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ADHD and Anxiety Online Workshop

December 3rd 2023

Dr James Brown

A smaller version of the SEED TALKS logo, positioned in the bottom left corner. It features the words "SEED" and "TALKS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with three stylized black leaves above "SEED".

SEED
TALKS

The logo for jbhd coaching & communication. The letters "jbhd" are in a large, bold, black, lowercase sans-serif font. Below them, the words "coaching &" and "communication" are stacked in a smaller, black, lowercase sans-serif font.

jbhd
coaching &
communication

The Plan

1. Understanding ADHD
 2. Understanding Anxiety
- Break
4. The Intersection of ADHD and Anxiety
 5. Strategies for Managing ADHD and Anxiety
 6. Q&A Session

Icebreaker

How are you on a scale of Lemur?

1



2



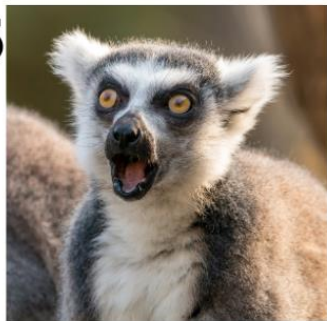
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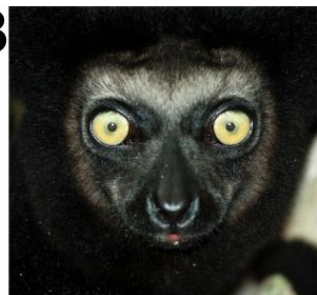
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Understanding ADHD

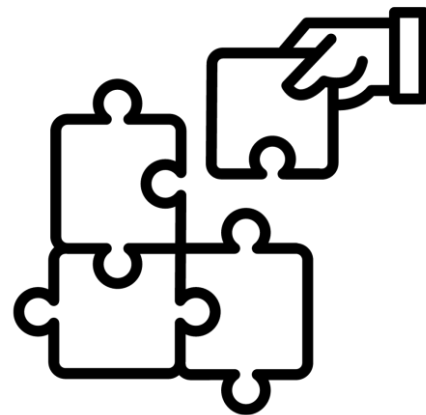
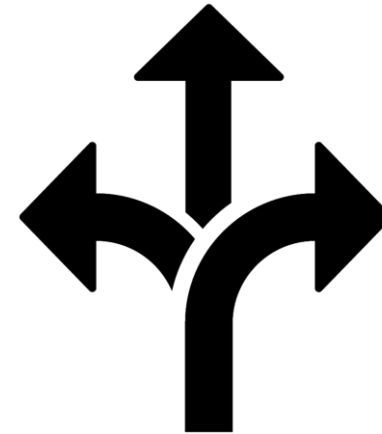
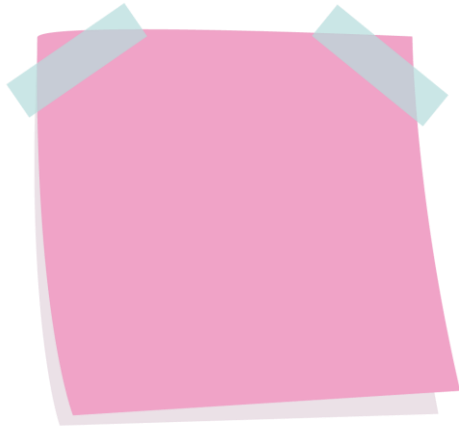
What is ADHD

- **‘Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder’... or is it?**
- **Lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder.**

- **Really two things:**

‘Executive functions’ and ‘emotions’.

What are Executive Functions?



Performance, not ability...

Symptoms of Inattentiveness

1. Making careless mistakes/lacking attention to detail.
2. Difficulty sustaining attention.
3. Inability sometimes to listen when spoken to directly.
4. Failure to follow through on tasks and instructions.
5. Exhibiting poor organisation.
6. Avoiding/disliking tasks requiring sustained mental effort.
7. Losing things necessary for tasks/activities.
8. Being easily distracted (including unrelated thoughts).
9. Being forgetful in daily activities.

Yeah, he's shat him Alf when he's seen the backlash

06:23 ✓✓

Someone sent it to Insta, Sam just sent it me. We have to make a **Horne** of it if it is

16:33 ✓✓

Yeah, we have to! Someone from an NHS group asked about our community and she seemed excited about it but said is it moderated? We need to learn about boys and what they can do too!

09:55 ✓✓

Duck head! I can pop o ex with some tomorrows if needed. Xx

18:05

Symptoms of Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

1. Fidgeting with or tapping hands or feet, squirming in seat.
2. Leaving seat in situations when remaining seated is expected.
3. Experiencing feelings of restlessness.
4. Having difficulty engaging in quiet, leisurely activities.
5. Being “on-the-go” or acting as if “driven by a motor”.
6. Talking excessively.
7. Blurting out answers.
8. Having difficulty waiting for your turn.
9. Interrupting or intruding on others.

Symptoms in Males & Females

- Women are less likely to be externally hyperactive and impulsive than men.
- Internal hyperactivity in women can be in the form of overthinking, intrusive thoughts, **anxiety** and negative self-talk..



Non-Diagnostic Symptoms of ADHD



- Emotional dysregulation.
- Rejection-sensitive dysphoria (RSD).
- Mind wandering.
- Time blindness.
- Alexithymia
- Sensory processing issues.
- Low self-esteem/imposter syndrome.

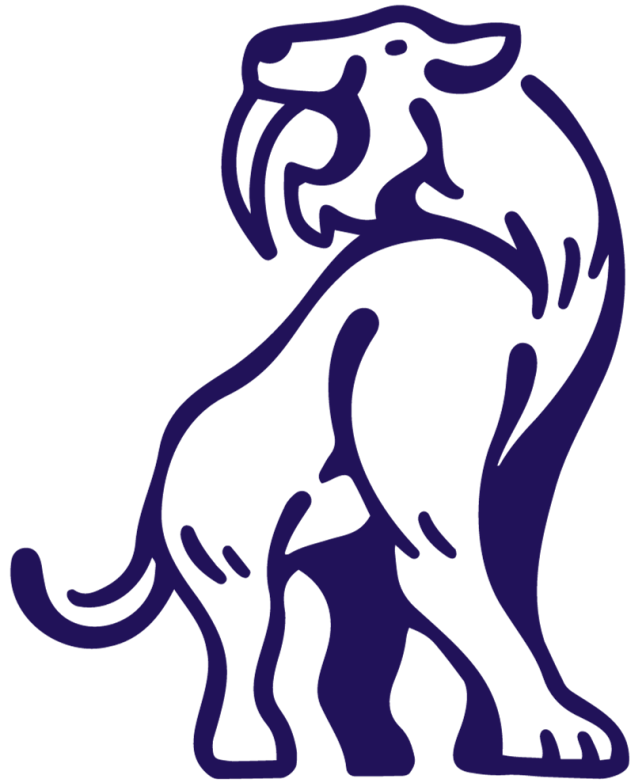
- Co-existing mental and physical health conditions.

Understanding Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

- Anxiety is a ***normal*** response to things we see as threatening.
- It characterised by feelings of worry, fear, uneasiness, or apprehension about future events, situations, or **uncertainties**.
- While the symptoms are generally not dangerous, they can be distressing.
- At certain levels, anxiety helps us prepare for situations.

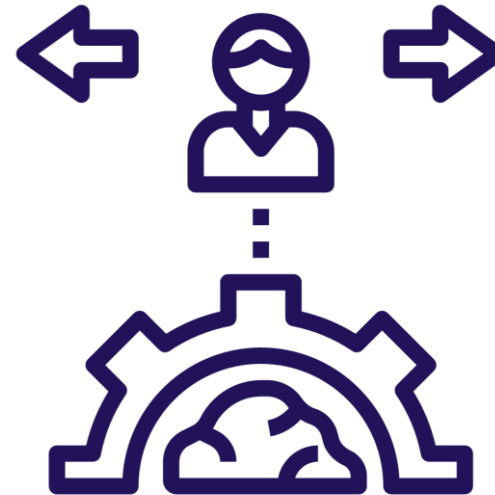
Evolution, Uncertainty and Anxiety?



When Anxiety isn't Helpful

- Chronic or elevated levels of anxiety can be detrimental, stopping us from engaging in activities of daily life.

What Does Anxiety Do?



The 11 Anxiety Disorders (DSMV)

- **Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) – 3rd most common.**
- **Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD) – 4th most common.**
- Selective mutism.
- **Specific Phobia – 2nd most common**
- **Social anxiety disorder (social phobia) – most common.**
- **Panic disorder.**
- Agoraphobia.
- Substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder.
- Anxiety disorder due to another medical condition.
- Other specified anxiety disorder.
- Unspecified anxiety disorder.

GAD

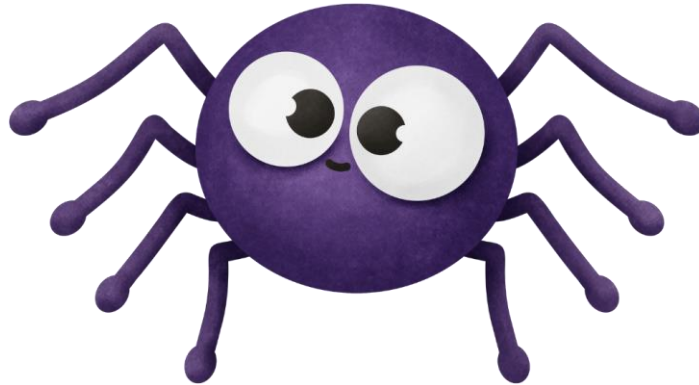
- **Persistent and excessive worry that interferes with daily activities.**
- **Around 3-12% of population.**

Specific Phobia

- If you have a phobia, you will have an overwhelming need to avoid all contact with the source of your anxiety.
- Coming into contact with the cause of your phobia or even the thought of this can make you anxious and may cause you to panic.
- Two main categories:
 1. Simple phobias
 2. Complex phobias

1. Simple Phobias

- Simple phobias are fears about specific objects, animals, situations or activities. Some common examples include:



2. Complex Phobias

- **Complex phobias tend to be more disabling than simple phobias because they are often associated with a deep-rooted fear or anxiety about a particular circumstance or situation.**



Social Phobia

- **Social phobia is a marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others.**
- **12% of the general population.**
- **Higher in women.**



Separation Anxiety

- Separation anxiety is when someone fears being apart from or losing a person or other attachment figure, or even a place (home).
- Adults can experience separation anxiety, although it is more common in children.



Domestic Anxiety

- **Not a real thing**
- **Transient form of anxiety that can hit when there is nothing to do but your brain wants you to do things.**



Where Anxiety Meets ADHD

Statement 1

In adult ADHD, comorbidity is the rule rather than the exception...

Statement 2

**It could be said that living with ADHD is living
in a chronic state of transient anxiety**

ADHD and Anxiety



ADHD and GAD

- **GAD involves persistent and excessive worry that interferes with daily activities.**
- **Frequently co-occur (30% of people with ADHD).**
- **ADHDers with anxiety have more severe symptoms.**
- **Emotional Dysregulation is more common in the high anxiety ADHDers.**

ADHD and Social Phobia

- 18% of people with ADHD.
- ADHDers with anxiety have more severe symptoms.
- Emotional Dysregulation is more common in the high anxiety ADHDers.

ADHD and Specific Phobia

- **Difficult to find ANY good science.**
- **Blood–injection–injury phobia is commonly associated with ADHD.**

ADHD and Separation Anxiety

- Separation anxiety disorder presents as an unusually heavy dependence upon another individual to be present and to accomplish tasks for the anxious person.
- Is often masked: “This bed is too hard” example
- Can be improved in ADHD with methylphenidate.

Strategies for Managing ADHD and Anxiety

Healthier Strategies



Unhealthier Strategies



General Strategies

- **Talk about it.**
- **Journal**

- **In the moment**
 1. **Breathing**
 2. **Grounding**
 3. **Recognize and Accept**
 4. **Ask yourself “Am I safe? Am I in immediate threat?”**

Tolerating Uncertainty

- If you can't stand having uncertainty in your life, you are probably:

Doing things to remove all uncertainty in daily life situations
Avoiding uncertain situations.

- Remember, it is **IMPOSSIBLE** to get rid of all uncertainty in your life!
- Learning to be more **TOLERANT** of uncertainty is important

Learning to act “as if”...

- The best way to learn to become more tolerant of uncertainty is to start acting “as if” you are tolerant of uncertainty.

STEP 1: Make a List of Behaviours

STEP 2: Rank Them According to Anxiety

Anxiety Ranking Example

Behaviours to reduce uncertainty	Anxiety Level (0-10)
Asking questions at work	8
Going out with friends	6
Doing the shopping	5
Sending an email without checking wording	3
Watching a new TV program	2

Relaxation Techniques

- Relaxation as powerful as CBT for ADHD.
- Breathing.
- Muscle Relaxation

Specific strategies for GAD

- **Except that dealing with your anxiety is different from removing your anxiety.**
- **Learn to recognise what your ‘worries’ are...**
- **Classify your various worries.**
- **Turn your worries into a ‘film script’...**

Specific strategies for Social Phobia

- **Be aware of your social phobia, particularly environments where it is more commonly going to occur.**
- **Diarise social anxiety.**
- **Use relax**
- **Remember you have power.**
- **Turn your worries into a 'film script'...**

Specific strategies for Specific Phobia

- Ask yourself “What is frightening about it?”.
- Realistic thinking.
- Exposure.

Specific strategies for Separation Anxiety

- Practise short separations to begin with.
- Be open and honest with trusted people.

Summary

- **ADHD is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder**
- **Anxiety disorders are relatively commonplace but are found more commonly in people with ADHD**
- **Anxiety can make living with ADHD more complex**
- **Utilising strategies to accept uncertainty and deal with anxiety ‘in the moment’ can help minimise its impact**

Resources

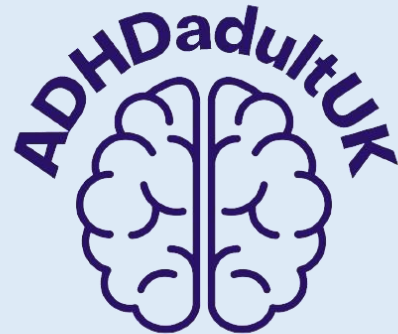
Personal



Website: JBHD.uk

Social media: [@adhdadult_james](https://www.instagram.com/adhdadult_james)

Charity



Website: ADHDadult.uk

Social media: [@adhdadultuk](https://www.instagram.com/adhdadultuk)

Online magazine: Focusmag.uk

Discord: [theadhdadults](https://discord.gg/theadhdadults)

Podcast



Website: TheADHDAdults.uk

Social media: [@theadhdadults](https://www.instagram.com/theadhdadults)

