

## IATEFL Edinburgh 2025

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**Inclusive teaching: ADHD strategies  
which engage and support **all** learners**

Presenter: Dagmara Tanska

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Aim for today: to devise 10 commandments of lesson planning using ADHD-supportive methods.

We're going to achieve it by discussing:

- what ADHD is and how it affects learning abilities,
- effective teaching strategies that benefit **all** learners.

## Pre-Session Survey

**How confident do you feel about accommodating your ADHD students' needs in your lessons?**

**1 - Never heard of ADHD before.**

**2**

**3**

**..**

**10 - I'm an expert.**

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True or false? Discuss with your partner.

1. ADHD is a prevalent disease, affecting app. 5% of children globally.
2. It is caused by poor parenting, dopamine addiction and trauma.
3. It is characterised by hyperactive behaviour and lack of concentration.

# ADHD stands for...

Attention

Deficit

Hyperactivity

Disorder

**A more accurate term:**

*Inability to control **too much** attention*

*physical and **mental** hyperactivity*

*impulsivity and **rejection sensitive disorder**.*

Symptoms persist **since childhood**  
and affect **at least 2** areas of life,  
e.g. school and home.

ADHD is a prevalent **disorder**, affecting app. 5-10% of children and **adults** globally.

- genetic, with heritability between 70% and 80%
- a neurodevelopmental disorder, affecting brain development and **key executive functions, e.g. ... (unjumble)**

Ipsmule **C**tnorol

**Impulse Control**, e.g. interrupts others

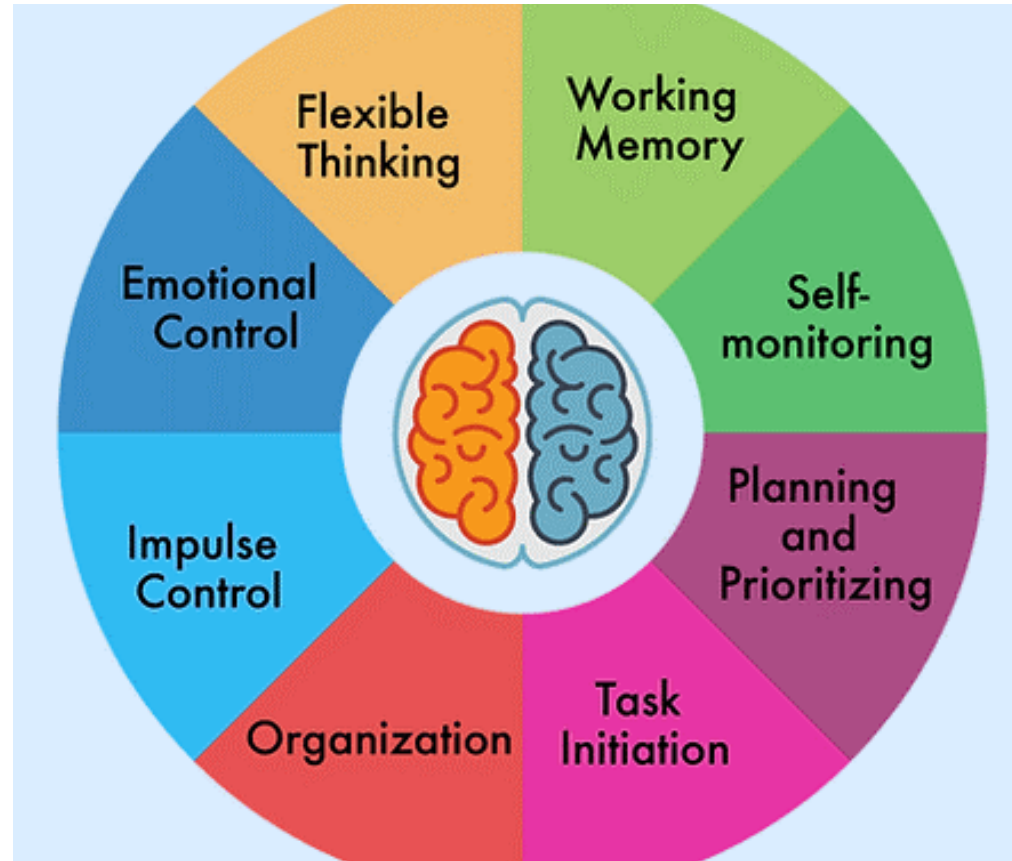
Felxfibe **T**ghkini

**Flexible Thinking**, e.g. dislikes sudden changes

Wgnroik **M**yroem

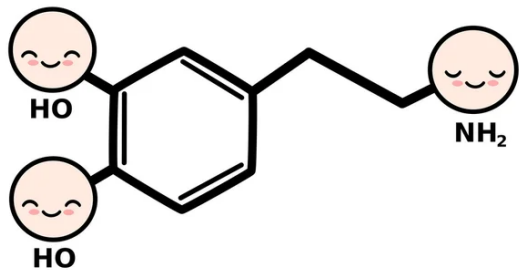
**Working Memory**, e.g. can't remember instructions

# Executive functions impaired by ADHD.



It may be **exacerbated** by poor parenting, screen addiction and trauma.

ADHD is **caused** by dysregulation of two hormones crucial for learning.



## Dopamine

- motivation
- attention
- forming of dopaminergic pathways

Problem: *'I remembered everything when I was studying at home, but I failed the test in school.'*

## Noradrenaline

- focus
- attention
- emotional regulation

Problem: *'I have anxiety and depression, therefore no energy to study.'*



## ADHD on neurological level

Student: 'It's boring.'

Meaning:  
It's '**dopaminergically  
unprofitable**' for the brain.

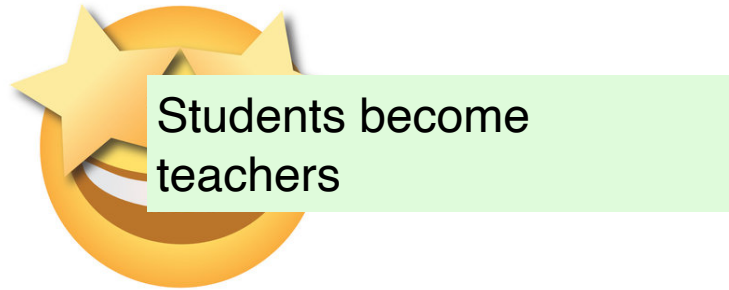


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Source: istockphoto.com

# Dopamine and Noradrenaline Boosters - Classroom Activities Examples



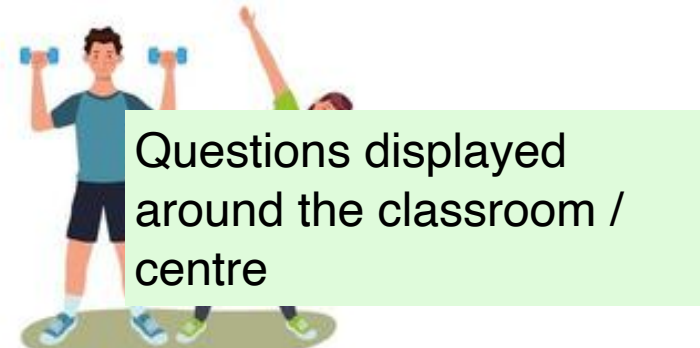
**Fascination**



**Technology**



**Having fun**



**Physical exercise/  
movement**



**Competition**





**Mindfulness**



# ADHD Symptoms

## Hyperactive-Impulsive

Fidgets with or taps hands or feet or squirms.	Talks excessively and interrupts others.	Blurts out an answer before a question has been completed.
 Support: sensory cushions and fidget toys, flexible seating (e.g. cross-legged)	 Support: "Write your answer in your notebook before you speak!"	Support: signposting, attention grabbers, routines.
Prevalent in boys.		

## Inattentive-Sensitive

Quiet, seems shy.	Mind seems elsewhere, daydreams.	Messy, loses things, forgetful.
 Support: minimal Teacher Talking Time when giving instructions.	 Support: technology, i.e. timers, reminders, computer games	 Support: Learning Partner - a classmate who will help stay on task.
Prevalent in girls.		



Submit Answers



Which one is the most common?

**Mixed.** Symptoms change throughout life.

Which one is frequently overlooked?

**Inattentive-Sensitive**

- Masking
- Compensation with perfectionism
- Symptoms worsen during puberty

# Rejection Sensitivity



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# Rejection Sensitivity Support

- dialectic-behavioural therapy
- medication
- education
- acknowledge Ss' feelings
- praise positive behaviour
- give agency, e.g. choice of activities

## Self-regulation: HALT

Factors that trigger negative reactions.



**Hungry**

**Eat.**

**Angry**

**Name emotions and let them go.**

**Lonely**

**Learning partners.**

**Tired**

**Take a break.**

# Self-regulation: TIPP

Skills to control distressing emotions.

**Temperature**

Touch window glass.

**Intense Exercise**

Run in place for 30 seconds.

**Paced Breathing**

4 in - 4 stop - 4 out

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

Squeeze an imaginary lemon



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# Case studies

# Case Studies

🔍 Get a hint

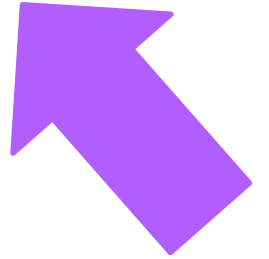
## Teacher's voice:

"Janek (12) is consistently disruptive, frequently fidgeting and interrupting during class. Last week, he included a swear word in the title of a presentation students were working on, causing the entire class to burst into laughter. I feel he was trying to undermine my authority."

## Janek's voice:

"I understand that my behaviour can annoy others, but I often have impulses I find difficult to control. My classmates at school dislike me, so I'm trying to make new friends at British Council. That's why I often act like a clown."

Which symptoms of ADHD can you identify?  
Hyperactivity? Impulsivity? Inattention? Oversensitivity?  
How can the teacher support the student?  
How can the student self-regulate?



FLIP

Track progress ☐



1 / 5



# 10 Lesson planning Commandments for ADHD and all

Allow alternative seating and fidget toys.

Progressive muscle relaxation.

Grab attention, minimise Teacher Talking Time

Assign Learning Partners

Write answers down before speaking.

Guided mindfulness meditation.

Positive reinforcement + ignoring **minor** misbehaviour

TIPP

HALT

Learner Autonomy: let us choose!

Physical hyperactivity

Mental hyperactivity

Inattentiveness

Inattentiveness

Impulsivity

Impulsivity

Rejection sensitivity

Rejection sensitivity

Trigger prevention

Trigger prevention

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ADHD is an important aspect of my identity,  
but it represents just one small part of who I am.

I would love to hear your feedback.

*Dagmara.Domanska@britishcouncil.pl*

