

ADHD and art therapy *children and youth*

Your ADHD brain can be pretty amazing. People with ADHD are often energetic, spontaneous, creative, inventive, and driven.

Famous people with ADHD include:

- Musicians: David Grohl, Doja Cat, Justin Bieber, Justin Timberlake, and Grimes
- Actors: Channing Tatum, Emma Watson, Tom Holland, and Margot Robbie
- Athletes: Michael Phelps, Simone Biles, Terry Bradshaw, and Cammi Granato
- Entrepreneurs: Richard Branson, Mel Robbins

ADHD can also lead to behaviours that range from irritating to problematic. You'll hear your ADHD described as "inattentive" and "hyperactive/impulsive."

When ADHD can be difficult

- Not doing well in school
- Yelling, screaming, easy to cry
- Meltdowns when going from one thing to another (transitions)
- Being physically aggressive or violent
- Hard to make or keep friends
- Intense emotional pain with feelings of rejection or failure
- Self-harm and thoughts of suicide
- Very sensitive to feeling criticized
- Big emotions that are hard to control
- Easily frustrated
- Short temper, often irritable or angry
- Poor fine and gross motor skills e.g., clumsy, difficulty writing
- Taking dangerous risks

Inattentive

- can't stay focused on tasks
- doesn't listen, daydreams
- trouble following instructions
- loses things often
- unorganized
- easily distracted
- forgetful
- careless mistakes
- avoiding or having trouble with tasks that require mental focus and effort

Hyperactive-impulsive

- impatient
- restless, fidgets
- runs or climbs when it's not appropriate
- hard time doing quiet activities
- difficulty waiting
- talks a lot
- interrupts or intrudes on other people
- impulsive, acting without thinking
- always on the go

Combined ADHD

Experiencing at least 12 combined symptoms of inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive ADHD.

Art therapy can help

An art therapist has training and experience in mental health and the creative process that uses physical movement, expression, and engages the executive function part of your brain (planning, organization, starting tasks, managing time, and controlling emotions) to help you:

- problem-solve and improve focus
- learn ways to self-regulate
- reduce stress
- get along better with others
- understand emotions and triggers
- strengthen fine and gross motor skills
- feel better about yourself
- understand yourself better
- develop tools for living well with ADHD

You don't
need to be an
artist to do
art therapy!