

AlongNow

How to Accompany a Person With ADHD

Professional Human Companionship • Educational Guide

ADHD can affect attention, impulse control, activity level, organization, time management, and completion of everyday tasks. Companionship can provide structure and encouragement while preserving autonomy.

Understand the Person, Not Just the Label

A person with ADHD may lose track of time, change topics, forget details, become restless, or struggle to start a task even when it matters to them. These difficulties should not be framed as moral failures.

Helpful Companion Practices

- Keep communication clear, friendly, and concrete.
- Break an activity into small steps when the person asks for help.
- Use written reminders, timers, or simple checklists only with the person's agreement.
- Allow movement and short breaks during activities requiring sustained attention.
- Support interests and strengths, and recognize progress rather than only completed outcomes.

What to Avoid

- Do not shame the person for distraction, lateness, restlessness, or forgetfulness.
- Do not become a disciplinarian or take over responsibilities without consent.
- Do not advise changing prescribed medication.

A Helpful Phrase

“Would it help if we choose just one thing to start with and decide the next step after that?”

Safety and Scope

AlongNow companionship is non-clinical. A companion should not diagnose, provide psychotherapy, prescribe or change medication, or replace professional medical or mental-health care. If the person appears to be in immediate danger, has suicidal thoughts, or may harm themselves or someone else, contact appropriate emergency/crisis services. In the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline; call 911 for an immediate life-threatening emergency.

Educational basis: National Institute of Mental Health guidance on depression, autism and ADHD; National Institute on Aging principles for dementia care and communication. This AlongNow guide is educational and is not medical advice.

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