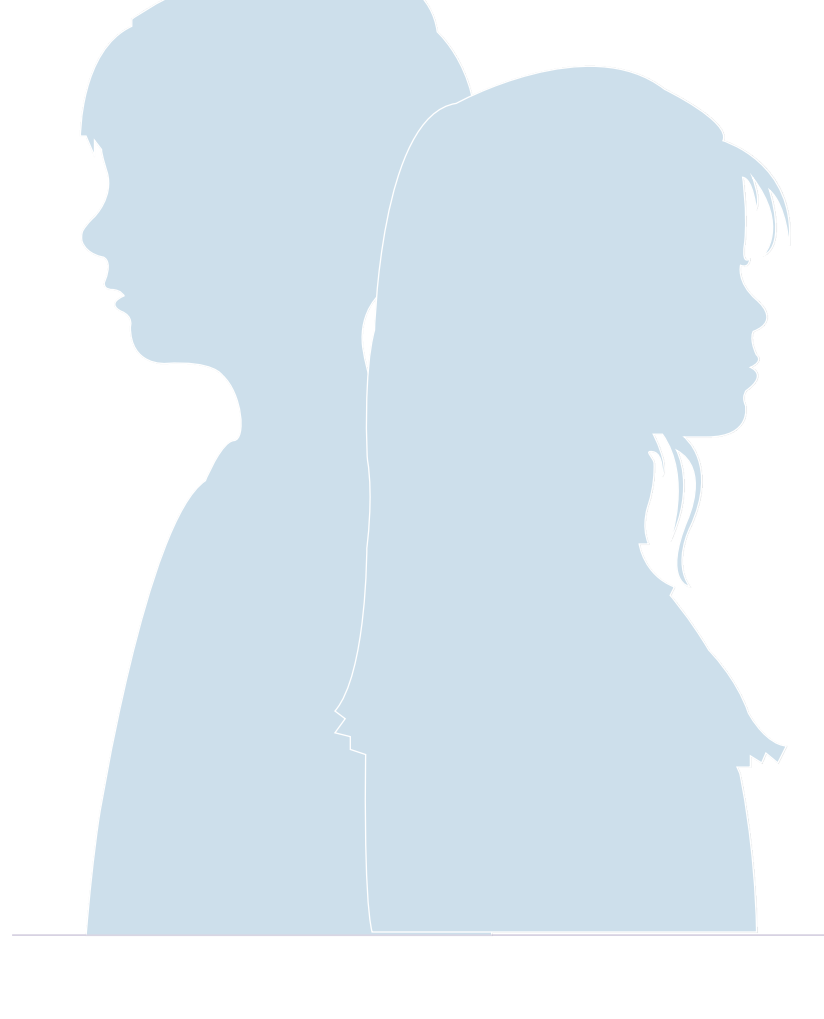


OVERLAPPING AUTISM AND ADHD



30-80%
of individuals with autism
have symptoms of ADHD.

20-50%
of children with ADHD
have traits of autism.



FUNCTIONAL IMPACTS

Autism and ADHD present similar day-to-day challenges. Both conditions can:



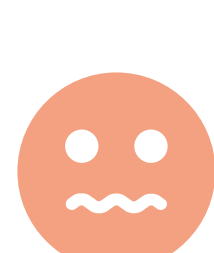
affect social interaction



interfere with attention



delay the development of language



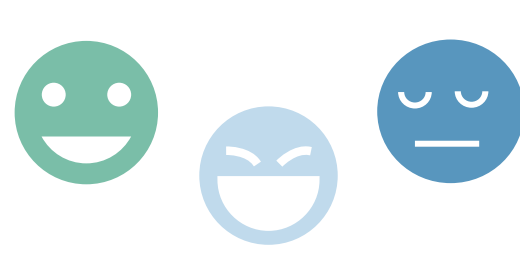
spark discomfort in new situations



result in sleep disturbances



occur with oppositional or defiant behavior



limit emotional regulation



involve atypical sensory processing



create deficits in working memory

HOW DO AUTISM AND ADHD COMPARE?



SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFERENCES

Autistic individuals may have greater differences in auditory processing than children with ADHD or typical development.

Children with ADHD often score higher than those with autism or typical development on tests measuring visual processing.



SOCIALIZATION AND FRIENDSHIP DIFFERENCES

Social communication styles can be more difficult for autistic people to parse.

Impulsivity can interfere with social communication with ADHD.



ATTENTION DIFFICULTIES



With autism, attention problems may occur when the individual is intensely focusing on something else.

With ADHD, this lack of attention is often because of distraction.



MOTOR-SKILL DIFFERENCES



Repetitive movement and speech patterns are considered an autistic trait.

ADHD can cause restless movements.

EARLY SIGNS

Developmental monitoring and screening are usually part of pediatric visits. Parents or health practitioners may raise concerns about developmental delays.

ADHD may go undiagnosed until behavior issues crop up in the school years.

EITHER CONDITION CAN RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT:

- Excessive crying
- Sleep problems
- Eating issues
- Motor delays
- Difficulty interacting with others



CAMOUFLAGING AND MASKING

People with neurodevelopmental differences often work hard to hide or compensate for their differences. Camouflaging and masking can cause extreme fatigue. They are also linked to higher risk for depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts or actions.

DISPARITIES IN DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Autism and ADHD occur in all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Sex, gender, race, and other factors can play a role in delaying identification and intervention.

WHAT CLINICIANS CAN DO

- Screen for both conditions when either condition is present.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation, gathering data from different environments, sources, and assessments.
- Avoid “double-counting” traits for both autism and ADHD.
- If possible, observe functioning over time since characteristics can change.
- Use visual tools in addition to those requiring spoken responses.
- Be aware of how culture can impact criteria such as eye contact.
- Keep an eye out for camouflaging and compensatory strategies.
- Consider assessing mental health and sensory processing.
- Work to counteract bias and other sources of disparity.

Scan the QR code to learn more:



unlocking potential