

HOW TO MANAGE ADHD

Although there is no one cure for ADHD, many find it to be a very tolerable disorder with the addition of psychotherapy and/or medication. While medication may help, skills that are learned in psychotherapy are most important for long term management. Below are a few different ways that individuals are able to successfully manage their ADHD.

CREATE STRUCTURE:

Creating a routine that works for you allows you to ensure that everything gets done with less room for distraction.

- ❖ Be Realistic:
 - You want to be realistic in the goals you set so that you are not feeling like you failed.
 - You also don't want to schedule yourself to study for hours on end, and then feel like what you told yourself you could do is impossible.
- ❖ Prioritize certain tasks:
 - Make sure you have "tasks" like eating, taking breaks, and sleeping as your priorities. These are important parts of the day and you want to make sure that your schedule allows for these things.
- ❖ Let there be fun:
 - Creating a routine does not mean that you only have to schedule things that feel like are a job. Write down things you're excited about too.
 - Ex: If you are excited to be going to the movies with a friend on Friday, add that to your schedule.
- ❖ Reminders are your friend:
 - Set reminders such as alarms to ensure that you are remembering things. Before long, your body will get used to what it needs to do on its own and not need a reminder.

MAKE TIME FOR RELATIONSHIPS:

ADHD can make someone seem as though they are not trying in their relationship, even though that is not the case.

- ❖ Forgetting important dates:
 - If you forget birthdays or anniversaries easily, one thing you can do is set a reminder on your phone to alert you on the specific day. You can do the same thing for meetings or dates.
- ❖ Teach your partner about ADHD:
 - It's hard for people without ADHD to really understand what it may be like for individuals with ADHD. If your partner can be made more aware about why you may act in a certain way, then they are more likely to be understanding with mistakes and/or strategies to help you.
- ❖ Set aside 10 minutes for them:
 - (This is likely only acceptable in a relationship where both sides know about ADHD) Set an alarm for 10 minutes every day and give your partner your full listening attention for those minutes. This means you should not be on your phone or distracted in any way.

STAY ORGANIZED:

Disorganization is one of the worst things for someone with ADHD, because it is distracting.

- ❖ To-do lists:
 - Creating a to-do list allows you to actually visualize how much you need to get done and what your day/week might look like.
- ❖ Clean workspace:
 - Before you start your work make sure your area is free of distractions so that you are able to do your work.
 - When you're done with work for the day, clean your area so that when you're back next, the area is free of distraction.
- ❖ Throw away:
 - Get rid of old papers and things hanging around your office or home that would just be a distraction otherwise.
- ❖ Easy task first:
 - If you do a task that is quick first, then you already feel accomplished, and that task is off your mind.

KNOW YOUR ENVIRONMENT:

Knowing the environment you work best in will help you be more productive.

- ❖ Noisy and active:
 - Some people work better with background noise and people around. (e.g., working in a coffee shop, working in the library with white noise playing in headphones, working at the park).
- ❖ Quiet and Inactive:
 - Some people work better where there is absolute silence and few to no people are around. (e.g., a private room in the library, your room, an office)

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:

Without sleep, nutrition, and exercise, people without ADHD would become hyperactive, so people with ADHD need to pay more attention to these three things.

- ❖ Exercise:
 - Find something you enjoy. It does not have to be exhausting (e.g., 30 minute walk, 20 minute run, bike ride, swim).
- ❖ Sleep:
 - Get into a routine depending on what your body needs. (most people need close to 8 hours of sleep per night, but everyone is different)
- ❖ Nutrition:
 - Specific foods have not been proven to help with ADHD, but it has been proven that a high protein and low sugar diet can help with focus and other symptoms of ADHD.

