



The Association
for Child and Adolescent
Mental Health

Exploring the Relationship Between ADHD and Depression

Depression commonly co-occurs with ADHD. Understanding why may inform prevention as much as treatment.

Symptom overlap

Shared features counted towards both conditions:

Poor
concentration

Restlessness

Irritability

Disturbed sleep

Shared underlying risk

Some of the same genetic and environmental factors appear to underlie both conditions.

- Neither condition causes the other
- Both expressed differently across development

ADHD as a causal risk factor

Living with ADHD may generate some conditions for depression:

Peer difficulties and social rejection

Academic underachievement

Family conflict

Loss of self-esteem over time

Irritability as an early signal

Children whose irritability persists across childhood, rather than easing with age, appear more likely to develop depressive symptoms later.

- Persistence matters more than presence
- Easily read as part of ADHD itself

Join Sinead Rhodes, Olga Eyre and Ramya Srinivasan for an
ACAMH Expert Half-Day on ADHD and Depression.