



IN SIGHT for Oregon Lawyers

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

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ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER IN ADULTS

The following is a checklist of criteria for attention deficit disorder (ADD) in adults. Consider a criterion met only if the behavior is considerably more frequent than that of most people of the same mental age.

- A. A chronic disturbance in which at least 15 of the following are present:
1. A sense of underachievement, of not meeting one's goals (regardless of how much one has actually accomplished)
 2. Difficulty getting organized
 3. Chronic procrastination or trouble getting started
 4. Many projects going simultaneously; trouble with follow-through
 5. Tendency to say what comes to mind without necessarily considering the timing or appropriateness of the remark
 6. A frequent search for high stimulation
 7. An intolerance of boredom
 8. Easy distractibility, trouble focusing attention, tendency to tune out or drift away in the middle of a page or a conversation, often coupled with an ability to hyper-focus at times
 9. Often creative, intuitive, highly intelligent
 10. Trouble in going through established channels, following "proper" procedure
 11. Impatient; low tolerance for frustration
 12. Impulsive, either verbally or in action
 13. Tendency to worry needlessly, endlessly
 14. Sense of insecurity or impending doom
 15. Mood swings, mood lability
 16. Restlessness
 17. Tendency toward addictive/compulsive behavior (addiction to a substance, such as alcohol or cocaine, or a compulsion to a behavior or activity, such as gambling, shopping, eating, or overwork)
 18. Chronic problems with self-esteem
 19. Inaccurate self-observation
 20. Family history of ADD or other disorders of impulse or mood
- B. Childhood history of ADD (It may not have been formally diagnosed, but in reviewing the history, the signs and symptoms must have been there.)

Reprinted with permission from Edward M. Hallowell, MD, and John J. Ratey, MD, Driven to Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood through Adulthood (New York: Touchstone, 1995). The authors have also written a new book, Delivered from Distraction: Getting the Most Out of Life with Attention Deficit Disorder (New York: Ballantine, 2005).

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