Fact Sheet: Clearing Up Misconceptions About ADHD

What is ADHD?

- ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, a neurodevelopmental condition affecting both children and adults.
- It involves differences in brain function that affect attention, impulse control, activity levels, sensory systems, and emotional regulation.
- ADHD is a neurotype, meaning it is one type of brain wiring among the diverse ways brains can function.

Common Misconceptions and Facts:

- ❌ **Misconception: ADHD only affects children, particularly boys.**
  - ✅ **Fact: ADHD affects people of all ages and genders. Many adults have ADHD, and most don't know it. Less than 20% of adults with ADHD are aware of their condition.**

- ❌ **Misconception: ADHD is overdiagnosed.**
  - ✅ **Fact: Boys are often misdiagnosed, while girls and women are frequently undiagnosed. Up to 75% of girls with ADHD remain undiagnosed.**

- ❌ **Misconception: ADHD always involves hyperactivity.**
  - ✅ **Fact: Many individuals with ADHD do not exhibit external hyperactivity. For example, women with ADHD may appear calm externally but experience constant internal movement and racing thoughts.**

- ❌ **Misconception: ADHD individuals lack intelligence.**
  - ✅ **Fact: ADHD has nothing to do with intelligence. Many individuals with ADHD are highly creative, think outside the box, and excel under pressure.**

- ❌ **Misconception: ADHD is a disorder and those with it are defective.**
  - ✅ **Fact: ADHD should not be viewed as a disorder or defect. It is simply a different brain wiring, requiring different management strategies.**

- ❌ **Misconception: ADHD people must struggle in school.**

- ✅ Fact: Many individuals with ADHD excel academically and achieve high honors.

- ❌ Misconception: People with ADHD are always late.
  - ✅ Fact: Some individuals with ADHD are very punctual and make a point to be early.

- ❌ Misconception: Executive function deficits are the same for everyone with ADHD.
  - ✅ Fact: Executive function deficits vary widely from person to person with ADHD.

- ❌ Misconception: ADHD is easy to diagnose.
  - ✅ Fact: ADHD is often misdiagnosed as anxiety, depression, borderline personality disorder, or bipolar disorder due to overlapping symptoms like emotional dysregulation.

- ❌ Misconception: People with ADHD have trouble managing their focus.
  - ✅ Fact: People with ADHD often experience hyperfocus but have difficulty distributing their focus or attention across various tasks.

Unique Traits and Strengths of Some Individuals with ADHD:

- 🎯 Hyperfocus: On tasks of interest, enabling quick and intense work completion.
- 🌟 Creativity: Innovative thinking and problem-solving.
- 💪 Persistence: Strong resilience and determination.
- ⚖️ Passion for Justice: A strong sense of fairness and justice.

Challenges Faced by ADDers:

- 📅 Organization: Struggles with organization, procrastination, emotional regulation, meeting deadlines, and poor working memory.
- 🤔 Self-Doubt: Experiences of discrimination and stigma, pleasing behavior, anxiety and depression, imposter syndrome, and a need for perfection.
- ⏳ Task Management: Difficulty with non-urgent or less stimulating tasks.

Understanding Neurodiversity:

- 🌐 Diverse Conditions: Neurodiversity includes various conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, and more.
- 🌈 Unique Strengths: Each neurodivergent individual has unique strengths and challenges.

- ❤️ **Embracing Differences: Recognizing and valuing these differences is key to embracing neurodiversity.**

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