

Understanding executive dysfunction

ADHD *and Me.*

Understand your brain, work with it — and build daily systems that actually fit your life.



The C³ Loop™

Centre → Clarify → Choose → Repeat · Human first. Then performance.

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Welcome to your *ADHD journey*.

How to use this workbook.

Welcome. Whether you've been recently diagnosed or have lived with ADHD for years, this workbook is designed just for you — to help you understand your brain, work *with* it (not against it), and create daily systems that actually fit your life.

This guide is built on **Dr Russell Barkley's** research, which views ADHD as a **self-regulation difference** that affects the *executive functions* — the skills that help us manage ourselves over time. Here you'll learn to recognise, manage, and thrive with ADHD, using worksheets, real-life tools, and digital supports made for adults.

Defining ADHD

ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is a **neurodevelopmental condition** that affects the brain's self-management system — the **executive functions** that help us plan, focus, regulate emotions, remember tasks, and manage impulses.

ADHD IS NOT JUST ABOUT ATTENTION

It also involves difficulties with:

- **Self-awareness** — noticing what we're doing.
- **Impulse control** — pausing before acting.
- **Working memory** — keeping tasks in mind.
- **Emotional regulation** — managing emotions.
- **Motivation** — getting started without immediate rewards.
- **Planning & problem-solving, and time management.**

Why this workbook? Because ADHD affects *how* we do things, not just what we do, this workbook helps you build executive-function skills step by step — learning how ADHD shows up in your life, and practical ways to work with it.

Your ADHD *profile*.

Barkley's seven executive functions — and why naming your profile helps.

Russell Barkley's seven-factor executive-function model explains ADHD as a difference in self-regulation and cognitive control. Executive functions are the brain processes that let us manage behaviour, thoughts and emotions to reach goals. ADHD can affect these functions — leading to struggles with focus, emotional control, impulsivity, planning, motivation and working memory.

WHY MAP YOUR PROFILE

Understanding *which* executive functions feel hardest for you helps target personalised strategies and support — and it shows your strengths as clearly as your growth edges. ADHD affects each person differently.

— SECTION 3 · THE SEVEN EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Seven functions, *seven levers*.

For each: what it is, why ADHD affects it, what it looks like when it's impaired, and how to work with it.

01 Self-Awareness · *The Mind's Mirror*

WHAT IT IS

Noticing your behaviour, thoughts and feelings in the moment — seeing yourself “in action.”

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Talking over others, missing reactions, losing track of goals, escalating emotions without noticing.

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

You may not register when you're off-task, interrupting, or escalating — so it's hard to pause and adjust in real time.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Daily self-awareness journal (“What am I doing? What was I meant to be doing?”).
- Mood / activity tracking (Daylio, Reflectly).
- Visual cues — sticky notes, a band on the wrist — to trigger a check-in.

FUNCTION	APPS & TOOLS	WHAT IT DOES
Guided pauses	Insight Timer, Smiling Mind, Headspace	Train attention to notice internal states through short mindful pauses.
Time tracking	RescueTime, Toggl, Apple Screen Time	Reveal how time is really spent — patterns you might not notice in the moment.
Journalling	Journey, Reflectly	Quick reflections on being on / off track; builds the daily habit.
Routine prompts	Routinery, Habitica	Embed short awareness cues into routines so they become automatic.
Voice notes	Otter.ai, Voice Memos, Google Keep	Capture thoughts and reminders in the moment via speech-to-text.

02 Inhibition · *The Mind's Brakes*

WHAT IT IS

The ability to pause before acting — separating thought from action.

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Acting on a thought before thinking it through; speaking when self-talk would do; physical restlessness.

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

ADHD affects the circuits that let us internalise thoughts and hold back an impulsive response.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Pause strategies (“count to 5”, a band technique).
- Impulse-control worksheet — record triggers and alternative responses.
- Medication + CBT for impulse control, where appropriate.
- App: CBT Thought Diary.

03 Non-Verbal Working Memory · *The Mind's Eye*

WHAT IT IS

Holding images, sounds and sequences in mind — to plan actions, judge time and remember steps.

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Poor sense of time, forgetting steps, trouble following routines, “living in the moment.”

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

It can be hard to visualise plans, foresee consequences, or sense time passing.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Visual planners (Trello, Notion).
- Timers and visual time aids (Time Timer).
- Cognitive training for visual memory (e.g. CogMed).

04 Verbal Working Memory · *The Mind's Voice*

WHAT IT IS

Talking to yourself internally to guide actions, solve problems and follow rules.

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Excessive talking, weaker self-guidance, difficulty following internal rules, easily distracted.

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

ADHD can limit inner speech — so you may talk out loud or struggle to plan internally.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Self-talk coaching — learn to ask yourself guiding questions.
- Verbal task breakdowns — write the steps and say them aloud.
- Cognitive training for verbal working memory.

05 Emotion Regulation · *The Mind's Heart*

WHAT IT IS

Managing strong emotions and responding in a way that fits the situation.

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Emotional outbursts, frustration over small things, lower resilience to stress.

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

ADHD increases emotional impulsivity — acting on feelings before they've settled.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Emotional-intelligence skills — self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness.
- A physiological sigh; CBT/DBT skills (STOP, opposite action, reframing).
- Apps: Woebot, Calm, Breathwrk.

06 Self-Motivation · *The Mind's Fuel Tank*

WHAT IT IS

Generating internal drive to act on goals, even without an immediate reward.

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Difficulty starting or finishing; relying on external pressure to get moving.

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

ADHD brains find delayed rewards hard — which can mean procrastination and stalled follow-through.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Body doubling (Focusmate) for accountability.
- Gamification apps (Habitica, Forest).
- Micro-goals with immediate rewards (Pomodoro, small wins).

07 Planning & Problem-Solving · *The Mind's Playground*

WHAT IT IS

Simulating actions, imagining consequences, and choosing the best solution.

WHEN IT'S IMPAIRED

Trouble organising tasks, procrastination, difficulty solving problems effectively.

WHY ADHD AFFECTS IT

ADHD can affect thinking ahead, planning steps, and staying organised.

HOW TO WORK WITH IT

- Task-breakdown templates — big goals into small actions.
- Apps: Sunsama, Structured.
- Cognitive problem-solving training.

AT A GLANCE

The seven functions, *summarised.*

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION	WHAT IT DOES	CHALLENGE IN ADHD	TOOLS & STRATEGIES
Self-Awareness	Notice actions and thoughts	Unaware of behaviour, goals, emotions	Self-monitoring apps, journals, visual reminders
Inhibition	Pause before acting	Acting on impulse	Pause practice, impulse journals, medication, CBT
Non-verbal working memory	Visualise, sense time	Forget steps, poor time awareness	Visual planners, timers, cognitive training
Verbal working memory	Internal self-talk	Talking out loud, weaker self-guidance	Self-talk coaching, written / verbal task breakdowns

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION	WHAT IT DOES	CHALLENGE IN ADHD	TOOLS & STRATEGIES
Emotion regulation	Manage emotions	Outbursts, low frustration tolerance	CBT/DBT, emotion tracking, breathing tools
Self-motivation	Internal drive for goals	Low motivation, procrastination	Gamification, body doubling, Pomodoro
Planning / problem-solving	Imagine solutions, organise	Poor planning, disorganisation	Task breakdown, step-by-step planners, training

THE POINT OF THE PROFILE

ADHD affects each person differently. Understanding your executive-function profile helps you see both your strengths and the areas where extra support helps. This workbook pairs Barkley's seven functions with your assessment results to build a personalised roadmap.

SECTION 4 · YOUR PERSONALISED ROADMAP

ADHD and *me*.

Your profile, function by function — your pattern, your tools, and a prompt to reflect. Complete alongside your assessment results.

02 Inhibition · *The Mind's Brakes*

YOUR PATTERN

Inhibition is one of your strengths. You can usually pause and think before acting — though under stress, small slips of impulsivity can still appear.

YOUR TOOLS

- “Stop – Plan – Do – Review” pause script.
- CBT Thought Diary — to log and reflect on triggers.
- Impulse logs — noticing patterns helps you plan.

REFLECTION PROMPT

What situations make it harder for me to hit the “pause button”?

03 Non-Verbal Working Memory · *The Mind's Eye*

YOUR PATTERN

This is a growth edge — holding steps in mind and sensing time passing can be harder for you.

The personalised roadmap for functions 03–07 was cut off in the source document I could read. Share the rest (or the full doc) and I'll complete this section — your pattern, tools and reflection prompt for each — in the same format.

— A NOTE TO FINISH ON

Work *with* your brain.

Understanding your executive-function profile isn't about fixing yourself — it's about building the right architecture around the brain you already have. Start with one function, one tool, one small change, and let it hold before adding the next.

A NOTE ON THIS WORKBOOK

This is a psychoeducational resource. It supports — and does not replace — individual assessment, therapy, or medical advice. Decisions about diagnosis and medication sit with you and your clinical team.