



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

A way of thinking often described as fast-paced and idea-rich. ADHD is associated with differences in attention, focus, activity levels, and impulse control, which can interfere with day-to-day functioning.

These traits can vary widely from person to person and may affect how someone manages time, organises tasks, or stays focused.

Strengths:

- They may enter a state of **hyperfocus** when deeply interested in a task.
- They're often **calm** in **high-pressure** situations, reacting quickly and creatively.
- They may naturally **spot patterns** or connections others miss.

Challenges:

- They might struggle with **executive functioning** tasks like planning or time management.
- Sustaining **concentration** on less stimulating tasks can be difficult.
- **Restlessness** or a need for movement may impact focus in certain environments.



Autism Spectrum Disorder

A lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that affects how someone experiences the world, processes information, and interacts with others.

Autism exists on a spectrum, meaning it looks different for everyone – there's no one way to be autistic.

Strengths:

- They may have strong **logical reasoning** skills and enjoy working through complex problems.
- **Analytical thinking** can allow them to break down information in clear, methodical ways.
- Many have a keen **attention to detail**, often noticing things others might overlook.

Challenges:

- Social **communication** and unspoken cues can be difficult to interpret or navigate.
- Some may have a tendency toward **literal thinking**, which can lead to misunderstandings in ambiguous situations.
- **Coping with change** or unexpected disruptions to routine can be especially stressful.



Dyscalculia



(dis-kal-KYOO-lee-uh)

A specific and ongoing difficulty with understanding numbers, patterns, and mathematical concepts. Dyscalculia can affect things like time, money, measurements, or sequencing – and it can show up in people of all ages and across all ability levels.

It's important to note that dyscalculia isn't the same as just being “bad at maths.” It's a recognised neurodevelopmental difference that affects how the brain processes numbers and quantities, not a lack of effort or intelligence.

Strengths:

- They may be strong **problem-solvers**, often finding creative or unconventional solutions.
- **Visual-spatial** reasoning can be a real asset, especially in areas like design, storytelling, or navigation.
- Many show **strategic thinking** skills, approaching tasks with big-picture awareness.

Challenges:

- **Maths and numeracy** tasks, including calculations, budgeting, or estimating quantities, may be difficult.
- They might struggle with **remembering number-based information**, like phone numbers, dates, or PINs.
- **Time management** and sequencing can be tricky, particularly when schedules involve lots of moving parts.

Find out more: bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyscalculia



Dyslexia

(dis-lek-see-uh)

A specific learning difference that primarily affects reading, writing, and how language is processed. Dyslexia can make it harder to decode written words or organise written information, but it does not reflect someone's intelligence or potential.

Strengths:

- They may be **out-of-the-box thinkers**, approaching problems in imaginative and original ways.
- Many show a natural flair for **entrepreneurialism**, often thriving in fast-paced, ideas-led environments.
- **Innovation** comes naturally, with big-picture thinking and strong verbal or visual communication skills.

Challenges:

- **Executive functioning** tasks like organisation, planning, or working memory can be more demanding.
- **Reading and writing** might take more time or effort, particularly under pressure.
- **Anxiety**, especially related to literacy tasks or past negative experiences, can be a barrier to confidence.



Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)

A way of thinking often described as fast-paced and idea-rich. ADHD is associated with differences in attention, focus, activity levels, and impulse control, which can interfere with day-to-day functioning.

These traits can vary widely from person to person and may affect how someone manages time, organises tasks, or stays focused.

Strengths:

- **Resilience and determination** – adapting to daily challenges builds tenacity.
- **Organisational skills** can become a personal strength, often developed through finding creative ways to manage day-to-day challenges.
- **Visual-spatial reasoning** and **creative thinking** is often a standout – many people with dyspraxia approach problems in original and imaginative ways.

Challenges:

- **Motor coordination tasks**, like handwriting, using tools, or sports, can be physically demanding or tiring.
- **Clumsiness** or difficulties with balance and spatial awareness are common, particularly in unfamiliar or busy environments.
- **Processing speed** and **working memory** may affect how quickly instructions are followed or how information is held in mind while completing a task.



OCD



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

A common, long-term mental health condition involving intrusive, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviours or rituals (compulsions) that someone feels driven to carry out. OCD can affect focus, emotional energy, and day-to-day functioning.

OCD is often misunderstood as simply “liking things neat and tidy”, but it’s much more complex than that. It’s a mental health condition, not a personality quirk. Using terms like “I’m so OCD” casually can minimise real experiences and make it harder for people to seek understanding or support.

Strengths:

- **Attention to detail** can be a key strength, especially in tasks that require precision, care, or consistency.
- Many develop **strong organisational skills**, often creating clear systems and routines that help them feel in control.
- **Creative thinking**, particularly when it comes to solving problems or noticing what others might miss, is often reported as a strength..

Challenges:

- **Compulsions**, repetitive behaviours or mental rituals used to reduce anxiety, may interrupt daily routines.
- **Obsessions**, like intrusive and distressing thoughts, can take up mental energy and make focus difficult at times.
- **Related anxieties** can be overwhelming, particularly in unpredictable or high-pressure environments.

Find out more: ocdaction.org.uk



Tourette's Syndrome (TS)



A neurological condition characterised by tics, like involuntary sounds, movements, or words that can be sudden and difficult to control. Tics vary widely from person to person and can change over time. Tourette's doesn't affect intelligence, and many people with the condition lead full, creative lives.

Tourette's is often wrongly associated only with swearing or inappropriate language (known as coprolalia), but this affects only around 10% of people with the condition. Reducing Tourette's to this stereotype overlooks the diversity of experience and can contribute to harmful stigma.

Strengths:

- Many show enhanced **cognitive control**, particularly in learning to manage or redirect their focus under pressure.
- **Fast information processing** is often reported, with quick thinking and responsiveness in dynamic environments.
- **Creativity** can be a real strength, especially in storytelling, improvisation, or visual and performance-based work.

Challenges:

- **Social situations** can be tricky, particularly when tics are misunderstood or draw unwanted attention.
- **Organisation** and planning may be difficult at times, especially when routines are disrupted or energy is low.
- **Self-esteem** can be affected by public perception or past experiences of being misunderstood or excluded.

Find out more: [nhs.uk/conditions](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions)



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