

Choosing the Right Career for You

Being aware of how your ADHD impacts you at work is the first step in deciding if your job is the right one for you. This should also be the first step when assessing which career field would be your best choice. There are no specific careers that are absolutely good or bad for people with ADHD, since those with ADHD are unique and vary greatly in their strengths, weaknesses, and interests. There are careers/jobs that are considered ADHD unfriendly, however even these depend on your personality and ADHD profile. One person with ADHD may find a desk job intolerable; another person who often hyper-focuses may find the same role intriguing and well suited to their work habits.

There are several things that you should assess and consider when deciding on which career may best suit you.

1. What are your interests? – It is well known that those with ADHD need to be engaged and interested in their field of work for attention to be more easily sustained.
2. Are you easily distracted and prefer a quiet environment – Or does a quiet or unstimulating environment cause your mind to wander more?
3. Are you hyperactive and do you need to be on the move?
4. What are your strengths? – Do you work best when interacting with others, when working with your hands, when analyzing data?
5. What are the skills that have allowed you to succeed in the past? – Input from others may be helpful when answering this question.
6. What skills and accomplishments at your current job set you apart from others?
7. Is there a pattern to your energy level throughout the day? – You may need to keep a log, rating energy levels throughout the day for several weeks to figure this out. Some may be able to sustain their energy through the entire day.
8. What parts of your current or past job do you enjoy doing and what parts do you dread?
9. What sectors and roles have your professional and educational background prepared you for?

A career counsellor that understands ADHD, or an ADHD coach, may be extremely helpful when working through these questions.

Before assuming that your job is totally unsuited to you put some thoughtful strategies in place. If these are insufficient, request appropriate accommodations that will make you a more productive employee. Placing the discussion in the context of a win for both sides by a potential increase in productivity is an excellent way to begin the conversation. You may find that you are able to request a few changes to your work environment without disclosing your ADHD.

Web Sites Referenced for the development of this document:

<http://www.help4adhd.org/living/workplace/wwk16>

<http://www.addvance.com/help/adults/workplace.html>

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/adhd-in-the-workplace-solutions-and-success/0001511>

<http://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/guide/adhd-in-the-workplace>