

SEND Puberty

Supporting ADHD:

A Parent Guide to Navigating Puberty



The emotional and physical changes puberty brings can be really challenging to navigate and children with ADHD can find the transition particularly difficult. As a parent, your guidance, patience and understanding will play a vital role in supporting your child through this stage of their life. We hope you find this guide to be an informative source of support as you navigate this journey together.

How might puberty affect ADHD?

The way a child's ADHD presents might change as they go through puberty.

Fluctuating hormones can cause children with ADHD to experience mood swings and increased reactivity.

It can become more challenging to manage attention, impulsivity and hyperactivity.

Puberty can disrupt sleep patterns, which, in turn, can exacerbate characteristics of ADHD.

Your child might become more aware of societal pressures, which can lead to feelings of self-doubt or anxiety.

Puberty can encourage children to explore new coping strategies, which can also support them in adapting to new situations and managing symptoms of ADHD.

In some cases, risk-taking behaviours can increase.

Remember, every child is an individual and your child might experience few, some or many of these to different degrees.



What support can I offer my child?

Continue to offer your child a safe, loving and supportive environment to express their thoughts and feelings as they navigate the changes they're experiencing. Speak openly and honestly about puberty, avoiding metaphors and using accurate, age-appropriate language.

Focus on positives and offer reassurance – the period between childhood and young adulthood is a period of rapid change which effects children physically, emotionally and socially, so they'll likely need to lean on you for comfort and support.

You might also consider:

encouraging your child to ask questions about their body, feelings and relationships;

providing visual aids, planners or checklists to support your child with organisation and family or personal routines;

breaking down tasks or situations into more manageable chunks (timers can often be a useful tool);

encouraging exercise and providing a balanced, nutritious diet;

engaging in regular quality time together;

exploring and practising a range of coping techniques, such as journaling or physical activity;

discussing personal hygiene and ways to look after their body;

providing fidget toys or stress balls;

encouraging healthy sleep patterns;

role-playing social scenarios so your child can safely explore different occurrences and practise their responses.



Conversation Prompts

It can often be difficult to discuss puberty and the changes it brings. You can use these conversation prompts to initiate the discussion and, hopefully, encourage your child to express any thoughts, feelings or concerns they might have.

Have you noticed any changes to your body lately?

What do you understand about puberty and why it happens?

What helps you to feel calm?

How do you feel about the changes your body will go through?

Would it be helpful to read a book or watch a video about puberty?

What do you understand about boundaries?

What does a healthy friendship or relationship look like to you?

Friendships and relationships sometimes change. Have you noticed that?

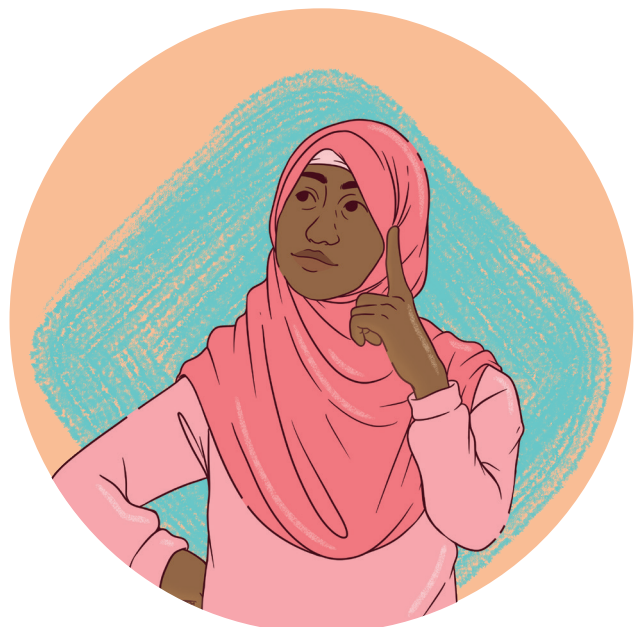
Are there any questions you'd like to ask me?

What could you do if you were feeling anxious?

Would you like to explore different coping mechanisms together?

What could you do if you were feeling angry or frustrated?

What could you do if you were feeling overwhelmed?



Disclaimers: These resources are those which we have generally found to be of benefit to learners with SEND. However, every learner's needs are different and so these resources may not be suitable for your learner. It is for you to consider whether it is appropriate to use these resources with your learner.

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. This resource contains potentially sensitive and/or upsetting topics that may emotionally impact on children due to their experiences in their past. It is your responsibility to consider whether it is appropriate to use this resource with your children. If you do use this resource, it is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate support is available for anyone affected.