EMPOWER & THRIVE COUNSELING

Understanding ADHD & Executive Functioning

Practical strategies for attention, organization, task initiation, and self-compassion.

A gentle reminder: This resource is for education and reflection. You can skip any prompt that feels uncomfortable, and you do not need to complete everything at once.

ADHD is more than distractibility

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder can affect attention regulation, planning, time awareness, impulse control, and emotional regulation. Experiences vary widely, and ADHD can look different across ages and settings.

What are executive functions?

Executive functions help us start tasks, prioritize, remember steps, switch attention, and manage time. Difficulty with these skills is not the same as a lack of effort or caring.

Make tasks visible and smaller

Write down the next physical action instead of a broad goal. “Open the document and write the heading” is easier to start than “finish the project.” Use checklists, visual cues, and reminders outside your head.

Work with time, not against it

Try a short timer, a calendar block, or a transition reminder. Estimate how long something might take, then compare it with the actual time to build more realistic plans.

Support attention and follow-through

Reduce friction by preparing supplies, limiting competing distractions, pairing a task with an existing routine, or working alongside another person (“body doubling”).

Build in flexibility and compassion

Strategies may work differently depending on sleep, stress, and environment. Experiment rather than expecting perfection. An assessment by a qualified professional is needed to determine whether ADHD explains your symptoms.

Choose one strategy for one week. Track whether it reduces friction rather than whether you do it perfectly.

YOUR REFLECTION WORKSHEET

Putting it into practice

Use these prompts to notice patterns, identify what helps, and choose one manageable next step.

Which everyday task is hardest to start or finish right now?

What is the smallest next action I can take?

Which support will I try: timer, checklist, reminder, body doubling, or environment change?

What worked, what did not, and how can I adjust without judging myself?

If your distress feels unmanageable or you are concerned about your safety, reach out to a trusted professional. For immediate danger, call 911. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support.