

# ADHD & PRODUCTIVITY

## 6 WEEK COURSE

From chaos to control



with Dr James Brown  
Mon 30 Oct | 6pm | Online

# ADHD & Productivity 6-WEEK COURSE

WEEK 2. Procrastination and Perfectionism.

November 6th 2023

Dr James Brown

Week	Topic	Information
1	Understanding ADHD and motivation.	Why does ADHD create a barrier to productivity
2	Tackling perfectionism and procrastination	How to start to accept that perfection is a barrier to progress, and tackling the sources of procrastination
3	Engaging with and completing tasks	Understanding why 'starting' and finishing' can be an issue, and discussing approaches to tackle this
4	Managing your distractions	How to create a work environment that removes unnecessary distractions
5	Developing and improving time management skills	Developing coping mechanisms, strategies and technological approaches to improving time management
6	Managing stress and burnout	Stress and burnout impact productivity. How can we prevent this?

<b>Time</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	<b>Last week's form response and discuss how the session will run</b>
<b>20 minutes</b>	<b>Discussion 1</b>	<b>What is procrastination?</b>
<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Time for a cuppa</b>
<b>40 minutes</b>	<b>Discussion 2</b>	<b>ADHD and procrastination/perfectionism</b>
<b>5 minutes</b>	<b>Break</b>	<b>Time to stretch our legs</b>
<b>30 minutes</b>	<b>Discussion 3</b>	<b>Tactics for procrastination with ADHD</b>
<b>10 minutes</b>	<b>Summary and next steps</b>	<b>What will you do next?</b>

# Learning objectives

- Upon completion of this session, learners will be able to:
  - Define procrastination and perfectionism.
  - Explain the reasons for procrastination in ADHD.
  - Identify and discuss strategies for reducing procrastination and perfectionism in individuals with ADHD.

# Icebreaker

which raccoon are you today?





# Results from last week's poll - tasks

Things for me!

Admin

Big things

Reports/Projects

Difficult things

Contacting people

Boring tasks

Results from last week's poll - consequences

**Stress/burnout**    Other people

Poor performance

**Missed deadlines**

Work builds up

**Guilt/shame**



# The consequences question

- Always ask yourself “What are the consequences of...”

# Discussion 1a. What is procrastination?

Write your  
answer in the  
chat...



# Procrastination is...

- ... the act of delaying or postponing a task or set of tasks.
- Question – is procrastination positive or negative?
- Procrastination eventually impedes the successful completion of a task in a given timeframe in the workplace (or at home).

# Procrastination in the general population

Q – do you see others procrastinate?

- Procrastination is highly prevalent in humans (20%).
- Procrastination increases over time.
- Contributing factors to procrastination include:
  - Fear of failure.
  - Having an avoidant coping style coupled with tasks that are aversive or that challenge self-worth.

# Motivation and Procrastination

- Usually, to take action we either want to do something (seeking reward) or perceive that we need to do something (avoiding negativity).
- Lack of motivation is a core part of procrastination.
- ‘Avoidance’ greater than ‘drive’.

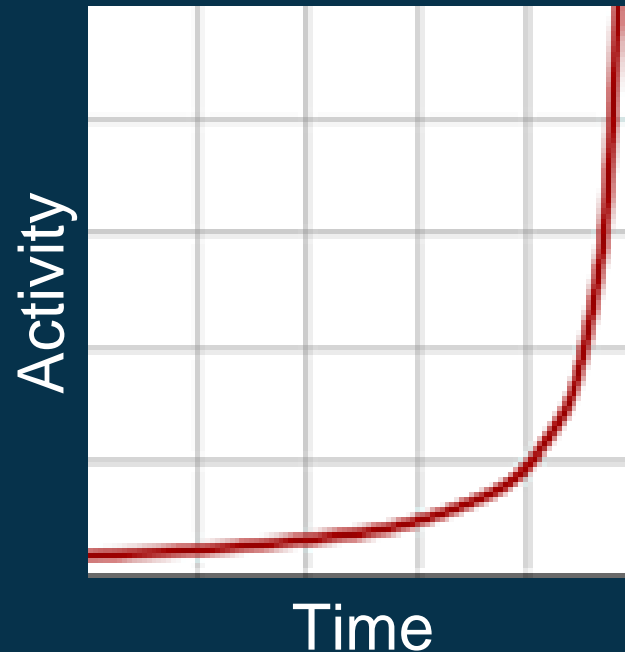
# A Psychological Theory of Procrastination...

- The temporal motivation theory (TMT) suggests that time is a critical *and* motivational factor.
- Three elements to TMT.
  1. Pacing style.
  2. Intention-action gap.
  3. Availability of temptation.



# 1. Pacing style

- People (in general) differ in when they do their work (some doing the bulk of their work earlier and others later).
- Temporal motivation theory suggests that failure to regulate ourselves is often caused by 'undue sensitivity to delay'.



## 2. Intention-action gap.

- The failure to follow through on a given intention is known as the ‘intention-action gap’.
- The intention-action gap can cause ‘preference reversal’; we make plans, only to reverse them before goal accomplishment.

# 3. Availability of temptation

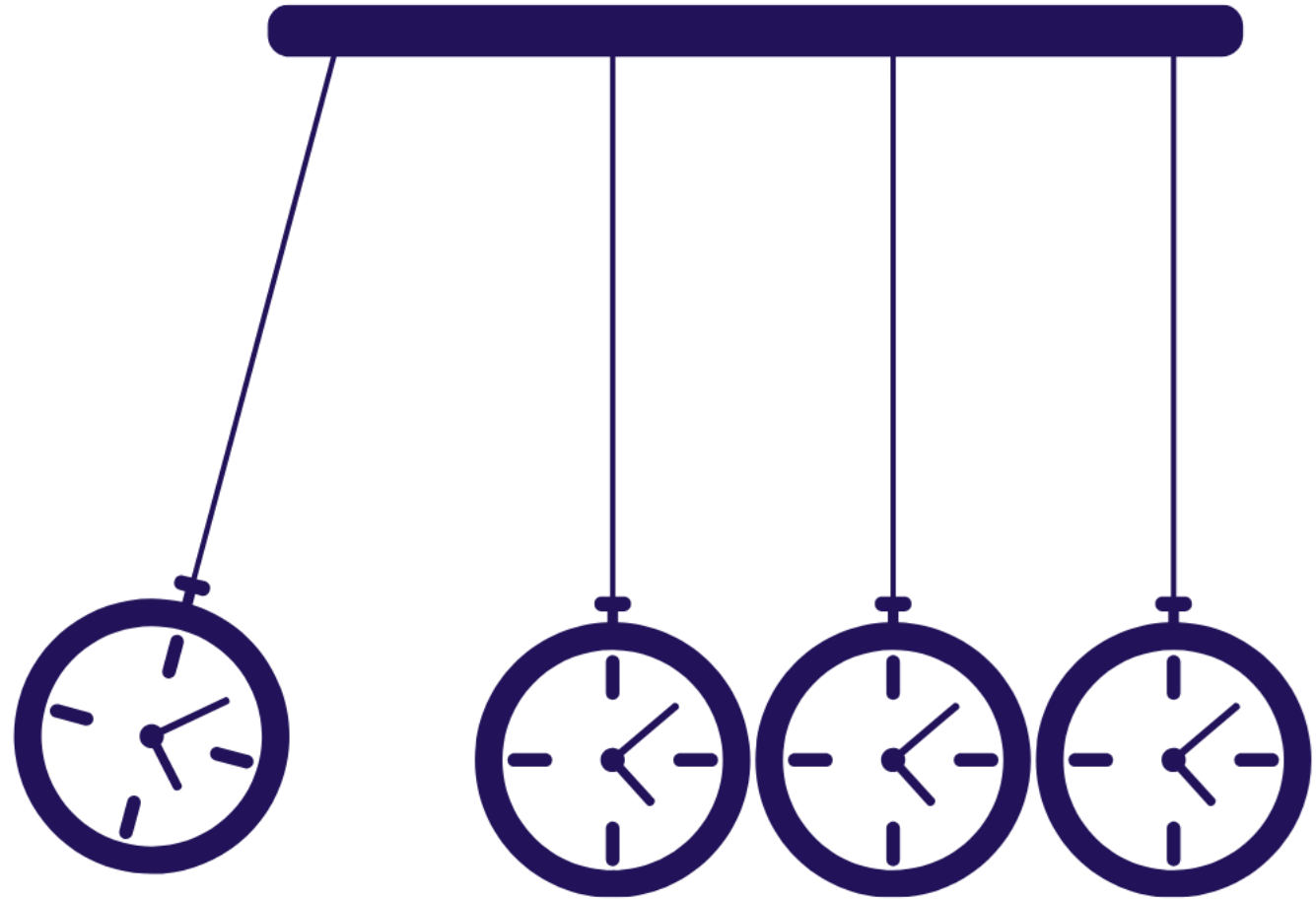
- One clear driver of procrastination is the environment, especially the proximity an individual has to temptation.
- People procrastinate less when a temptation is further away.
- Background temptations, such as the internet and email, can be more attractive than organisationally important activities (at least until the deadlines near for work projects).



# Time for a break...

**Discussion 2a.**  
**Why do people**  
**with ADHD often**  
**procrastinate?**

Write your  
answer in the  
chat...



# TMT in an ADHD Context

- Pacing style – ADHD brains will seek out immediate reward over delayed reward.
- Intention-action gap – ‘IDD’ is a key feature of ADHD.
- Availability of temptation – we are (usually) distractible.



# Intention Deficit Disorder

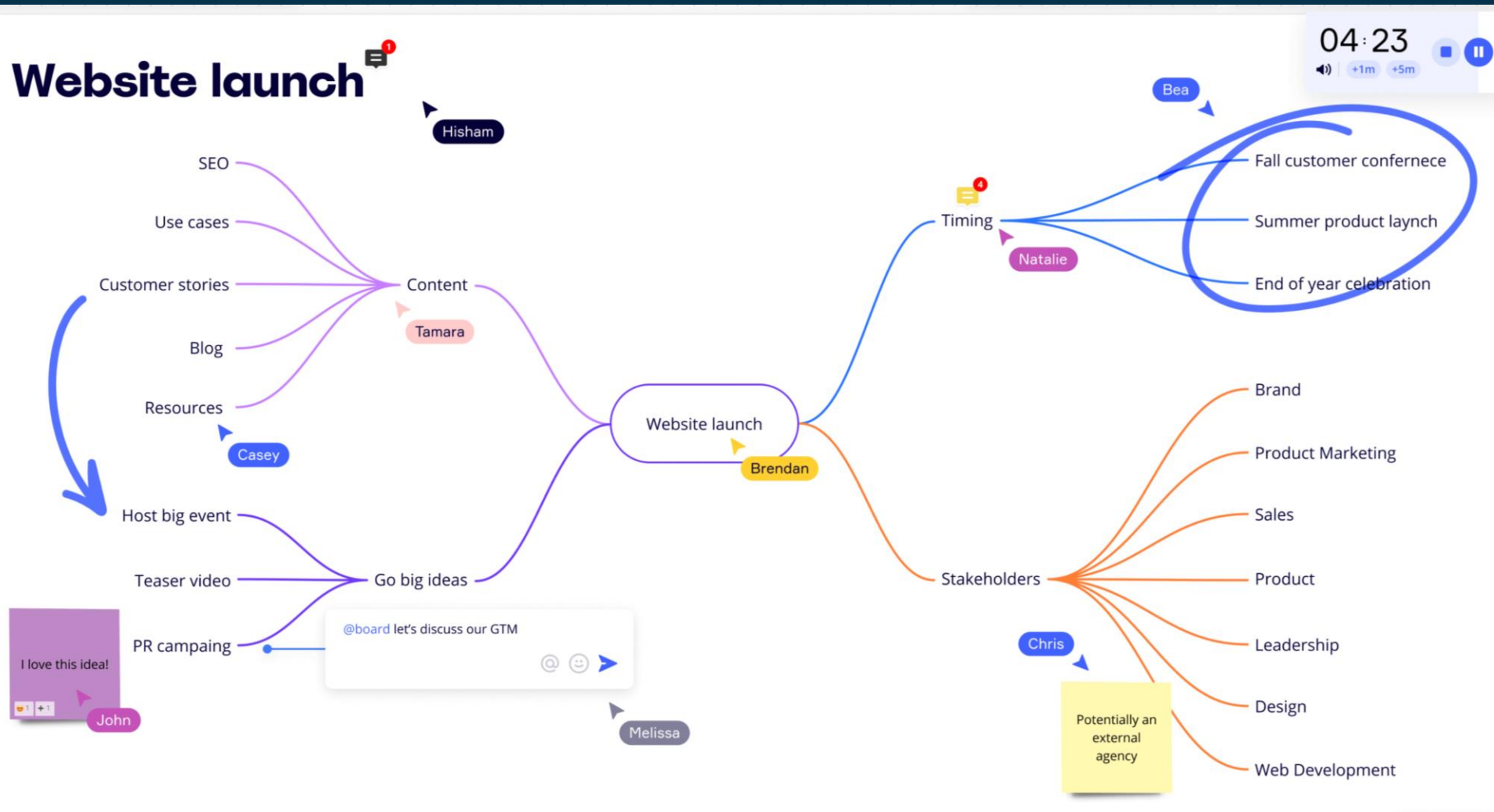
- Dr. Russell Barkley, defines "intention-deficit disorder," (IDD), as the difficulty of people with ADHD to accomplish their goals and struggle to transform their intentions into actions.
- Blindness to the future (time blindness) is central to IDD.
- Best represented by the 'intention-action gap'.

# Intention-Action Gap – Three tips

- 1. Externalize time
- 2. Bring the future forward
- 3. Sustain motivation

Elements of self-CBT.

# Mind Mapping



Free websites  
Mindmap  
Jiro  
Figjam

# Motivation and Procrastination

- We struggle with intrinsic motivation.
- We rely on extrinsic motivation.
- So how do you keep healthily motivated with external accountability?

Type some suggestions in chat...

# Executive Function & Procrastination

- Remember ADHD is an 'executive function disorder'
- Executive dysfunction links ADHD symptoms to procrastination.

Self-management of time.

Organisation/problem-solving.

Planning.

# Emotion & Procrastination

- Remember ADHD is also an emotional regulation disorder.
- Executive dysfunction links ADHD symptoms to procrastination.

RSD.

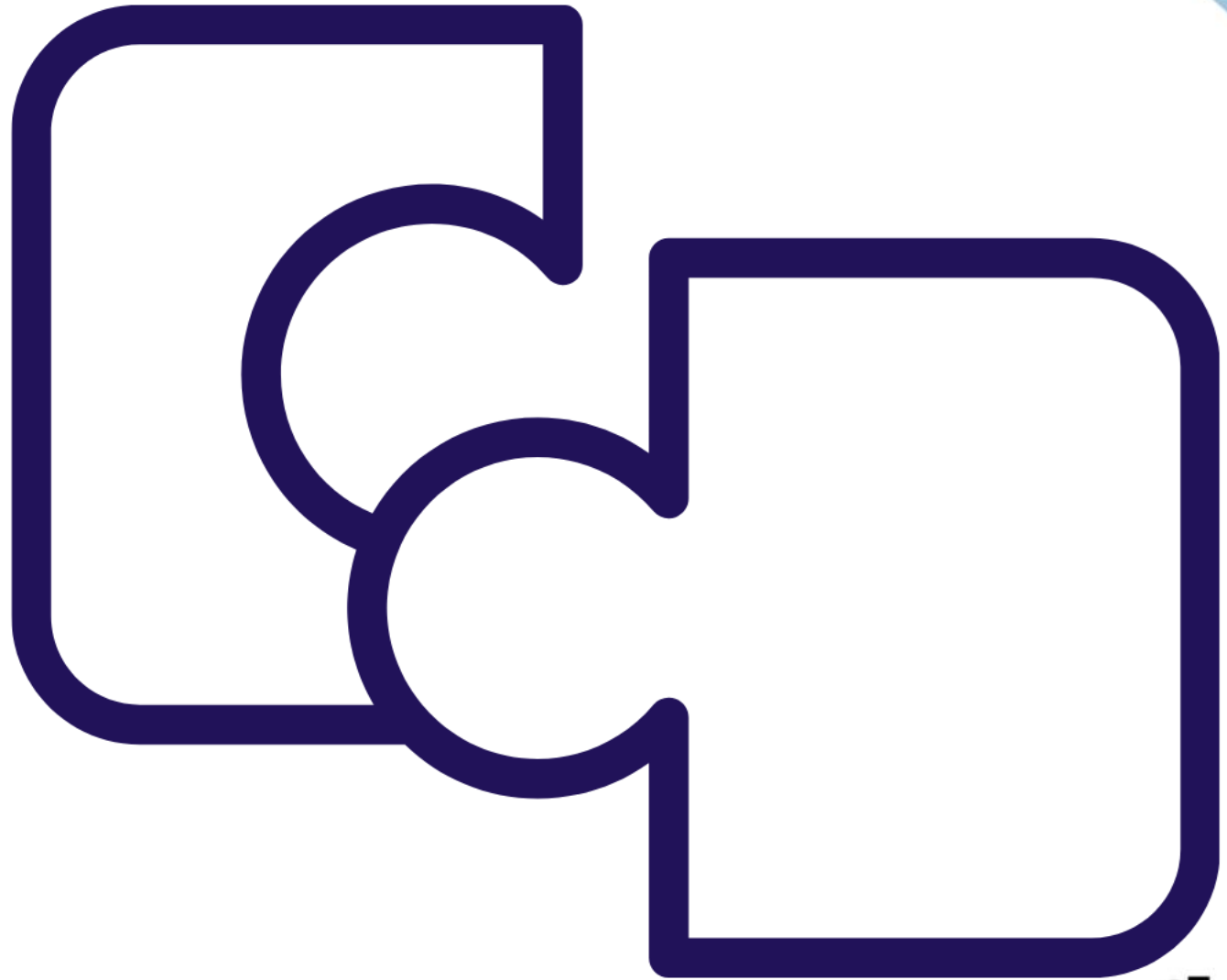
Emotional regulation.

People pleasing.



**Discussion 2b.**  
**What is**  
**'Perfectionism'?**

Write your  
answer in the  
chat...



# Perfectionism

- Perfectionism is a personality trait characterised by setting high standards for oneself, striving for flawlessness, and self-critical tendencies.
- Perfectionism is holding unrealistic performance standards that may lead to negative reactions when those standards are not met.
- It is a 'self-imposed' standard that can lead to unrealistic expectations and a fear of failure.

# Perfectionism Types

- **Back-end perfectionism:** having extremely high, rigid standards for quality, details, and/or performance, akin to the classic definition of perfectionism.
- **Front-end perfectionism:** having rigid standards or preconditions that must be met in order to engage in a task or endeavour in the first place.
- Question – which is more common in ADHD?

# Perfectionism Continued...

- Is perfectionism positive or negative?
  
- Write your answers in chat...

# ADHD & Perfectionism (Exec. Functions)

- People with ADHD are more likely to experience perfectionism than those without ADHD.
- This is partly because ADHD can cause difficulty with executive functioning issues.
- However, people with ADHD may struggle to complete tasks perfectly due to their difficulty with executive functioning skills.

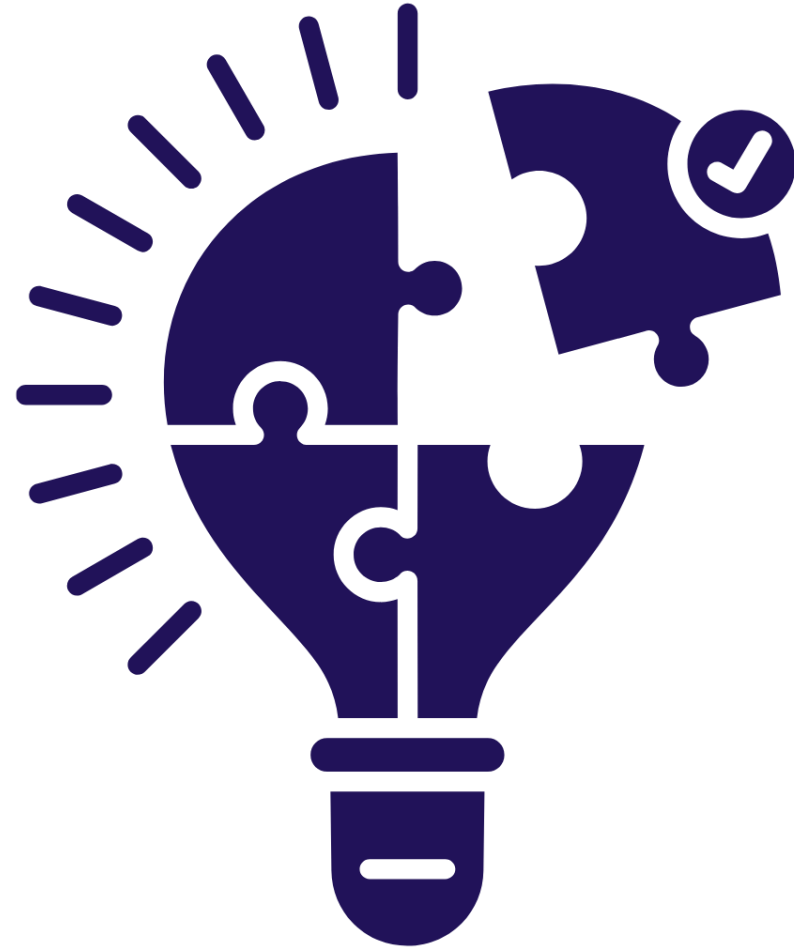
# ADHD & Perfectionism (Emotions)

- People with ADHD may be more likely to experience perfectionism due to their fear of failure.
- RSD.
- People with ADHD may have a history of academic and/or workplace struggles.
- This can lead to a fear of failure and a need to be perfect in order to avoid negative consequences (RSD).



# Time for a break...

**Discussion 2b.**  
**How can we**  
**tackle**  
**procrastination**  
**and**  
**perfectionism?**





# Tackling Procrastination

# Approaches for Procrastination

1. Set expectations.
2. Organise your time.
3. Set realistic deadlines for yourself.
4. Eliminate distractions from your work environment.
5. 'Pomodoro or Flow'.
6. External accountability and gamification.

# 1. Setting Expectations

- As we often lack ‘intrinsic motivation’ always ask “what is the deadline, and how high a priority is it.

Question – how can you do this?

- Under promise and overachieve.
- If its now, it’s no.
- If I am going to do this, what am I not going to do?

## 2. Organise your time

- Routine is a prison but without it we have chaos.
- Block your day out (where possible) into different tasks based on priority.
- This includes breaks.

## 4. Eliminate Distractions

- ADHD brains will seek out immediate, short-term rewards and we are usually distractible.
- Remove or block anything that can be a distraction.
- Q – what can distract you?

## 5. 'Pomodoro or FLOW'

- **Set a Timer:** Set a timer for a specific period, traditionally 25 minutes.
- **Work on the Task:** During the Pomodoro, focus exclusively on the chosen task.
- **End of Pomodoro:** When the timer goes off after 25 minutes, stop working on the task, even if you're in the middle of something.
- **Take a Short Break:** Take a 5-minute break to relax, stretch, or do something non-work-related.
- **But... If in flow, DO NOT STOP!**

## 6. Adding External Accountability/Gamification

- Body doubling really works.
- Adds extrinsic accountability.
- If you can gamify, this adds dopamine!
  
- Q – who can be your ‘body double’?
- Q – how can you gamify?

# Tackling Perfectionism



# Perfectionism Approaches

- Challenge your perfectionistic thoughts.
- Set realistic goals.
- Accept that mistakes are a part of life.
- Making tasks 'doable'.
- Demystify being perfect.

# Week 2 Summary

- Procrastination is common, but we do it more.
- This is because of executive dysfunction and emotional regulation.
- Tackling procrastination and perfectionism is possible.
- Using your 'toolkit' of approaches can help you procrastinate less.

# Non-compulsory “Homework”

1. Tell me how you prioritise on the online form.
2. Self-test: test your knowledge from Week 2.

# Link to Preparation for Week 3



# Week 2 Self-Test



Next Session (Week 3) November 13th 2023

# Engaging with Tasks