

CBT for Adult ADHD

Session 1

Committing to growth

- Introductions
- Schedule overview
- Mantras
- Coming to terms with mixed feelings
- Skills evaluation

Schedule

- Session 1: Committing to growth
- Session 2: Time Awareness and Scheduling
- Session 3: Breaking down tasks and rewards
- Session 4: Prioritizing and to-do lists
- Session 5: Overcoming emotional obstacles
- Session 6: Activation and motivation
- Session 7: Using an organizational system
- Session 8: Project Planning

Mantras

- If its not in the planner, it doesn't exist
- If you can't get started, the first step is too big
- All things in order of priority
- Starting is the hard part
- Everything in its right place
- Out of sight, out of mind
- What you resist persists (and gets worse)
- Proper planning prevents poor performance

Making peace with ADHD

- Mixed feelings
- *Relief* at having problem recognized
- *Hope* that help is available
- *Curious* about what the diagnosis means
- *Doubt* about the diagnosis
- *Dislike* the idea of any diagnosis
- *Angry* that it wasn't recognized/treated before

Take-Home Assignment 1.0

Answer the following:

- Why come for treatment now?
- What are the pros/cons of treatment?
- What was the hardest thing as a child?
- What would you say to someone else with ADHD?
- What positive qualities have you developed as a result of struggling with ADHD?

Take-Home Assignment 1.1

Skill	Start score (%)	End score (%)
Wears a watch		
Uses a planner		
Has bedtime/wakeup time		
On time for appointments		
Has plan for the day		
Has plan for the week		
Starts tasks on time		
Avoids/overcomes distraction		
Completes tasks		
Stops tasks on time		
Plans projects		
Completes projects		
Has organization system		
Avoids emotional barriers		

Session 2

Time Awareness and Scheduling

- Target Skills
 - Constant access to timepieces
 - Effective Time Estimation
 - Planner selection
 - Use of planner for scheduling and to-do list
- In-session work
 - Discuss pros/cons of planners
- Take home exercises
 - 2.0 Evaluate your personal planner
 - 2.1 Time Estimation
 - 2.2 Time Log

Session 2

Time Awareness and Scheduling Agenda

- Review Take-home exercises 1.0 and 1.1
- Time awareness
- Selecting a planner
- Using the planner
- To-do lists
- Scheduling tips
- Using 'Time Cracks' wisely

Review Take-Home assignments

- When and how did you do it?
- Did you plan it?
- What got in the way?

Time Awareness

- Access to a time piece AT ALL TIMES
- Time estimation biases (wishful thinking, rounding, over/under-estimation, over/under-calculation)
- What are the barriers?

Selecting a planner

- Portable
- Available
- Easy
- Calendar and task lists
- Neat

Using the planner - Commandments

1. Thou may have one planner and only one planner
2. Thou must carry the planner at all times
3. Thou shalt put every appointment and task into the planner
4. Thou shalt consult thy planner at least 3 times per day

Mantra:

If it's not in the planner, it doesn't exist

Using to-do lists

- 1. Set up regular daily/weekly time slots in the calendar for recurrent tasks to avoid over-using task lists
- 2. Set up separate to-do lists for each project
- 3. Transfer to-do tasks to calendar
- 3. Check-off or delete items as soon as they are completed

Time cracks

- Spaces in the schedule, small or large
- Review your planner
- Make a to-do list
- Generate ideas for a project
- Have a book handy
- Avoid 'mindless' distractions
- Plan 'mindless' time if required

Scheduling tips

- 1. Schedule repeat tasks for the same time each day/week
- 2. Observe regular 'business hours' even if you don't have regular business
- 3. Plan the more challenging tasks for when you have the most energy
- 4. Never abandon a task at the difficult part
- 5. Over-estimate for difficult tasks (50% rule)
- 6. Fill your time cracks
- 7. Schedule unscheduled time
- 8. Remember you are learning this – no perfectionism

Take-Home Assignment 2.0

- Evaluate your current planner system

Feature	Yes	No
Easily Portable?		
Easy to use?		
Ample space?		
Easy to update?		

- If 'No' to any feature, you MUST acquire a new planner before next session

Take-Home Assignment 2.1

- Estimate the time require to complete these tasks, then calculate the actual time it took

Task	Estimated time	Elapsed time
Get ready for work		
Prepare dinner		
Respond to emails		
Wash dishes		
Meet a friend		
Grocery shopping		
Check social media		

Take-Home Assignment 2.2

- For a single, real, whole day, from wake up to bedtime, track all of your activity in 15-minute increments

Time	Activity
5:00-5:15	
5:15-5:30	
5:30-5:45	
5:45-6:00	
6:00-6:15	
6:15-6:30	
6:30-6:45	

Session 3

Breaking Down Tasks and Rewards

- Target Skills
 - Break down large or aversive tasks into manageable chunks
 - Establish contingent self-reinforcement
- In-session work
 - Break down a complex or difficult task into parts
 - Generate a personal rewards list
- Take home exercises
 - 3.0 Schedule and complete one small task with reward

Session 3

Time Awareness and Scheduling Agenda

- Review Take-home exercises 2.0, 2.1 and 2.2
- Chunking
- Using rewards
- In-session exercises
- Take-home assignment 3.0

Chunking

- Reduce the magnitude of that you are trying to accomplish to the smallest part that you can do easily
- Mountain of dog poop metaphor

Mantra:

If you can't get started, then the first step is too big

Rewards

- Behaviour that is rewarded is likely to repeat
- Pair the completion of a difficult task with a pleasant reward (contingent self-reward)
- Completion becomes more likely and task becomes less unpleasant

Reward tips

- Plan rewards in advance
- Use naturally occurring rewards
- Pair the most aversive tasks with the most desirable rewards

In-Session Exercise

Break down a large task into chunks

- Task: Clean the whole house
- Break into small, discrete tasks (chunks)
- Create a schedule of chunks
- Plan a reward for every chunk

In-Session Exercise

Generate a personal reward list

- Make a list of potential rewards
- Rank in order of desirability
- Consider different types of rewards: natural, available, easy, expensive, 'once-in-a-lifetime' etc.

Take-Home Assignment 3.0

- Select a task you have been avoiding. Break it into chunks, estimate the time for each chunk, complete the chunks, time yourself and apply the reward

Task	Chunks	Estim . time	Scheduled date/time	Elapsed time	Reward
Clean House	Dust	15	3pm	25	Chocolate
	Vaccuum	30	3:15pm	20	Squid Game
	Bathroom	20	6:30pm	30	Walk dog
	Kitchen	25	8:00pm	30	Call Jim

Session 4

Prioritizing and To-do lists

- Target Skills
 - Identify priority activities
 - Using planner to prioritize
- Take home exercises
 - 4.0 Importance/Urgency grid
 - 4.1 Schedule one week of to-do's

Session 4

Prioritizing and To-do lists

- Review Take-home exercises 3.0 and 3.1
- Prioritizing is important
- Defining priorities
- In-session exercise
- Importance/urgency grid

Mantra:

Do all things in order of priority

Prioritizing is important

- There are only 24 hours in a day
- Without prioritizing, we fall victim to biases
eg. Gravitate towards what is easy, fun,
available etc

What is priority?

- Urgency/Deadlines
 - Is there a hard limit?
- Importance
 - Is it necessary for the next step towards goals?
- Goals, values, objectives
 - Does it align with my goals/values/objectives?
- Efficiency and feasibility
 - Can I chunk it with something similar?
 - Does it fit neatly into a time crack?
- Gratification
 - Will it feel good to get done?

In-Session Exercise

Prioritizing and Scheduling

- Order the following into a 1-day schedule

- 11:00am meeting
- Lunch with colleague
- 4:00pm print deadline
- Proofread print copy
- Drop letters in mailbox
- 1:30 telephone Roger
- Buy milk
- Prepare 11am meeting
- 8:00pm Jenny Birthday dinner
- Buy card
- Prepare budget for next week finance meeting
- Call Jeff
- Call Christine
- Walk dog

Urgency/Importance Grid

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1- Important and Urgent	2- Important, not urgent
Not important	3- Not important, but urgent	4-Not important or urgent

Take-Home Assignment 4.0

Organize your main types of tasks/projects/activities into the following grid:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1- Important and Urgent	2- Important, not urgent
Not important	3- Not important, but urgent	4-Not important or urgent