

# Media devices do not cause ADHD, researcher says

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Florida International University Psychologist Margaret Sibley says there is no evidence media devices cause ADHD, despite a recent [study](#) published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that says otherwise.

While many teens appear to be constantly distracted by electronic devices, Sibley says being distracted does not necessarily mean they have ADHD.

"Distractibility and motivation problems are common in adolescence, but these problems do not usually represent ADHD," Sibley said. "Up to 40 percent of teenagers will experience symptoms of ADHD at some point during their adolescence including concentration difficulties that could be due to normal teenage distractions or mental health difficulties like depression or drug use."

Sibley is a board member of the non-profit organization Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD). She reviewed the study and provided insight for CHADD's weekly newsletter. Read the full article [here](#).

[Sibley's recent research](#) shows adults and teens who never experience ADHD symptoms in childhood, likely do not develop ADHD later in life. Instead, what appear to be ADHD symptoms can be better explained by other problems including the cognitive effects of heavy marijuana use, psychological trauma or depressive symptoms that affect concentration.

Whether or not ADHD is a concern, Sibley recommends parents set limits on media use and other distractions if they are interfering with school and social relationships.

Sibley is an associate professor of psychiatry & behavioral health at Florida International University's Center for Children and Families and Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine. She is the director of the Supporting Teens' Academic Needs Daily (STAND) program which offers comprehensive family-based services to middle and [high school students](#) with attention, organization and behavioral problems throughout

the school year. STAND is a family-based intervention that teaches parents and adolescents to work together to set academic goals and to reinforce success on these goals through a comprehensive home privilege program.

**More information:** Chaelin K. Ra et al. Association of Digital Media Use With Subsequent Symptoms of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Among Adolescents, *JAMA* (2018). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2018.8931](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2018.8931)

Provided by Florida International University

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