

# Self Accommodation

Self-accommodation can take many forms and may involve changes to physical surroundings, work, or social interactions. Generally, it entails checking in with yourself, your body, and stress level and asking yourself if you need anything to make things feel more comfortable or easier.

Similar to how a person with a physical disability may use assistive technology, such as a wheelchair or hearing aid, to help them navigate their environment and communicate effectively. You as an ADHD person, can make changes to your behavior and environment to make things easier for you.



WHAT DO I NEED TO  
HELP MYSELF WITH  
THIS STRESS?

# Self Accomodation

If you were properly accommodated during your life to live in this world comfortably, you would have learned how to self-accommodate. As we have learned, often this is not the case. When neurodivergent and adhd girls are not given the accommodations they need in school and at home, it can significantly impact their mental health and overall well-being. Rather than being taught about their unique brain and nervous system and how to work with its strengths, they are taught to become like the gold standard "girl".

They learn to mask and push through discomfort in order to do things to function "normally" and be acceptable.



# Self Accomodation

As a result these things often occur:

Frustration, Anxiety, Depression, and Stress: Without accommodations, adhd girls may struggle to keep up with academic, social, and family demands, follow classroom routines, or manage sensory stimuli. This can lead to frustration, stress, overwhelm even depression and anxiety. But they learn this is the norm!

Low Self-Esteem: When adhd girls are not provided with accommodations and are not taught about their strengths and to value their differences, there are consequences to their sense of self. They often feel like they are not meeting expectations and can't measure up to peers. This can lead to low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, and a sense of failure.

Behavioral Issues: Girls with adhd may experience behavioral problems when they are not provided with accommodations. These behaviors result from frustration, overwhelm, or a lack of understanding about how to meet unreasonable neurotypical expectations. However, girls are more likely to internalize their frustrations and may develop eating disorders, substance abuse issues, or self-injurious behaviors.

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Loneliness: When adhd girls struggle to fit into the world, they may be at risk for social isolation and a lack of peer connections. This can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. When accommodations are not provided to neurodivergent adhd girls, they do not thrive and reach their full potential. This is so devastating and unnecessary.

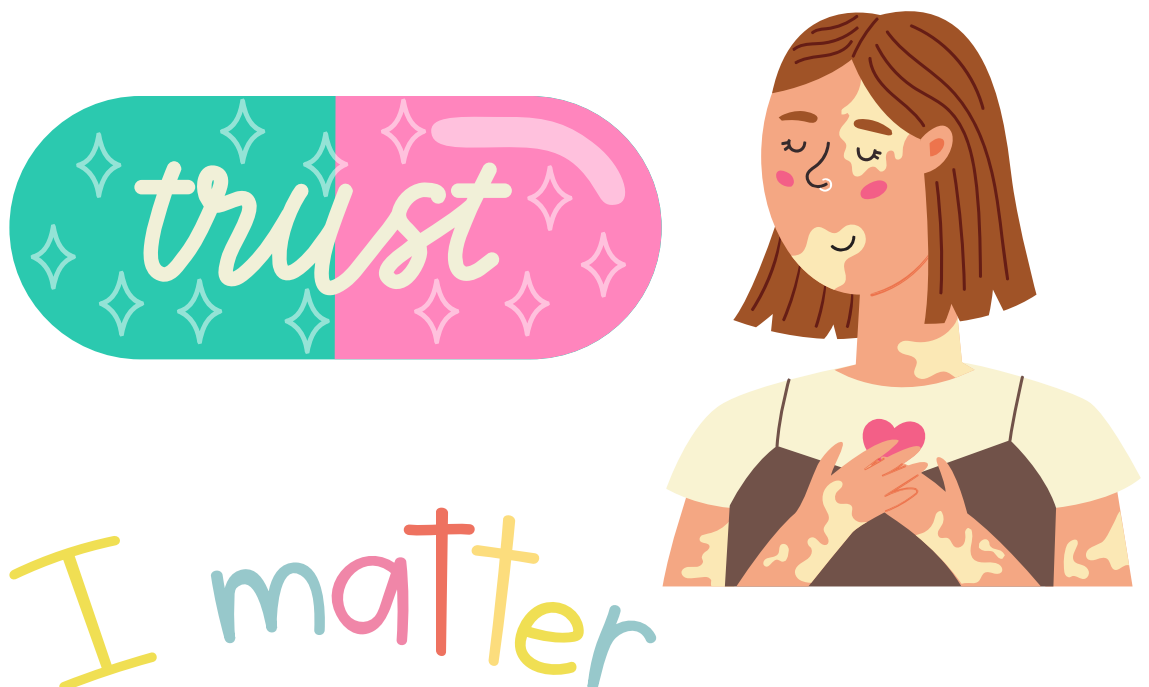
Masking: Instead, girls learn to mask. Masking involves hiding or suppressing natural behavior or traits to fit in with societal expectations, which can negatively affect mental health and well-being to a significant degree. The good news is you can begin to self-accommodate and get back in touch with what you need!



# Self Accommodation

Self-accommodation is often an essential component of disability advocacy and empowerment as it allows individuals to take control of their own lives and participate more fully in society. By making changes to your environment and behavior you can make life easier without relying solely on external accommodations or supports, which are often not available.

Instead, self-accommodation should be viewed as a complementary strategy that can enhance your sense of self-confidence and self-trust. It can decrease your stress, increase your sense of control, and help you be more emotionally regulated.



# Self Accommodation

## Is it Hard to Practice Self-Accommodation?

It might be. There can be various reasons why women have a hard time giving themselves accommodations, including:

### Societal Expectations:

Women are often expected to be caretakers and nurturers, which can lead to a tendency to prioritize the needs of others at the expense of their own. This can make it difficult for women to advocate for their needs and prioritize self-care and accommodations.

### Internalized Stigma

Neurodivergent women may internalize negative societal messages about their abilities and worth, which can lead to feelings of shame or inadequacy. This can make it difficult for women to give themselves accommodations, as they may fear being seen as weak or incapable if they help themselves in this manner - or even see themselves that way.

### Lack of Awareness

It may not even occur to women that they need to self-accommodate because they are so used to pushing through their discomfort and stress. With this knowledge, it can be easier for women to identify the accommodations that would be most helpful to them. Self-awareness and self-compassion can help here.

# Self Accommodation

## **Fear of Judgment/Self-Judgement**

Women may fear discrimination or adverse treatment if they begin to ask for consideration or even if they give it to themselves.

## **Lack of Self-Compassion**

When women try to be kind to themselves, the self-critical voice can creep in. Self-compassion can help, and starting small can be easier. The skills of Self-compassion, self-advocacy, and self-accommodation must be built slowly and together.

## **Perfectionism**

Women may feel pressure to meet high standards and expectations and may view accommodations as a sign of weakness or failure. This can make it difficult for women to acknowledge their limitations and to ask for help or accommodations.

It's important to note that these factors can interact in complex ways.

However, by recognizing and addressing these barriers and using all skills together, you can begin to overcome some of the obstacles put in front of you and start to thrive and heal.

# Self Awareness

## How Self Awareness is Related to Self Accommodation

Self-awareness is crucial in identifying triggers and warning signs before a situation becomes unmanageable, enabling you to practice self-accommodation effectively.

Being mindful of emotions and physical signs can help identify anxiety or tension before you tip over into overwhelm, cluing you in to the fact that you might need some accommodation to make it easier for you.

Physical or mental signs of stress, like worry or tension headaches, muscle tightness, or increased heart rate, indicate the need for taking a break or reducing stressors in the environment.

By paying attention to emotional and physical cues, and TRUSTING THEM EARLY ON you can begin to learn when you need to practice self-accommodation.

Remember our unit landmarks of emotion had lots of information to help you with learning about your signals.



# Self-Compassion and Self Accommodation

Self-accommodation can be an act of self-compassion because it involves creating a supportive environment for yourself that accommodates your needs and challenges. By recognizing your limitations and needs, and taking steps to accommodate yourself, you practice self-compassion and learn to feel more confident and trust that you can care for yourself even when the rest of the world has taught you not to.

Remember, self-compassion involves treating yourself with kindness, understanding, and non-judgment when faced with challenges or setbacks. Self-accommodation aligns with this by creating a supportive environment that reduces stress and anxiety, helps to prevent overwhelm, and promotes overall well-being.



# Self-Advocacy

## Self-Advocacy and Self-Accommodation

Self-advocacy and self-accommodation are closely related because both involve taking an active role in identifying your own needs and taking steps to meet those needs.

Self-advocacy involves advocating for yourself by communicating to others your needs and rights, and seeking support or accommodations when necessary. Self-accommodation involves identifying your own needs and taking steps on your own to create a supportive environment that accommodates those needs.

We will learn more about the skills of self-advocacy in our communication, boundaries and workplace units.



# Self-Care

## Self-Care and Self Accommodations

Practicing giving yourself accommodations is a form of self-care because it involves taking steps to meet your own needs and prioritize your own well-being. Self-care involves engaging in activities or practices that promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being, and self-accommodation is a key aspect of this.

## Build Self-Trust and Self-Confidence

Being able to give yourself accommodations can build self-trust and self-confidence because it demonstrates a willingness to acknowledge and meet your own needs in a way that you haven't been allowed. This is an act of healing.



# Examples of self-accommodations

Many ADHD women have sensory issues. So it's a great place to get started!

Here is a general list of examples:

- Wear comfortable clothing made from soft, non-irritating fabrics.
- Use sunglasses or a hat to reduce glare and bright light.
- Use a fidget toy or stress ball to manage nervous energy or anxiety.
- Take breaks to step outside for fresh air and a change of scenery.
- Use a weighted blanket or compression clothing to manage sensory overload.
- Choose quiet environments for work or study, such as a library or private office.
- Use essential oils or aromatherapy to create a calming environment.
- Take breaks from screens to reduce eye strain and overstimulation.
- Use earplugs or white noise machines to reduce background noise.
- Wear noise-reducing earbuds or earplugs to manage noise sensitivity in public places.
- Use a standing desk or adjustable seating to manage discomfort caused by prolonged sitting.
- Avoid strong scents or perfumes that can trigger headaches or sensory overload.
- Use dim lighting or natural light to reduce sensory overload.
- Ask friends to meet in quieter, less stimulating places.
- Seek comfort from animals or through human touch when you feel dysregulated
- Use soft material to stroke to regulate you.
- Use music or exercise to help you when you are understimulated

# Accommodations for Stress

## Self-Care and Stress Reduction:

Prioritize self-care activities that promote relaxation and well-being, even though you feel guilty

Pursue your special interests even if they seem silly

Take regular breaks, exercise, or engage in sensory activities.

Allow yourself to practice self-care activities more frequently than you think you're "allowed" to.

Provide a calming or sensory-friendly space where you can retreat to when feeling overwhelmed.

Use deep breathing exercises or other relaxation techniques when overwhelmed

Take breaks or have extra time to complete tasks when overwhelmed

# Communication

Self-accommodations related to effective communication can help to combat hiding and silencing. Asking yourself what can help me communicate, remember, or understand better is a good question to help lead you to accommodations here.

Ask for clarification if you don't understand something.

Use anything that feels comfortable to help you with communications at work and with loved ones at home. This could mean making choices about where and when important conversations happen in order to get the best outcome.

Take notes during meetings or conversations to help you remember important details.

Give yourself permission to use email or text to communicate important information if you want to.

Avoid interruptions with "Do Not Disturb" signs or apps.

Repeat important information back to ensure you understood it correctly if it's helpful. This can help reduce misunderstandings or miscommunication that exacerbates feelings of failure or inadequacy.

Use recording devices or apps to catch information so you don't lose it.

# Task Management Accommodations

When shaming and criticizing yourself or struggling with procrastination, first ask yourself, **is there something I can do to make this easier or more comfortable for myself?**

Can I self-accommodate?

Some ideas:

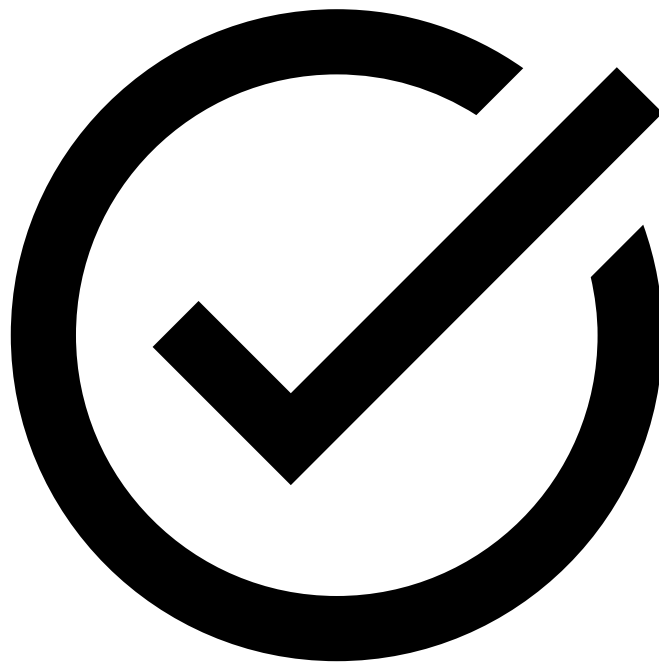
- Break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.
- Prioritize tasks based on your strengths, values, and stress level.
- Where possible, delegate or offload expected responsibilities when they feel too challenging.
- Say no to things that don't matter to you.
- Simplify complex or multi-step tasks.



# Task Management Accommodations

Do things according to how your brain works rather than how the world has told you to do it.

- If possible don't do tasks you aren't suited to. Don't force yourself to get good at things that don't work for you.
- Make tasks more enjoyable with music or podcasts.
- Allow regular breaks to reduce stress and improve focus.
- Use self-talk to encourage with kindness and compassion.
- Delegate or offload tasks you dislike when possible rather than telling yourself you should be better at or should be able to do something.



# Home/ Social Interactions

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You don't have to do things the way neurotypical people do.

If you are comparing yourself to others or struggling with a task, that's the time to be creative and self-accommodating.

## Social Interactions- Anxiety

Choose social environments that are comfortable and accommodating of your needs.

Set boundaries around social interactions, such as limiting the duration or number of interactions.

Take breaks during social interactions to recharge and prevent overwhelm. Bring a trusted friend or family member with you to social events for support.

Use social scripts or role-playing to practice social interactions in a safe and supportive environment.



# Home/ Social Interactions

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## Household and Cooking:

If you find yourself getting frustrated with keeping up with daily housekeeping tasks, ask yourself about your standards.

Are you trying to do things the way women who don't have adhd do them?

Is there a way you can accommodate YOUR brain?

- Arrange your fridge in a different way, such as using drawers or labels, to reduce overwhelm.
- Eat in a different way, such as snacking or eating from a platter, to reduce stress.
- Don't fold your clothes but use baskets
- Buy things that don't need to be ironed
- Buy all the same socks so they don't need to be matched
- Have similar outfits so you don't have to make choices



## Three questions to ask yourself to find accommodations

- How can I make things easier for myself?
- What obstacle can I remove that would enable me to do this thing?
- How can I make myself more comfortable?



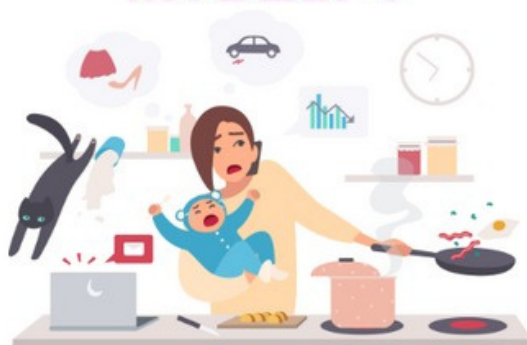
## Group Activity for Self Accommodations

You want to prepare meals from scratch but have difficulty gathering ingredients, following recipes, and staying on task. You have a tendency to become overwhelmed and frustrated when things don't go as planned.

Worksheet prompts:

1. What are some challenges you face in meal preparation due to your different mind?
2. Are there any self-accommodation strategies you currently use in meal preparation?
3. What are some new self-accommodation strategies you might like to try?
4. How can you practice self-compassion and reduce guilt or shame related to meal preparation?
5. How can you use communications self-accommodations to relieve anxiety and stress in meal preparation situations?

**HOW CAN I MAKE  
THIS EASIER FOR  
MYSELF?**



## Group Activity for Self Accommodations

You have been invited to a social event but feel anxious and overwhelmed about attending. You worry that you will struggle with small talk and that others may judge or misunderstand you.

### Worksheet prompts

1. What are some challenges you face in social situations due to your different mind?
2. What are some self-accommodation strategies you currently use in social situations?
3. What are some new self-accommodation strategies you would like to try?
4. How can you practice self-compassion and reduce anxiety related to social situations?
5. How can you advocate for yourself and communicate your needs to others in social situations?
6. How can you identify and focus on your strengths and interests in social situations?

How can I make this more comfortable or less stressful so I can do the thing I want to do?



# Accommodation

You are working on a project that requires a lot of visual concentration. Instead of pushing through the strain on your eyes, you decide to practice self-accommodation by adjusting your screen settings, using a larger font size, or taking regular breaks to rest your eyes.

# Examples

You are attending a social event, but you know that the noise and crowd will be overwhelming. Instead of avoiding the event altogether, you decide to practice self-accommodation by setting boundaries for yourself. You give yourself permission to leave early if you feel overwhelmed, or to take breaks throughout the event to recharge.

You are feeling overwhelmed and anxious, but you don't have time to take a break. Instead of pushing through the discomfort, you decide to practice self-accommodation by taking a few deep breaths and getting a glass of water

You used to force yourself to do laundry the hard way, but now you use tools such as a laundry sorter with wheels, a laundry bag with shoulder straps, and a portable steamer to make the task easier and more efficient for you even though it might seem indulgent.

