

Women and ADHD Series: PMS Needs Assessment

Changes in hormone levels result in heightened symptoms of ADHD. By identifying specific needs, you may be able to alleviate burdens that are heightened during this time and bring your partner in as a support with something specific. When making a decision about what may be most pressing, consider how much the symptoms interfere with your life or relationship by rating them below. You may also wish to allow your partner to complete the exercise to allow them the opportunity to reflect on their own impact, *and how they can make changes to support you.*

INATTENTIVENESS & EXECUTIVE FUNCTION					
SYMPTOM		HOW IT SHOWS UP		IMPACT	
Challenges with time management or ‘time blindness’	▪	Spending time on tasks that are less important (cleaning out cupboards, instead of doing dishes or meal planning).	1	2	3
	▪	Trying to do too many things at once (taking on too many ‘interesting’ projects or opportunities, and quickly feeling overwhelmed.)			
Short attention span for uninteresting tasks	▪	Spending less time than required on important tasks, like work-related tasks.	1	2	3
	▪	Starting a task, and not finishing it. Dishes are half done, the floor is half swept, or cupboard doors are left open or the groceries are not put away.			
Trouble completing tasks and increasing procrastination	▪	To-do lists get longer and longer, tasks are pushed to the next day.	1	2	3
	▪	Unable to meet professional or personal deadlines.			
	▪	Being late to regularly-scheduled obligations or appointments (daycare pick-ups, gym classes).			
Lack of focus, disorganization and difficulty prioritizing	▪	It might feel like your ADHD medication has stopped working.	1	2	3
	▪	Feeling more distracted than usual (background noise, clutter, etc.). Unable to focus on or understand what others are saying to you.			
Forgetfulness of poor working memory	▪	Missed appointments and obligations, like paying bills.	1	2	3
	▪	Forgetting about previous agreements or couple/family rituals.			
Making careless mistakes	▪	Putting belongings in the wrong place, unable to locate personal belongings (leaving the house without your phone, wallet or keys).	1	2	3
	▪	Work-related or administrative errors.			

HYPERACTIVITY, EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES				
SYMPTOM	HOW IT SHOWS UP	IMPACT		
Addictive behaviours	- Increased substance use or misuse (alcohol, recreational drugs). - Excessive time on phone (games, social media, online shopping) or watching TV. - Impulsive spending or shopping.	1	2	3
Emotional withdrawal	- Bottling up emotions, feeling like we can't share, or can't be helped. - Turning away from loved ones and friends, not responding to texts or invites. - Choosing alone time over quality time with a partner. All the time.	1	2	3
Rejection sensitivity dysphoria	- Feeling unable to take criticism, criticism or feedback from a partner; it always feels like an attack. - Increased defensiveness. - Feeling unloved or rejected.	1	2	3
Mood swings, emotional dysregulation	- Intense need to connect, intense joy, need for physical touch or affection more than usual. - Intense sadness, tears (triggers can be very minor). - Playing defense, feeling angry, nitpicking with a partner, things that usually don't bother you, begin to. - Feeling less satisfied once tasks are completed or an inordinate sense of accomplishment when basic tasks are completed.	1	2	3
Inability to recover reasonably from strong emotional upset (anger, sadness)	- Using different communication strategies to keep partners away or communicate a message (slamming doors, walking loudly, talking loudly... the need to be heard is REAL). - Strong, uncontrollable urges to express emotion (yelling, tears). - Little things set us off (being asked to for a small request from a partner, making meals, feeling overwhelmed with all that is required to get through the day, eliciting a big emotional response and subsequent shut down).	1	2	3
Fatigue	- Falling asleep on the couch earlier than usual. - Sleeping through alarms. - Unable to keep up with daily tasks and routines.	1	2	3
Changes in appetite, libido	- Craving specific foods, feeling overwhelmed about meals. - Can't seem to make decisions about to eat, impulsive eating choices, unintentionally skipping meals. - Increased anxiety/stress about meal planning. - Unable to communicate needs related to sexual preferences, more impulsive decision making, taking risk with sexual behaviours or not wanting to have sex at all, and then feeling guilty about disappointing spouse.	1	2	3