

Table 3: Differential Diagnosis of ADHD in Adults

PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS	FEATURES SHARED WITH ADHD	DIFFERENTIAL FEATURES	USEFUL SCREENING TOOLS/ASSESSMENTS
Major depressive disorder	Poor concentration, attention and memory; difficulty completing tasks	Enduring dysphoric mood or anhedonia; sleep and appetite disturbances	Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)-screening and diagnosis
Bipolar disorder	Hyperactivity; difficulty maintaining attention and focus; mood swings	Enduring dysphoric and euphoric mood; insomnia; delusions	Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ) – screening; Adult Altman Self-Rating Mania Scale [ASRM] - diagnosis
Generalized anxiety disorder	Fidgetiness; difficulty concentrating	Exaggerated apprehension and worrying; somatic symptoms of anxiety (eg, syncope, insomnia)	Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) – screening; Adult Severity Measure for Generalized Anxiety Disorder–diagnosis
Personality disorders, especially antisocial and borderline personality disorders	Impulsivity; affective liability	History of arrests (antisocial personality); repeated self-injuries or suicidal behavior (borderline personality); failure to recognize the effects of their behavior of self and others	MacLean Screening Instrument for borderline personality disorder – screening; Interview for diagnosis and severity

<p>Substance use disorders or dependence</p>	<p>Difficulties with attention, concentration and memory; mood swings</p>	<p>Pathologic patterns of substances use with social consequences; physiologic and psychologic symptoms of tolerance, dependence and withdrawal</p>	<p>NIDA Modified ASSIST Drug Use Screening Tool – screening; Interview for diagnosis and severity</p>
<p>Mild Autism Spectrum Disorder (Asperger syndrome)</p>	<p>Inattentiveness; interrupting; talkativeness</p>	<p>Hyperfocus on unique activity to the exclusion of normal daily life; lack of interest in people; inability to “read” social clues; often illogical</p>	<p>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) - diagnosis</p>