

From lecture hall to home:

ADHD and post-secondary education

**NAVIGATING THE SHIFT FROM IN-PERSON TO
VIRTUAL LEARNING—YOUR NEW NORMAL**



An overview of ADHD



SYMPTOMS CAN MANIFEST DIFFERENTLY IN ADULTS VS. IN CHILDREN AND CAN CHANGE OVER TIME

Possible “red flags” for suspected ADHD include:

✓ Organizational problems (time management, missed appointments, late/unfinished projects)	✓ Difficulty with household routines, sleeping patterns, self-regulating activities	✓ Driving problems (tickets, serious accidents)
✓ Erratic work/academic performance	✓ Direct relative with ADHD	✓ Low self-esteem; chronic underachievement
✓ Need to reduce course load; difficulties completing school assignments	✓ Addictions (substance use, sex addiction, overeating, compulsive shopping/exercising/gaming/gambling)	✓ Difficulty with finances
✓ Family/relationship problems	✓ Frequent accidents due to recklessness/inattention	✓ Anger management problems

The symptoms of ADHD **can overlap with those of other mental health conditions**, including:

- Antisocial personality disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Substance use disorder
- Anxiety disorder
- Major depressive disorder
- Bipolar disorder



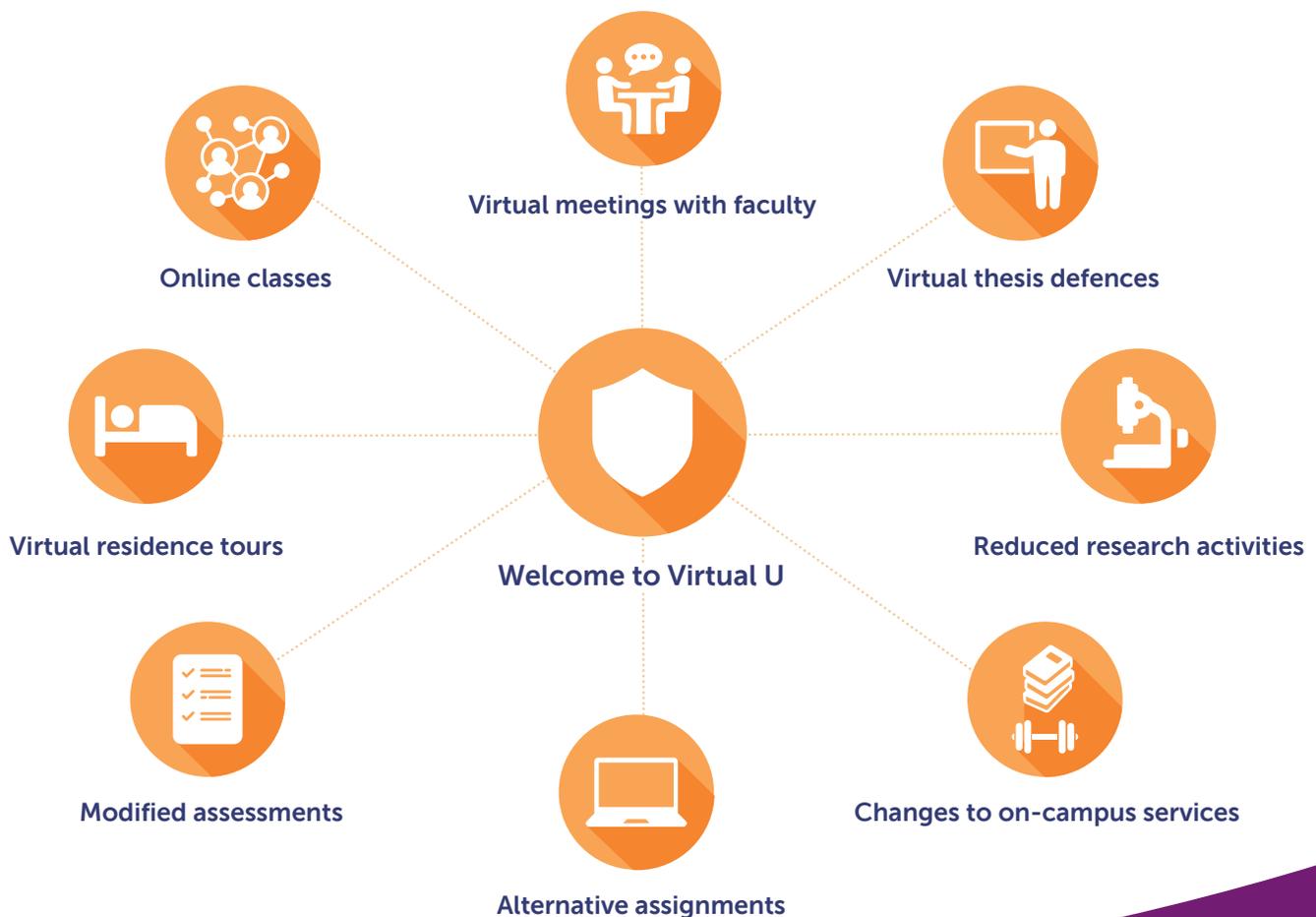
If you would like to talk to your doctor about your ADHD, set up a virtual or in-person appointment

Your home, your campus

HOW YOUR SCHOOL MAY BE SERVING YOU VIRTUALLY

Many post-secondary students have begun a new journey with virtual learning. Whether you're a seasoned student or are planning on starting post-secondary education for the first time, remember that virtual learning can introduce some changes to normal campus life.

Although every school will navigate virtual learning differently, here are some possible changes to expect this year:



Be proactive about your health **BEFORE** the school year starts

- Be sure to visit your school's website to learn how you can utilize the available **Student Health Services**
- Contact a counsellor to find out about **special accommodations** that may be offered to **students with ADHD**

Navigating learning from home with ADHD

HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

As an adult with ADHD, you may find that learning from home—in isolation or with family members nearby—is a challenging new experience. **Focus, time management, and prioritization** are important skills to facilitate learning from home but can be complicated by the symptoms of ADHD.

Remember these tips and tricks the next time you're sitting at your desk:



Take your medication as prescribed by your doctor

Avoid altering your medication schedule, even though your personal schedule and obligations may have changed.



Stay focussed

Help avoid distractions by **finding tools that help keep you focussed on your schoolwork**. These can include:

- Checking in with a classmate to review upcoming priorities as needed
- Using noise machines or fans to block out distracting sounds
- Taking timed, planned breaks from your desk
- Getting some exercise by taking a lunchtime walk to repower your brain



Set boundaries

Ask your family members or roommates to respect your workspace during learning hours.

- A "Do Not Disturb" sign can help let people know if you are busy studying



Define your workstation

Try using your workstation only for work.

- Move to a different space when doing other activities like browsing social media



Keep it clean

Keep your workspace **decluttered to help avoid distractions**.

- Avoid studying on the couch or near materials that you know are distracting to you



Introduce structure and avoid unhealthy hyperfocus

Setting and maintaining a daily schedule can help avoid unhealthy hyperfocus and introduce some structure into your day-to-day life. Items in your schedule can include:

- Waking up at the same time, every day
- Getting dressed
- Completing schoolwork
- Taking scheduled breaks
- Eating lunch
- Drinking water

For tips on how to time manage and build your personal schedule, see the last page

Navigating anxiety and stress in uncertain times

Unexpected changes like transitioning to virtual learning can be accompanied by anxiety and stress. If you are experiencing symptoms, try some of these helpful coping mechanisms:



Stay active and busy by doing activities that you enjoy



Stay connected with friends and family in a safe way



Find a balance between staying informed and taking breaks from the news



Be kind to yourself and remember that you are doing your best to cope with a challenging situation



Take care of your physical health by exercising, eating, and sleeping well



Seek out help from people who are close to you or look into professional support

Remember, *Rome wasn't built in a day*—Set SMART goals that are:



Specific



Measurable



Attainable



Relevant



Time bound

Managing your time

A RECIPE FOR GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Prioritize tasks from **MOST** important to least important
2. Enjoy leisure time **AFTER** you have completed your tasks
3. Estimate the amount of time each task will take to complete and **ALLOT** for it in your schedule
4. Break down tasks into **DOABLE** steps and schedule each step with a deadline

BUILDING YOUR SCHEDULE

Try using these helpful tips as you begin building a schedule that works for you:



Write a schedule that fits your routine



Post the schedule where you can see it



Set an alarm to go off 5 minutes before it's time to start a new task



Start by scheduling one small task and sticking to it; then add more tasks



Set a "start over" day to get caught up if your routine was interrupted



Don't give up—try different routines until you find one that works for you



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