

The ADHD National Gazette

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2023 has been a wonderful year where the ADHD Foundation has been able to take some very large steps to ensure that we are growing with our community needs.

Our helpline continues to grow and develop as we are now receiving many more calls that are complex. We have now increased our wonderful Helpline response team.

We have also been busy with our workshops and training sessions. We have had the opportunity to work with many schools and organisations to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to support individuals with ADHD.

We have also been working on developing new resources to further assist those with ADHD and their families. Keep an eye on our website and social media for updates on these exciting new initiatives.

As always, we are grateful for the continued support of our community and donors. Your contributions help us to continue our important work in raising awareness and providing support for those with ADHD. We wish you all a happy and safe holiday season, and look forward to continuing our work in the new year.

**Merry
Christmas**

Dympna Brbich
Chair/Director



Thank you for supporting us in 2023!



The Board of the ADHD Foundation would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our wonderful volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort to support the efforts of 2023.

From our wonderful counsellors on our helpline to the many volunteers who work behind the scenes your unwavering commitment and dedication to the ADHD community is what makes it the National ADHD representative organisation in Australia.

We thank our donors, supporters and those who have generously contributed financially to support the ADHD Foundations work during 2023. Your support has been invaluable in helping us achieve our goals. We are grateful for your contributions, which have enabled us to provide essential services to those who need it most.

The ADHD Foundation is a registered ACNC charity. We operate with a 100% volunteer workforce. We also don't receive government financial assistance. 100% of your donations go directly to increasing the support and services we provide. Our team are proud of our business model in being able to deliver vital support and services without the need to have expensive offices, CEO's or other added costs.

We hope that you will continue to support our charity in the future. Your contributions are essential to our continued success, and we are grateful for your support.

We believe that everyone deserves access to support, help and treatment for their ADHD, regardless of their background or circumstances.

"Everyone deserves a chance to shine".

Our goal is to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need, and we are grateful for your support in helping us achieve this.

The ADHD Foundation Australia provides a range of services to support individuals with ADHD, including:

- **Affordable Counselling** for individuals with ADHD to help them overcome any challenges they may be facing in their journey. Counselling can help individuals hone their communication skills, increase self-acceptance and self-worth, alleviate depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders, and equip individuals with strategies to manage stress and change.
- **Our ADHD Helpline** responds to calls for help and support from the ADHD community. The helpline provides accurate and reliable support, information, and referrals.
- **ADHD Specialist Referrals** assisting allied health and medical clinics in supporting their patients.
- **ADHD Information and Education** delivered through regular workshops and online webinars to provide practical solutions for a variety of ADHD-related topics.

**Learn more about our important work and ways
you can support this community on our website:**

Support



ADHD Development for Educators

The ADHD Foundation Australia Team are delighted to announce a new Education Series online training program commencing in Term 1 2024.

This is designed to supply a valuable professional development opportunity for teachers, school support, teachers' aides and other school staff. This series will include a diverse range of subjects related to ADHD and other neurodiverse conditions providing a wealth of knowledge and insights to help you better understand and enable students with different learning needs.

We understand that every class member is unique, and neurodiversity is an essential aspect of human variation. Therefore the ADHD Foundation Australia has partnered with the ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity in the UK to bring you the very best in knowledge and expertise in their field.

Since 2012, The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity, have trained over half a million educators and educators alike and are the largest provider of training in ADHD and neurodevelopmental conditions for professionals in the UK.

These expert presenters are leading practitioners and trainers in the field of neurodiversity. They will share their insights and knowledge while drawing on the latest research and best practices. You will have the opportunity to engage, and exchange ideas and experiences during these sessions.

By participating on our online training programs teachers, school counsellors, teachers support, principals and heads of departments will gain a deeper understanding of neurodiversity, developing new skills to further support the diverse learning needs of your students.

You will become part of a community of educators committed to creating inclusive schools that celebrate diversity and promote the success of all students.



Colin Foley

Director of Training
ADHD Foundation UK
The Neurodiversity Charity

Colin is the training director of the ADHD Foundation UK, the largest ADHD charity in Europe. After 25 years as a secondary teacher and senior leader, Colin's work is grounded in empowering teachers to deliver outstanding outcomes for children and young people with ADHD through increased awareness of the condition and through practical classroom strategies that every teacher can use.

BOOK NOW This session begins on 28th February 2023



Emma Weaver

Deputy CEO
ADHD Foundation UK
The Neurodiversity Charity

Emma is the Deputy CEO of the ADHD Foundation UK. Emma's role is to work alongside settings, parents and carers of children and young people presenting with traits of neurodevelopmental conditions. Her expertise in developmental psychology enables families and professionals with the knowledge and skills to ensure early intervention and support takes place.



Arron Hutchinson

Education Training Director and
Therapeutic Practitioner
ADHD Foundation UK
The Neurodiversity Charity

Arron Hutchinson is a trainer and therapeutic practitioner at the ADHD Foundation. Following a 5 year teaching career, Arron joined the ADHD Foundation UK to deliver therapeutic interventions for children and young people with a variety of needs, whether they have a diagnosis or not. Arron's work also includes the delivery of high-quality CPD for school staff on how best to support neurodiverse children and young people.



Dates & Topics

We highly encourage you to register early to ensure that you don't miss out on these valuable learning opportunities. So mark your calendars and get ready!

Topics and speakers are listed below:



28th of February, 2024

Leading a Neurodiverse Classroom

Colin Foley

This session will address key themes of conditions, including ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia and Dyscalculia, and proactive approaches for neurodiverse learners. [BOOK NOW](#)

13th of March, 2024

Dual Diagnosis of ADHD & Autism

Arron Hutchinson

This session will explore practical strategies to support children and young people to succeed in classroom environments with ADHD and Autism. [BOOK NOW](#)

27th of March, 2024

Supporting Executive Functioning

Colin Foley

The session will include information about the importance of executive functioning skills such as planning, organizing and working memory.

[BOOK NOW](#)

8th of May, 2024

Recognising & Regulating Emotions

Emma Weaver

The course will discuss how an individual's mental health is impacted by neurodiversity, exploring anxiety, Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria and more. [BOOK NOW](#)

22nd of May, 2024

Reading, Writing and ADHD

Arron Hutchinson

This session will focus on how literacy skills can be impacted by ADHD, focusing on inattention, executive functioning skills, anxiety and more.

[BOOK NOW](#)

5th of June, 2024

Supporting Memory in the Classroom

Colin Foley

This evidence-based webinar will explore the different forms of Memory with a particular focus on Working Memory.

[BOOK NOW](#)

19th of June, 2024

Girls, Young Women and ADHD

Emma Weaver

This session will explore a variety of reasons why girls with ADHD can often be missed, including masking, differing presentations and societal expectations. [BOOK NOW](#)

Learn more and keep up to date by registering as a member on our website:

[View](#)

For further information contact us below:
events@adhd.foundation.org.au



Lisdexamfetamine Shortage

Briefing note prepared by the ADHD Foundation, November, 2023

Key Issue

The ADHD Foundation is concerned that a US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) proposal to not increase production of amphetamine-based medications in 2024 will exacerbate and lengthen current medication shortages.

Lisdexamfetamine is the most prescribed ADHD medication in Australia. Domestic prescriptions of lisdexamfetamine increased over 150% in the period 2020-2022.

The entry of biosimilars to the US market following the expiry of the lisdexamfetamine will decrease the production quota allocated to Takeda, which manufactures Vyvanse, the only form of lisdexamfetamine available on the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Vyvanse is manufactured in Ireland and Germany, and the manufacturer relies on export of active lisdexamfetamine from the United States.

The ADHD Foundation is requesting urgent intervention from the Australian Government at a Ministerial level to reduce the impact on Australians with ADHD. As at 30 November 2023, the Foundation could not identify a submission from the Australian Government in over 3000 comments made to the DEA on this matter.

Background

Lisdexamfetamine dimesilate (Vyvanse, by Takeda) and methylphenidate hydrochloride (Ritalin Long-Acting (LA), by Novartis) are the only two long-release medications approved by the TGA to treat ADHD.

Lisdexamfetamine is available at strengths of 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and 70mg. It overtook modified release methylphenidate as the most prescribed ADHD medication in 2022.

According to the Department of Health and Aged Care, annual prescriptions for ADHD medication grew 27.6% each year between 2020 and 2022, including a 153.9% increase in prescriptions of lisdexamfetamine over that period and a 28.5% increase in modified release methylphenidate. Immediate release methylphenidate prescriptions increased by 40% and dexamfetamine by 46.5%.

Takeda held a patent for lisdexamfetamine until August 2023. The US Food and Drug Administration approved 13 generic versions of lisdexamfetamine on 25 August 2023.

The Department of Health and Aged Care advises that an 'overseas alternative' of lisdexamfetamine has been approved for supply in Australia; however, the TGA Section 19 listing for this medication indicates that it is only for the 30mg dosage and only approved until 29 February 2024.

The supply of lisdexamfetamine can change quickly. On 26 October 2023, the Department of Health and Aged Care advised in Senate Estimates that they expected the then-shortage of 30mg Vyvanse to end on 31 December 2023 and that no other shortages were expected.

However, by 3 November, the TGA had updated the medicine shortage reports database to advise that shortages of 30mg were expected through to March 2024 and that, additionally, shortages of 50mg were now reported and expected to resolve in March 2024, with shortages of 60mg expected from December 2023 to April 2024.

Regulation of Amphetamine Production

The US Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 826) requires the DEA to set production quotas for each basic class of controlled substances including schedule II stimulants (amphetamine, methylphenidate (including dexmethylphenidate), and lisdexamfetamine).



The aggregate production quota must provide for the estimated medical needs of the US, lawful export requirements, and the establishment and maintenance of reserve stocks. In order to address domestic drug shortages of controlled substances in the US, procurement quota allocations will be divided between quantities authorised for domestic sales and for export sales.

The proposed annual production quota for lisdexamfetamine for 2024 has not been increased from 2023 levels. The DEA cites amphetamine misuse as the key reason for limiting production.

Studies have shown that while lisdexamfetamine abuse is technically possible, it is less commonly diverted for non-medical use and has a lower risk of abuse than other stimulants. The DEA has proposed increases for methylphenidate, despite the risk that immediate-release stimulants are more likely to be used for recreational purposes. No shortages of methylphenidate have been reported in Australia.

Data shows that, from 2012 to 2021, overall dispensing of stimulants increased by 45.5% in the US. However, the FDA has only predicted a 3.1% increase in domestic medical use of schedule II stimulants in 2024.

Calculating production quotas based only on previous year sales is difficult at a time when increased awareness of ADHD is driving a significant year-on-year increase in diagnosis, and generic companies cannot provide historical sales data or accurately forecast sales for 2024.

The DEA notes that in 2022, amphetamine manufacturers produced only 70% of their allocated quotas. The Foundation is not aware whether Takeda filled this quota, but we understand that Takeda had requested a 25% increase to the 2023 quota, and we take in good faith that the company has attempted to fill its existing allocation.

The DEA has also proposed to review and allocate production quotas quarterly, which removes the certainty manufacturers require, and “will make manufacturing lead times, planning schedules, and resource allocation extremely difficult if not untenable.”

Impact on Australians with ADHD

An inability to access their prescribed medication is already causing significant distress for Australians with ADHD.

Untreated ADHD can lead to poor work and school performance, delayed learning, mental health deterioration (including depression, anxiety, and poor self-esteem), poor relationships, increased alcohol and drug use, risk of obesity, rates of incarceration, and even the likelihood of car accidents. It can also significantly impact the lives of parents and carers of people with ADHD.

Through the Senate inquiry into ADHD, many patients expressed the frustration that a small level of harmful misuse of amphetamine drugs was burdening individuals with additional administration and barriers.

The very high cost and limited availability of private psychiatrist appointments means that substituting medications is particularly difficult. Long-acting ADHD medicines may also help maintain privacy for individuals at school, work, and social situations by removing the need for additional doses to be taken during the day.

The Section 19A provisions for importing lisdexamfetamine only cover the 30mg product. This is not a suitable substitution for the patients currently prescribed one of the five other dosages of Vyvanse.

Restrictions on the legal supply of prescription medication, including through limited production, harms patients by removing access and potentially increases the illicit supply of medication to manage symptoms.

References

- [Department of Health and Aged Care submission to the Senate inquiry into Assessment and support services for people with ADHD](#)
- [What is the potential for abuse of lisdexamfetamine in adults? A preclinical and clinical literature review and expert opinion, Expert Review of Pharmacology, Professor Tony Lawler, October 2023](#)
- [Comparison of lisdexamfetamine and dextroamphetamine exposures reported to U.S. poison centers, Clinical Toxicology, M.E. Kaland & W. Klein-Schwartz, 2015](#)
- [A systematic review and analysis of longterm outcomes in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: effects of treatment and non-treatment. BMC Med. Shaw M, Hodgkins P, Caci H, Young S, Kahle J, Woods AG, Arnold LE, September 2012](#)
- [Comments on DEA's Proposed Aggregate Production Quota 2024, R Street, Stacey McKenna, November 2023](#)



ADHD Foundation in the Media

Our team at the ADHD Foundation, alongside our wonderful volunteers, is dedicated to offering a multitude of effective and engaging learning opportunities tailored to your needs. Whether you're seeking to stay updated on the latest research, improve your management of ADHD for yourself or a loved one, or connect with those who share similar experiences, we've got you covered. Check out the following channels to get started:

Membership

Providing free membership at the ADHD Foundation is a wonderful initiative that helps support individuals with ADHD and their families. Access to resources, support, and opportunities for learning and connecting within the ADHD community:

[Register](#)

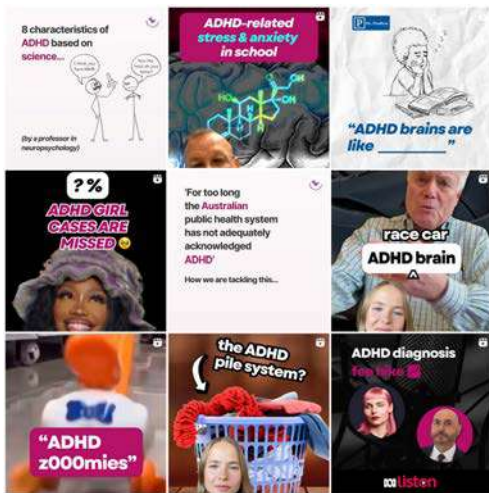
Newsletter

We offer the newsletter as a means of keeping our community informed about the latest updates, events, resources, and initiatives relating to ADHD. Find previous newsletters and subscribe to notified of future ones here:

[Subscribe](#)

Instagram

@theadhdfoundation

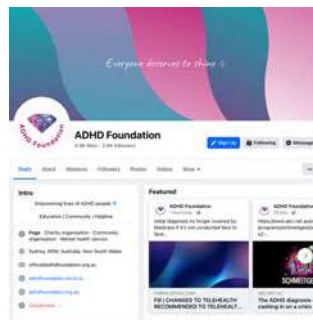


Our Instagram page is packed with a variety of content that we think you'll love. From motivational quotes to funny memes and informative posts.

If you're looking for a little bit of inspiration, a laugh or two, or just some helpful information, be sure to follow us on Instagram.

Facebook

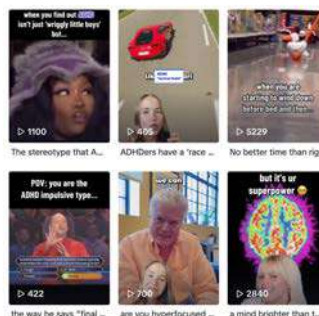
@theadhdfoundation



Get involved in the ADHD Foundation Community. Keep an eye out for upcoming events, webinars, and research surveys in which you can actively take part. Be notified of published newsletters and articles.

TikTok

@theadhdfoundation



Join the community on TikTok where ADHD awareness is growing rapidly. You'll find solace in knowing that you're not alone, as many others share the quirky and distinctive aspects of life with ADHD.



Erica's Story: ADHD & Hoarding

Adults with ADHD are prone to disorganization and clutter, but recent research has found that almost **one in five** people with ADHD exhibited clinically significant levels of hoarding, indicating there could be a hidden population of adults struggling with hoarding and its consequences.

These factors often make conditions at home overwhelming - for the individual trying to manage the problem, their children, and their partner.

Erica's Story

We found out a few weeks ago a valued volunteer with the Foundation, had passed away. We're resharing Erica's story to bring greater awareness to the impacts of hoarding, as she suffered this condition for the whole of her life.

I feel it goes back to a very early time in my life. When I was 4yrs old my parents moved house, but they didn't take me with them, they took my baby brother and left me with neighbours. Although the neighbours were very good to me, and had a daughter the same age, I always wanted to know where and why my parents disappeared. My father also threw all my toys away, including my precious baby doll "dib dib", a soft cuddly rag doll who had been my constant companion. I missed her terribly - I was left with absolutely nothing of my own.

One night, when I was about 5yrs old, an older cousin decided I needed to see my mother and drove me to her country town. It was very dark as there were no street lights there in those early days, and to my terror my father answered the door with a shot gun demanding to know who was there! He did not make me feel welcome at all, and his attitude towards me never did change. I don't know why I never came up to his standards, or why I was an embarrassment - I'll never know.

I do know that my dad was diagnosed ADD in the 60's by the famous psychiatrist Dr. John Ellard, and I was diagnosed in the 70's, also by Dr. Ellard.



I have suppressed those feelings of being unwanted and unloved for 75 years. Once working and having my own money, I seemed to console myself by purchasing items that made me feel good about myself - in some strange way it gave me pleasure just to have this odd collection of things around me. Consequently I have a well stocked house, an overflowing garage, two storage sheds, three chickens, a rescue dog, and five rescued cats - all of whom I love dearly. Every now and then I make an attempt to sort through items and take some to a charity organization, or give things to friends and acquaintances - all lovely and new and well received, but very hard to part with.

I couldn't bear it if something happened to me, and some distant relatives came to my home and threw all my precious 'things' away. 'Things' that have happy memories and 'things' that have given me pleasure for so many years - because I would like to make that final choice....

Resources

If you or a loved one would benefit from more information:

- [ADHD linked to hoarding behaviour - new study,](#)
- [Anglia Ruskin University, \(February 2022\)](#)
- [Buried in Treasures 2ed, Book. Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding by David Tolin](#)
- [Keep Your ADHD From Turning Into Hoarding Disorder, additudemag.com, \(March, 2023\)](#)
- [What is the link between hoarding and ADHD?, The British Academy \(June, 2020\)](#)



Mastering Time Management

Time management can be challenging for anyone, but for individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), prioritising tasks, staying organized, and meeting deadlines is often a struggle.

However, with the right strategies and techniques, individuals with ADHD can master time management and improve their productivity and self-esteem.



Understanding Your ADHD Challenges

Before diving into time management strategies, it's important to understand how ADHD impacts your ability to manage time effectively. Common challenges include:

Difficulty with Focus

ADHD often leads to difficulties with sustaining focus and easily getting distracted. This can make it challenging to stay on track and complete tasks within a given timeframe.

Procrastination

Many individuals with ADHD struggle with procrastination, especially when facing tasks that require sustained attention. Procrastination is used to alleviate feelings of overwhelm and this can lead to a buildup of stress and missed deadlines.

Time Blindness

Accurately estimating and perceiving the passage of time can be a constant challenge. The feeling of time moving faster or slower when bored causes difficulties in prospective time tasks and inaccuracies in time estimation.

Stories from the ADHD Community

ADDitude Magazine ([Read more here](#))

"Time is like a sink faucet with a drip that you've tuned out and forgotten about. Then you walk into your bathroom and step in a puddle because that faucet drip has turned into a flood!"

"Hyperfocus often consumes so much time that I can forget to eat, use the bathroom, or even stand up and move around to ward off stiffness."

"I have been utterly time-blind my entire life. It takes a conscious effort not to succumb to the magical thinking that a week's worth of tasks can be fit into one day. I'm a writer, and I've missed or pushed — with great anxiety — more deadlines and appointments than I can count."

With these challenges in mind, let's explore some practical techniques to improve time management.

Use External Tools and Reminders

Leveraging external tools and reminders can provide structure and help you stay on track. Here are a few options:

Digital Calendars and Alarms

Utilize digital calendars on your phone or computer to schedule tasks and deadlines. Set reminders or alarms to notify you ahead of time.

Task Management Apps

There are numerous task management apps available that allow you to create to-do lists, set reminders, and track your progress. Find one that suits your needs and use it consistently.

Visual Timers

Visual timers provide a clear visual representation of time passing. Use timers to break down tasks into manageable segments and gain a better understanding of how long each segment takes.



Break Tasks into Smaller Steps

Large tasks can trigger procrastination and make it difficult to get started.

1. **Identify the Task:** Start by clearly defining the task or goal you want to achieve.
2. **Break it Down:** Next, break the task into smaller steps or subtasks. This allows you to focus on one component at a time, making it easier to get started and maintain momentum.
3. **Set Realistic Deadlines:** Assign deadlines to each subtask to create a sense of urgency and accountability. Make sure the deadlines are realistic and achievable.
4. **Rewards & Incentives:** Give yourself something to look forward to once you complete.

Prioritize and Create a Schedule

Effective prioritization is key to managing your time efficiently.

Ordered Lists: Organise your tasks by urgency and due date to work through them in succession. Deadlines can keep you focused and motivated.

Time Blocking: Allocate specific time for different types of tasks or activities. This helps you ensure you dedicate time to important tasks.

Keep a Daily Routine: Establishing a consistent daily routine can create a sense of structure. Stick to wake-up times, meals, and bedtimes to maintain a predictable schedule.

Minimize Distractions

Reducing distractions can significantly improve your ability to manage time effectively.

Designate a Productivity Space: Set up a dedicated workspace without distractions.

Utilize Productivity Apps: Be cautious in your selection and don't forget to cancel subscriptions if you discontinue use.

Practice Mindfulness or Meditation: Engage in mindfulness or meditation exercises to strengthen your ability to focus and maintain attention.

Sound Cancelling Headphones: Reduce sensory overload and external distractions if you're in the office or at home.



Seek Support and Accountability

Finally, seeking support and accountability can greatly enhance your time management efforts.

Work with a Counsellor: The Australian ADHD Foundation offers very affordable counselling to assist individuals with ADHD in developing strategies for time management, organisation, and overall life skills. They can provide guidance and recommend support tailored to your specific needs.

Join a Support Group: Connect with others who have ADHD to share experiences, challenges, and strategies. Peer support can be invaluable in helping you stay motivated and learn from others' experiences.

Remember

Be patient with yourself, as developing new habits takes time. With consistent effort and practice, you can overcome time management hurdles and achieve your goals.

References

- [ADHD & Time Blindness, Russel Barkley PhD, 2023 \(Youtube\)](#)
- [Time Perception is a Focal Symptom of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults, Weissenberger et. al., 2021](#)
- [Clinical Implications of the Perception of Time in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\): A Review, Ptacek et. al., 2019](#)



A True Story of Body Doubling

"Some people who started working from home during the pandemic found it much harder to stay focused and on task without their co-workers nearby. They missed the routine and structure their workplace provided.

As a result, many turned to body doubling to keep them on track during the workday. Some Uni students with ADHD also used body doubling to help them stay on track with class assignments.

I always had trouble getting motivated – housework, Uni assignments, organizing my kids – even getting started first thing in the morning.

It wasn't until more recently that I realized that I was taking the cue from my husband. When he got up of a morning and got dressed, I knew it must have been time for me to get up and dressed too.

While he was still in the house, I was able to prepare breakfast for everyone, pack the kids' lunches and perhaps get a load of washing on before going to Uni. But when I was home during the day, and if John wasn't at home, I couldn't seem to get anything done – especially housework or homework!! There is always so much going on in my head it's hard to prioritize, concentrate on one thing, and just get it done.

I became aware of 'Body Doubling' by listening to Tracy Otsuka's podcast 'ADHD for Smart Ass Women', and then I researched more, as those with ADHD tend to do!"



What is "body doubling"?

It's doing a task in the presence of another person. Having someone else present seems to make boring tasks more pleasurable, helping overcome this motivation deficit.

Most popular with body doubling is video calling, an amazing strategy that is tailor made for the job of being a body double. You can hang out with someone in the comfort of your own home, and if you have a computer and a working internet connection, it is free!

This kind of body doubling works particularly well, as it allows visual as well as audio contact – and it's hands-free. Your laptop or phone can be set up in the kitchen, the living room, or simply left in the office, with your friend working away on their project in their home, while you vacuum, put a load in the washing machine, or clean a cupboard.

Body Doubling works extremely well if you have a young family member who is ADHD and studying overseas, maybe homesick, but may also be having difficulty with an assignment and needing support. It's re-assuring to glance at a parent on the screen to get a smile or some words of encouragement.

The practice emerged from ADHD self-help groups, so the evidence supporting it, is based on word of mouth rather than rigorous scientific research.

Body doubling doesn't work for everyone with ADHD. Whether body doubling or daily strategies, it seems they are more effective when a person is also receiving appropriate treatment in the form of medication and therapy to boost the development of life skills.

References

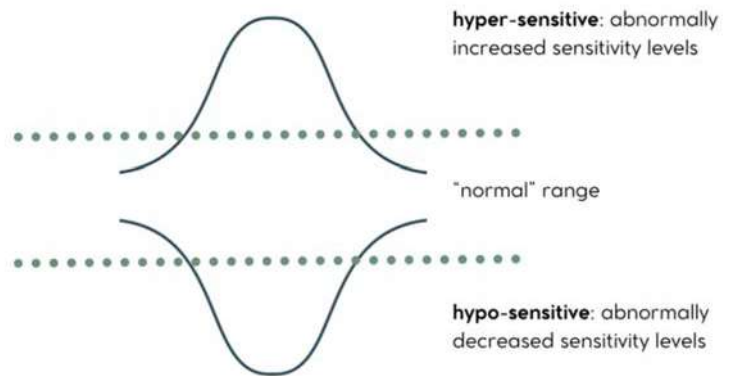
[What is 'body doubling' for ADHD?, Medical News Today, October, 2021](#)



Sensory Overload

Sensory overload occurs when the brain is overwhelmed by excessive sensory information, including sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound. This can lead to feelings of anxiety, being overwhelmed, and even meltdowns.

Although everyone experiences sensory overload occasionally, some individuals, particularly those who are neurodivergent, are more susceptible and experience overstimulation more frequently.



(Image Credit: He's-Extraordinary.)

We all have sensory preferences. These are things we enjoy and avoid. This is called a **sensory bias**. It's the reason why people have different preferences for foods, music, activities, etc.

Sensory bias is normal and only poses a problem when it severely restricts or limits productivity or chronically interferes with enjoyment in life. If you feel more information could support you manage your sensitivity levels, keep reading!

ADDitude Magazine:

How Sensory Processing Sensitivity Affects the ADHD Brain with Bianca Acevedo, Ph.D

Are you easily overwhelmed by bright lights, strong smells, coarse fabrics, or loud sirens? Do you get rattled when you have a lot to do in a short amount of time? You may have Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS) — the formal diagnosis for a highly sensitive person (HSP).

Approximately 20 to 30 percent of the population has SPS, according to recent studies, and the propensity is even higher among people with ADHD.



Watch the webinar

Read the article

Webinar Insights

- Are you easily overwhelmed by bright lights, strong smells, coarse fabrics, or loud sirens? Do you get rattled when you have a lot to do in a short amount of time? You may have Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS) — the formal diagnosis for a highly sensitive person (HSP).
- Approximately 20 to 30 percent of the population has SPS, according to recent studies, and the propensity is even higher among people with ADHD.



Menopause & ADHD

Menopause is typically accompanied by hormonal changes, specifically a decline in estrogen and progesterone levels. These hormones play a role in various bodily functions, including brain function. As hormone levels fluctuate during menopause, it is theorized that they may influence ADHD symptoms in women who have ADHD.

Potential Interactions

It's important to note that not all women with ADHD experience a significant impact on their symptoms during menopause. Variations in individual hormone levels, age at menopause, and other factors can influence the extent of symptom changes.

Memory & Cognition

Most instances of cognitive changes during menopause seem subtle and potentially temporary, yet for some women, these challenges can detrimentally affect work productivity, and for others, they can evoke concerns about dementia.

Over 60% of women report cognitive difficulties during this transition, describing issues such as remembering names, finding the right words, concentrating, and decision-making.

Although the decline is subtle, these symptoms can be bothersome, particularly as they coincide with the professional peak for many women.

Hormonal Fluctuations

The term "brain fog" describes the cognitive haziness experienced by women during menopause.

These cognitive changes are not simply age-related decline but are likely influenced by the fluctuation and eventual decline of ovarian hormone production, particularly estradiol and progesterone.



Estrogen, in particular, has been associated with the regulation of dopamine, a neurotransmitter involved in attention and reward.

The decline in estrogen and progesterone levels during menopause may impact neurotransmitter activity in the brain, potentially affecting ADHD symptoms.

Sleep Disturbances

Menopause-related symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and insomnia can disrupt sleep patterns. Lack of quality sleep can worsen ADHD symptoms, leading to increased daytime impairment.

Mood Changes

Menopause can also bring about mood changes such as irritability, anxiety, and depression. These emotional fluctuations can interact with and exacerbate ADHD symptoms, making them more challenging to manage.

Seeking Support

It is important to seek the advice of a healthcare professional to help manage these symptoms and develop a treatment plan that is tailored to the individual.

With the right support, women with ADHD can successfully navigate the challenges of menopause and continue to thrive.



Emerging Research

New onset executive function difficulties at menopause: a role for lisdexamfetamine. *Psychopharmacology* (Berl). (August, 2015)

Epperson CN, Shanmugan S, Kim DR, Mathews S, Czarkowski KA, Bradley J, Appleby DH, Iannelli C, Sammel MD, Brown TE.

Lisdexamfetamine (Vyvanse), a stimulant commonly prescribed for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children and adults, may enhance executive function in menopausal women experiencing cognitive decline.

The research, published online in *Psychopharmacology*, involved 32 women aged 45 to 60 going through or completing menopause and reporting challenges with executive function.

Results indicated improved symptom scores during medication use, and participants scored better on one of the three memory and concentration tests while on LDx.

While on the medication, participants experienced an increase in blood pressure and heart rate, remaining within the normal range overall. The study did not report major side effects.

[Read the full study here.](#)



Prevalence of hormone-related mood disorder symptoms in women with ADHD

Farangis Dorani, MSc, Denise Bijlenga, PhD, Aartjan T.F. Beekman, MD, PhD, Eus J. W. van Someren, PhD, J.J. Sandra Kooij, MD, PhD,

This is the first study to assess the prevalence of symptoms of premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), episodes of postpartum depression symptoms (PPD) after first childbirth, and climacteric mood symptoms during peri & and postmenopause in ADHD.

More severe climacteric symptoms seem to be present in women with ADHD during and after their menopausal transition. Existing treatments consist of antidepressants, contraceptives or hormonal supplementation therapy (Sepede et al., 2016).

A temporary increase of the stimulant medication dosage during the premenstrual week, or light therapy in the last week of the menstrual cycle may as well be helpful for women with ADHD. However, studies on the efficacy of such treatments are still lacking.

[Read the full study here.](#)

References

- [‘Brain fog’ during menopause is real – it can disrupt women’s work and spark dementia fears, *The Conversation*, 2021](#)
- [Menopause, Hormones & ADHD: What We Know, What Research is Needed, Jeanette Wasserstein, Ph.D., *ADDitude Magazine*, 2023](#)
- [Midlife ADHD in women: any relevance to menopause? Pines A., *Climacteric*, 2016](#)



Advocacy

Senate inquiry confirms need for greater government focus on ADHD

The ADHD Foundation has welcomed the findings of the Senate inquiry into Assessment and support services for people with ADHD.

Foundation spokesperson Christopher Ouizeman:

“For too long, the Australian public health system has not adequately acknowledged ADHD. They generally failed to diagnose it, treat it, and provide medication. Right now, we have cases where waiting lists across Australia for private psychiatrists and specialist paediatricians exceed 12 months. We hope that the comprehensive recommendations made by this inquiry provide as a catalyst for an overhaul in thinking about the debilitating nature of ADHD and the way the condition is now funded.”

Key findings of the Committee report include:

- A need for a National Framework for ADHD
- Better access to diagnosis and support
- Uniform prescribing rules
- Improvements to the Medical and Pharmaceutical Benefits schemes
- Better public information on ADHD
- More support for ADHD community organisations, including dedicated funding for the ADHD Foundation’s helpline.

Mr Ouizeman said that the report findings validated what many in the ADHD community had experienced in seeking diagnosis and support for the condition. “The ADHD Foundation is advocating for swift government action, including ensuring accurate public healthcare ADHD diagnosis and treatment supported by a national education program and dedicated telephone and online helpline service.”

Mr Ouizeman acknowledged that time would be needed to educate medical professionals and that a ramp-up period would be required before the supply and demand imbalance could be redressed, but was encouraged by the report’s findings, believing the correct course of action was now clear.

“All the evidence provided as part of this inquiry concurred that diagnosing and treating ADHD in Australia was too difficult. We have heard countless stories about how this has negatively impacted –and in some cases devastated –the lives of so many Australians.”

“It’s now time for the government to seriously consider the report’s recommendations and move quickly to implement those elements which will have a real impact for people living with ADHD.”

The ADHD Foundation provided a comprehensive submission to the inquiry, with recommendations focused on recognising and managing ADHD in the public healthcare systems as a primary mental health condition, improving and broadening ADHD education and training for healthcare professionals, regulating private provider pricing, and funding the current ADHD Foundation National Helpline as part of the national mental healthcare support framework.

“In operating Australia’s only dedicated ADHD helpline, we have first-hand experience in recognising the dire need for more investment in managing ADHD as a public health priority,” Mr Ouizeman said.

“Funding is critical, but so is greater awareness in the health care and support services sectors as well as among the wider community. The condition and treatment needs to be destigmatised. We’re particularly grateful to Senator Steele-John for his advocacy in ensuring this inquiry makes a meaningful difference for Australians with ADHD.”

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Letter to Minister Butler Regarding the Lisdexamfetamine Shortage

The ADHD Foundation understands from pharmaceutical manufacturer Takeda that current difficulties in accessing lisdexamfetamine dimesilate (Vyvanse) in 2023 are expected to continue into 2024.

We are seeking urgent intervention by the Australian Government to reduce the risk that this essential medication becomes inaccessible to Australians.

The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) regulates the production of lisdexamfetamine and sets annual production limits.

Despite global increases in ADHD diagnosis, including a 154% growth rate in lisdexamfetamine prescriptions in Australia between 2020-22, the DEA has indicated that it will not increase the production limit for lisdexamfetamine in 2024. This is despite a request from the manufacturer to increase the production quota by 25%.

We also understand that following the expiry of the patent for Vyvanse in August 2023, the commercialisation of biosimilar lisdexamfetamine in the US will divert some production capacity away from Vyvanse, with these biosimilars not available in Australia.

Australians with ADHD are currently experiencing shortages of Vyvanse 30mg and 50mg capsules that are not expected to resolve until March 2024, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration advises that a shortage of 60mg is anticipated in December 2023.

Without an increased limit to lisdexamfetamine production, these shortages could continue well into 2024. Many patients rely on Vyvanse as one of only two long-release medications for ADHD approved for use in Australia.

Access to this medication is essential to maintaining physical and mental health, as well as economic productivity and academic success, for the ADHD community.

MRAC Post-Implementation Review of Telehealth Items

The ADHD Foundation would like to express serious concern with Recommendation 9 of the draft report: For initial consultations, make specialist MBS items available only face-to-face, with subsequent consultations available through telephone or video at the clinician's discretion.

Given the current shortage of psychiatrists specialising in ADHD, we encourage the government to prioritise access to initial consultations by any appropriate means, including through telehealth.

People with ADHD are reportedly already paying well over \$4000 to access a diagnosis; adding an extra cost will discourage individuals from seeking diagnosis. Even under current arrangements, many ADHD Foundation members report they will either delay or not seek a diagnosis due to prohibitive costs, resulting in potential negative mental health outcomes, personal, community, and economic impacts.

Advocating for the ADHD Community

We recognise the value of advocating for our community and bringing government attention to the issues that impact them. We firmly believe that regulatory and systematic barriers should not hinder individuals living with ADHD or caring for loved ones with ADHD from accessing necessary services and treatments that can enhance their quality of life.

We remain committed to keeping our community informed of any new developments. If you are seeking support with your ADHD journey, we encourage you to contact our helpline:

Contact



Our Community

Join our National ADHD Members Portal!

In today's world of increased costs isn't it great to hear our membership is free! Everyone should have equal access to resources, support, and opportunities for learning and connecting within the ADHD community.

- Immerse yourself in a diverse community of people who share your passion and goals.
- Find priority opportunities to participate in networking events, workshops, & newsletters.
- And much more!

[Sign Up](#)

Helpline

Our ADHD support service is here to help you. By enquiring via our website, you can be connected with a counsellor for guidance in finding the right next steps, as well as referrals to trusted professionals who specialize in ADHD.

[Contact](#)

Donate

Thanks to the contributions of our generous donors and volunteers, we have been able to achieve many milestones that we are incredibly proud of.

If you are able to contribute to our cause we would greatly appreciate it. Whether it's through a financial donation or by volunteering your time, every little bit helps.

We are incredibly grateful for all of our supporters, and we look forward to continuing to work together towards a brighter future for those living or caring for loved ones with ADHD.

[Support](#)



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