

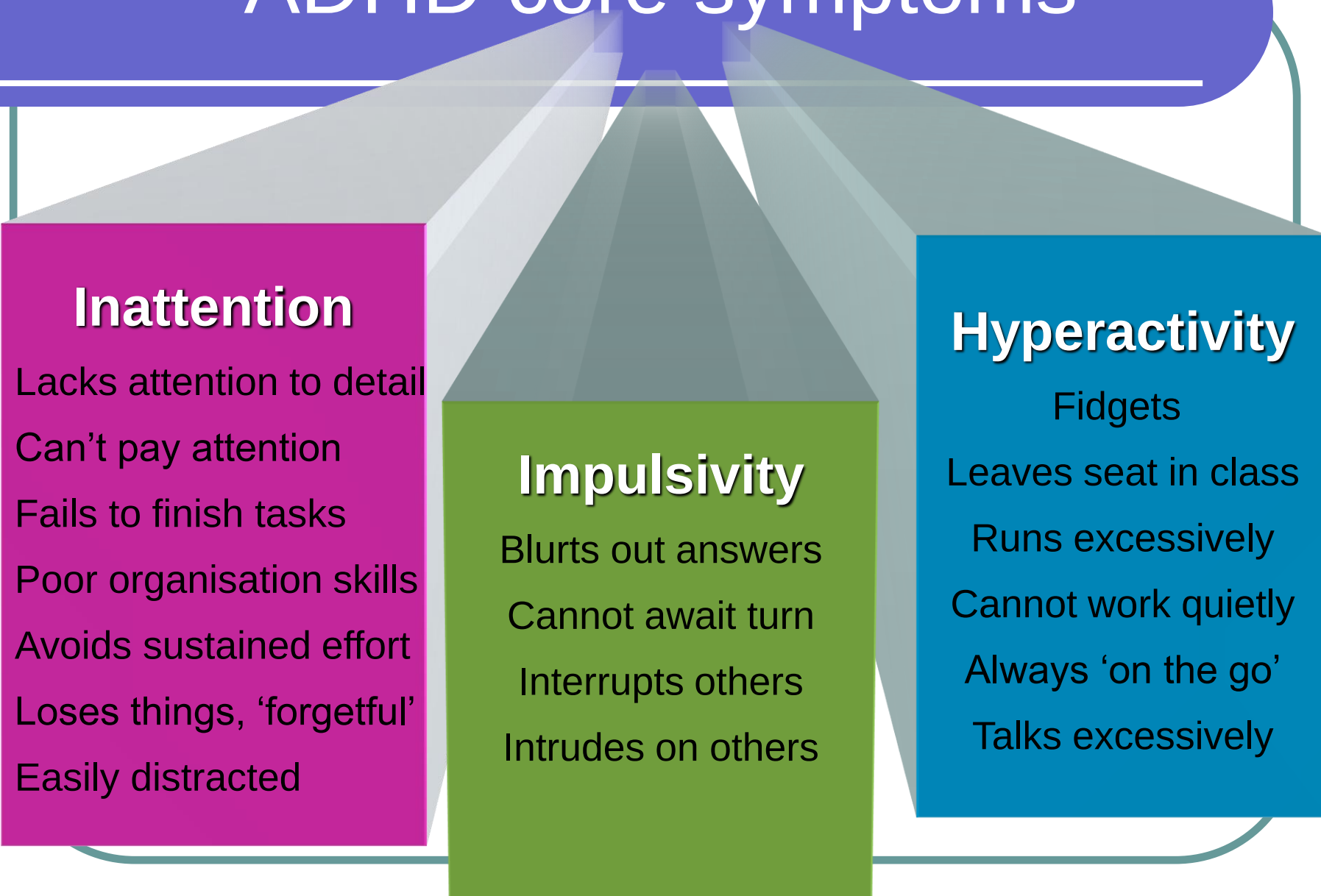
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Education

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ADHD

- ADHD is a neuro-developmental disorder with symptoms frequently occurring in early childhood (Sonuga-barke & Halprin 2010)
 - Neuro because the brains of ADHD children are different, in terms of structure and function.
 - Developmental because the key symptoms of ADHD relate to a developmental lag.

ADHD core symptoms



Inattention

- Lacks attention to detail
- Can't pay attention
- Fails to finish tasks
- Poor organisation skills
- Avoids sustained effort
- Loses things, 'forgetful'
- Easily distracted

Impulsivity

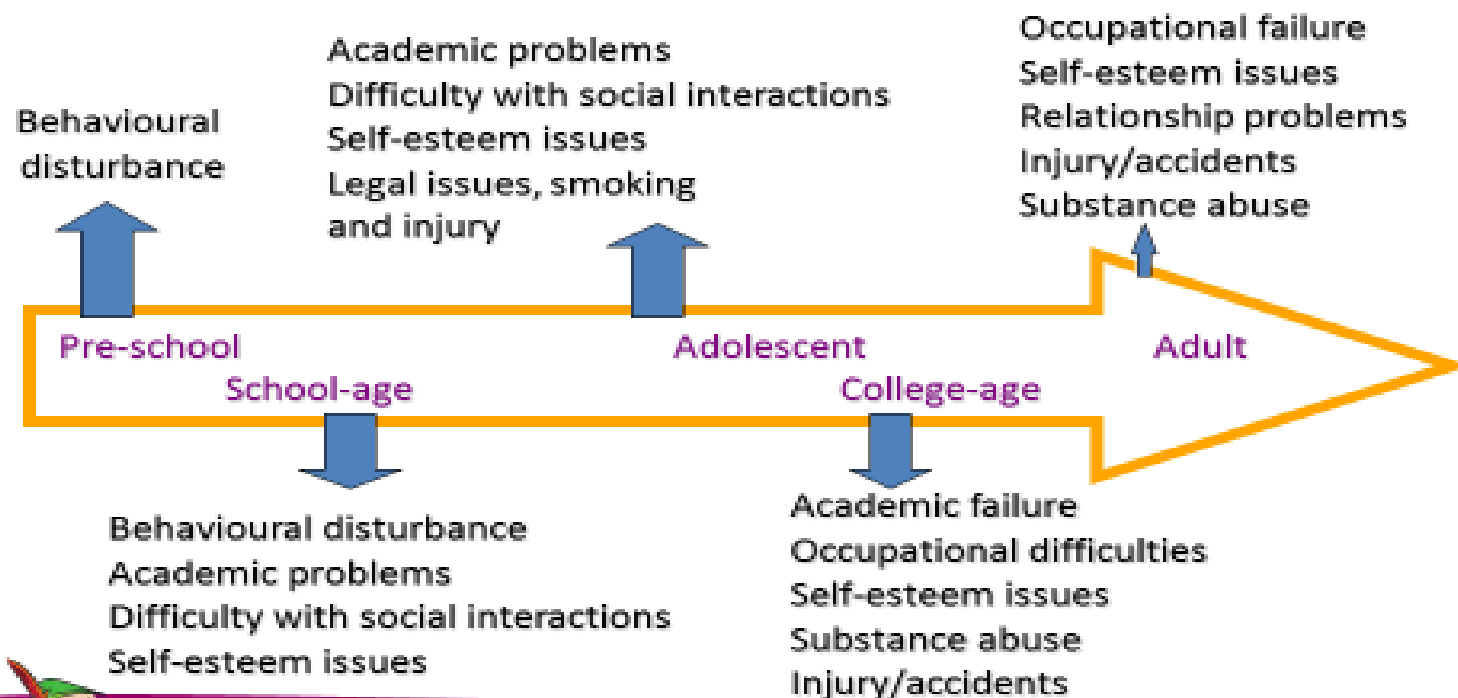
- Blurts out answers
- Cannot await turn
- Interrupts others
- Intrudes on others

Hyperactivity

- Fidgets
- Leaves seat in class
- Runs excessively
- Cannot work quietly
- Always 'on the go'
- Talks excessively

Developmental impact of ADHD

Developmental Impact of ADHD



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Where do symptoms come from ?

- There are three key explanations for why children with ADHD behave in the way that they do:
 - Executive functioning
 - Motivational style
 - Timing difficulties

Executive function

- Executive functioning consists of higher cognitive processes such as:
 - Planning
 - Working memory
 - Inhibitory control

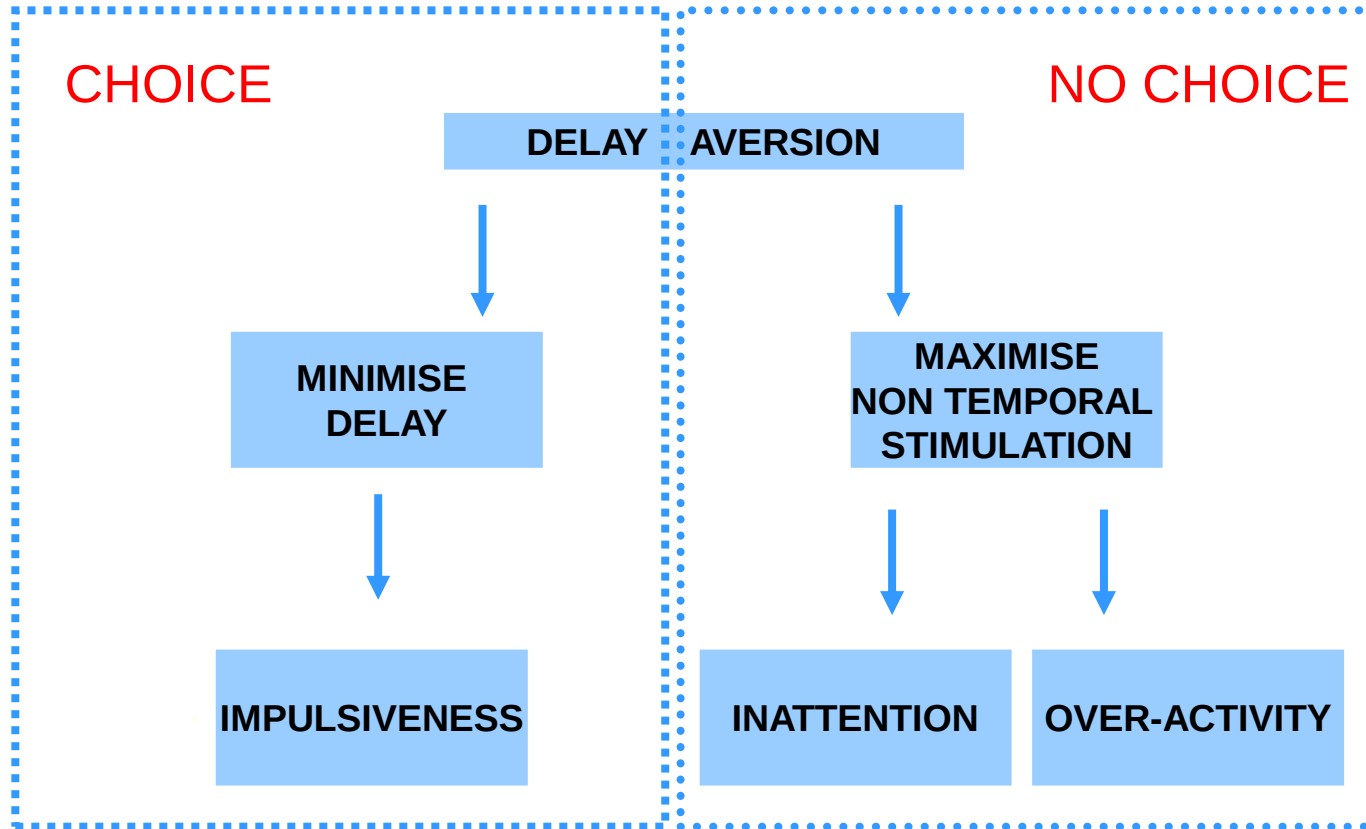
Modifying environment

- Poor inhibitory control means you cannot modify your response to environmental cues – *impulsivity*
- Poor working memory means that you have lower storage and rehearsal capacity – *forgetful, poor attention*

ADHD as a motivational style

- Sonuga-Barke (2002) argues that ADHD symptoms result from a motivational style
 - Function rather than dysfunction
 - Escape or avoidance of delay

The expression of delay aversion



ADHD and timing



Supporting ADHD assessment

- Getting teachers to complete screening information is challenging
- Can't get information in July, August or September
- For secondary school children, it is always best to focus on subject teachers which involve risk assessment, i.e PE, Science or DT

Supporting ADHD assessment

- Information from teachers should include contextual information such as
 - percentage rate of school attendance,
 - periods of remote or virtual teaching
 - periods of lockdown
 - degree of engagement in education,
- As it maybe difficult to judge a pupil's attention, activity level and impulsivity under these circumstances.

Supporting ADHD assessment

- Don't expect agreement between parents and teachers, the context is different.
- Sometimes it is the difference between raters that is illuminating
 - If parent rate high symptoms in a very disorganised and unstructured home environment
 - Teachers rate lower symptoms in a more structured school environment, then behavioural support for the family maybe very successful

Supporting ADHD assessment

- Asking teachers to play games that test executive function can also be very helpful.
- You can ask the teacher 20 questions about inhibitory control or you can ask them to play Simon says and see how the child responds

Concentration break



Managing ADHD in the classroom



Executive Functions

- Executive functions such as planning, and working memory need to be rehearsed.
- Try to compensate for poor executive function when making requests or giving instructions Keep It Simple **KIS.**
- Make allowances for poor planning (missing pens etc) but try to slowly shape appropriate planning skills, one task at a time.

Delay aversion

Delay aversion needs to be slowly desensitised.

Try to ensure that children learn that waiting can have a positive outcome, **reinforce and remind** then about the positive outcome.

Manage delay aversion in the classroom using fidget techniques such as blue tac, quiet fidget tools, resistance bands and wobble cushions

Time

Be careful with your use of language. What do we always say *“yes I will be there in a minute”*

Be consistent with your own time intervals which models time intervals for the child.

Use timers etc to help the child to wait learn time intervals

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Make constant reference to the classroom clock or timer on the IWB on encourage them to check their phone clock.

Use of praise

- Try to increase the immediacy of praise
- For children just with **ADHD** praise when they are engaging in a task, to motivate engagement
- For children with **ADHD and ASD** (who are often demand avoidant) praise after they have completed something well.
- Make sure the child know what they are being praised for, a general well done doesn't really work

Summary

- ADHD pupils often struggle with Executive function, delay & Waiting and understanding time.
- For assessment think context
- Be curious about differences in ratings between parents and teachers
- Use KIS to compensate for poor executive function
- Help shape waiting using fidget tools and reminders about positive outcomes to waiting
- Don't use time as a metric for children with ADHD
- Praise, praise praise!

Thank you for your attention!

Questions