



Supporting Trainee Teachers with ADHD

Understanding ADHD in Adults

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. In adults, it often presents as:

- Difficulty with time management and organisation
- Challenges maintaining focus during long tasks
- Emotional regulation difficulties
- Impulsivity in decision-making or communication
- Sensory sensitivities or overwhelm in busy environments

Trainee teachers with ADHD may experience these traits more intensely due to the demands of training, classroom management, and academic expectations.

Key Principles for Support

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| Strengths-Based Approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise and celebrate creativity, enthusiasm, and adaptability.• Encourage trainees to use their unique perspectives to connect with pupils.• Encourage trainees to use their unique perspective to develop their inclusive practice. |
| Individualised Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create/review the GITEP Personal Support Plan at the start of each school placement.• Tailor support to the trainee's ADHD profile (inattentive, hyperactive/impulsive, or combined).• Use regular check-ins to adjust strategies and provide reassurance. |
| Clear Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide written and verbal instructions• Break tasks into manageable steps with visual aids or checklists. |
| Environmental Adjustments | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer quiet workspaces or flexible seating.• Minimise distractions during planning or reflection time. |

Practical Strategies for Support

Planning & Organisation	- Encourage the use of digital planners or apps (e.g., Microsoft Outlook, Trello, Notion). - Model time-blocking and prioritisation techniques. - Encourage use of timers (Pomodoro method) for focused work.
Emotional & Behavioural Support	- Validate feelings of overwhelm or frustration. - Promote self-advocacy and help trainees communicate their needs. - Encourage mindfulness or movement breaks.
Professional Development	- Scaffold lesson planning with templates and examples. - Provide feedback in small, focused chunks – verbal and written. - Encourage note-making in meetings and check understanding of targets. - Allow extra time for written reflections or assignments.

Classroom Management Tips for Trainees

Structure & Routine	- Establish Clear Routines: Use visual schedules and consistent daily structures to reduce decision fatigue. - Prepare in Advance: Set up materials and lesson plans the day before to avoid last-minute stress. - Use Visual Timers: Help manage transitions and keep lessons on track.
Simplify Instructions	- Chunk Information: Break down instructions into small, clear steps. - Use Visual Aids: Diagrams, icons, and colour coding can support memory and focus. - Repeat & Rephrase: Reinforce key points verbally and in writing.
Cognitive Supports	- Cue Cards or Prompts: Keep classroom management strategies on hand. - Checklists for Routines: For tasks like taking attendance, setting up activities, or managing behaviour. - Anchor Points: Use physical cues to trigger focus or transitions.
Behaviour Management	- Positive Reinforcement: Focus on praising desired behaviours to build rapport and confidence. - Pre-emptive Strategies: Use proactive techniques like greeting pupils at the door or previewing expectations. - De-escalation Scripts: Prepare phrases to use during moments of stress or conflict.
Emotional Regulation	- Mindfulness Techniques: Breathing exercises or short grounding routines before lessons. - Movement Breaks: Incorporate short, structured breaks to reset focus. - Safe Space: Identify a quiet area in the classroom or staff room for brief resets if needed.
Relationships	- Build Rapport Early: Use student interests to connect and foster mutual respect. - Delegate Roles: Empower pupils with responsibilities to reduce your cognitive load. - Reinforce Norms: Use school behaviour policy consistently.

Supporting Trainee Teachers with ADHD During Training Sessions and Lectures

Training sessions and lectures can be cognitively demanding for trainee teachers with ADHD. These environments often require sustained attention, note-taking, and processing large amounts of information. The strategies listed below can help improve engagement and accessibility.

Seating & Environment

- Allow trainees to choose seating that supports focus.
- Minimise distractions by offering quiet zones or noise-cancelling headphones.

Content Delivery

- Break lectures into short segments with interactive elements.
- Use visual aids, diagrams, and colour coding to reinforce key points.
- Provide a copy of slides and printed or digital handouts in advance for previewing and annotation.

Time Management

- Include regular breaks to reset attention and reduce fatigue.
- Use timers or visual countdowns for activities and transitions.

Note-Taking Support

- Encourage use of note-taking apps with tagging and search features.
- Allow audio recording of sessions for later review – with permission of facilitators and fellow trainees.
- Share structured notes or summaries after each session.

Cognitive & Emotional Support

- Check in with trainees after sessions to clarify concepts and address concerns.
- Validate feelings of overwhelm and offer reassurance.
- Encourage use of fidget tools or movement breaks as needed.

Inclusive Practices

- Offer alternative formats for participation.
- Use clear, concise language and repeat key instructions.
- Foster a supportive peer environment through group work and discussion.

Useful Resources

- [Society for Education and Training – How I Manage My ADHD as a Teacher](#)
- [NeuroLaunch – Accommodations for Teachers with ADHD](#)
- [ADHD Foundation](#)