

Understanding ADHD



- ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder affecting both children and adults.
- It is described as a “persistent” or on-going pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that gets in the way of daily life or typical development.
- There are three presentations of ADHD:
 - Inattentive
 - Hyperactive-impulsive
 - Combined inattentive & hyperactive-impulsive
- Children with ADHD often do not sense danger. They have difficulty seeing the outcome of an action. They can act without thinking
- Children are more likely to develop good self-esteem and improve their behaviour if the approach to them is positive and they have a good relationship with the teacher

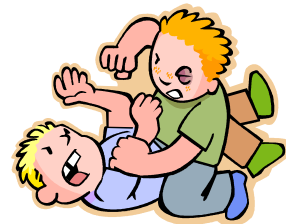
Hyperactivity

- Frequently out of seat in class often gets up from seat or leaves classroom inappropriately
- Unable to work or play quietly
- Fidgeting in seat; may frequently tap on books/table
- Rushing or charging around; always on the go
- Persistent over-activity that is not moderated by social demands
- Often talks excessively
- Runs or climbs excessively



Impulsivity

- Interrupting others
- Cannot wait for their turn
- Blurting out answers too soon
- Intruding on others activities
- Talking excessively without response to social constraints
- May be aggressive to classmates
- Bothering / distracting classmates



Inattentive

- Makes careless mistakes
- Struggles to sustain attention in tasks/play
- Doesn't listen when spoken to
- Not following through instructions or finishing work tasks
- Difficulty in organising tasks/activity
- Avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (eg schoolwork or homework)
- Often loses things
- Often distracted by what's going on around them
- Forgetful in daily activities



Inattentive, but not **hyperactive** or **impulsive** may be overlooked as they are not disruptive

Explaining ADHD to Teachers

Share this infographic, created by Chris A. Zeigler Dendy and Alex Zeigler, with your teacher (artwork adapted by ADDitude magazine).

The Tip of the Iceberg: The Obvious ADHD Behaviors

Hyperactivity

- > Can't sit still
- > Fidgets
- > Talks a lot
- > Runs or climbs a lot
- > Always on the go

Impulsivity

- > Lacks self control
- > Difficulty awaiting turn
- > Blurts out
- > Interrupts
- > Intrudes

- > Talks back
- > Loses temper

Inattention

- > Disorganized
- > Doesn't follow through

- > Doesn't pay attention
- > Is forgetful
- > Doesn't seem to listen
- > Loses things
- > Late homework

Hidden Beneath the Surface: The Not-So-Obvious Behaviors (2/3 have at least one other condition)

Neurotransmitter Deficits Impact Behavior

- > Insufficient levels of neurotransmitters, dopamine and norepinephrine, results in reduced brain activity.

Weak Executive Functioning

- > Working memory and recall
- > Getting started, effort
- > Internalizing language
- > Controlling emotions
- > Problem solving

Impaired Sense of Time

- > Doesn't judge passage of time accurately
- > Loses track of time
- > Often late
- > Forgets long-term

- projects or is late
- > Difficulty planning for future
- > Impatient
- > Hates waiting
- > Time creeps
- > Avoids doing homework

Sleep Disturbance (56%)

- > Impacts memory
- > Doesn't get restful sleep
- > Can't fall asleep
- > Can't wake up
- > Late for school
- > Irritable
- > Morning battles

3-Year Delayed Brain Maturation

- > Less mature
- > Less responsible
- > 18-year-old acts like 15

Not Learning Easily from Rewards and Punishment

- > Repeats misbehavior
- > May be difficult to discipline

THE ADHD ICEBERG

Only 1/8 of an iceberg is visible. Most of it is hidden beneath the surface.

- > Less likely to follow rules
- > Difficulty managing his own behavior
- > Doesn't study past behavior
- > Acts without sense of hindsight
- > Must have immediate rewards
- > Long-term rewards don't work
- > Doesn't examine his own behavior
- > Difficulty changing his behavior

Co-Existing Conditions

- > Anxiety (34%)
- > Depression (29%)

- > Bipolar (12%)
- > Tourette Syndrome (11%)
- > Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (4%)
- > Oppositional Defiant Disorder (54-67%)

Serious Learning Problems

- > Specific Learning Disability (25-50%)
- > Poor working memory
- > Can't memorize easily
- > Forgets teacher and parent requests
- > Slow math calculation
- > Spelling problems
- > Poor written expression
- > Difficulty writing essays
- > Slow retrieval of information

- > Poor listening and reading comprehension
- > Difficulty describing the world in words
- > Disorganization
- > Slow cognitive processing speed
- > Poor handwriting
- > Inattention
- > Impulsive learning style

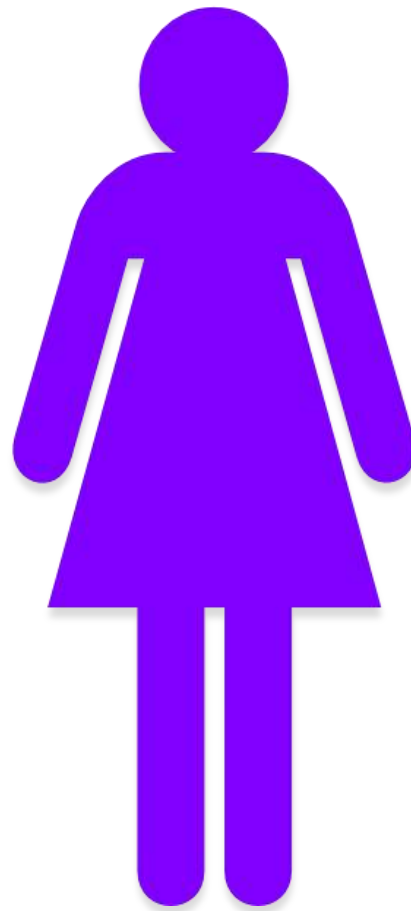
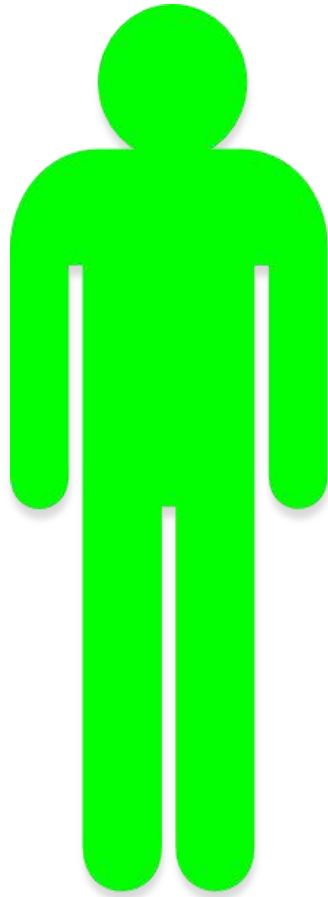
Low Frustration Tolerance

- > Difficulty controlling emotions
- > Short fuse
- > Emotionally reactive
- > Loses temper easily
- > May give up more easily
- > Doesn't stick with things
- > Speaks or acts before thinking
- > Difficulty seeing others' perspective
- > May be self-centered

ADHD is often more complex than most people realize! Like icebergs, many problems related to ADHD are not visible. ADHD may be mild, moderate, or severe, is likely to coexist with other conditions, and may be a disability for some students.

You can order the original color ADHD Iceberg poster at CHRISDENDY.COM.

Boys vs Girls



BOYS

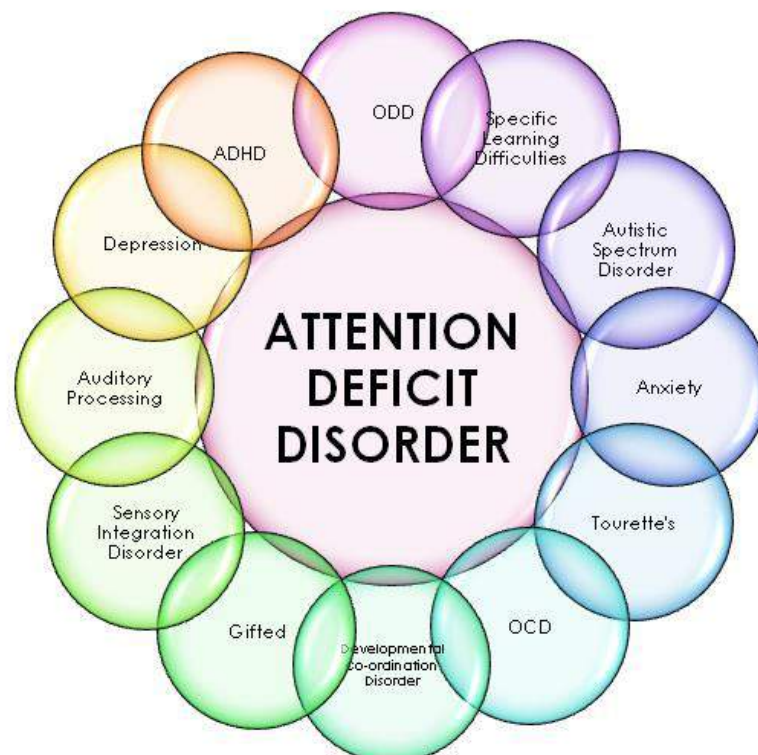
- ▶ Often identified at younger age
- ▶ Can present as more hyperactive
- ▶ Behaviours can be more externalised
- ▶ Can be affected by hormones
- ▶ Behaviours can be more accepted by peers - seen as the 'class clown'
- ▶ Higher rates of co-morbid ODD or

GIRLS

- ▶ Often identified at older ages
- ▶ Can present as more inattentive
- ▶ Behaviours can be more internalised
- ▶ Can be affected by hormones
- ▶ Can have more difficulties with friendships
- ▶ Can have more feelings of self-doubt
- ▶ Higher rates of co-existing problems linked with mood or worries

Other considerations

- Co-existing conditions are very common in people with an ADHD diagnosis (in around 66% of diagnoses), and include disorders of mood, conduct, learning, motor control, communication, and anxiety (NICE, 2008).
- Many CYP diagnosed with ADHD experience academic problems, achieve lower grades than their peers, and perform at a lower level than would be predicted by their IQ (Daley & Birchwood, 2010).
- Keep in mind that a child with ADHD may be immature socially. Even if they're on target academically, they are often two years younger than their classmates.



Education intervention and classroom management

Teachers can assist children with ADHD through a variety of educational intervention and classroom management strategies, as well as behaviour modification strategies.



Examples of educational interventions are:

- Seating the child near the teacher but always as a regular part of the class
- Ensuring the child is seated away from distracting stimuli such as heaters, windows or air conditioners
- Surrounding the child with good role models, or 'significant others'
- Encouraging peer tutoring and co-operative learning

Fidgeting and restlessness

- Telling a child with ADHD to Stop does not work. They need to move!
- Try to replace the behaviours with more suitable ways of getting the sensory stimulation by giving them jobs
- Activities that provide calming, heavy, steady muscle work are very effective in helping these children to calm down.
- Use of a weighted lap-pad
- Use of a 'fidget' toy/object – this can be anything from a fidget spinner to a piece of blue tack or play doh.
- Use of scribble book/whiteboard
- Scheduled learning breaks
- Use of headphones/ear defenders

ADHD and working memory



- Working memory is the ability to hold in mind and mentally manipulate information over a short period of time.
- Research suggests that children with ADHD are more likely to have difficulties with working memory than their peers (see Alloway and Gathercole).
- In the classroom: difficulties include copying from the board, remembering instructions, reading, mathematics.

Supporting Working Memory

- Recognise working memory failures
- Monitor the child
- Evaluate the working demands of learning activities
- Reduce working memory loads if necessary
- Be aware that processing demands increase working memory loads

Specific strategies to help with attention difficulties

- Getting students to repeat back instructions
- Ensuring resources are available readily and in sufficient quantities
- Varying the pace of tasks and activities used in lessons
- Where possible including active as well as in-seat tasks
- Using prompt sheets and step by step instructions
- Rewarding task completion immediately if possible
- Reducing extraneous background noises
- Ensuring students are given clear, concise instructions
- Teaching the child strategies to improve their listening skills
- Encouraging students to take notes or finding other ways of them taking notes/recording their voice/ taking a picture of the work on the board
- Using visual cues



"Thoughts fly lightning fast... Can you control them?"

To help with increased activity levels:

- Allow students to fiddle with an agreed object, e.g. a stress ball
- Anticipate potential problems and have planned responses
- Emphasise the difference between 'in class' and 'out of class' modes
- Allow the child a calming-down period before coming into class
- Encourage a calm atmosphere in class
- Give short breaks between assignments
- Plan ahead for transition times
- Use alternative technology e.g. computer, Dictaphone, phone if appropriate
- Set a variety of tasks and activities
- Where possible include 'hands on' activities
- Give the whole class stretching exercises midway through lessons
- Seek advice from an occupational therapist
- Plan time out facility; encourage students to realise when this is necessary
- Use students for 'jobs' which require activity (eg giving books out to the class)



Specific strategies to deal with organisational difficulties include:



- Liaise with parent/carer regarding consistent strategies to help develop routines
- Provide a checklist of equipment required for specific lessons
- In Primary schools – leave a checklist for going home routines somewhere the child can see it – back of their chair if chairs go on tables/above coat pegs.
- Have spare materials in classes that students can borrow/'rent'
- Instigate a targeted incentive system
- Colour code and/or use symbols in the timetable - ensure students have several copies and that spare copies are available at a specific location
- A good routine at home/school will help a child develop their organisational skills. For example, parents can help them to organise their bedroom, by using containers to store things.
- Encourage the child to organise their bag in the evening for the following day. Using the checklist of equipment from school and helping them think through the full day to plan what they need.
- Suggest pinning a clear coloured timetable on the wall at home with matching colour coded checklists of what they need to take. You might want to include another checklist in the bag so they remember what to take home. It can be helpful to have a zipped bag or wallet in the school bag which the child puts any letters from school into.
- Where Secondary schools use pupil planners or journals with a timetable and homework is recorded. Encourage children and their families to work out a daily homework timetable so there is still a routine at home.



Social Skills

Children with ADHD may have difficulties making and keeping friends because of their over-activity, impulsivity and restlessness. Most of us learn social behaviour from our families, and our everyday experiences. However, children with ADHD may not pick up socially appropriate behaviour due to their difficulties with attention, concentration, hyperactivity and impulsivity. This can result in the child with ADHD behaving in a way that is socially immature for their age. A child with ADHD may have one or more of the following difficulties with social skills:

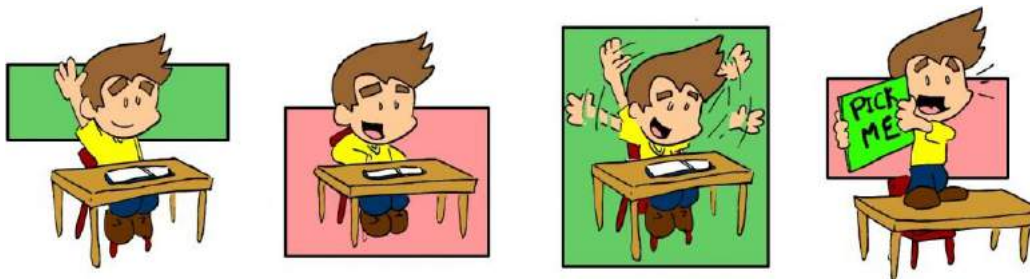
- find it hard to read a social situation so that their own behaviour can be adapted to fit in
- play well on a one to one basis but find group play more difficult
- be very self-centred and insist that they set the rules or take the lead in a game
- grab the toys they want from others
- find it difficult to stay quiet or still
- experience difficulties reading facial expressions, or responding appropriately to tone of voice
- be tactless, without intending harm, they may blurt out hurtful statements
- experience difficulties predicting the consequences of their actions
- not know when to stop
- find it difficult to ignore another child who is behaving inappropriately, tending to join in and escalate the situation.

By observing a child in social situations, you may be able to see what their difficulties are. You could then try to explicitly teach them a more appropriate way to behave. Role play of alternative ways of behaving can be helpful as they may help the child to see the consequences of different behaviours. Schools may run small groups for children to help them develop their social skills. In a small proportion of children with ADHD, their social difficulties are too severe to be explained by ADHD alone. Such a child may have an additional condition such as a speech and language disorder, or Autism.

Impulsiveness

Children with ADHD often act before they think. This can lead them into danger if they run out into the road after a ball, or if they hit out at someone who has teased them. They may find it hard to wait and shout out in class or push to be first in line. These behaviours can make them unpopular with other children.

- You will need to ensure the child is supervised in new settings where they may become excited and act impulsively.
- Notice when the child has controlled their impulsiveness and praise them for this.
- If you know the child is going to have to wait, plan an activity or a way to keep them occupied
- Set clear rules and frequently remind children of them. Praise the child for keeping these rules.
- Establish clear routines and teach the child to follow these so they become habit.
- Teach the child to STOP and THINK before they ACT.
- Encourage children to see the consequences of their actions, they may not see what they did was potentially dangerous.
- Visual reminders can be helpful, such as a wrist band with a shared meaning, an agreed hand signal, or a picture of someone doing the correct thing, e.g. football cards and traffic lights.



Distractibility

Children with ADHD find it difficult to sustain attention on a task unless it really interests them. The following strategies may help when a child needs to focus on a task:

Try to reduce distractions from the environment

- Sit away from the window/door.
- Sit facing a wall rather than into the room
- Ensure the television, radio, or music are switched off
- Make sure the child has all the equipment they need for the task before they start.

Break up the work time

- Use a timer to demark work time and break time, say 10 minutes work followed by 5 min for a movement break.
- Set targets to be achieved. "Let's see how much you can do in five minutes."

Encourage the child to complete tasks

- Set a task that can be achieved.
- Break the task into smaller steps.
- Using picture prompts of the parts of a task may help.
- Praise the child for completing each step and allow a break between each step
- Ensure the child completes the task so they get the satisfaction of finishing and provide no cost reward - e.g. extra time playing a game they enjoy.

Try to make tasks fun

- Children with ADHD often like practical tasks.
- Try to find ways of making tasks more involving. For instance, when learning spellings they could sing the letters to a tune or rhythm; write the letters in sand; use 'look cover, write check', or use magnetic letters on a fridge.

Diet and appetite



- It is generally recommended that children with ADHD should have a healthy diet. They should eat breakfast and avoid caffeine (a known stimulant) which is found in drinks such as coca cola.
- Children should be encouraged to drink water during the school day as being well hydrated is essential to aid concentration.
- Medication for ADHD can reduce appetite, so children's height and weight should be monitored by the prescribing team.
- Children with ADHD sometimes find eating at school a challenge. This could be because they are not hungry or because they want to prioritise their playtime. Some children eat just enough to take the edge off their hunger so that they can go out to play, whereas others may have sensory issues relating to the smell, texture or taste of foods. School staff can help by encouraging children to eat and/or permitting them to go to the front of the queue at lunchtime. It is important to keep parents informed if a child is not eating at school. The school may be asked to keep a record of what the child is eating if there are concerns about a child's weight.

Challenging Behaviour



Types of Challenging Behaviour

- Aggression - verbal or physical
- Withdrawal
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Self-injurious behaviour
- Refusing to co-operate
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Repetitive questioning
- Spitting
- Smearing
- Over/under eating
- Stealing food
- Not sleeping

Why are behaviours challenging?

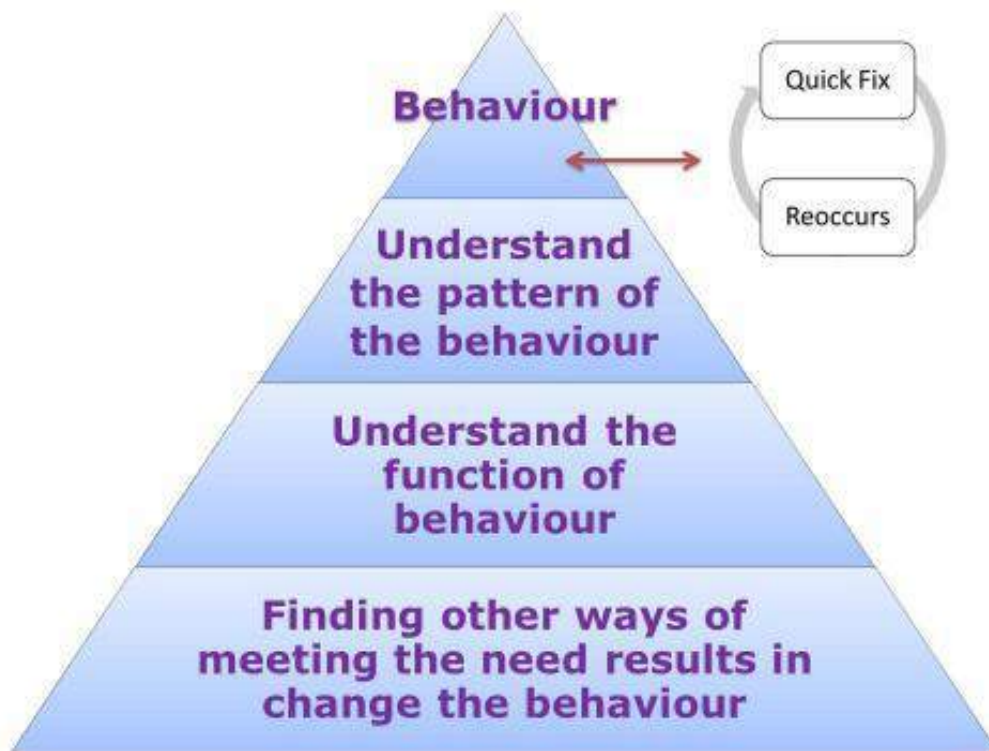
- Dangerous to self/others
- Worrying
- Upset
- Irritating/annoying
- Embarrassing
- Disappointing
- Disgusting
- Boring
- Exhausting – physically and mentally
- Expectations/view of self e.g. I 'should' deal with this better; they 'should' do as I say

Challenging Behaviour (cont..)

Functions of behaviour

- Research has shown that a majority of behaviour happens for the following reasons:
 - Unmet primary need
 - Developmental needs
 - Fear and panic
 - Shame
 - Control
 - Trust issues
 - High levels of anxiety
 - Disregulation of emotions

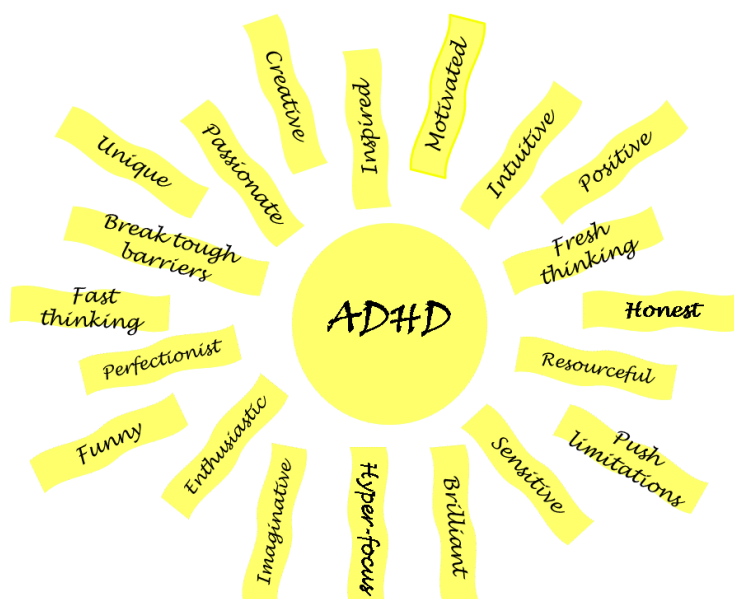
A behaviour can service different functions at different times



Final Thoughts

- Keep in mind the **strengths and difficulties** children with ADHD.
- Close liaison with Parents
- Remaining calm and positive
- Make the consequence fit the behaviour
- Let the child know the consequence in advance so they have a choice.
- Ensure the rules are clear.
- Ensure the consequence can be carried out
- Praise when the consequence is completed and move on
- Key message from the new SEND Code of Practice (2014).....

Every teacher is responsible and accountable for all pupils in their class wherever or with whoever the pupils are working with



STRENGTHS AND TALENTS OF PEOPLE WITH ADHD

ADHD



ALWAYS WILLING TO HELP OTHERS • ADAPTIVE • ADVENTUROUS • AMBITIOUS • ARTISTIC • ALWAYS KIND
CAN CREATE CONNECTIONS • CAN THINK ON MY FEET • COURAGEOUS • CREATIVE
CONFIDENT • DEDICATED • ENERGETIC • ENTREPRENEURIAL
GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR • HARD WORKER • HELPFUL
IMAGINATIVE • INTELLIGENT • INTUITIVE
LOTS OF INTERESTS • MOTIVATING SELF AND OTHERS • MUSICAL
OPTIMISTIC • OUTGOING • PASSIONATE • PERSISTENT • PHILOSOPHICAL • PRODUCTIVE
PROBLEM SOLVER • QUICK WITTED • RELATES TO PEOPLE
RESOURCEFUL • RESISTANT • SEES THE BIG PICTURE • SPONTANEOUS
STABLE • SUCCESSFUL • TAKES INITIATIVE
TENACIOUS • THEORETICAL • THINKS OUTSIDE THE BOX • THINKS BIG, DREAMS BIG
THOROUGH • TOLERANT • UNCONVENTIONAL • UNLIMITED ENERGY • VERSATILE • VISIONARY
VISUAL LEARNER • WILLING TO EXPLORE • WITTY
WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS • WORKS WELL UNDER PRESSURE

