

ADD SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZZES FOR ADULTS: A SCREENING TEST

The DSM-IV criteria for ADD—which are listed in chapter 11—provide the definitive screening questionnaire for ADD. However, it was not written with adults in mind. There has long been a need for a brief screener for adults. Now that need has been met.

A team of leading experts, in conjunction with the World Health Organization, developed the Adult Self-Report Scale, or ASRS. Led by Ron Kessler of Harvard and Len Adler of NYU, the team refined the questions to the point where 80 percent of the people who score positive on the ASRS will turn out to have ADD when a full evaluation is done.

The ASRS is a screening tool, *not* a definitive diagnostic test. However, it does give a short means of seeing if it is worthwhile to go on to a more detailed diagnostic workup.

If you get a positive result on the test, then you definitely ought to get a full evaluation. However, if you get a negative result, do not assume this means you do not have adult ADD. The test is only 70 percent sensitive. That means it will pick up only 70 percent of the cases of ADD in a random sample of adults.

The test consists of six questions. You should answer each with one of the following responses: "N" for never; "R" for rarely; "S" for sometimes; "O" for often; or "V" for very often.

Here are the questions:

1. How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project, once the challenging parts have been done? N R S O V
2. How often do you have difficulty getting things in order when you have to do a task that requires organization? N R S O V
3. How often do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations? N R S O V
4. When you have a task that requires a lot of thought, how often do you avoid or delay getting started? N R S O V
5. How often do you fidget or squirm with your hands and feet when you have to sit down for a long time? N R S O V
6. How often do you feel overly active and compelled to do things, as if you were driven by a motor? N R S O V

Here's how you score the test:

If you answered "S," "O," or "V" for questions 1, 2, or 3, give yourself one point for each.

If you answered "O," or "V" for questions 4, 5, or 6, give yourself one point for each.

Now add up your points. A score of 4 or higher is a positive score. That means you ought to consult with your health-care provider and go on to the next step in the diagnostic process.

Remember, this is *not* a diagnostic test. It is just a good, brief screening tool.

A SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ

While the ASRS is a statistically valid, short screening tool for adult ADD, the following quiz has no statistical validity whatsoever. I composed it as an additional means of providing a feel for ADD. The more 'yes' answers you give on this quiz, the more likely you have ADD. However, there is no cutoff point, as this is purely descriptive, not diagnostic.

This quiz is a good place to start if you are dealing with an adult who doubts that ADD is real. If the person has ADD, she will be surprised at how many questions hit close to home.

A quiz with a similar format appeared in *Driven to Distraction*. However, this quiz is entirely new; it is longer, covering more ground, and the questions highlight aspects of the ADD experience I have learned about since writing *Driven to Distraction*.

General Questions

1. Did you turn to this chapter right away, before you read any of the other chapters in this book?
2. Do you feel that you are underachieving in your life, even though you may have achieved a great deal so far?
3. Are you more generous than most people?
4. Do you have more trouble than the average person with staying on track, especially when what you are doing is less than gripping?
5. Do you feel some regrets about the way you are but also feel unable to find any way to change?
6. Would you have made a good inventor?
7. Do you perceive patterns where other people don't see them?
8. Do you tend to solve problems intuitively rather than logically and methodically?
9. Do words like *logically* and *methodically* bring back bad memories?
10. Do you also relish certain qualities you have, regretting that you can't always present them in such a way that others appreciate them?
11. Are you more tenacious and persistent than the average person?
12. Are you more sentimental than the average person?
13. Do you have an unusually acute sense of smell and sensitivity to touch?
14. When you are sitting, do you frequently drum your fingers on the table or bounce one of your legs up and down using the ball of your foot as a fulcrum?
15. Do you love crossword puzzles, brainteasers, and self-assessment quizzes?
16. Do you love bicycles (even if you don't ride them anymore)?
17. Do you feel that the positives you have accomplished in life you did by accident, by smoke and mirrors, almost as if someone else achieved them, not you?
18. Do you put up a good front, but inwardly wish you could find a better way in life?
19. Do you go off on tangents easily?
20. On the other hand, do you get really annoyed when other people go off on tangents, wishing they'd hurry up and get to the point?
21. Do you drink coffee or consume other caffeine-containing substances (colas, chocolate, Mountain Dew, some teas) in greater quantities than most people do?
22. Did you have many ear infections when you were a child?
23. Do you like situations of danger and risk?
24. Have you missed many opportunities due to procrastination?
25. Although you may be quiet and reserved, does your mind go a mile a minute most of the time?
26. Are you more of a child at heart today than other adults your age?
27. Do you often get something done extraordinarily well and when you're finished have very little idea of how you did it?
28. Do you feel huge letdowns after big events or successes, more than the average person does?
29. Are you totally amazed that so many people can't see through the façades that phony people put up because you can see through them in a second?
30. Do you especially despise hypocrisy?
31. And do you especially admire honesty?
32. Do you wish people were more honest and less politically correct?
33. Did one or both of your parents or their parents drink too much, or suffer from depression or bipolar disorder, or have trouble with gambling, or get into trouble with the law?
34. Do you often drive past the exit you were supposed to take on the highway?
35. Are you chuckling to yourself as you read these questions?
36. Are you a born debater?

37. Were your years of education (school, college, and beyond) marked by underachievement?
38. Are you more prone than the average person to make careless mistakes?
39. Do you feel that if other people knew the real you, they would disapprove of you?
40. Were you the class clown or cutup in school?
41. Did you have trouble completing your education due to problems with organization or getting to class on time?
42. Do you find that marijuana appeals to you because it helps you "chill out"?
43. Do you often make remarks that others consider odd or off the wall?
44. Do you have many different enthusiasms, often wanting to follow more of them than you can possibly keep up with?
45. Do other people comment on how hard it is to get you to stay focused on what they want you to stay focused on, even when you want to focus on that as well?
46. Do you tend to drive fast?
47. Do you often feel an urge to hug the person you are talking to, even if you barely know them, for reasons unrelated to sexual attraction?
48. Did you feel a bit out of it in school, regardless of what grades you got or how socially popular you were?
49. Are you a dreamer?
50. Do you have a sense of humor that is unusual, zany, macabre, or otherwise out of the ordinary?
51. Do you not only think outside the box but have trouble thinking inside the box?
- 52.
53. Do you find that your thoughts go so fast, your mental organizer can't keep up with them?
54. Were you hyperactive as a child?
55. Do you find driving a car fast to be a soothing experience?
56. Are you much more forgiving than most people?
57. On the other hand, do you rush to take sides against people who take advantage of others?

58. Do you laugh easily?
59. Even though you may not do it, do you enjoy flirting more than the average person does?
60. Are you slightly less coordinated than others your age?
61. Do you love it when life is going fast?
62. Do you simultaneously yearn to fit in but hate to conform?

Questions About Work

63. Do others complain that if you were more motivated or just tried harder you could pay attention better?
64. Do you sometimes focus extraordinarily well, even superfocus?
65. Do you get frustrated because you can't make yourself superfocus on demand?
66. Are you embarrassed by what a mess your pocketbook, desk, or office is?
67. Would you have made a good salesperson?
68. Would you have made a rotten accountant?
69. Even if you don't like doing it, do you do your best work under a deadline?
70. Do you find that you can get more done in twenty minutes while waiting in an airport than in six hours working in your office?
71. Do you wonder why so many people refuse to take chances?
72. Do you love highly stimulating environments, like newsrooms, the floor of the stock exchange (or how you imagine the floor of the stock exchange to be), emergency rooms, courtrooms, or football games?
73. Do you excel in certain areas, but have trouble figuring out how to turn those areas into income generators?
74. Do you have a razor-sharp memory one moment only to be foggy and absentminded the next?
75. Do you have a million new ideas, but have trouble turning them into reality?
76. Do you do your best work when you can be your own boss?
77. Even though you may be at your best when you're your own boss, do you also benefit from having an assistant who can remind you to stay on track?

78. Do you find that you focus better in the midst of a crisis or an emergency than when all is peaceful and calm around you?
79. When you attend a lecture or other presentation, do you feel you could pay better attention if you could get up and pace around at the back of the room?
80. Even though you noticed it at the time and chortled a bit at what you took to be my own oversight, have you forgotten by now that question 52 was left blank?
81. Do you prefer to work in intense bursts, rather than prolonged intervals?
82. Are you an entrepreneur by nature?
83. Do others comment on how creative or original you are?
84. Do you find that sitting in a meeting is almost always a total waste of your time and agonizing to boot?

Questions About Home Life

85. Are you much more of a night person than a morning person?
86. Do you often offend people without meaning to?
87. Is your own humor sometimes mistaken for an insult?
88. Have you ever gotten divorced?
89. Do you usually know the point a person is getting to before they get there?
90. Do members of your family complain that you often interrupt?
91. Are you much more energetic than other people your age?
92. Are you now, or have you ever been, concerned that you drink too much alcohol?
93. Do you now or did you ever smoke cigarettes?
94. Are you a maverick?
95. Even though you may be a maverick, have you found yourself working for someone or married to someone who wants you to conform?
96. In romance, have you often made the mistake of dating, or even marrying, someone who belittles you, reprimands you, and tries to control you?

97. Do others see more that is good and valuable in you than you do?
98. Do you find that your spouse has to do most of the organizing and planning?
99. Does your spouse/partner resent how much he or she has to do for you to make a go of it with you?
100. Does your partner often tell you how much she or he cares about you but at the same time tells you that she or he is going to leave you unless you can get your act together?
101. Has the quality of your sex life declined due to emotional conflicts with your spouse?
102. Do you find that you have trouble sustaining attention when you are making love, even though you are aroused and interested?
103. Do you think you have a higher level of sexual interest, drive, and curiosity than others your age?
104. Are you thinking about many other things in the back of your mind as you read through this quiz?
105. Is what you are looking forward to doing after you put this quiz down something other than what you are supposed to do next?
106. Do you carry an anger and frustration within you that comes out too easily or at the wrong times?
107. Do you find that you feel much more mentally focused after you exercise?
108. Do you find that you have trouble putting your thoughts into words?
109. Does your spouse tell you that you are a difficult person with whom to communicate?
110. Are you dyslexic or a very slow reader?
111. Do you waste vast quantities of time roaming around on the Internet, sending and receiving e-mails, playing electronic games, and otherwise diverting yourself from what you originally sat down at your computer to do?
112. Do you love children but also find that you get bored trying to read to them or play a board game with them?
113. Do you feel that your life could be much, much better if only you

- could make one major change or breakthrough . . . but you don't know what it is?
114. Is your idea of a perfect dinner party to arrive, have a drink, eat the food, and go home with as little chitchat and dillydallying as possible?
 115. Do you sometimes smile in a conversation in hopes that it will be a sufficient contribution, because you have totally lost track of what is being talked about?
 116. Do you find it difficult to explain the rules of a game, not because you don't know them but because you just can't stand the laborious process of imparting them, step by step?
 117. Do you have recurring dreams in which you are mortified to discover you are walking around naked in public?
 118. No matter how hard you try to be on time, do you usually arrive late?
 119. Do you pray that your children never have to go through what you went through as a child and what you go through now?
 120. Do you have trouble lingering when you make love?
 121. Do you have trouble lingering in general? For example, if you see something beautiful, like a sunset or a painting, do you have trouble savoring it for more than a few seconds before you feel the need to move on, even though you liked the sunset or the painting?
 122. Do you sometimes get exceedingly annoyed (even if you don't show it) when someone interrupts you when you're reading the newspaper or working on your computer, even though the interruption was intended to be pleasant?
 123. If you have made it this far into this quiz, are you surprised that you have paid attention this long?
 124. Do you love basements and attics, even if yours are messy?
 125. Even if you don't talk about them much, do you think about the big questions in life more than you imagine the average person does?
 126. Do you feel a great deal of secret shame about how disorganized you are?
 127. Even though the questions in this quiz are diverse, can you intuit

- the theme that ties them all together, even if you can't explain it logically in words?
128. If you read all the questions in this quiz, and you made it all the way to this question, question 128, let me ask you, was there a point at which you said to yourself, "Wow. How does he know this? This is *me!*"?