

Get Started Guide: Preparing for an ADHD Assessment



A Reflection Tool for Teens and Adults Exploring ADHD or AuDHD

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Before You Begin

You do not need to have everything figured out before seeking an ADHD assessment.

Most people arrive with pieces. Patterns. Moments that feel connected, even if they do not yet have language around them.

This guide is not a test.

It is a way of translating your experience into something that can be shared, explored, and understood in conversation.

How to Use This Guide

You can use this in whatever way feels most natural.

You might reflect on these questions privately.

You might write down notes or examples as they come.

You might bring this with you to your assessment and refer to it in the moment.

Some people use it to find language. Others use it simply to notice patterns.

There is no right way to complete this.

Partial answers are still meaningful.

1. Attention and Focus

What to Notice

- When does your attention feel easiest to access?
- When does it feel hardest?
- Do you notice patterns around interest, urgency, or novelty?
- What happens internally or in your body when you try to focus but cannot?

Space to Reflect

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2. Task Initiation (Getting Started)

What to Notice

- What does it feel like right before starting a task?
- Do you experience hesitation, overwhelm, or a kind of internal “stuckness”?
- What helps you begin, if anything?
- What tends to make it harder?

Space to Reflect

3. Time and Energy

What to Notice

- How does time feel to you? Predictable, inconsistent, fast, slow, or hard to track?
- Do you notice cycles of high energy followed by depletion?
- How do deadlines impact your ability to engage?

Space to Reflect

4. Emotional Experience

What to Notice

- How quickly do your emotions shift?
- Do you experience emotional intensity, rejection sensitivity, or strong internal reactions?
- How long does it take to return to baseline after something activates you?

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5. Organization and Follow-Through

What to Notice

- What happens after you start something?
- Do you tend to lose momentum, hyperfocus, or switch tasks frequently?
- How do you manage multiple responsibilities at once?

Space to Reflect

6. Masking and Adaptation

What to Notice

- Are there ways you have learned to appear more “organized,” “focused,” or “regulated” than you feel internally?
- What does it cost you to maintain that?
- When do you feel most like yourself, without needing to adjust?

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7. Sensory and Nervous System Experience

What to Notice

- Are there environments that feel overstimulating or under-stimulating?

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- How does your body respond to noise, light, or interruptions?
- Do you notice shutdown, restlessness, or agitation in certain settings?

Space to Reflect

8. Patterns Over Time

What to Notice

- When do you first remember these patterns showing up?
- How have they changed across school, work, or relationships?
- What strategies have you developed to cope or compensate?

Space to Reflect

A Grounding Note

You do not need to have every answer.

You do not need to explain this perfectly.

You are not being evaluated on how well you can describe your experience.

You are offering pieces of a pattern.

Someone trained to listen will help you make sense of what they mean.

**This is not about getting it right.
It is about beginning from what is already true.**