



ADHD and the classroom: Positive attitudes, positive strategies, positive results

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ADHD is one of the most common neurobiological disorders faced by school-aged children and it can have serious and complicated educational, social and emotional implications for the students who present with ADHD-type behaviours (Barkley, 2005). Approximately 5% of school-aged children have ADHD, this translates into an average of at least one child with ADHD-type behaviours in every classroom. Due to the nature of a traditional educational system, teachers are often the first to notice behaviours associated with ADHD and are often the first to refer children for psychosocial assessments (Barkley, 2015; The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 2009). Research consistently points to a strong link between teacher knowledge and attitudes, and their resultant behaviour in the classroom (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cronin-Jones, 2006; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005). It is vital, therefore, that teachers have a strong knowledge about ADHD and management strategies for ADHD-type behaviours, order to provide positive school experiences and increased educational outcomes for these students. Research shows that teachers overwhelmingly want to know more about ADHD and its associated behaviours, and classroom interventions for students with ADHD-type behaviours (Mulholland, Cumming and Jung, 2015).

This presentation will discuss key general information about ADHD and will focus on research based interventions to help teachers manage the challenging behaviours associated with ADHD and thus improve the academic engagement of children who display ADHD-type behaviours in their classroom. These strategies include general classroom management strategies and more targeted approaches which include the use of functional behaviour assessments, occupational therapy equipment, evidenced based practices in behaviour management. The presentation will also discuss the comorbidity of ADHD and specific learning disorders, and will provide specific strategies to assist teachers with the adjustment of academic tasks to improve the academic learning of all children who display ADHD-type behaviours.

This presentation is based on results of a study into teacher knowledge and attitudes of students who display ADHD-type behaviour (Mulholland, 2017) that found although teachers have higher level of ADHD-specific knowledge than previous research they overwhelmingly wanted more information about ADHD and its management. The interventions outlined in this presentation are from a variety of studies including but not limited Purdie, Hattie, and Carroll (2002), Harlacher, Roberts, and Merrell (2006) and Schilling, Washington, Billingsley, and Deitz (2003). These management strategies will assist teachers in providing a classroom environment that creates positive school experiences and increased educational outcomes for students with ADHD-type behaviours.