

# Strategies in Training Employees with ADHD

Have you ever conducted a training with employees where you experienced a participant interrupting you while you were talking, blurting out answers before you complete your sentence or appearing not to pay attention? Chances are you may have an employee diagnosed with ADHD.

Most people think of children when they hear the word ADHD, but the fact is that ADHD can continue into adulthood and as a life-long challenge. Currently, 4.4% of the U.s adult population is diagnosed with ADHD. Of these adults, 38% are women and 62% are men.

## What is ADHD?

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders which is often characterized by a pattern of inattention/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that can impact workplace learning through making careless mistakes, the inability to complete a task, staying organized and excessive talking throughout the training.

Typically, a person with ADHD, the difficulties lies in the part of the brain that allows people to perform higher level task known as the executive function. 90% of people with ADHD also have an executive function disorder. This is the part of the brain that engages in goal-direction and self-regulations.

## Two Types of ADHD:

### Types of ADHD

#### Type 1: Inattention Without Hyperactivity

- Trouble paying attention
- Trouble following direction
- Trouble following through with task
- Easily distracted
- Seems disorganized or careless
- Slow to process information

## Type 2: Hyperactivity Without Inattention

- Trouble paying attention
- Restlessness
- Impulsive speech and action
- Excessive talking
- Difficulty waiting turns
- May have a quick temper
- Overactive

### **Challenges Training Employees with ADHD**

Workplace learning in most cases for the participant means learning new information, participating in training activities, sitting for a period of time and given direction.

- A participant with ADHD may have difficulty in sustaining attention and remaining focused during lectures.
- May need questions repeated
- May have difficulty in grasping main ideas or details during the lecture.
- Become easily distracted by both internal (day dreaming) or external (noises) stimuli.
- May blurt out an answer before a question has been completed.
- May have difficulty in listening in environments with noise distractions.
- Difficulty in following through with instructions
- May talk excessively
- Difficulty in taking turn in a conversation.

The upside is that often when a person with ADHD is interested in a topic, they may hyperfocus, meaning they will fully participate in group discussion, and show great enthusiasm for the subject matter.

### ***Strategies that help in training employees with ADHD include:***

Telling participants what they will learn

Vary instructions- auditory alone will not be effective, participants with ADHD will need visual aids as well.

Allow for frequent breaks.

Summarize key points of the training as a way to reinforce the lesson

Create a leadership role such as assisting in setting up any training equipment and giving out training material.

When possible, alternate between physical and mental activities.

Stick to the expectation of the time. It will be difficult for the participant to sustain focus once a time of dismissal is given.

Conduct a stretching activity for the group when possible, I would sometimes include a game of “would you rather.” This works great but should tie into the theme of the training.

Tips to remember:

A diagnosis of ADHD also qualifies under the American Disabilities Act regarding workplace accommodations.