

A day in the life of a teen with ADHD

The following is a typical day in Seamus' life:



7am

My alarm begins to ring.

7:20 am

Dad comes into the room to turn off the alarm and wake me up from yet another sleepless night. I am tired, not ready to wake up and have an argument with dad about letting my alarm ring for 20 minutes.

How this relates to ADHD: Sleep disturbance, low in mood, irritability frustration and anger.

8:15 am

Rush out the door, what have I been doing for the last 55 minutes? Quickly grab the easiest thing to eat. Don't eat it in the car and get told off for trying to eat my sugary snack in form time. End up not eating it.

How this relates to ADHD: struggle with prioritisation and time management.

9:00 am

Forgot to bring my timetable, what week are we on? I go to my year office to get another timetable. Get told off by my head of year and reminded that I should remember my timetable by now "you are in year 9 you know?!".

How this relates to ADHD: disorganisation and often loses things necessary for daily activities.

9:20 am

Realise I have PE lesson 2. I have forgotten my PE kit again! Do I get dad to bring it in or get told off by Sir? I go back to the year office. Get told off by head of year admin, "this is the second time this week, now I have to stop what I am doing just to call your dad. He should remember you know?!". I feel bad for my dad having to come back to school just before his shift.

How this relates to ADHD: Anxiety, forgetfulness as well as being restless and struggling not to rush into things.

11:00 am

Oh no, I will be stuck in this classroom for 3 hours with the same teacher. Lesson 3 Geography, lesson 4 History, lesson 5 RE. Why do we even have to do RE?! I know I am going to get told off as I struggle to sit in the same place for 3 hours. I get mixed up between these subjects. Can't wait for lunch!

How this relates to ADHD: tendency to struggle to keep focused over a period of time. Struggle to persist or sustain focus on tasks.

Noon

Finally, lunch time. I'm so hungry but feel so tired knowing that I have 2 more hours in that class with that teacher. I watch some videos and games on my school iPad, it helps me to relax. Oh man, bell has rung, I ran out of time to eat my food.

How this relates to ADHD: avoidance of tasks and inability to delay gratification. Hyper focus on things that enjoy but struggle to engage with more mundane tasks.

12:30 am

Lesson 4, I get told off for bringing my chicken burger into class. I throw it in the bin. I am hungry and I must listen to the same teacher for the rest of the day and start my work.

How this relates to ADHD: challenging to initiate and complete tasks.

1:40 pm

Lesson 5, same class, same teacher, same seat, what subject is this? "Pay attention Seamus!" My teacher tells me off. I wasn't even doing anything. My name goes on the board, strike 2. Another strike I will get another detention. What's the point? I shut down, put my head on the table for the rest of the lesson.

How this relates to ADHD: Struggle to concentrate and have a tendency to be distracted. Struggle to stay in same seat and leave in situations where it's considered inappropriate.

3:00 pm

I leave school 20 minutes late and miss walking with my friends. Mr Cunningham has kept me behind to shout at me about how I need to pay attention in class. I walk home alone again.

How this relates to ADHD: impact on school performance and social relationships.

6:00 pm

Dad arrives home from work. I walk up to him with a slip in my hand. "Oh Seamus, what have you done this time?!" I tell him I have a detention with Mr Cunningham again. I walk back to my room, slam my door, scrunch up the slip

and put it in the bin. The slip was an invitation to play football for the school's team, but the worst is always assumed.

How this relates to ADHD: poor self-esteem and confidence, struggles with criticism and emotional regulation.

6:30 pm

"Seamus, dinner time", dad calls out. I am too angry for dinner. I play on my Xbox for the rest of the night.

How this relates to ADHD: Impulsivity - have emotional reactions that appear over the top or immature for their age. Acting on impulse as opposed to acting upon reflection.