



## **Frequently Asked Questions about ADHD/ADD**

### **Diagnosing and Evaluation for ADHD Questions**

#### **What is attention-deficit disorder (ADHD)?**

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder is commonly referred to as ADHD or ADD. Symptoms of ADHD include: trouble focusing, difficulty staying on task, being impulsive and disorganization. For some people they may also have hyperactivity (constant fidgeting, difficulty sitting still). These symptoms start at a young age and persist through adulthood. No specific test exists to diagnose ADHD and many other conditions/situations can cause these symptoms. It is important to have a thorough evaluation by a mental health professional before being diagnosed with ADHD.

#### **I have trouble focusing and am easily distracted in the classroom. Do I have ADHD?**

Possibly. However, there are many potential causes that can lead to trouble with focus and easy distraction. This includes depression, anxiety, sleep issues, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance misuse. You can make an appointment with a counselor at the HCC to discuss your concerns in detail.

#### **How do I get evaluated for ADHD?**

Evaluation for ADHD is done through a comprehensive psychological evaluation where a person's behavior, learning, social skills, emotions and cognition are all assessed. These evaluations often contain psychiatric interviews, behavioral observations, a series of questionnaires/scales, lab tests, family and medical history, and evaluations from outside sources (parents, teachers). It can often take several visits with a provider for these assessments to be completed. The HCC does not do these evaluations, but can provide resources to students to where they can get this done.

#### **Does the HCC do evaluations for ADHD?**

The HCC does not do formal comprehensive psychological evaluations for ADHD. We can provide you with off campus resources where you can get this done. We can meet with you to discuss your symptoms and help determine if a formal evaluation is right for you. In addition, HCC counselors can provide recommendations on how to manage your symptoms and help connect you to resources on campus.

### **What does a comprehensive psychological evaluation for ADHD entail?**

A comprehensive psychological evaluation generally should:

- Be conducted by a qualified professional whose background includes training and relevant experience in the full range of psychiatric diagnoses,
- Be within the past three years and be updated as required,
- Include a summary of relevant historical information including initial onset, diagnosis, medication and indication of ADD/ADHD throughout adolescence or adulthood,
- Include a description of functional impact of diagnosis and include specifics of how the learning process may be affected under current treatment conditions,
- Rule out alternative diagnosis and discuss dual/co-existing diagnoses
- Include recommendations and rationale for accommodations and/or assistive technology, and
- Include psychoeducational test scores to document the nature and severity of the disability.

### **Treatment for ADHD Questions**

#### **What support is available to me to help with symptoms of ADHD?**

There are several options available to students to get help with ADHD. At the HCC, you can meet with a counselor or medical provider to discuss your symptoms. Counselors can help discuss techniques that may help your focus and motivation. Depression and anxiety are common conditions that can lead to ADHD symptoms or exacerbate ADHD. A counselor can also talk with you about these concerns. HCC staff can also help you find a therapist off campus or groups that can help you manage ADHD symptoms. A medical provider can help assess whether there are potential medical causes to your symptoms, order labs, and talk about ways to treat anxiety or depression.

Outside of the HCC, the Office of Academic Support has options for tutoring, academic coaching, and workshops for time management, test anxiety, quantitative skills, study skills and more. For those students with a documented disability such as ADHD, Disability & Accessibility Resources (DAR) can help students get appropriate accommodations. DAR also can provide executive function skills training and academic coaching for students.

#### **I would like to start medication for ADHD, can I do this at the HCC?**

Depends. See ADHD Medication Management for more information.

#### **If I am currently (or have recently been) on medication for ADHD, can I get this prescribed at the HCC?**

Possibly. See ADHD Medication Management for more information.



**I am not interested in getting evaluated for ADHD, but I would like support to improve my performance in school. What options are available for me?**

See: [What support is available to me to help with symptoms of ADHD?](#)

**I was diagnosed more than three years ago with ADHD; will I need another evaluation before I can have my medications managed at the HCC?**

Possibly. If you have demonstrated a longstanding relationship with a psychiatric provider and have been using ADHD medications to help manage your condition, we may be able to continue your medication at the HCC. We recommend you complete a Release of Information (ROI) so that the ADHD Assessment Team at the HCC can review your records.

**I would like to see a provider off campus to help manage my ADHD. Can the HCC give me recommendations?**

Yes! The HCC can help you find a provider off campus to help you with ADHD (or other mental health conditions).

**What is the difference between a stimulant medication and non-stimulant medication for ADHD?**

Stimulant medications are the most common medications prescribed for ADHD. These include meds such as Adderall (dextroamphetamine/amphetamine), Ritalin (methylphenidate), and Concerta (methylphenidate). These medications work on dopamine receptors to help with focus, attention and impulsivity. They do have some risks associated with them and are considered controlled medications by the DEA. Controlled medications are those that have a higher risk of dependence and misuse. For this reason, there are more strict guidelines required in order to prescribe these medications. Non-stimulant medications work differently (some on norepinephrine and some are alpha-2 adrenergics) and do not carry the same concern of dependency and misuse.



**Can I get a non-stimulant medication for ADHD at the HCC if I haven't had a comprehensive psychological evaluation?**

You do not need a comprehensive psychological evaluation to get a prescription of a non-stimulant medication. You will need to have an intake with the mental health medication prescriber to discuss your symptoms and to see if a medication is right for you.

**Other ADHD FAQ**

**What do I need to do to get my records transferred to the HCC in order to get my medications prescribed?**

You will need to complete a Release of Information (ROI) for all providers involved in assessment and recent treatment of ADHD. The ROI can be initiated from your current provider's office and faxed to Reed College HCC at 503-777-7209. Alternatively, you can complete a Reed ROI with your at home provider's information and we will fax in the request.

**What if my medical/mental health records do not meet the criteria for prescribing stimulant medications?**

The HCC can give you referrals to off campus providers who can complete a comprehensive psychological assessment to determine if you do have ADHD. We can also provide you with referrals to off campus providers who can make the assessment and prescribe the medications.

You can still meet with the HCC mental health prescriber to discuss non-stimulant medications that may help with ADHD symptoms. You may also still meet with the HCC counselors to discuss techniques that can help with your symptoms.

**Can I get my ADHD medication prescribed over winter and summer breaks?**

Depends. Stimulant medications (Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta, etc.) are controlled medications and the prescriptions can't be transferred across state lines. If you return home during breaks, we recommend you continue a relationship with a provider in your area that can manage these medications for you. If you live in Oregon, we may be able to continue stimulant medications over breaks. You should make sure to talk with your provider in more detail at an office visit.