

Information Sheet for Children and their Families

Catholiccare Assessment Services (CAS) offers assessments to both children and adults to explore their experiences and whether they are concordant with a diagnosis of ADHD or are better explained by something else. CAS aims to ensure all assessments are evidence-based, trauma-informed, strengths-based, neurodiversity-affirming, collaborative and validating.

CAS comprehensive ADHD assessments occur across a minimum of 3 appointments: (1) The Initial Appointment, (2) The Assessment Session, (3) The Feedback Session. These appointments can be completed in person at a Catholiccare Wollongong Office, or online via telehealth depending on your preference. For complex assessments, assessments requiring cognitive assessment, or assessments of young children, additional appointments may be required and/or telehealth appointments may not be suitable.

The Initial Appointment

For young children, parents should attend this session without the child so that relevant paperwork and intake information can be focused on and completed. Young children often find this session highly boring/dysregulating and this can make it difficult for parent/carers to participate fully. This session will also involve discussing the areas of difficulty your child faces in their day-to-day life, and it is not often in the best interests of the child to have to listen to adults talk about their difficulties.

Comparatively, older children should attend this appointment as it is an opportunity for them to be a part of the collaborative process and speak for themselves about their experience. If you're not sure whether your child should be a part of the initial session or not, send an email through to the CAS team and a clinician will get back to you.

During the Initial Appointment the Psychologist will go through the intake paperwork, and work to get a better understanding of the child's (and family's) experiences and what has led to you seeking assessment. The Psychologist will talk through the assessment process with you, including what you need to know for the assessment sessions and receiving/completing the online assessment questionnaires. This would typically include confirming contact details for a teacher/educator who knows the child so that they can be sent assessment questionnaires for collateral information.

The Assessment Session

The Assessment Session is a clinical interview, used to ask about the presence of ADHD symptoms experienced. The questions are based on the official criteria for ADHD in the DSM-5. For each question, your Psychologist will ask whether you recognise the problem. To help you, your Psychologist will also provide some examples that describe the way that children often experience difficulties related to each of the characteristics of ADHD.

The Feedback Session

Once your diagnostic report and results are complete (typically within 4-6 weeks after the completion of your assessment session and having completed all online questionnaires) you will be contacted to schedule a Feedback Session. During the Feedback Session, your Psychologist will provide you with a copy of your report and go through the results with you. You will be given time to ask any questions you may have and discuss next steps for support (i.e. referrals for therapy, education supports) or further investigation if required.

Important: Psychologists cannot prescribe medications, and this assessment alone will not provide access to medication for ADHD. To access medication for ADHD you will need to have an appointment with a Psychiatrist or Paediatrician who prescribes for ADHD.