



# The ADHDe Project

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Professional Development Workshop Presenters Guide



University  
of Windsor



# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
Project Overview .....	2
Introduction: .....	2
Project Objectives:.....	2
Notes About This Guide: .....	3
Module 1: Rules of Engagement and Overview.....	4
Key Learning Objectives Include:.....	4
Slide 2 Script: Rules of Engagement .....	4
Slide 3 Script: What We Will Cover Today .....	4
Module 2: The ADHDe Project .....	4
Key Learning Objectives:.....	4
Slide 4-5 Script: Who We Are .....	5
Slide 6 Script: What’s With the “e”?.....	5
Slide 7 Script: The EnAbling Change Program .....	5
Module 3: AODA .....	5
Key Learning Objectives:.....	5
Slide 8 Script: AODA.....	5
Slide 9 Script: AODA.....	5
Module 4: What is ADHD? .....	6
Key Learning Objectives:.....	6
Slide 10 Script: Understanding ADHD.....	6
Slide 11-12 Script: Key Concepts and Terms.....	6
Slide 13 Script: What is ADHD? .....	7
Slide 14 Script: Hyperactive, Inattentive, and Combined .....	7
Slide 15 Script: Common Symptoms.....	7
Module 5: Intersectionality.....	8
Key Learning Objectives:.....	8
Slides 16 Script: Intersectionality .....	8
Slide 17-18 Script: Intersectionality.....	8
Module 6: Diagnosis .....	9

Key Learning Objectives:.....	9
Slide 19 Script: Diagnosis .....	9
Slide 20 Script: Why is a Diagnosis so Important?.....	9
Slide 21 Script: What are the Potential Barriers to a Diagnosis? .....	9
Module 7: Barriers.....	10
Key Learning Objectives:.....	10
Slide 22 Script: Barriers.....	10
Slides 23 Script: Stigma and Barriers .....	10
Slide 24 Script: Stigma and Barriers.....	10
Module 8: Inclusivity and Accessibility .....	11
Key Learning Objectives:.....	11
Slide 25 Script: Being Supportive.....	11
Slide 26 Script: The Importance of Inclusivity and Accessibility.....	11
Slide 27 Script: Accessibility .....	11
Slide 28 Script: Inclusivity.....	11
Module 9: Close .....	12
Key Learning Objectives:.....	12
Slide 29 Script: Looking Back and Going Forward .....	12
Slide 30 Script: What We Covered .....	12
Slide 31 Script: Going Forward .....	12
Slide 32 Script: Thank You .....	13
Additional Resources.....	14
Acknowledgments.....	15

## Project Overview

### Introduction:

The ADHDe Project is a student-led initiative that promotes inclusion and respect for university students who identify as neurodiverse.

### Project Objectives:

This project was created to destigmatize ADHD and neurodiversity on campus, provide students with resources and support, and promote a welcoming environment at the University of Windsor.

Funded by the Government of Ontario, and in partnership with the Learning Disability Association of Windsor Essex (LDAWE), The ADHDe Project will host a series of social media campaigns, workshops, and seminars along with a permanent digital resource for people who identify as neurodiverse.

#### Notes About This Guide:

This guide was created act as a map for this presentation. Please note that all of the script is suggested. We encourage you to add your own personal touch!

## Module 1: Rules of Engagement and Overview

Key Learning Objectives Include:

- Learning
- Listening
- Participating

### Slide 2 Script: Rules of Engagement

Before we begin our workshop today, we would likely to briefly discuss the rules of engagement for this session. Fostering a supportive learning environment is a shared responsibility.

- We acknowledge the subject may be difficult for participants to discuss
- Confidentiality; share learnings, not personal stories/identities/experiences of others.
- Centre the importance of lived experience
- Work together to create space for folks to engage authentically and honestly
- Share the air; be mindful of how you take up space today
- Guilt and shame: we know folks are in different places/spaces with learning and that some may be managing these emotions as they reflect, consider next steps, and move forward in concrete ways
- Discriminatory comments will not be tolerated

(Make amendments as needed)

### Slide 3 Script: What We Will Cover Today

Before we jump in, here is a brief overview of what we will be covering today!

- Who We Are
- The AODA
- An Introduction to ADHD
- ADHD and Intersectionality
- Diagnosis
- Accessibility Barriers
- How to be Supportive

## Module 2: The ADHDe Project

Key Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn about the project and its goals.
- Present resources to participants.

- Introduce the EnAbling Change program

#### Slide 4-5 Script: Who We Are

The ADHDe Project is a student-led initiative that promotes inclusion and respect for students (especially those at the post-secondary level) who have been diagnosed with ADHD or identify as neurodiverse. This project was created to destigmatize ADHD and neurodiversity on campus, provide students with resources and support, and promote a welcoming environment at the University of Windsor. We recognize how difficult navigating university life can be for anyone, and sometimes more so for students who identify as neurodiverse or have ADHD.

**The ADHDe Project was produced by The University of Windsor and The Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor Essex with support from the Government of Ontario.**

#### Slide 6 Script: What's With the "e"?

The name The ADHDe Project represents the three "e's" of our mission, *Education, Equity and Empowerment*. We believe that by amplifying the voices of people with ADHD we will be able to create a more inclusive and accessible campus.

#### Slide 7 Script: The EnAbling Change Program

The ADHDe Project was made possible by a grant from The EnAbling Change Program, a grant program run by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. Thanks to the support from the EnAbling Change Program, The ADHDe Project was able to become a university-wide accessibility initiative.

### Module 3: AODA

#### Key Learning Objectives:

- Identify and explain the AODA
- Discuss the five standards of the AODA

#### Slide 8 Script: AODA

When discussing accessibility and inclusion in Ontario, it is important to mention the AODA.

#### Slide 9 Script: AODA

The AODA (The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) is an Ontario law which mandates that organizations must follow certain accessibility standards. The Act was put into place in 2005, with the intention of creating a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. There are currently five standards in place:

- The Information and Communications Standards
- The Employment Standards
- The Transportation Standards
- The Design of Public Spaces Standards
- The Customer Service Standards

The goal of the AODA is to help organizations provide an accessible experience for all Ontarians. Please note that there are two additional standards in the progress of development: the Health Care Standards and the Educational Standards.

## Module 4: What is ADHD?

### Key Learning Objectives:

- Participants will gain a better understanding of what ADHD is.
- Provide participants with a comprehensive list of terms and definitions relevant to the presentation.
- Discuss the different ways ADHD presents
- Identify and discuss of the common symptoms associated with ADHD

### Slide 10 Script: Understanding ADHD

To help everyone feel comfortable and informed about the topics we'll be covering today we will start by discussing some of the concepts and terms that are key to this project. We hope that these carefully defined concepts and terms will give you a better understanding of the barriers, circumstances, and realities that students with ADHD experience.

### Slide 11-12 Script: Key Concepts and Terms

Now, we will discuss some of the terminology associated with ADHD and neurodiversity.

- **ADHD:** Stands for Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder. ADHD as a neurodevelopmental disorder. The three core symptoms of ADHD are: inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. There are three types of ADHD: inattentive type, hyperactive type, and combined type, which we will be covering later in the presentation.
- **Neurodiverse:** Refers to a group of people who are neurologically diverse. This can include people with ADHD and people without ADHD. For example: "They are a neurodiverse family. There are two children and a parent who have ADHD, and one child and one parent who do not have ADHD".
- **Disability:** Personal experience of barriers to participation in all aspects of society.
- **Invisible Disability:** A disability that you might not be able to perceive when you first meet someone.

- Executive function: set of skills that we use to navigate everyday life. Includes time management, self-control, flexible thinking, emotional regulation, etc.
- Overstimulation: feeling extremely overwhelmed by a surplus of stimulating sensations such as loud music, certain textures, certain tastes, bright lights, etc. This can cause an emotional response.
- Accessibility Barrier: An accessibility barrier is an obstacle or hurdle that prevents a person with a disability from participating in all aspects of society. There are five types of accessibility barriers: physical/architectural, informational/communicational, technological, attitudinal, and organizational.

### Slide 13 Script: What is ADHD?

There has been a shift in ADHD terminology and labelling. Sometimes controversial. As a team we worked together to present an equitable and inclusive understanding of ADHD.

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, is often defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder. Common symptoms include hyperactivity, inattentiveness, and impulsivity.
- Many people with ADHD excel at creative problem solving, are exceptionally empathetic and often have a strong sense of fairness.
- Many children and adults with ADHD have other co-associated conditions, like Learning Disabilities, ODD, Anxiety, or Depression.
- There are effective psychological, educational, and medical supports available for people with ADHD. Some of the supports available are therapies, medication, support groups, educational programs, accommodations.

### Slide 14 Script: Hyperactive, Inattentive, and Combined

- ADHD presents in different ways, depending on the individual. There are three main classifications of how ADHD can present.
- Hyperactive type, inattentive type, and combined type. Inattentive type was traditionally referred to as ADD (attention deficit disorder). Cisgender men are more likely to be diagnosed with Hyperactive type ADHD when compared to cisgendered women.
- Cis women are less likely to receive a diagnosis as a child and are more likely to be diagnosed with Inattentive type ADHD.
- **ADHD is NOT a gender-specific disorder.**

### Slide 15 Script: Common Symptoms

Now that we've gone over the different ways that ADHD presents itself, let's go over some examples of the most common symptoms.

#### **Common Inattentive Type Symptoms:**

- Day dreaming
- Hyper focusing
- Easily distracted by small stimuli
- Struggles with paying attention
- Struggles with organization and time management
- Excels at creative problem solving
- Emotionally sensitive and struggles with rejection

#### **Common Hyperactive Type Symptoms:**

- Fidgeting, constant movement
- Impatient
- Struggles to control their volume
- Very creative
- Lots of physical and mental energy
- Experiences intense crashes after exerting energy
- May interrupt others

## Module 5: Intersectionality

### **Key Learning Objectives:**

- Participants will learn about the importance of considering identity when discussing ADHD and neurodiversity.
- Present the understanding of intersecting identities like race, age, gender, sexual orientation, sex, etc.

### **Slides 16 Script: Intersectionality**

When discussing ADHD, it is important that we think about intersectionality.

### **Slide 17-18 Script: Intersectionality**

Intersectionality is a concept made known by Kimberlé Crenshaw.

It acknowledges that everyone has their own unique experiences, and their identities play a role in how they experience the world.

Because of that, it's important to take into consideration how a person's identities may intersect with one another.

Some examples of intersecting identities may include:

- Race
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Ability

For example, women with ADHD are less likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than their male peers. Women are often diagnosed later in life and often struggle to receive accessibility accommodations and support.

## Module 6: Diagnosis

### Key Learning Objectives:

- Present the pros and cons of obtaining a diagnosis
- Discuss barriers associated with diagnosis

### Slide 19 Script: Diagnosis

Before we look at the benefits and challenges of an ADHD diagnosis, are there any questions?

### Slide 20 Script: Why is a Diagnosis so Important?

A big part of understanding ADHD and how to support people with ADHD is learning about the diagnosis process. Obtaining a diagnosis can help individuals with ADHD better understand their circumstances. The absence of diagnosis may leave people wondering why they:

- Have difficulty creating and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Struggles with addiction and substance abuse.
- Difficulty with executive functioning leading to issues at home, work, social life, and wealth management.
- An increase in stress and anxiety

After receiving a diagnosis, the individual is then able to reap the benefits. Diagnosis also helps to obtain qualification for resources and supports. This includes access to supports such as mental health supports, academic accommodations, medications, and familial support.

### Slide 21 Script: What are the Potential Barriers to a Diagnosis?

It is important to understand that there are many potential barriers to getting an ADHD diagnosis. These are barriers in place that make it difficult to receive a diagnosis and may discourage people from pursuing support.

- A lack of funding for diagnostic tools (testing may be up to \$2500)
- Due to the stigma surrounding ADHD, many professionals also don't truly understand ADHD or the affect it has on day-to-day life. As a result, ADHD is often undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.
- ADHD can be difficult to diagnose because it is considered an "invisible disability". Because it can't be seen at first glance it is more challenging to diagnose than an obvious physical issue, such as broken arm.

## Module 7: Barriers

### Key Learning Objectives:

- Discuss academic and societal barriers.
- Participants will learn how to be supportive allies
- Present information on inclusivity and accessibility

### Slide 22 Script: Barriers

Unfortunately, the barriers experienced during the diagnosis process is only the tip of the iceberg. After being diagnosed with ADHD there are many potential challenges that a person may face because of their diagnosis.

### Slides 23 Script: Stigma and Barriers

One of these barriers is stigma, which is a negative stereotype about a person or group of people. The stigmatization of ADHD is relevant in every aspect of society. ADHD stigma can create challenges in education, work, and social settings. It's also important to note that social stigma can lead to self-stigma which can be limiting as it promotes negative self-views and associations with their diagnosis. The severity of stigma can be placed on a continuum depending on the individual's intersecting identifying factors (gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, etc.).

### Slide 24 Script: Stigma and Barriers

- Once potential employers, colleagues or friends discover you have ADHD they may make assumptions based on what they've seen in the media. They may assume you are going to be unreliable, lazy, less intelligent, a distraction or uncommitted.
- Lack of Support and Misunderstanding of ADHD and Neurodiversity: a lack of understanding lends itself to a lack of support for people who have ADHD and/or identify as neurodiverse.
- These misunderstandings and lack of support creates additional barriers to achieving academic, professional, and social goals.
- Medication, therapy and receiving a diagnosis can all be expensive and difficult to access.

## Module 8: Inclusivity and Accessibility

### Key Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the importance of accessibility
- Give strategies that could help to create more accessible spaces
- Encourage open mindedness among participants about accessible and inclusive practices

### Slide 25 Script: Being Supportive

So, what comes next? Now that we know the struggles that individuals with ADHD may face, how do we support them?

### Slide 26 Script: The Importance of Inclusivity and Accessibility

Considering the external and internal struggles that people with ADHD can face, it's no surprise that many experience depression, anxiety, and self-doubt. By age 10, it's estimated that children with ADHD have received 20,000 more negative messages than positive ones. (Source: attitude magazine). That is why inclusive and accessible spaces are so important. People with ADHD deserve to feel as supported and valued as everyone else, and it's up to all of us to help foster those spaces. Creating an inclusive space is key for helping people with ADHD thrive. This also encourages everyone to be more aware of how their actions may impact others and creates an environment that models' inclusivity.

### Slide 27 Script: Accessibility

ADHD is commonly referred to as an "invisible disability". This means that when you first meet someone you may not be able to tell that they have ADHD. Because of that, people with ADHD may have a difficult time working, learning, and socializing in places designed for people without ADHD. Here are some suggestions to help create a more accessible and respectful place for all people.

- When possible, provide meeting notes, lecture notes, or other content ahead of time.
- Encourage alternative working or learning styles.
- Use inclusive and respectful language.
- When in doubt, ask! Always refer to the person with ADHD when implementing accommodations or supports.

### Slide 28 Script: Inclusivity

Promoting and creating an inclusive space helps to ease potential anxieties and worries that students may have. Inclusivity should be approached with a wide lens, with the goal of encouraging all identities to thrive and feel comfortable doing so. Here are some tips on how you can create a more inclusive environment for people with ADHD:

- Offer constructive criticism. Be aware of your tone and body language. Many people with ADHD interpret neutral body language as being negative and so positive reinforcement is key.
- Be conscious that the student you're working with may struggle with one or more serious mental illness and may not be well equipped for emotional regulation.
- Overstimulation can cause a lot of emotional, mental, and physical stress.
- Remember that ADHD is not inherently bad or good, is simply one neurotype.

## Module 9: Close

### Key Learning Objectives:

- Provide brief overview of what was covered during the session
- Give participants simple strategies for implementing accessible practices
- Encourage participants to take the Post-Session Survey
- Wrap up and thank you

### Slide 29 Script: Looking Back and Going Forward

We would like to thank everyone for their attendance and participation in this workshop thus far! Before we finish up for today, we'd like to take a moment to review some of the information we discussed today, as well as look ahead at some of the ADHD friendly practices that can be implemented right away.

### Slide 30 Script: What We Covered

In a nutshell, here is what we covered today.

- ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder. There are three presentations, inattentive, hyperactive, and combined type.
- Common ADHD symptoms may include hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsivity
- Intersecting identities may impact a person's experience with ADHD. These identities can affect a person's ability to receive a diagnosis, access accommodations, navigate their social life and be accepted as who they are.
- Receiving a diagnosis can be challenging. There are upsides and downsides to a diagnosis.
- People with ADHD may need additional supports or accommodations, and that's ok! Having accessibility accommodations does not diminish a person's achievement.
- When in doubt, try to refer to the person with lived experience. Often, the person who is needing the accommodation will have a good idea of what will work best for them.

### Slide 31 Script: Going Forward

Going forward, here are some of the things you can do to help make your office, department, and social environment more accessible and respectful for people with ADHD. Firstly, approach

ADHD with curiosity. If ADHD is a new topic for you, that's ok! Creating inclusive spaces is not about knowing every little detail, it's about being open to learning new things, and treating people with respect. Secondly, try not to make assumptions. The people in your lives with ADHD will rarely look like the stereotypes you see in the media. Thirdly, even if they haven't disclosed it, you likely know people with ADHD. When discussing ADHD and neurodiversity, be conscious that the words you use matter. You never know what the person you're speaking to may be experiencing, so always keep it respectful.

### Slide 32 Script: Thank You

We would like to thank The OHREA for their support with this workshop and initiative, as well as The Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex, The University of Windsor, and the Government of Ontario. Most importantly, we would like to thank all of our attendees for being here today. Please feel free to contact us via email at any time or visit our website for more project updates and announcements.

## Additional Resources

- [The ADHDe Project](#)
- [The University of Windsor OHREA](#)
- [The ADHDe Project Official ADHD Resource Guide](#)
- [The Center for ADHD Awareness, Canada](#)

## Acknowledgments

The ADHDe Project would like to give thanks to the following communities, organizations, and people for making this project possible:

- The EnAbling Change Program
- Student Accessibility Services
- The Office of Human Rights, Equity, and Accessibility (OHREA)
- The Centre for Teaching and Learning
- The Learning Disabilities Association of Windsor-Essex
- The ADHDe Project Advisory Committee
- The Government of Ontario.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals who have contributed their valuable time, energy, and expertise to this initiative:

- Cherie Gagnon
- Erin Plumb
- Anthony Gomez
- Dr. Erika Kustra
- Ashlyne O'Neil