



Understanding Adult ADHD: Myths and Practical Tools for Thriving

By: Adam Brownfeld, PhD, EMBA, ADHD-CCSP, with contributions by Kathryn Stith, LMSW, Ann Cornell, PsyD, and George Nasra, MD, MBA

Myth: ADHD is just trouble paying attention.

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects executive functioning, decision making, emotional regulation, and daily life across the lifespan. For many adults, ADHD influences how they manage work demands, relationships, and responsibilities at home, not just their ability to focus.

Myth: ADHD is not a real condition or is over diagnosed.

ADHD is a well-established diagnosis that affects more than 6 percent of U.S. adults. It is not a sign of laziness or lack of motivation. Many individuals with ADHD demonstrate strengths such as creativity, problem solving, and resilience. Effective treatment often includes therapy and, when appropriate, medication to support executive functioning skills and coping strategies.

Myth: People with ADHD just need to try harder to make decisions and get things done.

Decision paralysis is a common challenge for individuals with ADHD. Difficulties with prioritizing, initiating, and completing tasks can make everyday responsibilities feel overwhelming. Practical strategies such as breaking tasks into smaller steps, limiting options, and setting time limits can reduce overwhelm and help restore momentum.

Myth: Burnout is unavoidable, especially in high demand jobs.

Burnout and work life balance are particularly relevant for individuals with ADHD, especially in healthcare and other demanding professions. Intentional time management approaches that protect restorative, non-work activities alongside professional responsibilities can improve focus, mood, productivity, and overall wellbeing.

Myth: Medication is the only effective treatment.

While medication can reduce core ADHD symptoms such as inattention and impulsivity, it is not the sole, or always the most impactful, intervention. In adults with ADHD, psychotherapy, especially structured, skills-based approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) for ADHD, can be equally or sometimes more effective than medication in improving daily functioning. Therapy targets time management, organization, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping strategies, addressing impairments that medications alone often do not fully resolve. For many adults, the most effective care involves psychotherapy either as a primary treatment or in combination with medication, tailored to individual needs and goals.

As awareness of adult ADHD continues to grow, more individuals are recognizing concerns in themselves or loved ones and seeking support. Behavioral Health Partners provides comprehensive ADHD diagnostic assessment, medication management, and evidence-based treatment to help individuals reduce challenges, leverage strengths, and improve daily functioning at work and at home.

If you or someone you support is struggling with ADHD related concerns, clinicians at [Behavioral Health Partners](#) can help. Behavioral Health Partners is brought to you by [Well-U](#) and offers eligible individuals mental health services for stress, anxiety, depression, and ADHD. Call (585) 276-6900 to schedule an intake appointment.