

Turning ADHD into “Awesome Dynamic Highly Dependable”

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Who am I?

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- Lives in Portland, OR on the Columbia River in a floating home
- 30 Yrs in Tech, DBA- **MSSQL**, **Oracle**, MySQL, DB2, PostgreSQL, Sybase
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Attention Deficit Hyperactive Dynamic

“Strange Brilliant Child”

Obliviously brilliant

Daydreamer

Ability to recite stories from memory

When put on the spot, became anxious and suffered “brain shut-down”

Never sat still, always climbing

Lack of impulse control- took apart electronics, always touching everything, speaking up when asked to be silent

On the spectrum- difficulty interacting with peers

Considerable anxiety- happiest alone

Diagnosed in at 36 yrs
Old

Diagnosed as ADHD in
2005

Diagnosed with Autism in
2007

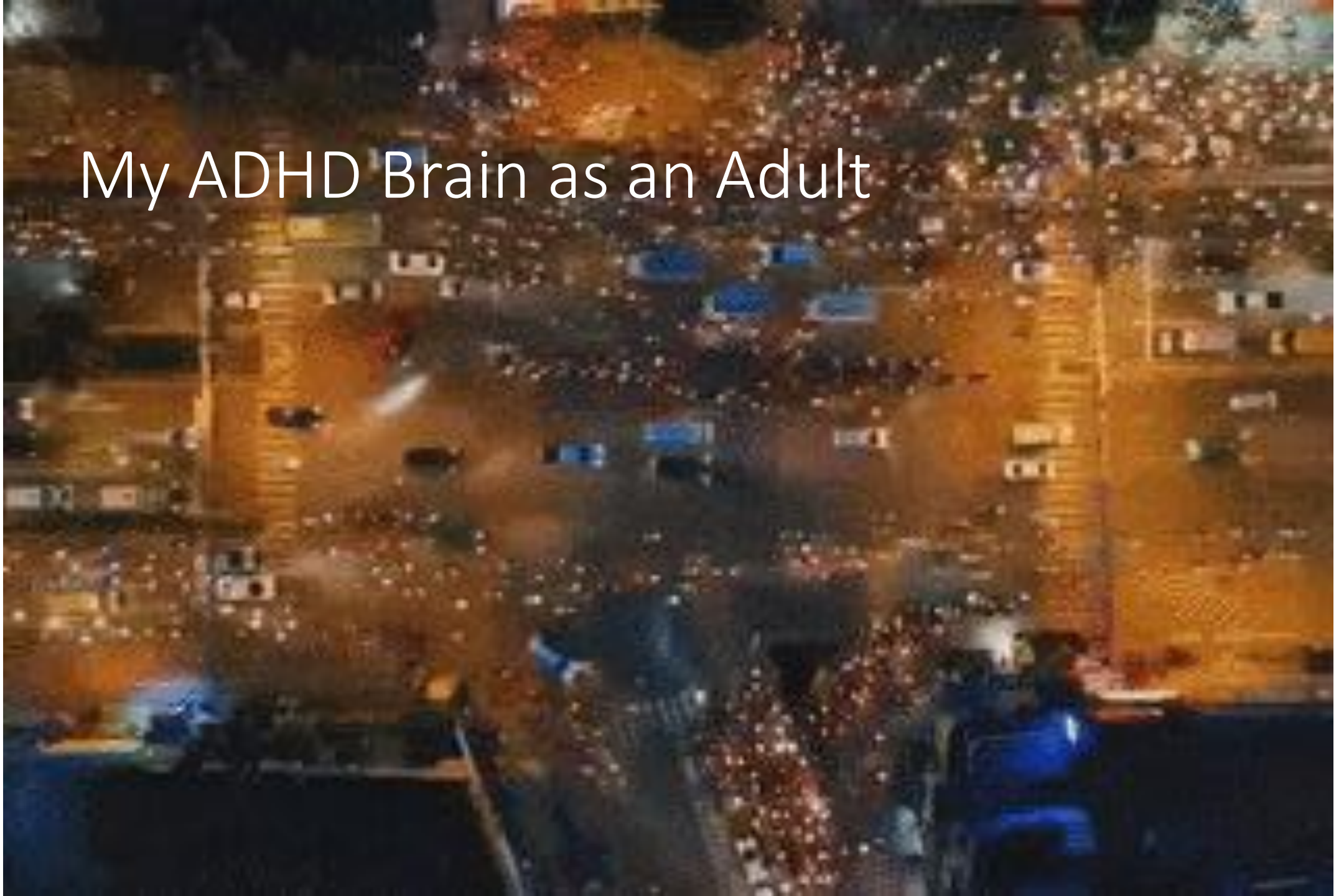
Son was diagnosed first,
(very common)



Growing Up with ADHD

- Not living up to your potential
- Stop being lazy
- Pay attention/Pull it together!
- Please sit still/stop climbing/stop running/dancing around/stop touching everything!
- Why must you talk so much? Ask so many questions?
- Widespread misinformation about drugs used in the treatment of ADHD
- Although recent breakthroughs in public stigma around ADHD and Autism have been made, still a lot of misinformation.

My ADHD Brain as an Adult



What is ADHD?

- Attention Deficit [Hyperactivity] Disorder
 - Most common neurodevelopmental conditions in human beings.
 - Often diagnosed in childhood
 - Although 3-7 types identified, common issues are:
 - Inattentiveness
 - Lack of self-control, (impulsiveness)
 - Hyperactivity
 - Hyper-focus, (for some)
 - Lack of detail
 - Anxiety
 - Emotional
 - Difficult to diagnose and no one set of tests exist.
 - Significant stigma around ADHD

What is Going on When you Have ADHD?

- Impacted areas of the brain with low levels of activity when tedious or stressful situations occur.
- Scenarios that are interactive, interesting or exciting create normal neuro-transmitter activity.
- Can be very demoralizing throughout the entire lifetime of the individual.
- Impacts to education, relationships, career and overall quality of life.
- Male brains are impacted differently than female brains both due to how we are raised and chemical differences.

Less Known Symptoms

- Obsessive itching, tics, picking or scratching at self.
- Hyper-sensitivity to clothing seams, tags or even colors.
- Hoarding/sloppy/messy
- Addictive behavior: food, shopping, drugs, sex, etc.
- Working memory deficit- A small detail will be forgotten or a word you just discussed can't be recalled.
- Combination with other neurodivergent issues is common.
- Hyperactivity can be demonstrated more than in physical activity- finger tapping, leg shaking, talking fast, eye movement, aggression, emotional or physical outbursts, etc.

Three Primary Types of ADHD

Inattentive Presentation

- Executive dysfunction
- Inattentive to detail
- Difficulty with paying attention
- Unable to follow instructions or remember conversations.

Hyperactive-Impulsive Presentation

- Very talkative and may speak very fast. Tendency to interrupt.
- Unable to sit still
- Fidgets
- Restless
- Poor sleep patterns
- Impulsive/lack of control
- Accident prone

Combined Presentation

To Treat or Not to Treat ADHD

9.4% of American children diagnosed with ADHD and 7.2% globally

62/47% choice of medication or behavioral treatment

83% embraced coping mechanisms to address challenges

23% received no treatment

4.4% of adults have ADHD, (60% of children diagnosed)

Benefits of Addressing ADHD

- 41% of adult ADHD consider the impact from it as “severe”
- Worst cases of ADHD could reduce your life expectancy by 25 years-
 - Less healthy choices
 - Impulsive behaviors create risk
 - Self-harm, anxiety, depression, etc.
- Impacts to career.
- Detrimental to relationships.
- Lack of adequate sleep.
- Overall quality of life.

Things to know about ADHD

Genetics are
high risk
factor.

40% have a parent with ADHD



Suspected risk
factors:

Brain injury

Environmental factors during pregnancy

Diet is not a cause, (i.e. sugar) but can impact symptoms


Symptoms may become more manageable as children reach adulthood, but rarely disappear.

Undiagnosed adults, (especially mothers) are often identified after their child or other family member is.

Medication is a personal and medical decision, shouldn't be up for public opinion.

Adults with ADHD


ADHD is often viewed as a childhood condition and identified mostly with boys, but no longer.



60% of adults with ADHD were aware of the same symptoms in childhood, but may have gone undiagnosed.



Were often viewed as incompetent, childish or irresponsible.

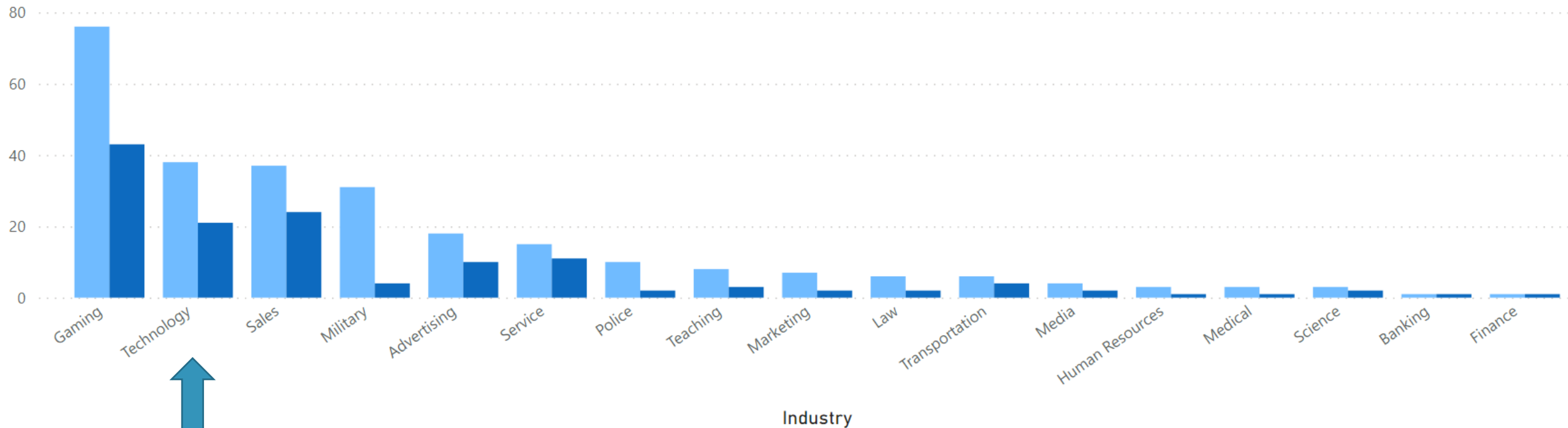


Coping mechanisms may be highly developed, (especially true for women with ADHD.)

The Tech Industry has a High Percentage of ADHD...7% ADHD adults in America

ADHD By Industry

Percentage ● ADHD Suspected ● ADHD Confirmed



20% Confirmed
38% Suspected

Biggest Complaints of ADHD

Executive Dysfunction- “Getting Started”

Disorganized

Being on Time/Keeping Appointments

Lack of Attention

Inability to “Transition”

Procrastination/Inability to Complete Tasks

Learning Disorders that may also be present.

Internal Preoccupation

Miscommunication or incomplete communication.

Executive Dysfunction

Don't overthink-
Overthinking can
be overwhelming.
Small goals.

To-do lists,
(including
AI/smartphone to-
do for quick access)

Schedule to begin
task and open-end
time.



Disorganization

- Remove clutter- If you don't need it, then get rid of it.
- Schedule time for designated tasks- email, daily, quick cleanup, etc. to keep from becoming overwhelming.
- Consider, (if available) to outsource weak points, such as housecleaning, weekly shopping
- Simplify clothing choices.
- Keep copies of important items with you, (medication, paperwork.) If you take medication, have some with you if you forget to take it.

Timeliness



Use a single calendar or global calendar if more than one.



Pad the amount of time needed into your schedule to keep you on time.



Use a smart phone to remind you of meetings/appointments- EARLY reminder.



Consider a smartwatch with vibration to remind of calendar agenda or important notifications.



Only accept necessary meetings. Decline anything that isn't important for you to be involved in and remove yourself from any "white noise."



Distracted

"That snail is too loud..."

Lack of Attention

Have

Have numerous tasks to transition to and from as attention wanes.

Hobbies

Have hobbies that can assist in train to extend attention, (reading, yoga, meditation, model building, word games, etc.)

Ensure

Ensure proper rest and nutrition, including removal of many artificial colors and sweeteners that are suspected to impact attention.

Consider

When attention is waning or an extended focus has not yielded results, consider a short break or distraction to regain focus.

Limit

Limit distractions/noise-cancelling solutions/peaceful surroundings

Procrastination/Inability to Complete Tasks

- Perform small tasks/easily completed tasks immediately.
- Try to group small tasks to complete as many as possible, (feeling of accomplishment with these, too.)
- Interweave small tasks in the middle of large tasks to give a break, refresh and offer attention refocus.
- Do something, do anything goal, even if it's not what you intended, start and migrate to the intended task.
- Reward yourself once achieved, (When I finish a small task, may be a walk on the deck, a large task, a ½ hour of Nintendo Switch game play.)

Learning Disorders That May Also be Present

Identify	Identify the Learning Disorder
Get	Get help to address it, (educational, therapeutic, etc.)
Use	Use application tools /technology to assist, (spell/grammar checks, accessibility features, etc.)
Notify and ask	If management support, then notify and ask for accommodations if needed.

Internal Preoccupation and Transitioning

Inability to recall
a word, a
person/name or
idea

Take a deep breath
Try word association
Talk it out

Inability to
transition

Complete task step, then attempt to transition.
Ask if request can wait till you've completed task
Use multiple screens to keep from a transition.

Racing Thoughts

Controlled distraction- read, music, tv/movie/game
Talk it through with someone you trust.
Imagine optimal scenario



Communication

Speaking

- Count to 5 before answering, (help with interruption issue.)
- Focus on the goal of what you want to say. We can begin to run-on in conversations.
- If you are hyper-focusing, ask the person if you can come to them later to have the conversation.
- If you demonstrate hyperactivity through speed of speech, consider taking more time on enunciating, not just slowing down your rate of speech.
- Stress/frustration/anger can exasperate ADHD issues, causing you to:
 - Blurt out
 - Clam up
 - Ramble

Consider asking for a better time to speak, whenever possible. Give yourself the time you need before speaking.

Listening

- Verify if peers or managers feel they must repeat communication with you. If so, identify if there is a pattern and produce options to address it.
- Repeat what was said to yourself to ensure you understood what was said.
- Ask the speaker to clarify or elaborate if you are having difficulty with retrieval.
- Ask questions to make it more interactive.
- One-on-one conversations are likely to be more productive than group or large social events.
- Be aware how much pragmatic conversation you are privy to with ADHD.

Emotional Toll

LESS ANGER CONTROL
THAN DESIRED.

CRY WITHOUT FEELING
SAD, (ESPECIALLY
PREVALENT IN WOMEN
WITH ADHD)

LAUGHING WHEN
NERVOUS

NON-REACTIVE

INSENSITIVE

HYPER-SENSITIVE,
(HYPER-AWARENESS OF
OTHER'S PRAGMATIC
COMMUNICATION)

OVER-SENSITIVE,
(MISREADS OTHER'S
REACTIONS/PRAGMATIC
COMMUNICATION)

OVERWHELMED,
SHUTDOWN

Office Space/Open Space

- Open Space Offices are Everywhere...
 - Re-arrange so desk faces a wall.
 - Purchase noise-cancelling headphones.
 - Locate quiet location for focus time.
 - Arrange monitors to build barrier from distractions.
 - Incorporate breaks throughout the day.
 - Consider a “Do Not Disturb” sign for focus times.

Ask for an opportunity to move to quieter location if there is an issue.

Work Environment

Work From Home

- Need Structure? Build out with scheduling, web meetings and timers.
- At home distractions
 - Home Office
 - Try observed, controlled outing, (coffee house)

Collaboration Group/

- Ask for scheduled times for work vs. collaboration.
- Set aside scheduled time for emails.
- Schedule focus time into calendar free of meetings and interruptions

Make a list of what works for you and what doesn't when it comes to work!

Work With, Not Against ADHD

Load up your plate with more tasks than you think you can accomplish, allows for easier transition and ability to keep busy.

Multi-task when able.

Keeps notes/data in a single locations vs. multiple and accessible from all devices.

Use your impulsiveness to take risks that might end up opportunities lost.

Persistence- The difference between failure and success is often trying one more time.

Let your manager know how he can make you successful, (Train your manager)

Find other neurodiverse individuals who may be able to help you find opportunities for success.

Team up with individual that is meticulous, detail oriented and balances out your ADHD mindset.

Tools

- Organizers
- Smart Phones, (along with smart watches- discuss benefits)
- Timers
- Routines
- Smart Home Devices
- Bill Pay/Auto Pay
- Online Automation
- Applications/Services
- Meal/Grocery Delivery
- Simplify EVERYTHING.

I Still Face Challenges...

- Topics which I don't find interesting or part of my area of focus.
- Mundane employment training or certification tests can take me an extensive amount of time.
- The last 5% of many tasks can go undone if waiting on someone else.
- Tasks that are low-priority and/or don't have a deadline or clear directions.
- A task or initiative that I don't believe in or goes against my knowledge on the topic.
- Busy, noisy or distracting work environments.
- Office setups that aren't constructive to my ADHD.

These scenarios can set me up for failure and at my age, I simply don't have the patience for it anymore.

Be Kind To Yourself

Don't expect perfection, expect small successes.

Give yourself a break, (i.e. take breaks and show yourself kindness.)

Get plenty of rest and eat healthy.

Make yourself comfortable.

Remove or mask distractions.

You feel things for a reason- find out the why, address the why.

My Own Tips To Success

Identify and OWN your ADHD. Find your superpower!

Find what you're passionate about and build it into your job and hobbies.

Your job is only as good as your boss.

Train your boss to be good at managing YOU.

Set yourself up for success.

Rid yourself or silence the “negative noise”- people, places and things.

Automate or “Auto-pilot” everything and anything to free up focus resources.

Essential notifications from smartphone to Apple watch keeps me dependable and on-time.

Small tasks I do immediately, and “pepper” transitioned between larger tasks when focus wanes.

A world map with a dark blue background and light gray landmasses. Numerous red location pins are scattered across the map, indicating the presence of ADHD groups. There is a high concentration of pins in North America, particularly in the United States. Other clusters are visible in Europe, Australia, and South America. Pins are also scattered across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Consider ADHD Groups

[ADHD groups | Meetup](#)

ADHD Awareness Month is October!

Data Platform Neurodiversity Data – Oct. 3rd Full Day of Virtual Sessions!

[Neurodiversity Day 2024, Thu, Oct 3, 2024, 8:00 AM | Meetup](#)

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<https://dbakevlar.com>

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Thank you!

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