Tips for ADHD Patients Adjusting to Higher Education

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

ADHD College Student Adjustments

An ADHD College Student tends to have a harder time adjusting to the faster pace and self-directed study schedule of college. As such, ADHD patients need to begin their higher education career with a plan to help them make a successful transition. While many colleges offer specialized support resources to students with ADHD, you should arrive with a strategy already in place.

You should also remain in close consultation with your doctor, as many children with ADHD are taken off their medication in their late teens or early twenties. Discontinuing your ADHD medication before you start college may make the transition even harder.

Tips for Adjusting to the College Learning Environment

Ideally, you should start planning for your eventual adjustment to college several years before you leave high school. However, it is never too late to begin implementing lifestyle modifications that will increase your chances of succeeding in higher education environments. Here are some of the top tips from experts:

- **Practice independent living.** As you prepare to go away to college, start self-directing your schedule. Manage your wake-up times and bedtimes, and practice independent living. You'll find that it will be easier to make the transition if you've already built these skills, rather than having to learn them while you are also adjusting academically.
- **Apply successful models to the college environment.** As you have progressed through high school, chances are you have found some coping and management strategies that work for you. Create a plan for importing these strategies to the college environment, which is more intensive with less supervision.
- **Keep your diagnosis to yourself among your peers.** Abuse of ADHD drugs is common on college campuses, and if you have ADHD, you may be subjected to peer pressure to sell or share your medication, particularly at exam time. Not only is this illegal, but it can also compromise your ability to perform if you don't have enough medication to take daily.
- **Disclose your condition to your instructors.** While most experts recommend that you not disclose your diagnosis openly to your peers, it is a good idea to let your instructors know that you have ADHD. They may be more forthcoming with extensions, and in some cases, you may be given extra time to complete examinations.
- **Manage your schedule.** While many students with ADHD plan to take very light course loads in their first semesters, this can be detrimental as your schedule may not provide enough structure. Work on striking the right balance by starting with a full course load, then adjusting it if necessary.
- **Ask for help.** Getting help when you need it shows the strength of character, not weakness. Don't hesitate to reach out to campus support networks, instructors, parents and your doctor if you need help.

Your first semester will come with many challenges, but if you prepare properly, you'll be equipped to meet them. Don't worry too much if you struggle to adapt to college life -- many students do. There's nothing wrong with

taking a lighter course load or cutting back on extracurricular activities to give yourself more time to study and complete assignments.