

Worksheet and Fact Sheet:

Understanding the ADHD Fight or Flight Response

Objective: This worksheet aims to help individuals with ADHD understand and manage their fight-or-flight response to lead a more balanced and fulfilling life.

Section 1: Understanding Stress Responses

1. What are the Five Responses to Stress?

- Fight: Confronting the threat.
- Flight: Escaping the threat.
- Freeze: Becoming immobilized or numb.
- Fawn: Trying to please others to avoid conflict.
- Fib: Fabricating stories to avoid immediate negative consequences.

2. Development of Stress Responses in Childhood and the Fib Response

Children in unsafe or unsupported environments may develop these responses as survival mechanisms. For example:

- Fight: Confronting criticism.
- Flight: Avoiding dangerous situations.
- Freeze: Becoming immobilized during conflict.
- Fawn: Seeking approval to avoid conflict.

- Fib: Creating stories to avoid disappointment or punishment.

Section 2: Learning the Triggers for the Fight-Flight Response in ADHD

3. Recognizing and Identifying Your Stress Response

- Physical Symptoms: Increased heart rate, sweating, shallow breathing, muscle tension.
- Emotional Reactions: Anxiety, fear, anger, irritability.
- Behavioral Changes: Avoidance, aggression, impulsivity.
- Thought Patterns: Catastrophic thinking, excessive worry, sense of impending doom.

4. Reflect on Your Triggers

Think about situations that trigger your stress response. List at least three examples:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 3: Strategies for Managing Your Response

5. Emotional Regulation Techniques

- Mindfulness: Practice deep breathing, meditation, and yoga.
- Relaxation Exercises: Progressive muscle relaxation and calming imagery.
- Positive Reframing: Challenge negative thoughts and reframe them positively.

6. Improved Coping Strategies

Develop effective coping mechanisms:

- Therapy: Neurodivergent Affirming Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).
- Medication: Consult a doctor about options like stimulants or non-stimulants.
- Self-Help: Consistency and self-compassion in applying strategies.

Section 4: Practical Tips for Managing the ADHD Fight or Flight Response

7. Mindfulness Practices

- Engage in mindfulness exercises such as:
 - Deep breathing.
 - Meditation.
 - Yoga.

8. Physical Activity

- Include regular physical activities like:
 - Walking.
 - Running.
 - Dancing.

9. Healthy Boundaries

- Set and maintain healthy boundaries in your:
 - Personal life.
 - Professional life.

10. Therapeutic Support

- Seek therapy or join support groups for:
 - Emotional support.
 - Practical strategies.

11. Self-Compassion

- Practice self-compassion by:

- Being kind to yourself.
- Allowing for mistakes.

Section 5: Medications for Managing Stress Response

12. Types of Medications

- Stimulants:
 - Methylphenidate-based: Ritalin, Concerta.
 - Amphetamine-based: Adderall, Vyvanse.
- Non-Stimulants:
 - Atomoxetine (Strattera).
 - Guanfacine (Intuniv) and Clonidine (Kapvay).

Section 6: CBT Strategies to Help ADHD People with Stress Response

13. Cognitive Behavioral Techniques

- Mindfulness: Stay present with deep breathing and meditation.
- Exposure Therapy: Gradually face stressful situations that are aligned with your values and chosen by you.
- Cognitive Restructuring: Change negative thoughts about yourself.
- Relaxation Techniques: Use deep breathing and calming imagery.
- Biofeedback: Control physical stress responses.
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): Focus on actions aligning with values when you want to do something for you but feel unable to.
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT): Manage emotions and handle distress.

Reflection Questions:

4. Which stress response do you most often exhibit?

5. What triggers your fight-or-flight response?

6. Which coping strategies have you found most effective or do you want to work on more?

By understanding and managing your fight-or-flight response, you can enhance your emotional well-being and live a more balanced, fulfilling life.