

**Multnomah Education Service District
School Health Services
Mental Health Curriculum Manual**

Title: The Mental Health Curriculum for School Age Children, Ages 10 to 12

Module 6: COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER: ADHD and REVIEW OF THE COURSE AND WRAP-UP

Module 6 Overview: This module introduces students to Attention Deficit Disorders and serves as the final, wrap up session for the series of mental health classes. This module emphasizes that ADHD is a common disorder that runs in families. Approximately 75% of the cause of ADHD is believed to be genetic. Students learn that the prefrontal lobe of the brain functions differently in individuals with ADHD. The change in brain functions contributes to behaviors including inattention, hyperactivity, distractibility, and impulsivity. Medications such as Ritalin and Adderall can help the prefrontal lobe function better, and in that way, these medications can help people with ADHD manage their behaviors. This class emphasizes that problematic behaviors associated with ADHD (such as not being able to sit still in class, being easily bored, and not being able to listen and follow directions) are not intentional. Common myths and stereotypes about ADHD are explored, and negative attitudes are challenged. Students are asked to think about how hard it would be to function in school if their frontal brains worked differently. One of the goals of this class is to build empathy and to dispel the myth that kids with ADHD are “just bad kids”. The second half of the class is used to clarify and summarize content from other mental health modules. Students are encouraged to ask questions and think about how they can continue to learn about their mental health. Students complete a post-test and an evaluation of the classes.

Module 6 Objectives: After completing this module, students will be able to:

Knowledge Domain:

1. Recognize that ADHD is a brain disorder and not a flaw in personal character.
2. Recognize that ADHD runs in families and is strongly influenced by genetics.
3. Recognize common myths and stereotypes about people with ADHD.
4. Relate behaviors and symptoms that are associated with ADHD, inattentive type; ADHD, hyperactive type; and ADHD, combined type.
5. Identify areas of the brain that function differently in someone with ADHD.
6. Relate how medications given for ADHD effect how the brain functions.
7. Discuss ways to help someone with ADHD to organize and stay focused.
8. Identify famous people who have ADHD.
9. Identify sources of help for ADHD or other mental health disorders.
10. Summarize and clarify key points about mental health and mental illness.

Affective Domain:

1. Experience empathy for individuals with ADHD and other mental health problems.
2. Experience greater awareness and acceptance of peers with ADHD.
3. Challenge negative attitudes about ADHD as intentional or controllable misbehavior.

Talking Points/ Outline for Module 6:

- Introduce the class with the overhead of the Bart Simpson quote and ask: “Who do you think might have said this?” Incite interest and curiosity by showing other cartoons related to ADHD.
- Show the figure of the brain from module 2, overhead #8, that shows that the frontal lobe of the brain has to do with focusing, decision-making, problem solving, and planning. This is the part of the brain that scientists have identified as functioning differently in people who have ADHD. Dopamine is a brain chemical that acts like a light switch to turn on the important functions of the frontal lobe. People with ADHD do not have enough dopamine to activate all these important functions. Ask students, “If your frontal lobe couldn’t turn on the focusing, problem-solving, and planning functions, how hard would school be?”
- Discuss how ADHD is strongly determined by genetics and the genes we are born with. When one identical twin has ADHD, scientists have discovered that 75% of the time, the other identical twin will also have ADHD. This is how scientists learned that ADHD is effected by genes, by studying identical twins who have the same genetic make-up. We have known for a long time that ADHD runs in families; if a parent or a brother or sister has ADHD, it is more likely that other children in the family will also have it. In our parents’ and grandparents’ generation, ADHD wasn’t always identified. But most kids who have ADHD can think of someone in their family who had similar behaviors.
- Discuss the different forms ADHD can take; sometimes it primarily affects attention and the ability to stay focused or to concentrate; sometimes it primarily affects behavior and causes the person to be very active and to act before they think; and sometimes ADHD has both of these kinds of behavior – both attention problems and hyperactivity.
- Ask students what they know about Ritalin. Discuss how Ritalin and Adderall are medications that are often prescribed for people with ADHD to help increase the brain chemical, dopamine, so that the frontal brain functions better.
- Ask students what some common beliefs are about kids with ADHD. Have they ever heard that someone with ADHD can control their behavior if they want to? Have they ever heard someone say that kids with ADHD are “just a bad kids”?
- Ask the class, “Do you know famous people who have ADHD?” Discuss how ADHD can sometimes help people think in different and creative ways so that they think of unusual solutions to problems. Artists and creative people often use their ADHD in a productive way.
- Talk about ways to help a friend with ADHD and where you can go to get help for ADHD or another mental health problem (talk with parents, teachers, the school nurse, school counselor, a therapist, a family doctor or a nurse practitioner).
- Discuss what it is like to go to a therapist: what are the reasons to kids may go to a therapist, what happens when you see a therapist or a mental health professional for an emotional problem, and the importance of confidentiality and privacy in talking with a therapist. (See kidshealth.org and teenhealth.org teaching activities)

- Ask students if they have questions about any of the topics covered in the mental health curriculum. Answer questions and clarify information.
- Administer the post-test. After post tests are turned in, go over the questions so that students hear the correct answers and any misinformation is clarified.
- Ask students to complete an evaluation of the mental health curriculum.
- Discuss how students can continue to talk about and ask questions about mental health and mental illness; encourage them to talk with parents, teachers, school counselors, the school nurse, and their family doctor or nurse practitioner about their mental health questions and concerns. Reinforce ways to help a friend who has a mental health problem and the importance of not keeping secrets when a friend is in trouble or is thinking about doing something that would hurt them.

Parent Letter: (Example attached)

Teacher Letter: (Example attached)

In-Class Overheads for Module 6:

OH#1: Bart Simpson Quote
 Source: Retrieved 6/2005 from
http://www.allgreatquotes.com/simpsons_quotes_bart/shtml
 Illustration from Best Animations.com

OH#2 - #4: Calvin & Hobbs, 3 Cartoons: Bug Collecting, Pay Attention!, and Making up a Story for Show & Tell
 Source: Bill Watterson, Universal Press Syndicate

OH#5: Famous People who had ADHD (CHADD Website)
 Source: Retrieved in 2000 from <http://www.chadd.org>

OH#6: Ty Pennington Article
 Source: The Oregonian, by Kristi Turnquist, 2005

OH#7: Dog Psychologist
 Source: Randy Glasbergen, 1997
randyg@norwich.net

Module 6 Teaching Aide:

TA#1: 21 item Post Test with Answers

Pre and Post Test Questions for Module 6:

- T or F: 1. Kids with ADHD could sit still if they really wanted to.
 T or F: 2. When a student can't pay attention in class it may be because his brain works differently.
 Short Answer: 3. If someone thinks they need help with their mental health, who could they go to for help?

Module 6 Resource List:

See the website, www.kidshealth.org, and select topics related to child/adolescent mental health that you would like to explore further in class, or use as a reference to expand the school nurse's preparation to teach this class:

What is Hyperactivity?

ADHD Medications

Going to a Therapist

Going to a Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or Therapist