



CIPRIANI COLLEGE
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES

**THE AGILE FRIEND TO THE ADHD PROJECT
PRACTITIONER**

WORK MATTERS

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The Agile Friend to the ADHD Project Practitioner

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For decades, project management has focused on the ability to develop an effective plan before starting any task or activity. Because of the risks linked to uncertainty and limited control over project outcomes, this approach has been successful most of the time and remains effective today, especially in developing countries. This practice usually requires individuals pursuing a career in project management to have strong executive functions to properly create a project plan before beginning any project. Due to the common constraints of project management, such as time, cost, scope, and quality, executive functions are cognitive processes that help individuals plan and organize. People with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD struggle with these functions, which leads to difficulties in organizing a complete plan before executing a project and in completing tasks step-by-step.

ADHD is most often diagnosed during preschool years; however, adults can also exhibit symptoms and receive a diagnosis. In the United States, approximately 11.9% of boys aged 3 to 17 are diagnosed with ADHD, compared to 5.5% of girls, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ADHD statistics by Forbes Health in 2025. An article published in October 2023 in the Journal of Defective Disorders (JAD) states that a global prevalence study found the rate of ADHD in children and adolescents to be 8.0%, with a higher estimate in boys (10%) than girls (5%). It wasn't until the 1960s that the American Psychiatric Association (APA) officially recognized it as a mental disorder. In the 1980s, the diagnosis became known as "attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity." Children with strong executive functions tend to have skills that enable them to focus, self-regulate, and plan effectively. These traits may be more difficult for children with ADHD symptoms, and if left undiagnosed, can remain challenging into adulthood.

Adults with ADHD may face greater challenges or

delays in their executive function skills. These delays can cause difficulties with standard project planning methods that rely on these skills. While these functions support planning and executing projects, in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, such methods can seem bureaucratic, time-consuming, and too rigid. These challenges have led project experts to explore new and innovative ways to deliver projects efficiently when traditional planning is impractical due to time constraints. This resulted in the development of Agile project management.

Agile methodology is a project management and software development approach that emphasizes flexibility and adaptability. Due to its adaptability and customer-focused approach, it is widely utilized by major companies such as Facebook, Google, and Amazon. Agile methodologies are iterative and incremental, breaking a project into smaller parts and adjusting to changing requirements as needed.

Due to the nature of the agile method in project planning and delivery, adults diagnosed with ADHD symptoms can actively participate in and lead projects towards success. The flexible application of the agile method can allow adults who may have challenges in creating a full, rigid plan upfront for a project.

Individuals with ADHD often excel in careers that are fast-paced, creative, and flexible, utilizing their unique strengths. Change and project management have a mutually dependent relationship, regardless of the project type. In today's rapidly evolving technological world, the ability for project professionals to multitask and stay flexible is essential. Agile best practices require customized approaches to planning at each iteration as the scope or product develops, which can be very engaging for ADHD individuals who enjoy a variety of responsibilities.

Hyper focus is another common trait of individuals diagnosed with ADHD. Hyper focus is characterized by

intense concentration and the ability to become deeply engaged in a task. Many adults with ADHD report feeling most productive when they are hyper-focused. The agile project framework also enables in-depth, focused problem-solving on complex tasks, especially in environments with varying projects. The autonomy in certain project management roles can sustain hyper-focus and satisfaction where needed. These main traits of ADHD align well with modern agile project management practices.

Agile project management requires practitioners to approach some tasks differently when engaging stakeholders on multiple projects across diverse cultures. People with ADHD often come up with unusual solutions due to their different perspectives.

As the world becomes increasingly volatile, with changes in how we work, technology-driven shifts, and complex project deliveries, leaders sometimes need to think outside the box. This situation creates a need for agile project practitioners to be creative in managing unexpected changes; those with ADHD are often highly innovative, especially when given a goal-oriented task. External environmental shifts can occur suddenly during project development, requiring practitioners to be adaptable and to adjust the scope incrementally. This iterative process in the agile method aligns well with the high-risk tolerance often seen in people with ADHD.