

Vignette-Based Activity: Read, Reflect, Diagnose

Instructions:

Read each student vignette carefully. After reading, answer the reflection questions. You will not be told if the case represents ADHD, another condition, or a typical behavioral pattern. The goal is to **critically assess** each profile without bias. Use your judgment and experiences to reflect, then we'll discuss as a group.

Vignette A – Student A

Student A is a 9-year-old who frequently talks to classmates during lessons. They often move around the classroom, tap on desks, and play with nearby items. When asked to sit still, they appear restless and resume movement after a short while. The teacher finds it hard to maintain their attention during long instructions. However, this student is friendly, enjoys participating in discussions, and often volunteers for classroom tasks.

Reflection Questions:

1. What behaviors stand out in this case?
2. Are these behaviors consistent with any subtype of ADHD?
3. Could these behaviors stem from other causes (e.g., boredom, sensory sensitivity)?
4. Would you recommend an assessment? Why or why not?

Vignette B – Student B

Student B is 8 years old and appears quiet and well-behaved. However, they are often caught staring out the window during lessons. They forget homework, lose supplies, and need frequent redirection to complete tasks. While their work is generally neat, it's often incomplete. They rarely participate unless prompted and seem disengaged from classroom activities.

Reflection Questions:

1. Does this student display signs of inattention or another issue?
2. How might such a quiet student be overlooked for support?
3. Would you refer them for an ADHD assessment? Why or why not?
4. What alternative explanations (e.g., anxiety, language barriers) might be considered?

Vignette C – Student C

Student C frequently interrupts the teacher, blurting out answers before questions are fully asked. They struggle to wait for their turn and often act impulsively, such as grabbing materials from others. Despite being bright and articulate, they become easily frustrated when corrected. The student's energy level is high, and they talk constantly—even when working alone.

Reflection Questions:

1. What aspects of this behavior suggest impulsivity or hyperactivity?
2. How might such behavior be misinterpreted as oppositional?
3. Would gender expectations influence how this student is perceived?
4. Would you consider ADHD as a primary concern? Why or why not?

Vignette D – Student D

Student D is cooperative and polite. They rarely cause disruptions but seem mentally absent during class. Their notes are disorganized, homework is often forgotten, and they need step-by-step instructions. Teachers describe this student as a “slow starter” who doesn’t ask for help. Despite their quiet nature, their academic performance is slipping.

Reflection Questions:

1. What signs of inattention can be identified here?
2. Could these be signs of low motivation, internalizing disorders, or ADHD?
3. Why might such students—especially if they are girls—be under-referred?
4. How could you support this student without pathologizing their behavior?

Post-Activity Discussion Prompts

- Which vignettes did you suspect were ADHD cases? Which subtype?
- Which cases might reflect non-ADHD issues (e.g., anxiety, temperament, environmental factors)?
- How might teacher perceptions—especially around gender—influence referral decisions?
- What questions or tools would you use to investigate further before referral?