

WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination Defined 📌

"Procrastination is the act of repeatedly deferring or delaying tasks to one's detriment, despite knowing there will be negative consequences."

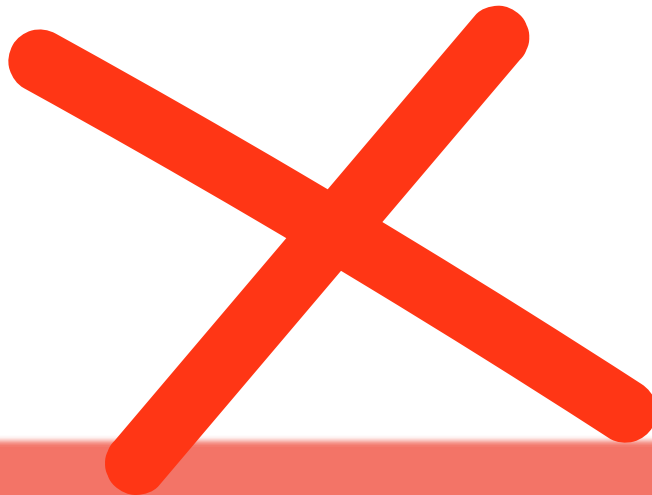
Russ Ramsey

Understanding Procrastination 🤔

The problem with this definition is that it tells us nothing about **WHY** procrastination is happening or **HOW** to help ourselves with it.

If you are struggling with procrastination it's likely you are wrong about the why behind your procrastination.

When you try to solve your procrastination, how does how you frame the problem, influence the solutions you come up with?



WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION

Common Misconceptions ❌

Default Assumption: The default assumption most people with ADHD make (and professionals make) for why procrastination is happening is often wrong.

Procrastination reasons vary.

Reasons for procrastination can vary from person to person and from instance to instance, further complicating the issue.

Finding Solutions 🛠️

Initial Assumptions Matter: The solutions or ways you try to help yourself with procrastination flow from the initial assumption you make about the cause.

It can make you feel worse about yourself if you try to help yourself with the wrong assumptions and are unsuccessful in beating the procrastination.

WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION

The Power of Self-Awareness 🌟

- **Understanding Behavior:** With self-awareness, we can begin to look at some of the true underlying reasons for our behavior.
- **Effective Solutions:** Once we understand the root causes, we can then find more effective solutions.





WHAT IS PROCRASTINATION

The Risks for ADHD Women of Quick Fixes and Solutions💔

The wrong guess about why you are procrastinating can be harmful.

- Effects:
 - It can reinforce negative internalized beliefs about your self-worth.
 - The wrong guess leads to the wrong solution.
 - This often reinforces a cycle of shame, failure, or self-criticism.

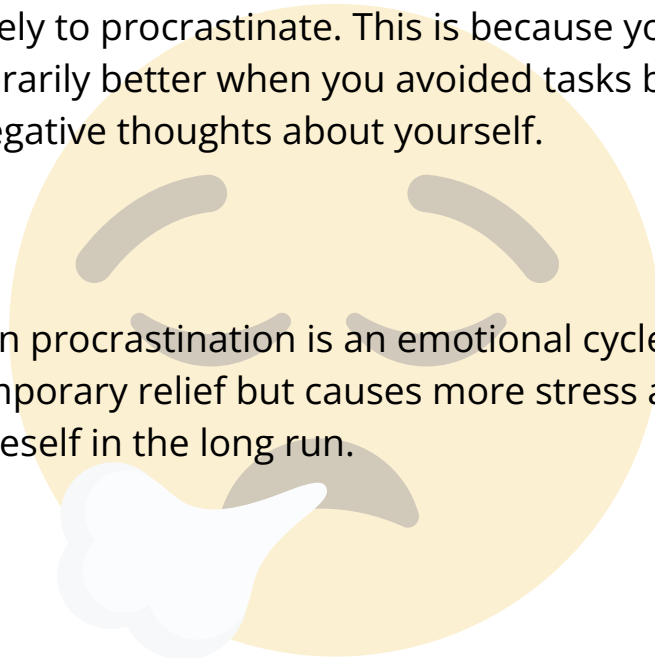


THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF PROCRASTINATION

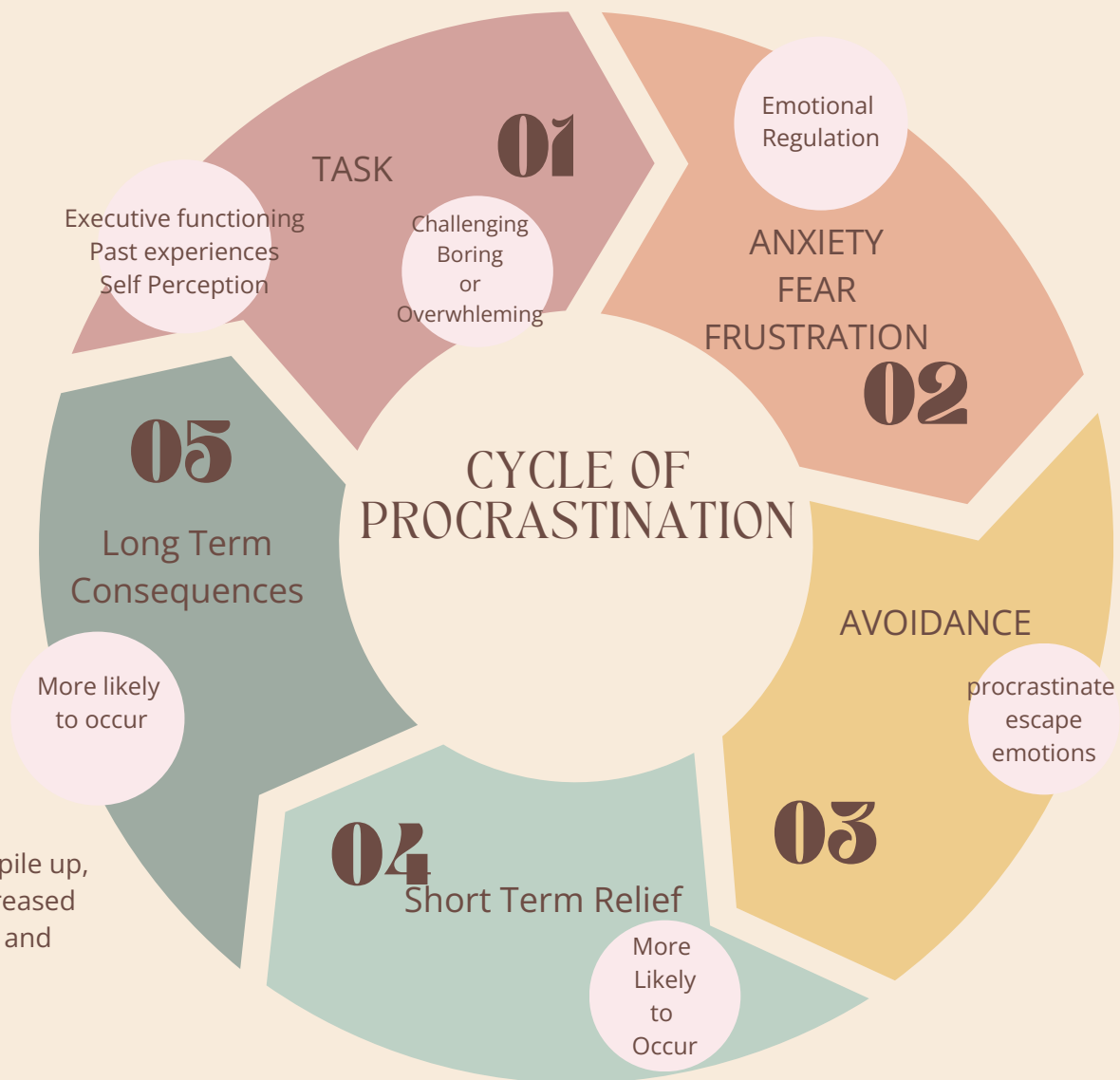
For Adhd women, emotions play a massive role in procrastination. Let's take a look at an example cycle.

1. **Facing a Tough Task:** You encounter a task that feels hard or overwhelming. This could be because of your past experiences, how tough the task actually is, or how you view yourself and your abilities.
2. **Feeling Bad:** When you think about this task, you start feeling anxious, scared, or frustrated. You might find it hard to manage these emotions.
3. **Avoiding the Task:** To escape these bad feelings, you don't do the task. You might just ignore it or stop trying.
4. **Feeling a Bit Better for a While:** By avoiding the task, you feel a little better temporarily. This makes you more likely to avoid tasks in the future.
5. **Problems Get Bigger:** Over time, stress increases because tasks pile up. You might even face a crisis. You feel guilty and even more anxious. This can affect your work and relationships.
6. **Thinking Worse of Yourself:** Continuously avoiding tasks strengthens negative thoughts about yourself. You might start thinking you're lazy or can't handle hard tasks.
7. **The Cycle Continues:** The next time a tough task comes up, you're even more likely to procrastinate. This is because you remember feeling temporarily better when you avoided tasks before, and you have these negative thoughts about yourself.

In summary, when procrastination is an emotional cycle avoiding tough tasks leads to temporary relief but causes more stress and negative feelings about oneself in the long run.



The Emotional Cycle of Procrastination



Wise, M. L., Wise, B. L., & Jones, S. R. (2019). The Maladaptive Coping Cycle: A Model for Understanding Academic and Social Failure in Children with ADHD. *The ADHD Report*, 27(7). A

THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF PROCRASTINATION

Once you have an understanding of the emotional cycle, you can practice other skills to help yourself with your emotions besides avoidance.



THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF PROCRASTINATION

Why did we wait so long to cover procrastination?

For many with ADHD, procrastination isn't just about laziness or lack of effort. It's often a result of not having the skills to tackle living in a world that is not set up for your brain and nervous system.

🌟 Key Insights:

- Skill Building: The core of the challenge isn't just procrastination; it's about mastering tasks that don't naturally align with our ADHD traits and understanding our unique nervous system.
- Beyond "Trying Harder": Simply pushing ourselves won't break the cycle. What's essential is acquiring skills, making accommodations, and regulating emotional responses to self-critical thoughts.
- Empowerment Tools:
 - Self-Advocacy: Champion for your distinct needs and knowing what your rights are.
 - Self-Compassion: Extend kindness and understanding to yourself.
 - Self-Care: Actively prioritize actions that put your well-being first.
 - Self-Accommodations: Tailor your environment to better suit your ADHD and knowing that you deserve accommodations.
 - Self-Awareness: Recognize there are alternative solutions, different from the mainstream advice you might have received.

Procrastination is a clue to be deciphered.

3 Reasons

Why Procrastination is Worse for ADHD Women

Procrastination is a multifaceted behavior, influenced by various cognitive, emotional, and environmental aspects. Let's explore three significant reasons that might heighten its presence among ADHD women.

1. Executive Function Challenges 🧩

ADHD women face heightened executive functioning challenges. Pressure on women to juggle multiple roles intensifies these challenges, leading to **feelings of being overwhelmed and resulting in procrastination.**

2. The Impact of Late Diagnosis on Internalized Beliefs and Symptoms 🥃

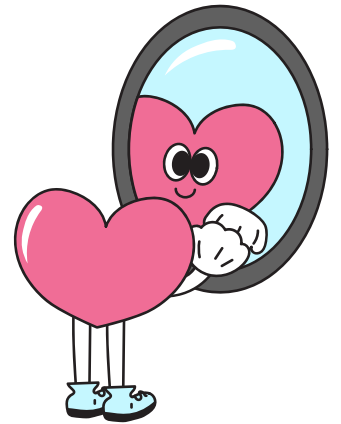
Deep-seated beliefs of feeling 'different' or 'inadequate' intensify the emotional spiral of procrastination.

3. The Perfectionism-Procrastination Paradox 🔄

Perfectionism, a common trait among ADHD women, is directly tied to procrastination. The fear of potential failure or judgment can be so strong that it becomes a barrier to even starting a task.

Reflect: As you ponder these points, identify which resonates deeply with you.

Mindful Self Compassion for Procrastination



Common Humanity

Understanding that you have faced these obstacles along with other women in our group can help you be self compassionate towards yourself when faced with procrastination.



Curiosity

You're probably eager for solutions to procrastination, as it can complicate parts of your life.

Before we delve into solutions, keep this in mind: Procrastination isn't always negative. Sometimes, it's our mind's way of protecting us.

Being curious about each particular flavor of procrastination and listening to what the procrastination can teach you about what you need is a good way to approach it.

This can help you determine the WHY of procrastination. Then we can begin to discover the HOW of moving through it.

We do this with MINDFUL SELF COMPASSION and SELF AWARENESS.

Why Procrastination is Worse for ADHD Women

Using Self-Compassion with Procrastination

Pause and Reflect:

When the impulse to procrastinate arises or difficult feelings show up, pause and use mindfulness to observe what's happening internally.

Normalize the Feeling:

Remind yourself using the principle of common humanity that many people feel this way, especially when faced with challenging, or overwhelming tasks. It's a human experience. Say this to yourself out loud. "Many women with adhd struggle with procrastination, I am not alone with this issue. "

Respond with Kindness:

Instead of spiraling into negative self-talk, employ self-kindness. Offer words of kindness to yourself. " I am doing the best I can, and I am learning new skills. " or "_____, you are doing the best you can here, and you are trying to learn a new skill with your procrastination." (distanced self-talk and self-kindness).

Self-Awareness-Get curious.

What is the flavor of your procrastination? What do you think it's saying to you?

Typically, procrastination stems from front or back-end perfectionism, fear of failure, lack of information, task initiation issues, feeling overwhelmed, disinterest, or anxiety due to lack of confidence. To tackle these challenges, please take a look at the following worksheet suggestions.

Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

A: Investigate Your Procrastination

1. Task Analysis:

Question: Why am I avoiding this task?

- The task seems too long.
- It appears complex.
- It feels unengaging.



2. Emotions & Thoughts:

Question: What emotions or thoughts arise when I think about starting this task?

3. Self-Talk:

Question: What things am I saying to myself?

Note: *Negative self-talk can inhibit action. Reassuring self-talk can motivate you.*

4. Task Details:

Question: What specific part of this task am I avoiding?

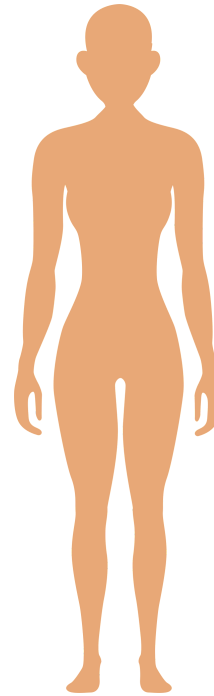
Task's nature:

- The environment
- Fear of outcomes

Tip: Pinpointing can help find solutions.

Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

A: Investigate Your Procrastination



5. Physical State Check-In:

Question: How do I feel right now?

- Tense
- Relaxed
- Anxious
- Energetic
- Overwhelmed

Note: Refer back to our emotions in units 3 and 4. Your physical state provides hints about underlying feelings.

6. Alignment with Values:

Question: Is this task in line with my values and strengths?

Note: If a task isn't in sync with your values, it's naturally going to be more challenging to tackle.

VALUES

Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

Part B: Working with Your Procrastination

Part B: Identify the Roots *All of these solutions are based on the assumption that these are tasks you should be and want to be doing.*

Based on Fears:

☐ Fear of Failure

Years of criticism can make fear of failure a key reason for procrastination.

- **Solutions:**

- ☐ Distanced self-talk
- ☐ Recall past successes
- ☐ Focus on progress, not perfection
- ☐ Align with values
- ☐ Practice self-compassion
- ☐ Willingness and Action plan

☐ Fear of Criticism

Early-life criticism can cement this fear, making it protective.

- **Solutions:**

- ☐ Engage in self-compassion exercises (e.g., journaling, meditation, breaks)
- ☐ Remember compliments and past achievements
- ☐ Willingness and Action plan

☐ Anxiety (rooted in feeling overwhelmed)

- **Solutions:**

- ☐ Grounding exercises
- ☐ Break tasks into bite-sized steps
- ☐ Use sensory soothers (e.g., calming music, tactile objects)
- ☐ Find a peaceful space to minimize sensory overload
- ☐ Willingness and Action plan

Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

☐ **Past Memories of Failures**

Previous traumas can intensify current apprehensions, particularly due to ADHD's emotional regulation challenges.

• **Solutions:**

- a. ☐ View past experiences through a compassionate perspective.
- b. ☐ Discuss prior events with someone to attain a fresh viewpoint.
- c. ☐ Embrace self-compassion.
- d. ☐ Use distanced self-talk techniques.
- e. ☐ Develop a willingness and action plan.
- f. ☐ Implement self-accommodation strategies.

☐ **Need More Information or Clarification on Task**

It might be challenging to seek assistance if you've been scolded for asking for help.

• **Solutions:**

- ☐ Hone self-advocacy skills.
- ☐ Engage in self-compassion exercises.
- ☐ Approach trustworthy individuals with inquiries.
- ☐ Gain proficiency in asking for assistance.



Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

Based on Executive Functioning Issues:

☐ Boredom or Lack of Interest

- **Insight:** Engaging with tasks in stimulating ways can help combat boredom.
- **Solutions:**
 - a. ☐ Use colorful markers or tools to enhance visual appeal.
 - b. ☐ Incorporate sensory stimulators.
 - c. ☐ Choose an activity from a dopamine menu.
 - d. ☐ Add sensory elements, like chewing gum or background music.
 - e. ☐ Gamify the task or set a reward system.

☐ Lack of Motivation

The ADHD brain may struggle with internal motivation due to dopamine imbalances.

- **Solutions:**
 - a. ☐ Seek external motivators, such as accountability partners.
 - b. ☐ Offer yourself short-term rewards upon task completion.
 - c. ☐ Visualize the successful end result and the subsequent satisfaction.
 - d. ☐ Question the necessity: Do you even need to do the task?

Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

☐ Initiation Difficulties (Starting a task or project)

A prevalent EF challenge is the initiation of tasks.

- Solutions:
 - a. ☐ Commence with the simplest part of the task.
 - b. ☐ Use visual aids: task lists, mind maps, etc., to enhance clarity.
 - c. ☐ Challenge yourself: Can you commit to just 15 minutes?
 - d. ☐ Begin with the tiniest conceivable step.

☐ Overwhelmed by the Task

- **Insight:** ADHD can intensify sensations of being overwhelmed.
- **Solutions:**
 - a. ☐ Refer to Module 5 (our stress module) and the Self Accommodations module.
 - b. ☐ Tackle it one step at a time.
 - c. ☐ Break the task into manageable portions.
 - d. ☐ Schedule specific start and end times for work periods.
 - e. ☐ Incorporate short intervals for rejuvenation.
 - f. ☐ Make necessary accommodations.

Miscellaneous:

☐ Rebellion

Those with ADHD may have a heightened sense of autonomy.

- **Solutions:**
 - ☐ Reflect: Are you hindering your own desires?
 - ☐ Reevaluate: Is this task essential or can it be approached differently?
 - ☐ Reframe: Visualize the task as a choice, not an obligation.

Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

☐ Lack of Resources

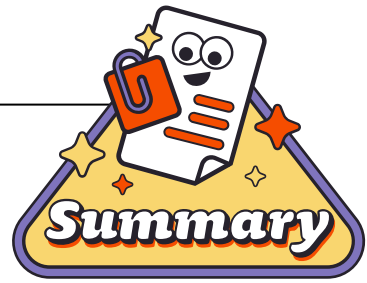
- **Question:** Do you possess everything required for the task?
- **Solutions:**
 - a. ☐ Design a checklist detailing commonly needed items.
 - b. ☐ Consider if you need to solicit resources from someone.
 - c. ☐ Do you need guidance on how to request assistance?
 - d. ☐ Seek support from the group.
 - e. ☐ Engage with a therapist or a friend.
 - f. ☐ Ensure all required items are prepared before beginning.

☐ Perfectionism

ADHD and perfectionism can sometimes coincide, often as a reaction to past critiques.

- **Solutions:**
 - ☐ Refer to our perfectionism unit.





The task I'm struggling with

The reason I've uncovered I'm struggling

Some new ways to cope

Ways this procrastination may be hurting.

Ways this procrastination may be helping.

Willingness and Action Plan

Understanding the Benefit of the Willingness and Action Plan for Procrastination

The Willingness and Action Plan is a strategy to address procrastination based in fear and anxiety. This is not helpful if you haven't practiced our model addressing self-accommodation, self compassion and self advocacy first. If the issues are rooted in executive functioning, this will not be helpful either.

Procrastination often arises from a mix of avoidance behaviors and overwhelming feelings, and that can exacerbate negative beliefs about yourself.

This worksheet helps you state your goals and understand what's truly important to you, especially when you are struggling with procrastination. By spotting problems early on, you can tackle anxiety and self criticism that gets in the way head-on and avoid putting things off.



Flourish Worksheet for Procrastination

The Willingness and Action Plan

- My Goal:
 - Describe your specific goal:

- Values Underpinning My Goal:
 - List the values that guide your goal:

- Action Steps:
 - Detail the specific actions you'll undertake to achieve this goal:

- Personal Commitments:
 - Identify what you're willing to accept or manage to realize this goal:
 - Thoughts/Memories:

 - Feelings: _____
 - Sensations: _____
 - Urges: _____
- Reminders:
 - Note key affirmations or things you want to remember:

- Break It Down:
 - If your goal seems too vast, detail smaller sub-tasks or steps:

- First Step:
 - Identify the most straightforward task to commence your journey: _____
- Commitment:
 - Specify the time, day, and date you'll embark on the initial step: _____

Introducing Procrastivity

Introducing Procrastivity A subset of procrastination, procrastivity is when you delay a priority to tackle a less urgent but still useful task.

Example: You aim to write a paper, but you end up emptying the dishwasher. Yes, the dishwasher needed attention, but writing was the real priority.

 **Insight:** Choosing a procrastivity task means you're often delaying something you've postponed before.

“I'll tackle smaller tasks first to build momentum for bigger ones”? If this genuinely helps you, it isn't procrastination. But often, it doesn't work out.

Why do certain tasks become procrastivity tasks?

Decoding Procrastivity Tasks

1. Manual: They involve hands-on work.
2. Structured: They have clear, well-defined steps.
3. Time-bounded: They have defined start and stop times.

These tasks give a clearer sense of progress and often feel less overwhelming, especially for those with ADHD.

Introducing Procrastivity

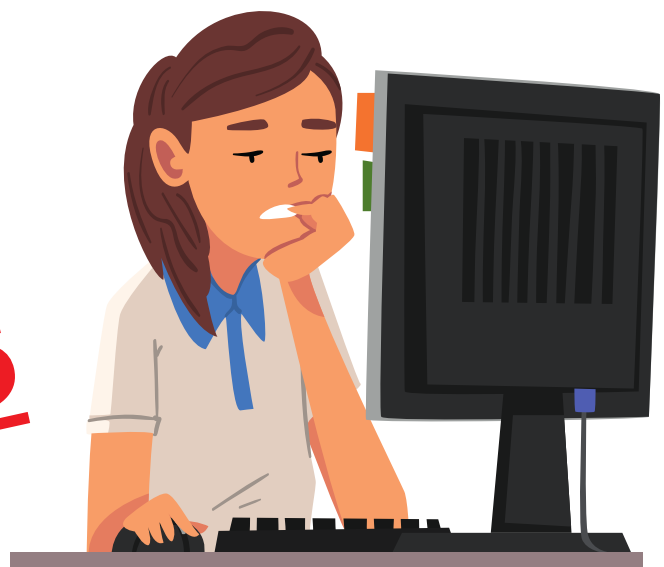
What Tasks Do People With ADHD Often Procrastinate Against?

Tasks that are:

- Overwhelming and broad.
- Lacking a clear start or end time.
- Without a distinct sequence.
- Mentally demanding (high cognitive load).
- Potentially emotionally overwhelming.

For instance, taxes are frequently avoided by everyone, but especially people with adhd. Someone might choose to mow the lawn (procrastivity) when they should be working on their taxes.

This is because of the complexity of the **task taxes**, but the simpleness of the task **mowing the lawn (even if it's not fun)**.



Introducing Procrastivity

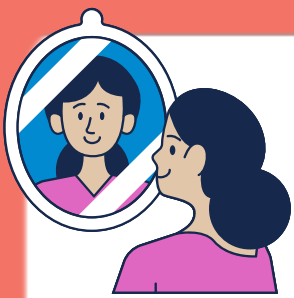
If you are procrastinating, here are some ways to help yourself.

1. Make it Manual: Introduce a physical aspect to the task.
2. Break it Down: Convert overwhelming tasks into step-by-step actions.
3. Get Started: Turn an idea into a tangible step that involves doing.
4. Visualize Steps: Represent the task as a visual sequence.
5. Set Boundaries: Define a time or task limit.
6. Personalize: Adjust the task to what works best for you.
7. Chunk Big Projects: Segment them and set appointments for each chunk.
8. Leave Notes: If you pause a task, jot down where you stopped.
9. Provide Guidance: Give yourself sequencing cues for re-engagement.

Additional Procrastination-Busting Tips

- Value Reflection: Remind yourself of the bigger purpose of the task.
- Positive Reinforcement: Visualize the satisfaction of task completion.
- Relief Visualization: Imagine the relief of having no pending tasks and the freedom to relax.
- Actionable Steps: Identify the smallest action to get started.

Inspired by insights from J. Russell Ramsay, Ph.D.



Group Activity

Making the connections with our model

- ◆ Group Activity: What do you think your or others' assumption of why you are procrastinating often is?

Hint: Common Assumptions:

- "I'm lazy"
- "I just don't want to do something because it's hard"

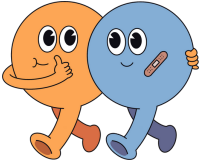
Impact of Assumptions 🔄

- What kind of things might you say to yourself to get yourself to break through procrastination?
- How does that make you feel physically? What kind of response does that produce in your body **right now**?

Solutions Based on Assumptions 🔍

- What kind of solutions will you come up with if you think you are lazy or just don't want to do something?
- ◆ What about **If you see the task differently**:
 - What different solutions might you come up with if instead, you understood the task as one that:
 - Overwhelms you?
 - Confuses you?
 - Makes you anxious?

ADHD Women & Accountability Buddy System Worksheet



This worksheet is designed to help women with ADHD structure an effective accountability buddy system. Understanding the importance of accountability can greatly enhance task management and daily productivity.

1. External Structure

- How often would you like to check in with your accountability buddy?
 - ☐ Daily
 - ☐ Weekly
 - ☐ Bi-weekly
 - ☐ Monthly
- What goals will you set with your accountability buddy? List down three

goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- How will you monitor progress?
 - ☐ Shared online document
 - ☐ Physical progress tracker
 - ☐ Regular verbal updates

-

ADHD Women & Accountability Buddy System Worksheet

2. Motivation Boost:

- What tasks or goals would you feel more motivated to do if someone was watching or knew about them?

- _____
- _____
- _____

- How would you like your buddy to remind or motivate you?

- ☐ Gentle reminders
- ☐ Encouraging messages
- ☐ Direct check-ins

3. Understanding and Support:

- Would you prefer your accountability buddy to:

- ☐ Have ADHD
- ☐ Understand ADHD
- ☐ Either of the above

- List down three challenges you face that you'd like your buddy to understand and support you with:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ADHD Women & Accountability Buddy System Worksheet

2. Shared Experiences:

- Are there any experiences or coping mechanisms you've found effective that you'd like to share with your buddy?

- Experience 1: _____

- Experience 2: _____

- Ask your buddy: What experiences or strategies have worked for them that they can share with you?

****Conclusion**:**

Remember, the partnership with an accountability buddy is dynamic. Regularly review your goals, strategies, and experiences with them. This system is a two-way street; ensure you're also offering support and understanding to your buddy. Together, you can navigate the challenges of ADHD and achieve a higher degree of productivity and personal growth.

Print this worksheet and fill it out together with your accountability buddy, or share it digitally for a remote collaboration. Adjust and refine as you progress in your journey.