Focusing Is Hard! Brain Responses to Reward in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

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Front Young Minds. 5:18. (2017)

ABSTRACT

Have there been times when you just couldn’t focus on homework or wait for your turn to speak? We all have these experiences! But for some children and adults, focusing, sitting, or waiting is extra hard, and that gets them into trouble all the time. They may have something called, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). But why is it harder for them to do these things? We thought that perhaps a part of their brains might work a little differently. So, we looked inside the brains of college students to see their brain activity. We found that, for the students who had ADHD, one brain area was not very active when they were waiting for good things. When the brain sends signals that “good things are coming soon!” this helps us wait or focus, even during boring tasks! For those with ADHD, these signals might be weaker, making it harder to wait and focus.