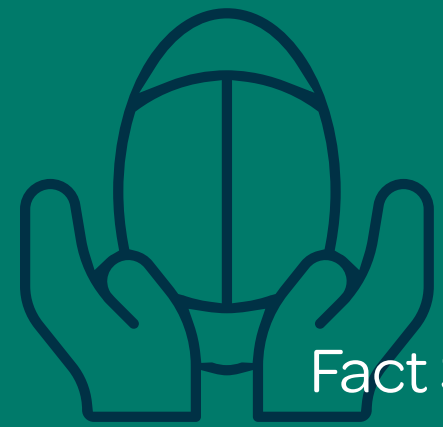




# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



Fact Sheet

## What is ADHD?

**ADHD is a highly genetic, brain-based syndrome that has to do with the regulation of a particular set of brain functions and related behaviours.**

These brain operations are collectively referred to as “executive functioning skills” and include important functions such as attention, concentration, memory, motivation and effort, learning from mistakes, impulsivity, hyperactivity, organisation, and social skills. There are various contributing factors that play a role in these challenges including chemical and structural differences in the brain as well as genetics.

People with ADHD are likely to be creative, flexible thinkers with a lot of energy and spontaneity.

It is important to remember that ADHD exists on a spectrum of severity (mild/moderate/severe). This means that ADHD symptoms (i.e., hyperactivity, impulsivity, and/or inattention) are not exactly the same in every person. So, one person might be very active, talk a lot and interrupt and intrude on other people; another person could daydream and be quiet and withdrawn; another person could be both: all of them could still have ADHD. As with anything else, no two people with ADHD are exactly the same and everyone experiences ADHD in their own way.<sup>A</sup>

## What we may see when coaching with people who have ADHD



### Inattention



Easily distracted, difficulty following through on instructions (e.g. loses focus, side-tracked), does not seem to listen when spoken to directly, has trouble holding attention on tasks or play activities, fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes with activities.<sup>A</sup>

### Impulsivity



Difficulty awaiting turns, interrupting conversations<sup>A</sup> or instructions, blurting out answers to questions before they are completed and intruding in others games.

### Hyperactivity



Difficulty remaining seated, fidgeting with hands and feet, shifting from one uncompleted task to another and difficulty playing quietly.

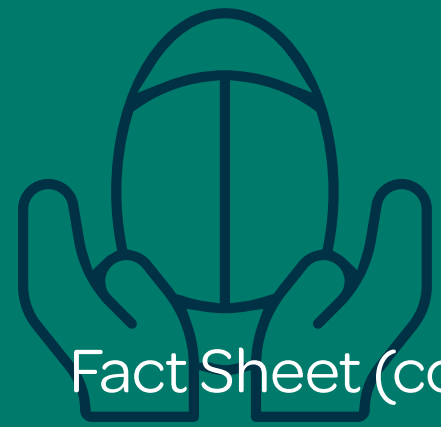
### Other Frequent Features



Difficulty coping with peers, engaging in dangerous activities without thinking about the consequences, high pain threshold, can be immature/clumsy.<sup>A</sup>

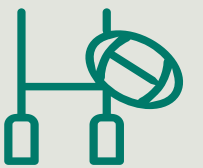


# Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



Fact Sheet (cont'd.)A

## How to include people with ADHD in your rugby coaching sessions



### Provide Structure:

Establish clear rules and structure for your rugby sessions. Maintain a calm demeanour and adopt a positive, encouraging approach.

### Adapt Your Coaching Style:

Tailor your coaching methods to the player's learning style. Prior to the session, speak with the player, their parents, or carers to understand how they learn best and adjust your coaching accordingly.

### Manage Frustration and Anxiety:

Be aware that players with ADHD may experience heightened frustration or anxiety, especially during fast-paced drills or matches. Know when to take a step back, offer a break, or provide support.

### Direct Communication:

Make eye contact when communicating instructions. This helps the player focus and understand what is being asked of them during rugby drills or gameplay.

### Organised and Predictable Environment:

Ensure that your training environment is structured and predictable. Consistent routines and well-organised drills can help players with ADHD stay engaged and focused.

### Praise Positive Behaviour:

Acknowledge and praise good behaviour and effort during training. Positive reinforcement can build confidence and maintain focus on rugby-specific tasks.A

### Private Signal System:

Develop a discreet signal or system to gently remind the player if they become distracted or start acting inappropriately during a drill or game.

### Use Names to Gain Attention:

When giving instructions to the group, call the player by their first name to ensure they are focused and know you are speaking to them. In a rugby context, if you ask the group to "gather for a scrum drill," you may need to specifically name the player to get their attention.

By creating an inclusive, structured, and supportive environment, you can help players with ADHD thrive and enjoy their rugby experience.A

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