

## ADHD Symptoms, Impairments and Accommodations in the Work Environment

This list of accommodations is to be used as a reference for **adults with ADHD** and **employers**. It lists a number of potential accommodations and strategies that address specific ADHD experiences. Adults with ADHD will differ in the type, quantity and severity of impairments. A process of trial and error may be required to discover the best accommodations and strategies since both ADHD symptoms and optimum accommodations and strategies are very individualized. However, in many cases a few simple strategies and accommodations may significantly increase both job performance and satisfaction.

DSM-5 Symptom [ASRS-6 Q#]	DSM-5 Symptom	Possible Resulting Impairments in the Work Environment	Possible Accommodations
<b>INATTENTION</b>			
1a ASRS-6 Q1 Trouble wrapping up details	Fails to give close attention to details OR makes careless mistakes creating inaccurate work	<input type="checkbox"/> Inattention to detail <input type="checkbox"/> Poor quality of work – inaccurate, careless mistakes <input type="checkbox"/> Poor time management so doesn't leave time to complete details or check for mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/> Review by co-worker, team lead or supervisor prior to completion to allow for improvement, added details & provide corrections <input type="checkbox"/> More frequent check-ins with supervisor, manager, team, lead or co-worker to review project, check details, assist with time management & due dates <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for more clarification
1b No ASRS-6 item	Difficulty sustaining attention	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties remaining focused during meetings or reading and writing lengthy amounts of material <input type="checkbox"/> Day-dreaming or mind-wandering <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty staying focused on boring or mundane activities <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty switching focus or prioritizing focus on the important rather than the interesting <input type="checkbox"/> Hyper focusing on the interesting and being unable to disengage resulting in missed work or meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Cuing to bring person back to discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Allow audiotaping of meetings and /or note taking for lengthy instructions <input type="checkbox"/> 5 – 10 minute warning when switch in focus is required <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you have their attention prior to giving instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Switch out mundane and interesting tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for the use of intrusive reminders and warnings prior to meetings or when tasks need to be completed – use electronic reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Use of timer for concentrated times of focus

<p>1c No ASRS-6 item</p>	<p>Difficulties listening when spoken to directly, mind wanders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poor listening skills</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mind often wanders when manager or coworkers are speaking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Often misses social cues or key words during one-on-one or small group interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow note taking or recording during meetings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up meetings with written summary of instructions, due dates etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide written overview of steps to a project or post steps to a task</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow for difficulty with social cues</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow employee to opt out of social situations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> With permission from employee explain impairments of social skills to co-workers</li> </ul>
<p>1d No-ASRS-6 item</p>	<p>Difficulties following through on instructions AND fails to finish tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has difficulty with follow through, especially on lengthy instructions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Starts tasks but loses focus and becomes easily side-tracked</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fails to finish duties especially when not immediate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow for frequent follow-up with supervisor, manager or team lead for clarification of steps to task or list of duties</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use “to do” check lists as reminders of tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Print out, post and refer back to steps of tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employee to report back to assigned person when tasks are completed - this increases accountability</li> </ul>
<p>1e ASRS-6 Q2. Trouble getting things in order</p>	<p>Difficulty organizing tasks &amp; activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unable to chunk projects or larger tasks into manageable pieces – easily overwhelmed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty staying on track of larger projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Misplacing work-related documents and materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty maintaining an organized work space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty organizing thoughts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty sequencing or organizing steps in complex projects, creating an outline, or creating a schedule to finish projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Having to go over and over instructions and still unable to organize what has to be done and in what order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision of organizational/planning software plus instruction &amp; support in its use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Colour-coded systems for files and projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List of daily, weekly and monthly routine tasks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of “to do” lists that can be checked off</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote teamwork amongst coworkers, including planning meetings for projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supervision with prioritization of tasks – scheduled bi-weekly meetings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Limited number of projects worked on at one time – when possible assign new project only when previous project is complete</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gantt or flow-charts on times lines for larger projects – especially useful for team projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional orientation or training may be helpful for employees juggling multiple or repetitive tasks</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork is often impairing – minimize, streamline, automate, colour code, dictate or delegate paperwork whenever possible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remove the stigma and shame associated with accommodation requests by promoting a collaborative and supportive workplace and management style</li> </ul>
1f ASRS-6 Q4. Delay getting started	Avoids, dislikes OR reluctant to engage in tasks requiring mental effort - preparing reports, completing forms, reviewing lengthy papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Puts off starting projects – procrastinates</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gets anxious about procrastinating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Putting off unpleasant tasks until the last minute</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Late or rushed completion of assignments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Delayed long term projects or excessive overtime to meet deadlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assign tasks suited to immediate response</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work with supervisor or co-worker to develop timeline and due date – add extra cushion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Closer supervision – biweekly scheduled meeting with supervisor to check on progress</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Balance workload and type of work – for example, set up a schedule where you take a break after 30 minutes of menial work to get up and stretch for 5 minutes, or balance a menial task with creative work throughout the day</li> </ul>
1g no ASRS-6 item	Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loses electronic organizers, laptop, books, papers, keys, phone, wallet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Loses things that are vital to completing assignments, duties, life activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work on developing habits or strategies for keeping needed items in one place &amp; how to retrace steps to remember where item was last used</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> System of checking belonging before leaving a location</li> </ul>
1h no ASRS_6 item	Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli or wandering thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distracted by noise, visual distractors, movement of others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Daydreams or gets distracted by own thoughts when supposed to be listening</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unable to remain focused during meetings, group or social activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow to work in a quiet environment especially for highly focused work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision to allow use of (noise-cancelling) headphones when working in distracting environments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Priority seating away from sources of distraction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flex-time to facilitate some less-distracting time at work – for example, beginning work an hour early</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Working at home part-time – reports and detail work may be easier to compete while uninterrupted at home</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Closing office doors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of sound absorption panels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moving office or cubicle to lower-traffic areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Asking employees to wear headsets when on the phone to minimize noise</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of space enclosures (cubicle walls) or face desk away from the line of traffic.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make your offices available for employees who want to bring in their own professional organizer for de-cluttering or reconfiguring their work environment to minimize visual distractions and development organizational systems</li> </ul>
<p>1i ASRS-6 Q3 Difficulty remembering appointments</p>	<p>Often forgetful in daily activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Often misses meetings, tasks appointments &amp; due dates</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Over-reliance on electronic reminders or on others to remind</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gets mixed up with days</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Forgets to record appointment in electronic scheduler/iphone etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Forgets commitments resulting in difficulty sustaining work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provision of electronic organizers &amp; visual reminders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take immediate action on tasks or immediately log into calendar or note pad</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check agenda at routine times a day</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All messages written in a binder and checked at scheduled times of the day</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use or timers, alerts or beepers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up of meetings or verbal instructions with an e-mail or hard copy to confirm</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Allow employees to use charts or cheat sheets for tasks and instructions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Suggest the use of agenda or phone calendar rather than the overuse of post-its</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote an environment of teamwork where employees feel that they can ask one another questions when unsure of something</li> </ul>

DSM-5 Symptom [ASRS-6 Q#]	DSM-5 Symptom	Possible Resulting Impairments in PSE	Possible Accommodations
<b>HYPERACTIVITY/ IMPULSIVITY</b>			
2a ASRS-6 Q5 Fidgets or squirms	Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet OR squirms in seat	<input type="checkbox"/> Constant movement, pacing, taping <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to remain seated at desk for extended periods <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets to the point of distracting others <input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets with objects, leg-jiggling, shifting positions frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Bites nails, cracks knuckles	<input type="checkbox"/> Tasks that encourage movement breaks – walking to meetings, picking up mail, getting coffee, walking to a co-workers desk rather than picking up the phone, using the stairs rather than the elevator <input type="checkbox"/> Built in structured breaks that allow for movement <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise during lunch – combine break and lunch times for longer movement breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Taking notes during meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Use of fidget toys or stress balls for intentional fidgeting <input type="checkbox"/> Private workspace where employee will not disturb others by tapping, humming, or fidgeting <input type="checkbox"/> Working from home.
2b No ASRS-6 item	Often leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to sit in meetings, at desk or in confined seating position for extended periods	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow employee to stand at side or back of room or sit near exit for breaks if required <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of standing desk or allow to stand as needed
2e ASRS-6 Q6 Compelled to move or do things, overactive	Often ‘on the go’, acting as if ‘driven like a motor’	<input type="checkbox"/> When working at desk or computer feels compelled to get up and move about <input type="checkbox"/> Get bursts of energy and just have to move around <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to function, remain still in quiet environment, such as confined work spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Get anxious if cannot move around – compelled to move <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot shut off creative side, streams of ideas, so constantly writing notes or	<input type="checkbox"/> Provision of frequent breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Allow preferred seating so pacing or leaving area will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Allow controlled movement such as use of stress balls <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of standing/elevated desk or table <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for independent work so movement will not distract others <input type="checkbox"/> Work with HR or supervisor to brainstorm work environment options to allow for movement

		muttering, recording voice notes because cannot write as fast as thinks	
2g, 2h, 2i No ASRS-6 item	Often blurts out, unable to await turn, interrupts or intrudes	<input type="checkbox"/> May be disruptive in quiet group work environment & annoy others <input type="checkbox"/> May become ostracized by coworkers	<input type="checkbox"/> Coworkers may be instructed that noise and interruptions are unintentional and should be ignored <input type="checkbox"/> Allow to work in separate area <input type="checkbox"/> Allow to work independently – excuse from group work

**Please Note:** Employers and employees should read this document, [“Duty to accommodate may be triggered even when employee does not request accommodation”](#) By Rudner Law, Employment / HR Law & Mediation.

It outlines an employer’s duty to “make inquiries if they are made aware of an employee’s disability or if they ought to know of an employee’s disability (e.g. if there are any red flags)” and that “an employer cannot bury their head in the sand and choose not to inquire, in order to avoid a duty to accommodate.”

In also states that, “Employees must participate in the accommodation process by providing sufficient information so their employer can make an informed decision about appropriate accommodations and how they can be meaningfully implemented.”

