

What is ADHD?

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About CanLearn Society

- Non-profit organization serving Calgary and area for over 35 years
- Literacy programs
- Clinical services (psychologists, physicians, ADHD coaches)
- www.ADHDFamilies.ca
- www.canlearnsociety.ca

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Interactive Webinars – Vision & Goals

- Provide education and resources to families dealing with ADHD.
- Targeted specifically to families who live in smaller communities, but all are welcome!
- The webinar will be recorded and posted on CanLearn's website.



Webinar Format

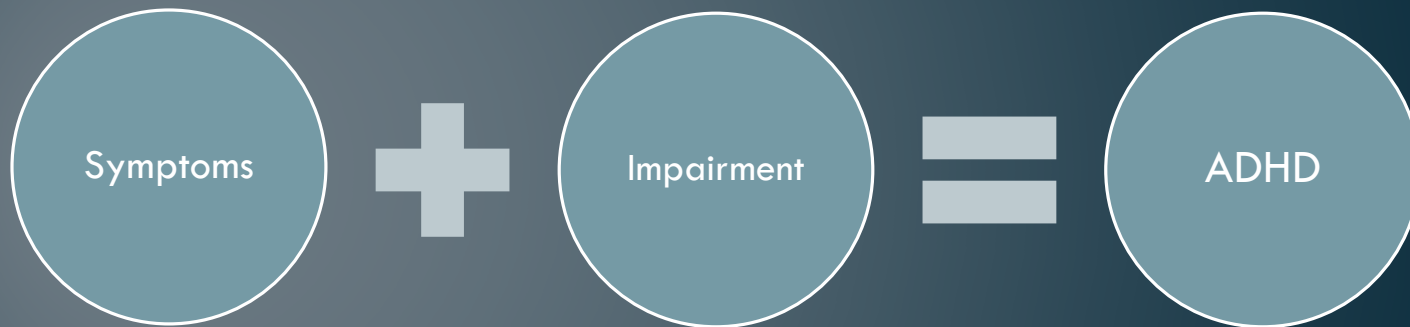
- 1 hour in length.
- A specific topic will be presented (approx. 30 minutes) – send us your topic suggestions: adhd families@canlearnsociety.ca
- Approx. 30 minutes available for questions.
- Please hold your questions until the end of the presentation.
- Use the chat box to ask your question.

Today's topic: What is ADHD?

- Neurodevelopmental disorder
- Real brain differences – frontal lobe, cerebellum, dopamine
- Epigenetics – genes X environment interaction – susceptibility is inherited.
- Prevalence: 5-7% in children, 3-5% in adults
- Considered life-long, but may present differently depending on age (and gender)
- Understand symptoms as a dimension (or spectrum) – everyone has attention problems sometimes

ADHD Presentations (Subtypes)

- 3 presentations: Inattentive, Hyperactive/Impulsive, Combined



Problems with
Activation and/or
Inhibition

Stress

Executive Functions

- Problems with:
 - Self-regulation (activation/inhibition)
 - Self-monitoring
 - Working memory
- Lead to problems with:
 - Planning
 - Organizing
 - Time management
 - Productivity and prioritization
 - Social interactions



Executive Functions

- “Remembering to remember”
- “Seeing the future”
- Emotional regulation
- A disorder of output/performance



What “Causes” ADHD?

- Epigenetics – genes X environment interaction – susceptibility is inherited.
- Poor diet does not cause ADHD, but may make it worse, particularly in children’s developing brains.
- Exposure to lead and other environmental toxins.
- Children born premature or with low birthweight.
- Prenatal exposure to alcohol and tobacco smoke

IMPORTANT:

- More research is need in all areas.
- It is more accurate to say that these factors are related (correlated) to ADHD rather than direct causes.

The Environment

- ADHD symptoms must be present in at least 2 settings (i.e., school, work, home etc.).
- Also consider the difference in expectations and level of support in each environment.
- Individuals with ADHD typically do better:
 - In novel settings with stimulating tasks
 - When they have one-on-one attention
 - When rewards are immediate
 - With simple, straightforward tasks that have few steps
 - When they can move around!

What to do about ADHD?



Discussion and Questions

- Please use the chat box to ask your questions.
- Give others an opportunity to ask questions.

Web Resources:

- www.ADHDFamilies.ca
- www.canlearnsociety.ca
- www.caddac.ca
- www.totallyadd.com
- www.caddra.ca
- www.ldac-acta.ca
- www.addvance.com
- www.chadd.org