

ADHD and Productivity: Harnessing Focus & Managing Distractions

with Dr James Brown

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What is Productivity

- **Type in chat what the word means to you?**
- **Productivity is ‘the ability of an individual to complete tasks or accomplish goals efficiently and effectively. It is a measure of how much output an individual can produce with a given amount of input’.**



Givers, Takers and Matchers

- **1 in 4 workers are 'Givers'.**

Givers are usually mostly productive, but at their cost.
If protected and supported, Givers are most successful.

- **Most are 'Matchers'.**
- **Takers damage the team 2 -3 fold more than a giver benefits it.**



Barriers to Productivity

(General Population)

- **There are many factors that can act as barriers to individual productivity. Some of the most common include:**
- **Lack of clarity about goals and priorities.**
- **Procrastination.**
- **Distractions.**
- **Poor time management skills.**
- **Lack of motivation (reward based).**
- **Stress and burnout.**



How ADHD can 'Present' itself

(in most people)

- **Lack of prioritisation skills.**
- **Procrastination.**
- **Distractibility.**
- **Impulsiveness.**
- **Time blindness.**
- **Dysfunctional reward/motivation system.**
- **Emotional regulation issues.**
- **Increased levels of stress and burnout.**



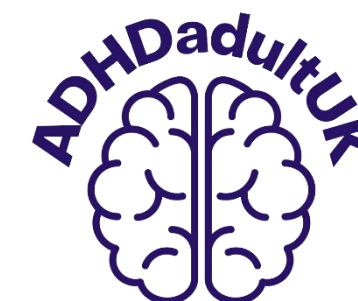
Now let's compare

General

- **Lack of clarity about goals and priorities.**
- **Procrastination.**
- **Distractions.**
- **Poor time management skills.**
- **Lack of motivation.**
- **Stress and burnout.**

ADHD

- **Lack of prioritisation skills.**
- **Procrastination.**
- **Distractibility.**
- **Impulsiveness.**
- **Time blindness.**
- **Dysfunctional reward/motivation system.**
- **Emotional regulation issues.**
- **Mental and physical health conditions.**
- **Increased levels of stress and burnout.**



Understanding ADHD



What is ADHD

- **Lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder.**
- **Thought to affect 2.5-5% of all adults.**
- **Largely genetic.**
- **3 presentations (related to symptoms):**

Inattentive type (20-30%)

Hyperactive/Impulsive type (50-70%)

Combined type (<15%)

- **Medication, education, coaching, therapy**



Symptoms of Inattentiveness

1. Making careless mistakes/lacking attention to detail.
2. Difficulty sustaining attention.
3. Inability sometimes to listen when spoken to directly.
4. Failure to follow through on tasks and instructions.
5. Exhibiting poor organisation.
6. Avoiding/disliking tasks requiring sustained mental effort.
7. Losing things necessary for tasks/activities.
8. Being easily distracted (including unrelated thoughts).
9. Being forgetful in daily activities.



Symptoms of Hyperactivity/Impulsivity

1. Fidgeting with or tapping hands or feet, squirming in seat.
2. Leaving seat in situations when remaining seated is expected.
3. Experiencing feelings of restlessness.
4. Having difficulty engaging in quiet, leisurely activities.
5. Being “on-the-go” or acting as if “driven by a motor”.
6. Talking excessively.
7. Blurting out answers.
8. Having difficulty waiting for your turn.
9. Interrupting or intruding on others.



Diagnosis

1. Sufficient symptoms (5/9)
2. Evidence of symptoms as a child
3. Symptoms present for > 6 months as an adult
4. Symptoms causing a moderate impact on 2+ domains of ,life
5. No other psychiatric/neurodevelopmental condition more likely causing symptoms





Non-Diagnostic Symptoms of ADHD



- Emotional dysregulation.
- Rejection-sensitive dysphoria (RSD).
- Mind wandering.
- Time blindness.
- Poor metacognition.
- Sensory processing issues.
- Low self-esteem/imposter syndrome.

- Co-existing mental and physical health conditions

How ADHD Impacts Productivity

(in most people)

- **Lack of prioritisation skills.**
- **Procrastination.**
- **Distractibility.**
- **Impulsiveness.**
- **Time blindness.**
- **Dysfunctional reward/motivation system.**
- **Emotional regulation issues.**
- **Increased levels of stress and burnout.**



Procrastination

Problem – leaving tasks ‘till later’

Possible solutions:

- **Break down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.**
- **Set deadlines for yourself (or get a trusted person to set you a deadline).**
- **Remove distractions from your workspace and avoid multitasking .**
- **When set a task, ask for PRIORITY and DEADLINE to be clear.**
- **Under-promise and over-deliver.**



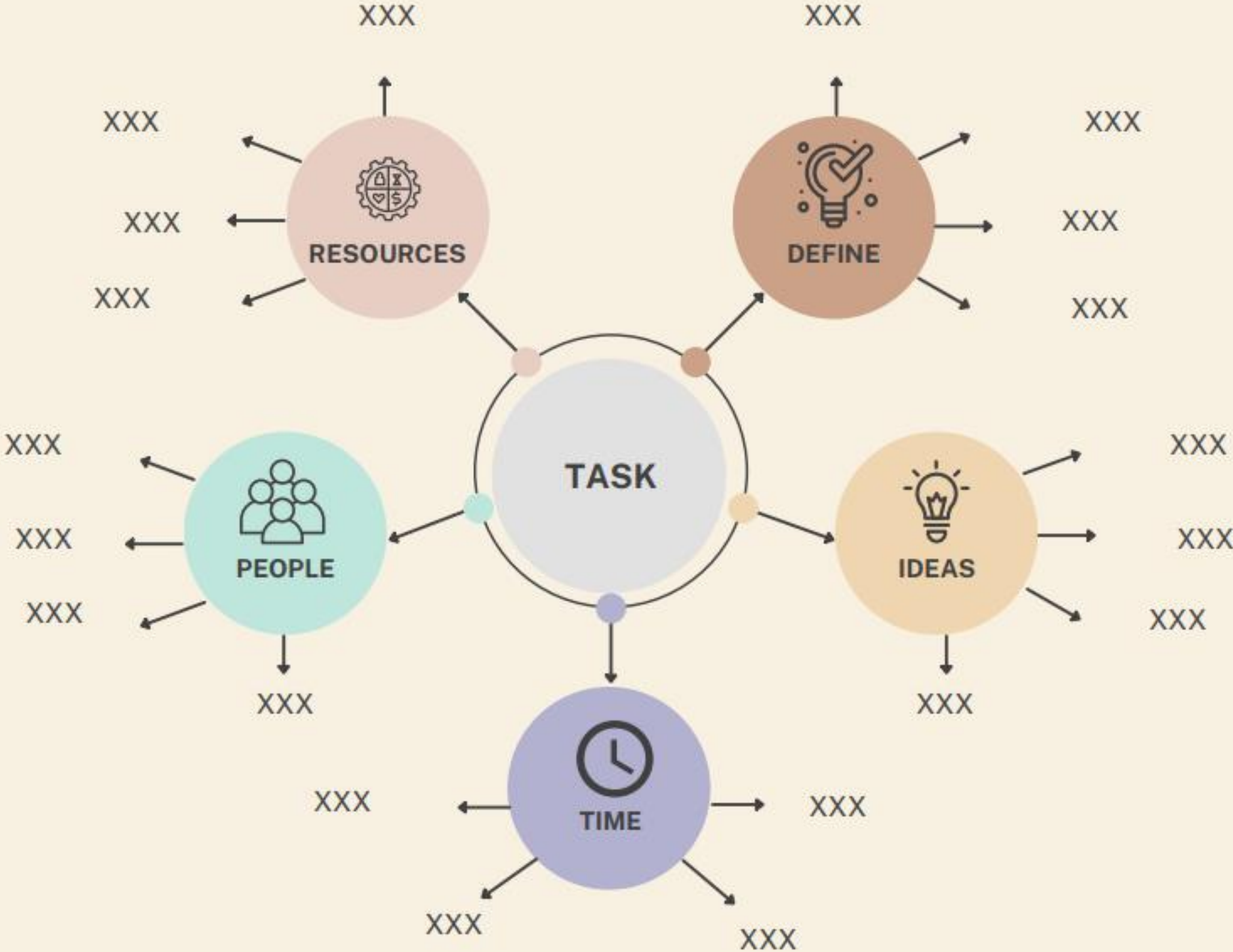
Prioritisation

Problem – lack of prioritisation skills

Possible solutions:

- **Identify your priorities.**
- **Deadlines.**
- **The Positive No.**
- **Consider ‘urgency’ and ‘importance’**
- **Work to YOUR goals**
- **Avoid perfectionism.**

Mind Mapping



The Golden Rule...

JUST. ONE. THING.



Distractibility.

Problem – internal/external things dragging you away.

Possible solutions:

- **Identify your distractions.**
- **Manage your environment.**
- **Take breaks... but go with the ‘flow’**
- **Avoid multitasking.**

Time management

Problem – we are often ‘time blind’.

Possible solutions:

- **The ‘50% rule’.**
- **Use your ‘Golden Hours’.**
- **Manage your time (where possible) by blocking.**



Motivation

Problem – unrewarding tasks are hard to engage with.

Possible solutions:

- **Ask yourself who the task is for?**
- **Break down the task into smaller, more manageable steps.**
- **Find a way to make the task more interesting or engaging.**
- **Set realistic goals and deadlines.**
- **Reward yourself for completing tasks.**
- **Work.**



Stress and Burnout

Problem – our behaviours mean we can often have high stress levels and ‘burnout’ from ‘overwork’

Possible solutions:

- **Establish a Routine.**
- **End each day with ‘Tomorrow’s Tasks’.**
- **Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques.**
- **The basics of ADHD.**



**What will be your
‘Just One Thing’**



Online Resources

Website - ADHDadult.uk

Online magazine - Focusmag.uk

Discord - [theadhdadults](https://theadhdadults.com)

The ADHD Adults Podcast

James Brown and Alex Conner

"with" Mrs ADHD

