



## The Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada

The only Canadian charity focusing solely on ADHD,  
providing leadership in education, awareness and  
advocacy to improve the  
lives of families and individuals with  
ADHD across Canada



# CADDAC Interactive ADHD Adolescent Parenting Course

## Preparing for Post-Secondary

# PLEASE BE AWARE THAT

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# Preparing for Post-Secondary

**Choosing the Right School**

**Issues in Post-Secondary Schools**

**Accessing Accommodations in Post-Secondary**

**Documentation Required**

**Impairments to Expect**

**Accommodations**

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

# Choosing the Right School

- Choosing the right school and program is imperative for students with ADHD
- Questions to ask and things to consider when choosing a school and program
  - How do they recognize and accommodate for ADHD?
  - Can they take fewer courses at one time?
  - A smaller school may be less overwhelming
  - Commuting from home may allow for more supervision
  - Can you visit the Access Center prior to applying?
- Accommodations should always be put in place before starting school even if they may not need to access them later
- The medical professional will be required to prepare documentation – access CADDAC web site resources



# ISSUES IN POST-SECONDARY SCHOOLS



# Issues in Post-Secondary

- Many post-secondary institutions still do not understand ADHD and professors may still not understand ADHD as a legitimate disability.
- ADHD is often not understood as a mental health disorder.
- ADHD is often wrongly categorized as a learning disability – it is not assessed nor documented in the same way.
- It is still not understood as impairing learning as significantly as it actually does.
- The student's issues are generally not one of understanding the material but rather one of missing classes and not handing in assignments.
- Disability services and accommodations are essential for these students or they will fail.
- Learning accommodations for students with disabilities do not give these students an unfair advantage, but rather level the playing field, allowing them equal access to post-secondary education.





# ACCESSING ACCOMMODATIONS IN P-S



# ADHD Recognized as a Disability

## To be recognized as a disability in the SE environment

- The Canadian government stipulates that it must be recognized as a permanent disability that impacts functioning in the post-secondary setting<sup>1</sup>
- Functional impairment must impact academic performance

ADHD Impairments would clearly qualify<sup>2</sup>

1. Canada Student Loans Program (2015)
2. CADDAC 2015



## Prior to 2015

- Many PS institutions were requiring similar (performance testing) and documentation for ADHD as for Learning Disabilities
- Schools were requiring data driven evidence of below average functioning for a student to qualify for accommodations and support
- Schools were using the results to bar many students with ADHD from receiving accommodations
- Requesting invalid data driven evidence of functional impairment for students with ADHD was resulting in discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

1. Gyenes, J., & Siegel, L. S. (2014)



# CADDAC Policy Paper

## CADDAC 2015 Policy Paper

### [Understanding ADHD as a Disability in the Post-Secondary Environment](#)

#### Why we developed the paper

- There are no national or provincial standards for assessment and documentation that would qualify a student with ADHD for accommodations
- Many schools were demanding expensive psychoeducational testing to be done less than two years prior to entering PS education to qualify students for accommodations
- This led to inconsistency & discrimination

[http://www.caddac.ca/2015/Final\\_Post-secondary\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.caddac.ca/2015/Final_Post-secondary_Paper.pdf)

# CADDAC Policy Paper States

- PS schools are using performance based testing to determine the severity of ADHD and to quantify the impact of ADHD on cognitive or academic functioning.<sup>1</sup>
- If testing has been done, testing results should not be required to demonstrate below “average” functioning in anything other than attention regulation for a disability to be recognized and for the student to qualify for services and accommodations.<sup>1</sup>
- Doing so would be discriminatory<sup>1</sup> and thereby open PS institution up to legal challenge.<sup>2</sup>

1. CADDAC 2015
2. Gyenes et al (2014)



# DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED



# Documentation Required

- Detailed medical reporting is required.
- Impairments documented by a qualified medical expert linking them to appropriate accommodations should qualify a student to access accommodations.
- Reporting should provide the post-secondary institution with the necessary information required to understand the student's unique impairments and need for specific accommodations.

## This Report Should

- Outline the assessment procedure resulting in the diagnosis.
- Identify the permanent disability and list specific impairments.
- Indicate how these impairments would negatively impact functioning of the student in the post-secondary academic setting.
- Link requested accommodations to existing impairments of the student.



# CADDAC PS Reporting Tool

- CADDAC developed a tool for physicians and psychologists to use to assist them in developing a detailed report.
- By following the instructions a report meeting government requirements and providing necessary information for post-secondary institutions would be developed.
- Medical professional should meet with the student and parents and use the chart to facilitate a discussion on specific impairments experienced in high school along with accommodations that proved successful.
- The chart check boxes can be used along with notes to develop an individualized report.
- The chart can be shared with the student and parents prior to the appointment.
- A note at the end of the chart indicates that the report should also state that the accommodations listed are what has worked in the past but there may be some changes required.



## ADHD SYMPTOMS, IMPAIRMENTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE POST-SECONDARY ENVIRONMENT

DSM-5 Symptom [ASRS-6 Q#]	DSM-5 Symptom	Possible Resulting Impairments in PSE	Possible Accommodations
<b>INATTENTION</b>			
1a ASRS-6 Q1 Trouble wrapping up details	Fails to give close attention to details OR makes careless mistakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties with details in an essay, such as bibliography, checking sources &amp; citations; forget to double check grammar, spelling, &amp; references</li> <li>• Poor quality of work – inaccurate, careless mistakes</li> <li>• Poor time management so doesn't leave time to complete details or check for mistakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Allow to write exams on computer with spellcheck software</li> <li>→ Work with Accessibility staff, coach, or supervisor to review assignment, check details, assist with time management &amp; due dates</li> <li>→ Flexibility in due dates – with opportunity to complete details &amp; correct mistakes</li> <li>→ Allow clarification of questions on an exam or test and clarification of an assignment</li> </ul>
1b No ASRS-6 item	Difficulty sustaining attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties remaining focused during lectures, conversations, or reading lengthy material</li> <li>• Day-dreaming or mind-wandering during lectures or reading text books etc</li> <li>• Difficulty focusing on &amp; completing large amounts of written work (essays, reports etc)</li> <li>• Gaps in learning due to inability to stay focused during lectures, Lab demonstrations etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Allow student to audiotape lectures, use audiotaped textbooks, receive notes &amp; copies of PowerPoint presentations</li> <li>→ Allow use of a note-taker</li> <li>→ Use of computer for tests or exams</li> <li>→ Allow testing/exams to be completed over several shorter sessions rather than one long session</li> <li>→ No more than one exam per day</li> <li>→ Substitute a non-compulsory subject</li> <li>→ Reduced course load</li> </ul>
1c No ASRS-6 item	Difficulties listening when spoken to directly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind often wanders when discussing something with peers;</li> <li>• Often misses social cues or key words during one-on-one or small group interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Provision of notes from class discussions &amp; presentations</li> <li>→ Work with Accessibility staff to learn strategies for keeping mind on conversations, watching for social cues</li> <li>→ Allow clarification of an assignment</li> </ul>



# IMPAIRMENTS TO EXPECT

# Post-Secondary Impairments to Expect

- Procrastination
- Difficulty remaining focused, easily distracted – lectures!
- Miss instructions, assignments, due dates
- Note taking while attending to the lecture will be an issue
- Following lists of instructions – or will misinterpret them
- Difficulty with sequencing, steps to a task, formulas
- Unable to chunk large assignments – become easily overwhelmed
- Starting or initiating assignments or tasks
- Becoming motivated and maintaining motivation
- Unable to time manage, over or under estimate and unable to prioritize
- Time might be spent on unimportant but stimulating activities
- Unable to sit still for long periods, may need to fidget, pace



# ACCOMMODATIONS



# Post-Secondary Accommodations

- Work with Access Centre staff or coach to review assignment, understanding, chunking work, time management and meet due dates
- Assignments given in written format
- Access to professor's notes or another student's notes
- Ability to tape lectures
- Access to reminder sheet for steps and formulas
- Ability to use headphones when working in class
- Use of electronic organizers
- Additional copies of course material
- Allow for more frequent breaks, controlled movement, fidget toy



# Accommodations Continued

- Preferred seating, allowed to leave to move and come back
- Use of computer for tests
- Write tests and exams in quiet room
- Extended time for tests and exams, usually time and a half
- Testing over several sessions
- Tests and assignments spaced out – due date flexibility if overwhelmed
- Allow for independent rather than group work
- Priority registration for classes with a professional in the access center
- Substitution for non-compulsory subjects

Access [Post-Secondary Impairment / Accommodation Chart](#)



# CADDAC Resource

CADDAC Post-Secondary Toolkit

[Transitioning to Post-Secondary Education for Students with ADHD](#)

Contains 4 Parts

- Timeline for Preparing
- Changes to Anticipate
- Tips and Strategies
- Online Learning



# **SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO ASK THE SCHOOL ABOUT YOUR TEEN'S FUNCTIONING**

# Specific Questions to Ask the School About Your Teen's Functioning

## Academically

- Is my adolescent performing at grade level? If not, in which subjects and how are they struggling?
- Are they understanding the material but not completing and handing in assignments?
- What is required for them to become more successful?
- What are the impediments that are preventing the school from implementing supports and strategies and anything else that could be helpful?
- What can we do as parents to increase assistance at school or to supplement at home?
- Does the school have an accurate and detailed profile of my teen's needs and strengths? If not, how can we help improve that?





# Specific Questions to Ask the School About Your Teen's Functioning

## Executive Functioning

- Are they able to start and complete their work in class? If not, why not? (If the school reports that they think it is due to lack of motivation etc. do not accept this and do further investigation with your child.)
- Are they having difficulty beginning tasks, understanding instructions, completing work and staying on task? What has been put in place to assist them with this?
- Are they able to organize their thoughts, assignments, belongings?
- What, if any, other issues do you see occurring with their EF skills?
- What has the school put in place to help overcome these disabilities? (If you feel that it is inadequate ask what needs to be done to increase your teen's support.)





# Specific Questions to Ask the School About Your Teen's Functioning

## Emotional Dysregulation

- Is my teen's emotional regulation an issue? If so, how and have supports been put in place to assist them with this disability? Is a Behaviour Plan in place?
- Has the board's behaviour team been asked for advice. Might our medical professional be of assistance?
- How is my teen functioning socially? Are they accepted by their peers? How is the school assisting? How can we help?
- Are there particular situations, time of day, environment, other peers, or sensitivities that seem to trigger issues? If this is unknown or they see the incidents as random ask if a tracking method can be implemented to discover triggers?
- Has any bullying been witnessed and what is the school doing to deal with this? Share any knowledge that you have of this?



# SETTING UP A SCHOOL COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY PLAN

# Developing Organization and Risk Reduction and Skill Training Strategies

## Specific Questions to Ask the school About Your teen Functioning

- <https://caddac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Specific-Questions-to-Ask-the-School-About-Your-Teen.pdf>

## Setting Up a School Communications and Advocacy Plan

- <https://caddac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Setting-up-a-communication-and-advocacy-plan-adolescent.pdf>



# Discussion

## Discussion Questions

- Has anyone had a good experience when asking for supports for you adolescent at school?
- What sort of road blocks have you come up against when advocating for your teen to receive school resources?
- Have you found any useful strategies that you can share with us?
- Have you found your teen's educators to be well versed on ADHD, EF and behaviour dysregulation?
- What frustrates you when dealing with the school system?



# Sessions Five

- As you work through the profiles, home and school plans and implementing CPS jot down your questions
- Have them ready for the next session
- We will be discussing any additional questions you have on any of the presentations
- We will be discussing any difficulties and or successes that you have had with your teen's profile
- We will also be discussing any possible interest in becoming involved in parenting support groups

