



Ballast adult ADHD toolkit

Reset After Overwhelm

Tools for emotional intensity, criticism, shame, and returning to yourself.

Steady before solving

Make room for a next action

01



02



03

Steady

Name

Choose

Steady before solving.

Useful on a real Tuesday.

Practical, psychologically informed tools for building a life that works with your brain.

Name what is happening

The feeling is real. The first interpretation may be incomplete.

Strong emotion narrows attention. Begin with state recognition before deciding what the moment means.

Activated

Fast heart, heat, urgency, argument

Collapsed

Numb, ashamed, quiet, disappearing

Fixated

Replaying words, reading signs, certainty

Flooded

Everything feels connected and unsolvable

Depleted

Tears, irritability, no margin

Ready

Body steadier, able to choose

 Steady before solving

A brief sequence for the first wave

This is not about suppressing emotion. It is about creating enough room to choose the next action.

01**Orient**

Name five neutral things you can see.

02**Exhale**

Breathe out longer than you breathe in, five times.

03**Ground**

Press both feet down. Unclench jaw and hands.

04**Name**

I notice hurt / anger / fear / shame.

05**Delay**

No major message or decision for 20 minutes.

06**Choose**

What is the next safe, values-consistent action?

 Slow the story

Separate event, meaning, and need

People often call this rejection sensitivity. It is a useful description for some people, but it is not a separate formal diagnosis.

1. The event

What was actually said or done? Use camera-language only.

Facts

2. The instant meaning

What did your brain conclude about you, them, or the future?

The story

3. The need

Information, repair, reassurance, boundary, time, or support?

The need / next wise question

I made a mistake. I am not the mistake.

Move from global verdict to specific repair

Shame says disappear. Repair asks what happened, what matters, and what comes next.

1 **Catch**
I notice the verdict: I always...

2 **Specify**
The actual event was...

3 **Own**
My part is...

4 **Repair**
The next honest action is...

The verdict my brain is making

The more accurate, specific account

The repair

Grace-based restart

Returning is a skill. You do not have to earn the right to begin again.

The four-sentence repair

Clear, brief, and sturdy

Use this after you are regulated enough to be curious and accountable.

01 Observation

When ____ happened...

02 Impact

I felt / I noticed ____...

03 Ownership

My part was ____...

04 Request

Could we / Next time I will ____...

Boundary

Repair does not require accepting cruelty, manipulation, discrimination, or abuse. Safety and dignity remain part of the plan.

 Support by state

Choose before you need it

A menu reduces decision load when the thinking brain goes offline.

Body

Cold water, paced exhale, walk, stretch, pressure

Environment

Lower light, reduce sound, leave the room, sit outside

Connection

Text a safe person, body double, ask for listening

Meaning

Prayer, values reminder, compassionate truth, journal

Time

Delay reply, sleep on it, schedule the conversation

Care

Food, water, prescribed medication, rest, professional support

My three most reliable reset options

Do not make yourself carry everything alone

Signals to widen the circle

ADHD tools can help with functioning. They cannot safely hold every kind of pain.

- 1 Notice Emotion or irritability is suddenly much worse
- 2 Notice You are sleeping very little and feel unusually driven or invulnerable
- 3 Notice Alcohol, cannabis, or other substances are becoming a primary coping tool
- 4 Notice Conflict is escalating toward threats, violence, coercion, or fear
- 5 Notice You are unable to meet basic needs for several days
- 6 Notice You are having thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or harming someone else

Immediate help

In the United States, call or text 988 for crisis support. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for imminent danger.

Use + evidence / Keep the tool, drop the verdict

Support, not a scorecard

These pages are experiments. A tool that does not help is data about fit, timing, context, or support needs. It is not evidence that you are lazy or incapable.

This resource is educational

It is not a diagnostic test or a substitute for individualized medical or psychological care. ADHD can overlap with anxiety, depression, trauma, sleep disorders, substance use, learning differences, and medical conditions. If symptoms are new, worsening, or unsafe, talk with a qualified healthcare professional.

The evidence base behind the design

Current guidance supports multimodal care tailored to the person and environment. Medication and psychosocial interventions, including cognitive behavioral approaches, may be useful. Environmental modifications, planning and organization skills, sleep, movement, and ongoing monitoring can support day-to-day functioning. No worksheet replaces comprehensive care.

Selected sources

[CDC. ADHD in Adults \(reviewed Sept. 2026\).](#)

[NIMH. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\).](#)

[NICE Guideline NG87. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management.](#)

[AADPA. Australian Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline for ADHD.](#)

[Faraone et al. World Federation of ADHD International Consensus Statement. 2021.](#)

Urgent support

If you may harm yourself or someone else, call or text 988 in the United States, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency department.