

Understanding Neurodevelopmental Disorders: ASD & ADHD

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong, complex developmental condition that is present in early childhood. It affects social skills, communication, relationships, and emotional regulation. While the exact cause of ASD is unknown, research suggests it could be due to differences in brain structure and function. ASD can present differently in each individual, which means that treatments and support must be personalised. At Hardwick Psychological Services, we provide psychological strategies for individuals ASD,

How We Support Individuals with ASD:

- **Behavioural Approaches:** Focus on managing behaviours by understanding triggers and outcomes. These approaches have the most evidence supporting their effectiveness for managing autism symptoms.
- **Psychological Approaches:** Such as Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), help autistic individuals cope with co-occurring mental health issues like anxiety and depression. In CBT, individuals learn to understand the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, working alongside their therapist to achieve personal goals.
- **Social-Relational Approaches:** Many autistic individuals have challenges in social settings. Interventions can include direct teaching of social skills, practice in real-life settings, and support for communication and sensory integration.
- **Functional goal attainment:** Psychological strategies can be helpful for Autistic individuals to meet their functional goals through improving resilience, communication and problem solving skills.

While there are no medications specifically for the core symptoms of ASD, pharmacological treatments can help manage co-occurring conditions like anxiety, depression, or sleep disturbances.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is a neurological condition that affects approximately 1 in 20 Australians. It manifests as differences in brain structure and function, particularly impacting the brain's executive functions – the control centre for tasks like memory, organisation, time management, and emotional regulation. ADHD presents challenges in both children and adults, but symptoms can differ between age groups.

Children with ADHD may display hyperactivity, impulsivity, and attention issues, affecting their academic performance and social development. In adults, ADHD may present as difficulties with time management, organisation, and sustaining focus, impacting work and personal relationships.

Managing ADHD:

- **Medications:** Stimulants and other medications are often used under medical supervision
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):** This widely supported therapeutic approach targets the cognitive symptoms and behavioural outcomes of ADHD. CBT can help individuals develop coping strategies, enhance organisation, and improve focus.



- **Cognitive skill development:** Techniques aimed at addressing executive dysfunction can help individuals regain control over daily tasks and responsibilities.
 - **Additional Strategies:** Lifestyle adjustments such as regular exercise, mindfulness, and structured routines are also effective in managing ADHD symptoms.
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Support at Hardwick Psychological Services

At Hardwick Psychological Services, we are dedicated to helping individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders like ASD and ADHD. Our team of clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists work with clients of all ages, offering tailored assessments and evidence-based interventions that address individual needs. Through a combination of therapy, behavioural strategies, and psychological support, we aim to improve the quality of life for those living with these conditions.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact us:

- hello@hardwickpsychology.com.au
- (07) 3515 0172

