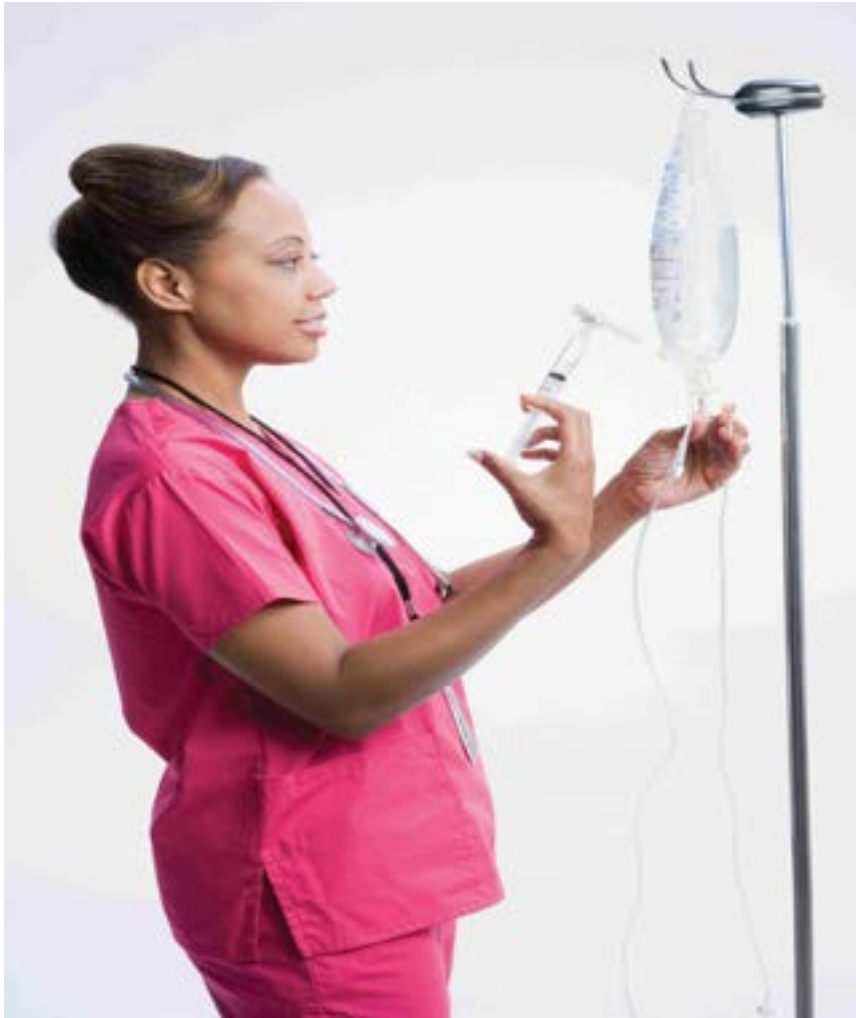




# Focus and Concentration



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# Focus and Concentration

- **Pomodoros** Always “small tomatoes” (25 min limit for focusing on a task) then a 5 min break.
- **Dopamine**- Stimulants release Dopamine but so does music on headphones (no lyrics) and exercise!
- **Physical activity** before sitting down to do a Pomodoro
- **Novelty** is important
- **Eliminate Distractions** in your environment and on your computer.
- **Use a Distraction Log**, which then becomes your To-Do List.
- Truly Understand and **Define the Task** and **Create a Narrative** of how it will get done



## Avoid Multi- Tasking at all costs

- **Block Extraneous Noise**
- **Connect with Nature.** Green space is key when it comes to sharpening your cognitive skills. Get outside.
- Playing **Specific Games** can help you get better at concentrating (Chess, Scrabble, Word Finds, Concentration Card Game)







## Week 2 Organization and Planning Strategies

- **Handle papers/mail once**
- For incoming mail have **folders** ready (Bills, Social, Medical, Call)
- **A Home for All Important Possessions!**
- No temporary homes for important stuff!
- Use **Phone Reminders**
- Use **Siri and Alexa Hacks** or Echo Dot to make grocery or shopping list/keep grocery list, call phone etc Can place Amazon Orders with your voice with Alexa or Echo; Use Timer Requests; Ask how much time is left on Timer etc Ask Alexa to call your phone when you can't find it
- **Assign priority level** to your To Do lists
- **Address Time Awareness** Phone provides distraction so use some other time piece for keeping track of time. Make time visible.
- Address Media Consumption. **Be intentional with what you read or watch. (Is THIS worth my time and attention?)**
- Focus on **Clear Surfaces**



## Week 2 Organization and Planning Strategies

- Use **1 notebook** for **your distraction log/to do list**
- Google Calendar to coordinate scheduling within a Marriage/Relationship/Family
- **If it's not written down it does not exist**
- Take **15 minutes each night** to organize what you will wear and what you will eat the following day
- **3 Things before bed:** Plug in phone in its home; Set alarm; Hygiene routine
- **Shower at night** Most folks with ADHD are not morning people
- Let people help you
- Leave earlier than you think you should leave; **Set clocks 10 minutes early**; factor 10-15 minutes extra into your planning
- For better organization at home, go through each room in your home, and reduce your inventory entirely.
- **Inventory must equal space**



## Week 2 Organization and Planning Strategies

- Leave some extra room in drawers and shelves
- Once you reach a level of orderliness, use **the 1 in =1 out** rule
- If it helps you clear your closet, think of someone to donate your items to, and then add things to the give-away pile that might work well for them
- **Arrange clothing in your closet by color; Simplify wardrobe**
- **Dress in black when you are in a rush** OR Keep an emergency outfit inside your closet door. Or wear same outfit every day (Einstein, Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg all do/did outfit repeats)
- Put things back where they belong
- Design systems that work for you
- Chunk out organization projects
- If you have the money, perhaps hire a professional organizer
- Don't over-shop for food that can go bad. **Put produce and cold cuts in the center of a shelf at face level.** Don't use drawers.

# People with ADHD tend to do “one more thing” before leaving the house...

- Notice when you are in this behavior pattern, stop what you are doing, and leave the house.
- Leave early and experience what its like to have time for things to go wrong. Suddenly traffic or spilling coffee everywhere or something breaking is not as stressful. Notice that on normal days something can very likely go wrong.
- Ask roommate/partner/family to point out when you are doing “one last thing” before leaving. Ask for an accountability buddy.
- The ADHD brain often excels in crisis situations. And there's no question that waiting until the last minute increases adrenaline and keeps you motivated until the finish line. However, this is not a relaxing way to live your life. Experiment with breaking old patterns and establishing a routine for leaving.



Steve Jobs Chose to Decrease Decision Fatigue By Choosing the Same Outfit Daily...so did Einstein and Mark Zuckerberg




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# Week 2 Organization and Planning Strategies

- If you have young children, use easy to reach bins to store toys
- Check your To-Do List during a mid-day break
- Set a bedtime alarm and go to bed on time
- Make sure you are using lists and learning to Triage (Today, This Week, This Month)
- **Use Routines** so some of your day is automatically easy (esp Wake Up and Bedtime)

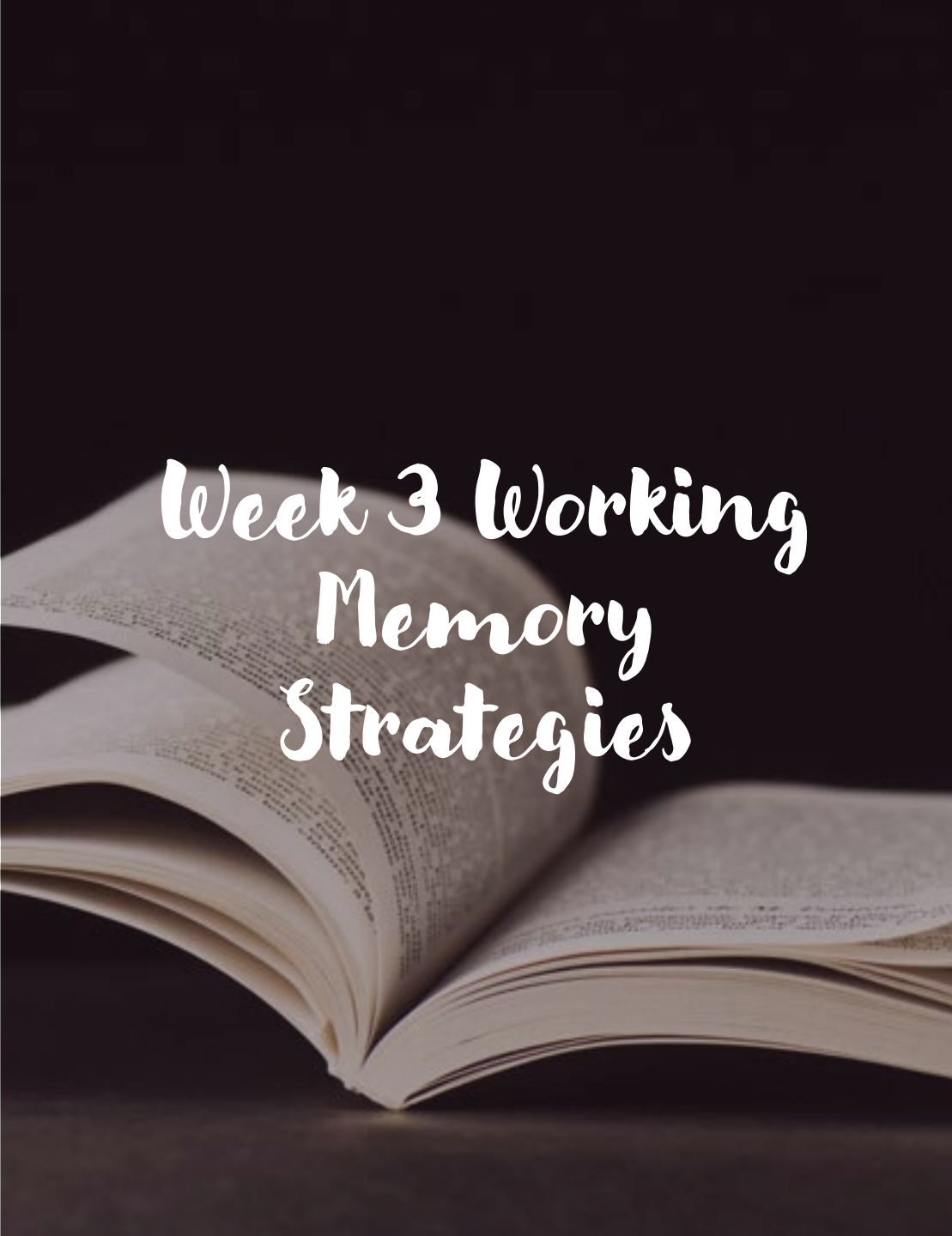




# Week 3 Working Memory Strategies

- Learn to **narrate what you are doing**
- When parking in a parking garage take a quick picture of the row and level where you park
- When you take the parking ticket with you use the same pocket you always use
- Say anything aloud that you need to remember
- Use mnemonic devices if you can't make a list
- A common sign that you have too much stress is Forgetfulness
- The 2 best ways to strengthen working memory are **SLEEP** and **EXERCISE**
- Avoid multi-tasking. This taxes your brain.
- Use positive self-talk even when you forget what you are doing
- Use mental visualization to reinforce your working memory
- Ask yourself "How did I get here?"
- Use humor when you notice your working memory has left the building.



An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, with its pages slightly curved. The book is set against a dark, almost black background. Overlaid on the book is the text 'Week 3 Working Memory Strategies' in a white, cursive font.

## Week 3 Working Memory Strategies

- **Mindfulness.** (Be here now! Narrate the present!)
- To remember instructions, try **repeating the instructions aloud**, or create a story with the information.
- You may remember some information better by **making it into into a song or a rhyme**
- You can practice remembering and strengthen memory by writing 6 unrelated words on paper and then developing a way to remember them

# *Week 4 Task Initiation Strategies*







# Pick the best strategy for you:

- **“Eat the Frog”**—do the hardest task first; (“If you must eat 2 frogs, eat the biggest one first”) -Mark Twain
- **“Climb the Ladder”**—do the easiest one first; and then the rest
- **“Dangle the Carrot”**—set up a reward for completion.
- **“Spoonful of Sugar”**- Make the task fun ie. playing music while doing dishes

## TASK INITIATION



*I can get myself started on a task, whether I'm interested or not.*

<b>Eat the Frog</b> Do the worst thing first!		<b>Spoonful of Sugar</b> Find a way to "sweeten the deal!"	
<b>Climb the Ladder</b> Start with simplest/easiest task. Work your way up to the most challenging.		<b>Dangle the Carrot</b> Reward yourself with something motivating when you get the task done.	





# Task Initiation Strategies

- **-Set a timer for 10 minutes** and start working for ten minutes. Use your adrenaline to see how much you can get done in 10 minutes. How did that feel? Could you do 15 minutes more? If so, that's 1 pomodoro! A timer can sometimes bust through your apprehension to start.
- **-Talk yourself through the steps of a project.** Make a chart or an outline to start. Chunk the work into pieces.
- **-Exercise before** sitting down to work.
- **-Start with a category** if that feels more manageable. If you need to clean your office, start with cleaning just surfaces. Then just floor. Then just papers etc
- -Address your **physical comforts.** Standing desk? Turn up AC?
- **-Address emotional barriers** to getting started.
- **-Manage distractions** and use rewards for completing small chunks of work.
- **Create artificial deadlines** for your chunks of work
- **-“Satisficing”** (Done is better than perfection. Sacrifice perfection to satisfy the requirement of completion of a task.)

# Emotional Barriers to Task Initiation

- “Its too hard”; “I want it to be perfect”; “It’s too big”; “I don’t care”; “It will take too long!” “ I don’t know what I’m supposed to do!”
- Consider what your emotional barriers may be and how you can provide yourself some help with the barrier.
- If you have unrealistic expectations of yourself, consider DONE is better than PERFECT so let go of perfection. Make the task clearer by dividing it into smaller sections. Address why you don’t care and find a reason to care ie (\_\_\_will be proud of me). Try to tell a story about someone who successfully tackled the project. Apply those steps to yourself.

*Write the first 2 Sentences to start a story based on image below.*



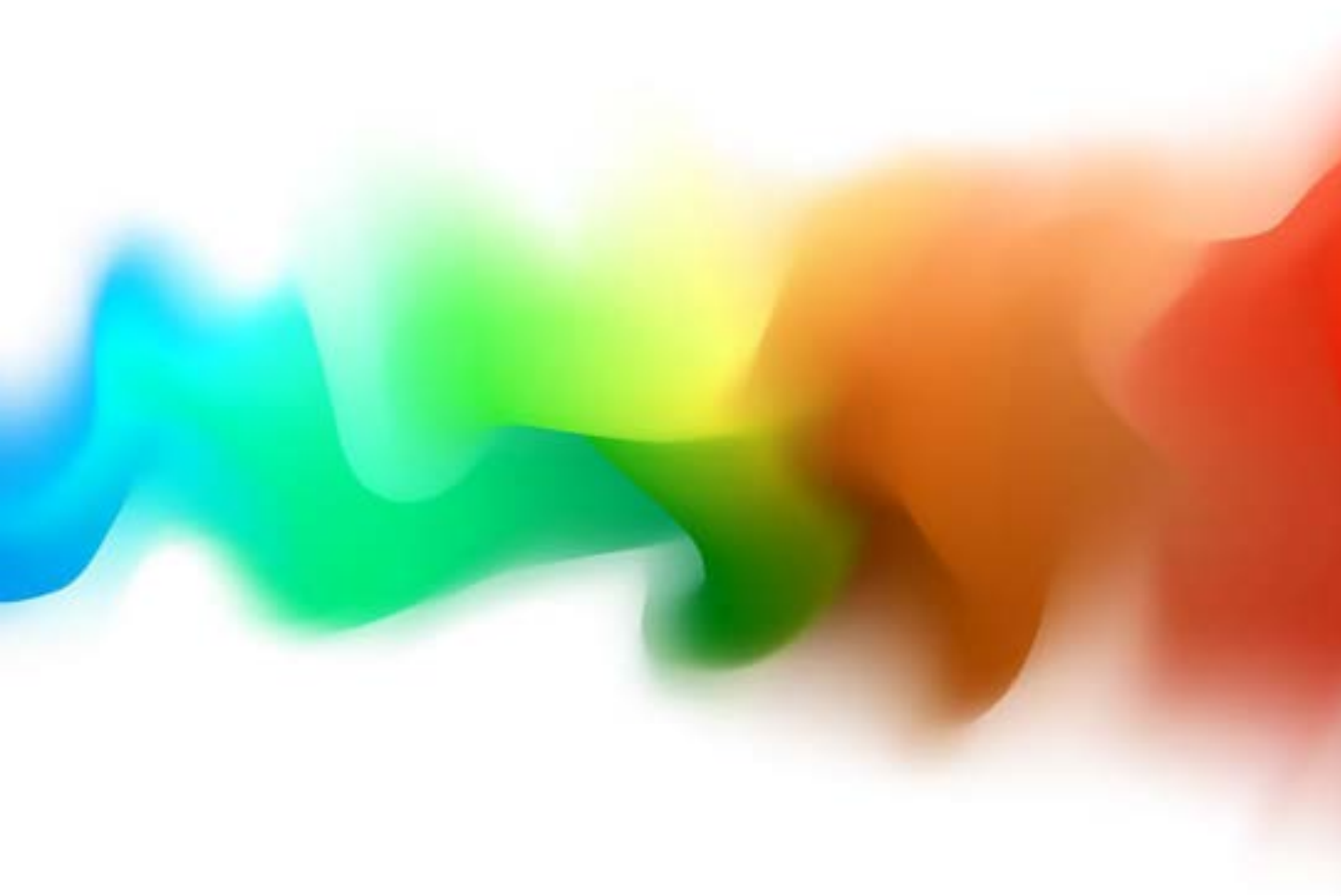
**Other Suggestions to Start Working:**

- Define Beginning, Middle and End
- Write the First 2 Sentences
- Brainstorm 10 words you want to include in your work
- Consider why you are being asked to do this task. Find meaning in completing it.



# Use the ADHD Flow... sidestep the rules and go for it.

- Sometimes it's difficult to get started with a task because there are too many and it becomes overwhelming. **ADHD Flow** is letting your ADHD run wild for a little while. When you are doing a task and get distracted by another task, and then another task, let these natural transitions direct your efforts. After a period of time, perhaps an hour, be sure to reserve time to back track through all of the projects you began, and try to either tidy up or finish each one.
- **Example:** You start to vacuum the living room. You put away the Winter Boots by the door. When you go to the closet with the boots, You notice the plants need watering. As you are watering plants, you see dishes in the sink that need to go in the dishwasher, and as you load the dishwasher you notice the the kitchen floor is dirty. As you mop the floor, you see the dog's water bowl needs filling. After you fill the water bowl, start back tracking and finishing small details of each task that you may have missed.



# *Week 5 Emotion Regulation Strategies*

# Emotional Regulation



**Get to know your emotions.** Become comfortable identifying different feeling states.

**-Identify which emotions are toughest for you.** Some examples: Rage, Fear, Shame, Embarrassment, Confusion can often be challenging for many people. What are the times you tend to get wrapped up in emotion?

-Everyone has an Emotional Mind and Logical Mind. Try to think about having both minds active in a difficult situation. When they are combined, (when you use feelings and logic together) they are called **“Wise Mind.”**

-Using **reflective practices** (yoga, guided meditation etc) may help you improve your emotional baseline and ability to calm

-Tell yourself **you can tolerate criticism, challenges, and negative feedback.** Learn to hear feedback. --Learn to take 3 deep breaths before responding if feeling triggered.

-Sometimes we spend more energy avoiding an emotion than figuring out how to handle an emotion. **Journaling** can help you understand your feelings more and then help you strategize ways to cope with the feelings.

**-Under anger is often fear or sadness.** Can you connect to those feelings instead?



# Week 6 Mental Flexibility Strategies

State the color of each word below.

**Blue**, Red, **Yellow**, **Green**, **Purple**, Orange

**Light Green**, **Magenta**, **Violet**, **Turquoise**





# Mental Flexibility Strategies

People who are emotionally flexible are better romantic partners and better equipped for family life and work success. **Learning to be collaborative and allow for other ideas or options** can feel like a relief for some. It means asking for help or asking for ideas as well as learning to un-attach from your own views sometimes.

Learn to **say "I never thought of it that way!" Or "I'll have to think about that point of view!/that idea!"** Or Consider that your assumptions may be untrue. Question your own assumptions!

**Use Brainstorming** to solve problems. This can unlock other options that your brain wasn't considering.

People with ADHD tend to be enthusiastic and creative. Use that **enthusiasm and creativity** to generate new ways to see a situation or a circumstance.

Nothing is a "catastrophe" so learn to think about problems as opportunities to use your flexible thinking. **Avoid black and white thinking!** Look for the grey!

# Name 3 Things You Can Do About It...

- 1) You are at the park and someone gets hurt and is bleeding.
- 2) You arrive at the airport and you have missed your flight.
- 3) Your friend is making your favorite dish but is missing a key ingredient.
- 4) Mid-day you notice your shoes feel painful and tight on your feet.
- 5) There's a storm and the power goes out
- 6) You and a friend have tix to the theatre. Your friend gets sick and can't go.
- 7) You stepped in gum.
- 8) You are taking a class and you don't know anyone.
- 9) Your neighbor has extra mulch and says come get it before the rain comes. You are busy all day...
- 10) You arrive at a restaurant to meet friends and it's too loud for you. You can't hear anyone.



# Week 7 Impulse Control Strategies



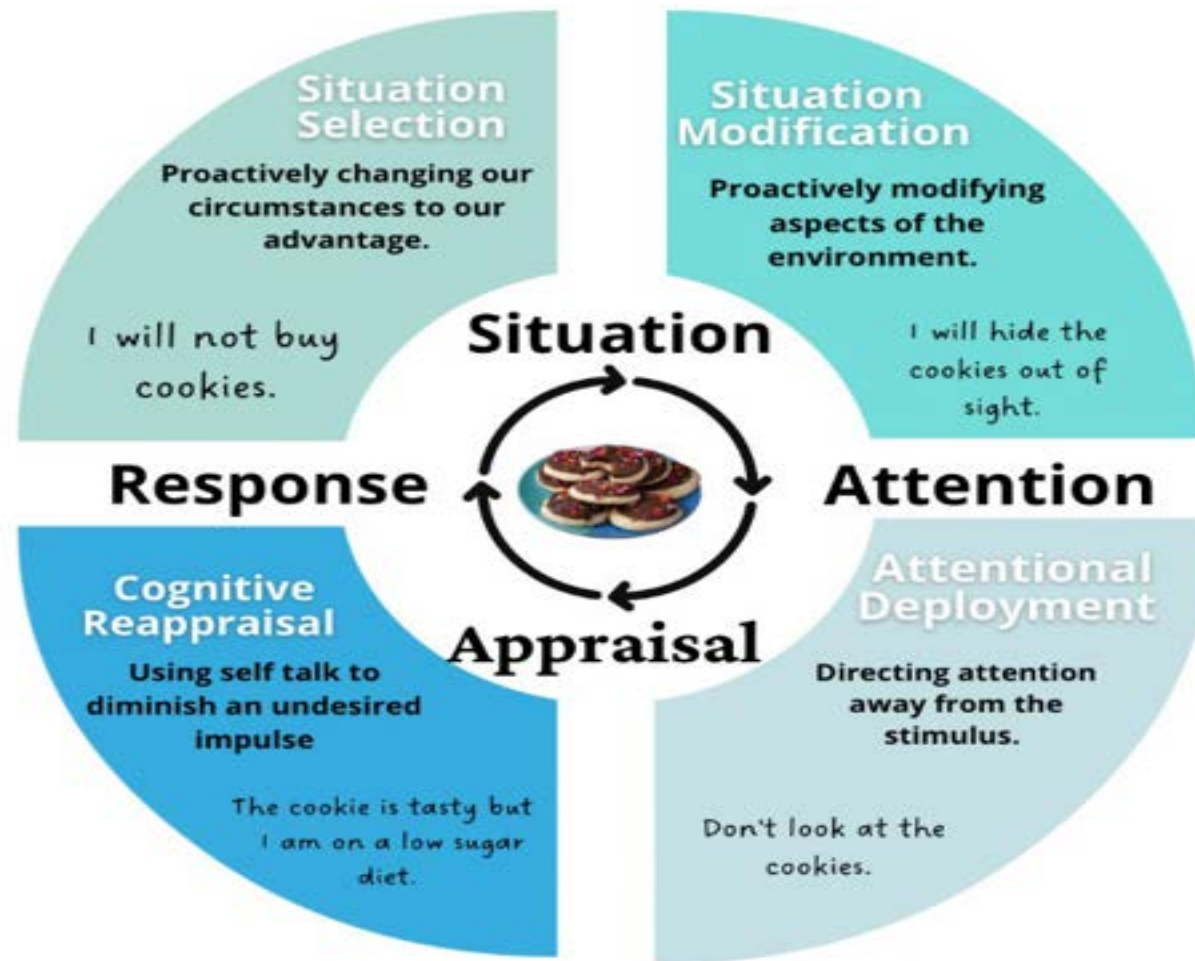
- Conversation is not a race
- Sending off impulse emails can often lead to problems at work
- With each potential outcome consider consequences that may arise - "**Play The Tape Forward**" is another way to remind yourself to link behavior choices to outcomes
- \*Play the tape forward example: If you want to and have the impulse to eat more sweets after dinner, think about stepping on the scale the next morning.
- Choose *good* fidget toys (non primary focus)



# Impulse Control Strategies

- **-Delay Gratification.** Each time you delay gratification you are building up a muscle. This muscle allows you to build your confidence in your ability to make good choices.
- -Rather than blurting things out during conversation you can always send a thoughtful email after the fact.
- -When tempted to be impulsive with behavior that can lead to trouble, **picture some potential consequences.**
- Consider the consequences of gambling, drinking, using drugs, spending money, or making a joke at someone else's expense.
- -If you find yourself interrupting someone when they are speaking, apologize and ask them to finish their thought.
- -When unsure of an appropriate response to an opportunity to be impulsive, consider what someone you admire would do in your exact situation.
- “If I **prioritize the future** over right now, does this change my behavior choice?”

# Map Out Where To Intervene





# Impulse Control Opportunities

## What do you do when...

- There's a giant bowl of M&M's on the table at a friend's house. You love M&M's.
- There's a box of puppies outside the grocery store with a homeless person. There's a sign that says "free puppies." You love puppies.
- There's a button on the wall that says "this button will activate emergency personnel." You feel like pressing it.
- You are at a work party with colleagues. Someone dares you to dance on a table. You love to dance.
- Your ex (who you never fully got over) calls and asks you to come over and it's late.
- **(How will you answer these if you prioritize your future?)**

# The *Positives* of the ADHD Brain

- Enthusiasm
- Creativity
- Energy
- Hyper-focus
- Spontaneity
- Resilience
- Can embrace chaos and create order
- Can thrive with an imminent deadline



## Podcasts:

Dr Nowell "Overview of ADHD".

Dr. Hallowell "The Bright Side of ADHD" and "Ned Hallowell's Step-by-Step Guide to Adult ADHD" and "ADHD Life Coaching with Dr. Ned Hallowell." Also "Dr. Ned Hallowell's Wonderful World of Different"

Tracy Otsuka "ADHD for Smart Ass Women"

Katy Webber "Women and ADHD"

CHADD "All Things ADHD"

The Kaleidoscope Society "ADHD Decoded"

David A Green "Overcoming Distractions"

Kate Moryoussef "The ADHD Women's Wellbeing Podcast"

Skye Rapson "The ADHD Skills Lab"

ADDitude "Strategies and Support for ADHD and LD"

Eric Tivers "ADHD Rewired"

Sara Snyder "Adulting with ADHD"

William Curb "Hacking Your ADHD"

Nikki Kinzer & Peter Wright "Taking Control; The ADHD Podcast"

Understood Podcast Network "ADHD Aha!"





## Playlists:

This is a **Spotify playlist** that originates from video games and kids tend to like for Focus/Thinking

[https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3tOCS8stne2kjTFOpbiJ5p?si=5idAPsb0RcGfAdAOzfrRUg&utm\\_source=copy-link](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3tOCS8stne2kjTFOpbiJ5p?si=5idAPsb0RcGfAdAOzfrRUg&utm_source=copy-link)

### ADHD Hyperfixation Playlist

This is a massive list of music on **Youtube** for Hyperfixation created by a Spotify user with ADHD

(**Spotify** has many Playlists):

ADHD Focus Music 2024; ADHD Work Mode; ADHD Hyperfocus Stimulance; ADHD DEEP FOCUS; ADHD Background Music; Energizing Focus Mix; Work Flow; Brown Noise for Studying, Bilateral Stimulation Music; ADHD Sensory Calming

(**You Tube Music** has many ADHD Play lists): Use any ADHD search term above

## APPS

### WAKE UP

- [Wake N Shake](#) (iOS, \$0.99) You have to vigorously shake your iPhone to shut off the alarm.
- [I Can't Wake Up!](#) (Android, free) You have to do eight wake-up tasks before the alarm is silenced.
- [Clocky and Tocky](#) (\$39.99, \$49.99) These alarm clocks jump off your nightstand and roll around the room while playing your favorite MP3s.

### CALM DOWN, FALL ASLEEP, OR PAY ATTENTION

- [Relax Melodies](#) (iOS and Android) Creates a white noise ambience for falling asleep or meditation.
- [Sleep Deeply](#) (iOS and Android, \$6.99) A hypnotherapist puts you in a relaxed state.
- [White Noise](#) (iOS and Android, free lite version and \$1.99 full version) Features natural and man-made sounds.
- Calm app

### KEEP TRACK OF TIME

- [Watchminder](#) (iOS, \$1.99) Set alarms and get reminders to help you focus.
- [TimeTimer](#) (iOS, \$2.99 and Android, \$0.99) Displays the passage of time visually.
- [Pomodoro Timer Lite](#) (Android, free) Focus for 25 minutes, and the timer signals it's time for a break.
- [FocusTime](#) (iOS, \$4.99) Set work and break intervals.
- [Apple Watch](#) with [Calendar Reminders](#) highly recommended for wearable reminders

### FIND LOST ITEMS

- [Find My iPhone](#) (iOS, free)
- [Find My Phone](#) (Android, free)
- [Find One Find All](#) Attach a sensor to your keys or other items. Press a button and the item beeps.
- [Tile.com](#) Tile also uses Bluetooth and an App called Tiles. The tile can help you locate anything you attach a tile tracker to. (recommended for wallet, keys).

## SET REMINDERS

- [iCalendar](#) (iOS, free) and [Google Calendar](#) (Android, free) Both sync with cell phones, allowing you to schedule online, and to send reminders by e-mail or text.
- [Watchminder](#) (iOS, \$1.99) Organize schedules and manage time.
- **Echo Dot; Alexa, “Hey Siri” ...wake me up tomorrow at 7:00am**
  - ... Set Timer for 1 hour
  - ....Set Timer for 10 minutes
  - ...Add milk to my grocery list

## **BLOCK THE INTERNET (to eliminate distraction when reading/studying)**

- **Keep Focus** ([Android](#), free)
- [Freedom](#) ([iOS](#) and PC, free trial then \$2.42/month)
- [SelfControl](#) (Mac)
- **Forest** The "forest" Avoid getting distracted by phone/social media when I have work to get done. User sets a timer and plants a cute tree, during that time the apps on your phone are (sort of) blocked (you can add exclusions like Spotify for music). If you try to open social media for example it will ask you if you really want to and if you say yes the tree will die but if you manage to not use other apps the tree will grow and be added to your garden. You then earn coins to buy more kinds of tree/flowers which keeps it from getting too boring and gives something to work towards.

## **LISTEN TO PRINTED DOCUMENTS**

- [Voice Dream](#) ([iOS](#), \$19.99) Listen to PDF and Word documents, e-books, articles, and Web pages anywhere with this text-to-speech app.
- [Read&Write](#) ([iOS](#), [Android](#), free) Text-to-speech software similar to Voice Dream.



## KEEP A SCHEDULE

- **30/30** (iOS, free) Make a list and give yourself a time allotment to complete each task.
- **Productivity- Daily Tasks** iPhone app.
- **Tiimo** (iOS or Android) Support for all types of neurodivergence; helps with setting up daily routines supports executive function challenges like planning, organization, time management and focus for all. <https://www.tiimoapp.com/about>
- **Routinery:** Good for tracking routine and how much time tasks take to complete. Uses a countdown timer which keeps user motivated.
- **My Morning Routine** Good for users who like a circular timer; can start routines any time; super basic and easy to figure out
- **Water Do** Provides a daily review of what you accomplished; good for rewarding efforts/finishing tasks/clean user interface
- **TickTick** Provides a list of task and helps to prioritize items on lists; provides a calendar view which is helpful
- **Slash** Popular in that it tells you what to do; allows tracking of how much time tasks take to complete
- **Monday.com** Good if you like stats, if you like to work with a team, if you need to track multiple priorities
- **Habitica** Good if you like video games, allows division of habits, tasks and one-offs, provides community
- **Friday** Allows for Time Blocking, integrates with other apps, uses a specific organizational style
- **Taskito** Provides Timelines; provides ways different ways to view your work
- **Hour Stack** Allows for Time Blocking; work with others; able to give tasks set times
- **Todoist.** Reminders to complete things on your To DO List.
- **Productive.** System to keep track of your habits and productivity, lots of icons and colors. Lots of personalization is possible