



# Strategies for Thriving in Relationships Where One Partner Has ADHD

## Understanding ADHD in Relationships

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) can present unique challenges in relationships. Recognizing how ADHD symptoms such as distractibility, impulsivity, and hyperactivity impact both partners is crucial. It's not just about managing symptoms; it's about understanding the dynamic they create in your relationship.

## Communication is Key

1. **Active Listening:** Practice truly hearing what your partner is saying, without immediately planning your response. This requires patience and a willingness to understand their perspective.
2. **Clear and Direct Communication:** Especially important in ADHD relationships. Ambiguities can lead to misunderstandings. Be straightforward about your needs and feelings.
3. **Scheduled Check-ins:** Regularly scheduled times to discuss the relationship, daily logistics, and emotional well-being can prevent misunderstandings and build a stronger connection.

## Managing ADHD Together

1. **Education:** Both partners should learn about ADHD. Understanding the condition can foster empathy and patience.
2. **Strategies for Daily Living:** Implement organizational tools like calendars, reminders, and to-do lists. Use technology to your advantage.
3. **Professional Support:** Consider counselling, both individually and as a couple. ADHD coaching can also provide strategies tailored to managing ADHD symptoms.

## Navigating Challenges

1. **Impulsivity:** Establish a "pause and plan" approach for decision-making to mitigate impulsivity.
2. **Distractibility:** Create a distraction-free environment for important conversations. Use visual cues to maintain focus.
3. **Hyperfocus:** Balance the positive aspects of hyperfocus with the need for attention to the relationship. Establish signals to gently remind your partner to re-engage with their surroundings.

## Building Intimacy and Trust

1. **Quality Time:** Plan regular activities that both partners enjoy. This can enhance connection and intimacy.



2. **Express Appreciation:** Regularly acknowledge each other's efforts and strengths. Positive reinforcement can lead to more desired behaviours.
3. **Conflict Resolution Skills:** Learn to address conflicts constructively. ADHD can lead to misunderstandings, so developing effective conflict resolution skills is essential.

## Examples of Positive Strategies

1. **Creating Routines Together:** Routines can provide structure and predictability, reducing stress for both partners.
2. **Use of Timers and Alarms:** For the ADHD partner, timers can help manage time effectively. For the non-ADHD partner, it can be a tool to gently remind their partner of tasks or commitments.
3. **Division of Labor:** Play to each other's strengths when dividing household tasks or responsibilities.

## Conclusion

Relationships where one partner has ADHD can flourish with understanding, patience, and the right strategies. By focusing on effective communication, managing ADHD symptoms together, and building intimacy, couples can navigate the challenges and enjoy a fulfilling relationship.

**Source of Information:** This handout draws on a wide range of sources, including leading ADHD research, experiences shared by couples in therapy, and best practices recommended by ADHD and relationship experts. The strategies and examples provided are based on evidence-based approaches and the collective wisdom of professionals who specialize in ADHD and relationships. This handout was created using OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT (4) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>.

For more resources and guidance, visit our ADHD Resource Hub or consult with an ADHD specialist.