

Coaching Techniques for ADHD

Adaptive Coaching – Related terms: flexibility, client-centered approach. Explanation: Adaptive coaching tailors strategies to the individual neurocognitive profile of each client, recognizing that ADHD symptoms fluctuate with context, stress, and motivation. The coach continuously assesses which techniques are resonating and adjusts the plan in real time. Example: A client who thrives on visual cues may be guided to use color-coded calendars, while a client who prefers auditory input might shift to voice-recorded reminders. Practical application: Begin each session with a brief “state check” to gauge energy, focus, and stress levels, then select the tool (e.G., Timer, checklist, or mindfulness cue) that best matches the client’s current state. Challenges: The coach must resist the urge to impose a single “best practice” and instead develop a repertoire of interchangeable methods, which requires ongoing training and self-reflection.

Anchor Technique – Related terms: trigger, habit cue. Explanation: The anchor technique links a specific, repeatable action (the anchor) to a desired behavior, creating a neuro-associative pathway that can be accessed when attention wanes. For ADHD clients, anchors are often simple, sensory-rich gestures that can be performed without disrupting workflow. Example: A client presses thumb and forefinger together every time they complete a paragraph, signalling brain reward circuits and reinforcing focus. Practical application: Identify a natural break point in the client’s routine (e.G., After a phone call) and pair it with a discreet physical cue; reinforce the cue with immediate positive feedback. Challenges: Over-reliance on the anchor can become a crutch if the client does not generalize the skill to novel situations; coaches must gradually fade the cue while maintaining the underlying habit.

Brain-Based Strategies – Related terms: neuroplasticity, executive function. Explanation: Brain-based strategies leverage scientific insights about the ADHD brain, such as heightened dopamine sensitivity and variable arousal thresholds, to design interventions that align with natural processing patterns. Example: Using movement-based learning (standing desks, short walk breaks) taps into the client’s need for kinetic stimulation, enhancing information retention. Practical application: Conduct a neuro-assessment (self-report or standardized tool) to pinpoint strengths (e.G., Creativity) and vulnerabilities (e.G., Working memory). Build a weekly plan that alternates high-focus tasks with brief physical activity. Challenges: Clients may misinterpret “brain-based” as a medical prescription; coaches must clarify that these are behavioral adjustments, not pharmacological treatments.

Cognitive Restructuring – Related terms: thought-record, self-talk. Explanation: Cognitive restructuring helps clients identify and modify maladaptive thought patterns that exacerbate procrastination, perfectionism, or self-criticism—common co-occurring cognitions in ADHD. Example: A client writes, “I always fail when I start a project,” and the coach guides them to replace it with, “I have succeeded in past projects when I break them into steps.”

Practical application: Use a structured worksheet during coaching sessions: (1) Situation, (2) Automatic Thought, (3) Evidence for/against, (4) Balanced Thought, (5) Action Plan. Review completed worksheets weekly. Challenges: ADHD clients often experience rapid thought flow, making it difficult to pause and

record thoughts; coaches may need to employ voice-memo tools or visual mind-maps to capture cognition in the moment.

Distraction Management – Related terms: environmental control, sensory regulation. Explanation: Distraction management equips clients with systematic methods to reduce external and internal interruptions that derail task completion. It involves both physical environment modifications and internal attention-training techniques. Example: A client installs a “focus app” that blocks social media sites for 45-minute intervals and pairs it with a breathing cue to signal the start of deep work. Practical application: Conduct an “environment audit” where the client lists all sources of distraction in their workspace, then co-create a “distraction-free zone” checklist (e.G., Phone on silent, desk cleared of unrelated items). Challenges: Some clients may have unavoidable environmental demands (e.G., Caregiving); coaches must balance realistic constraints with creative solutions such as “micro-focus” bursts.

Executive Function Coaching – Related terms: planning, self-monitoring. Explanation: Executive function coaching targets the set of higher-order cognitive processes—planning, organization, time management, working memory, and inhibition—that are typically impaired in ADHD. The coach serves as an external executive, modeling and scaffolding these skills. Example: The coach introduces a “project pipeline” board that visualizes stages from idea generation to completion, allowing the client to see progress and upcoming steps. Practical application: Teach the client to use the “5-minute rule” (commit to working on a task for five minutes) to overcome initiation resistance, then expand the interval as confidence grows. Challenges: Clients may experience “executive fatigue,” where sustained planning feels overwhelming; breaking down coaching interventions into bite-size chunks and celebrating micro-wins is essential.

Goal-Setting Framework – Related terms: SMART, GROW, outcome-orientation. Explanation: A goal-setting framework provides structure for defining, tracking, and achieving objectives in a way that aligns with ADHD strengths (e.G., Enthusiasm) while mitigating weaknesses (e.G., Forgetfulness). Example: Using the GROW model—Goal, Reality, Options, Way-forward—the coach helps a client articulate a specific career advancement target, assess current barriers, generate creative options, and commit to a concrete next step. Practical application: Write goals on index cards, each with a clear deadline and a single action item; place cards in a visible location (e.G., Fridge) to reinforce commitment. Review progress weekly and adjust as needed. Challenges: ADHD clients often set overly ambitious goals that become demotivating; coaches must guide them toward “stretch” goals that are achievable yet challenging, employing incremental milestones.

Habit Loop – Related terms: cue, routine, reward. Explanation: The habit loop describes the three-part cycle—cue, routine, reward—that forms the basis of automatic behavior. By redesigning one component, coaches can reshape problematic habits (e.G., Impulsive checking of notifications) into productive routines. Example: Cue: Phone buzz; Routine: Open task list; Reward: Quick sense of progress. Practical application: Map the client’s existing habit loops on a whiteboard, then co-design alternative routines that preserve the reward while inserting a beneficial action (e.G., A 2-minute planning step). Challenges: Habit change requires repetition; ADHD clients may struggle with consistency, so coaches should embed reminders and accountability checks into the loop.

Impulse Control Strategies – Related terms: pause-technique, self-pause. Explanation: Impulse control strategies teach clients to interrupt automatic reactions, allowing time for deliberation before acting. This is crucial for reducing impulsive decisions that often lead to missed deadlines or interpersonal conflict. Example: The “STOP” pause (Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed) is practiced before replying to an email or making a purchase. Practical application: Role-play scenarios in coaching sessions where the client must apply the STOP technique, then assign real-world practice with a log to record outcomes. Challenges: In high-arousal moments, the pause may feel unnatural; coaches should pair the technique with grounding exercises (e.G., 4-7-8 Breathing) to lower physiological activation.

Journaling – Related terms: reflective writing, log. Explanation: Journaling provides a structured outlet for ADHD clients to externalize thoughts, track task completion, and monitor mood, thereby reducing mental clutter and enhancing self-awareness. Example: A client uses a bullet-journal system with daily “rapid-log” entries to capture tasks, events, and emotions in concise symbols. Practical application: Introduce a simple template: (1) Today’s top three tasks, (2) Distractions encountered, (3) Wins, (4) Insight. Review entries together bi-weekly to identify patterns. Challenges: Consistency is a common hurdle; coaches can integrate journaling into existing routines (e.G., After morning coffee) and use prompts to lower entry barriers.

Kinesthetic Learning – Related terms: movement-based, tactile. Explanation: Kinesthetic learning leverages the body’s need for motion to reinforce cognitive processing, a modality that aligns well with many ADHD brains that seek sensory input. Example: A client uses a standing desk while reading, or taps a rhythm on the desk while brainstorming ideas. Practical application: Incorporate short “movement breaks” (e.G., 60-Second stretch) after each 20-minute focus interval; encourage the client to use a fidget tool that provides subtle proprioceptive feedback without becoming a distraction. Challenges: Too much movement can become counterproductive; coaches must help clients calibrate the intensity and timing of kinesthetic input.

Locus of Control – Related terms: internal, external. Explanation: Locus of control refers to the degree to which individuals perceive outcomes as being under their own influence (internal) versus driven by external forces. ADHD coaching often works to shift a client’s perspective toward a more internal locus, fostering empowerment. Example: A client who says, “I can’t finish anything because my brain is broken,” is guided to reframe with, “I can use specific tools to manage my brain’s tendencies.” Practical application: Use a “control matrix” exercise where the client lists tasks and identifies which aspects they can control (e.G., Start time) versus those they cannot (e.G., Weather). Focus action plans on controllable elements. Challenges: Deep-seated beliefs about helplessness may resist quick change; consistent reinforcement and success stories are essential for gradual shift.

Mind Mapping – Related terms: visual brainstorming, concept map. Explanation: Mind mapping is a visual organization technique that captures ideas radiating from a central concept, helping ADHD clients see connections and reduce overwhelm. Example: A client creates a mind map for a research paper, branching out from the thesis into literature review, methodology, and conclusions, each with sub-branches for specific sources. Practical application: Introduce digital tools (e.G., XMind, MindMeister) that allow rapid drag-and-drop of nodes, or provide large paper and colored markers for tactile engagement. Review maps weekly to prune irrelevant branches. Challenges: Without clear pruning, mind maps can become sprawling,

increasing cognitive load; coaches must teach disciplined “prune-and-focus” steps.

Neurofeedback Overview – Related terms: EEG training, self-regulation. Explanation: Neurofeedback is a non-invasive technique that provides real-time brainwave data, enabling clients to learn self-regulation of attention and arousal. While not a core coaching tool, understanding its principles helps coaches discuss adjunct options. Example: A client participates in a 20-minute session where alpha wave activity is visualized; they learn to increase alpha through focused breathing, resulting in calmer focus. Practical application: Coach reviews neurofeedback reports with the client, translating metrics into actionable cues (e.g., “When your theta spikes, you may be drifting”). Integrate complementary practices such as mindfulness. Challenges: Accessibility and cost can limit uptake; coaches must set realistic expectations and avoid presenting neurofeedback as a cure-all.

Organizational Systems – Related terms: digital filing, physical declutter. Explanation: Organizational systems encompass the tools and processes used to sort, store, and retrieve information. For ADHD clients, simplicity, visual cues, and consistency are paramount. Example: A client adopts a three-drawer system labeled “Inbox,” “Action,” and “Archive,” with color-coded folders for each life domain (work, personal, health). Practical application: Conduct a “system audit” where the client walks through each workspace, identifies items lacking a home, and assigns them a designated spot. Reinforce habits by setting a daily “tidy-up” alarm. Challenges: Over-complication (e.g., Multiple apps) can lead to abandonment; coaches must prioritize one primary system and integrate secondary tools only when they add clear value.

Pomodoro Technique – Related terms: time-boxing, work-break cycle. Explanation: The Pomodoro Technique structures work into intervals (typically 25 minutes) followed by short breaks, leveraging the brain’s natural attention span limits. It is especially effective for ADHD clients who benefit from clear start/stop signals. Example: A client sets a timer for 25 minutes, works on a specific task, then takes a 5-minute stretch before repeating; after four cycles, they take a longer 15-minute break. Practical application: Pair the Pomodoro timer with a visual progress board (e.g., Stickers for each completed interval) to provide immediate reward. Adjust interval length based on client’s focus tolerance (e.g., 15-Minute “micro-Pomodoros”). Challenges: Some clients may feel pressured by the timer, leading to anxiety; coaches should emphasize flexibility and encourage the client to experiment with interval durations.

Questioning Model – Related terms: Socratic method, reflective inquiry. Explanation: The questioning model uses purposeful, open-ended questions to elicit self-discovery, clarify values, and uncover hidden obstacles. In ADHD coaching, it counters the tendency toward impulsive answers and encourages thoughtful processing. Example: Instead of asking “Did you finish the report?” A coach asks, “What steps did you take toward the report, and what might have slowed you down?”

Practical application: Maintain a “question bank” of prompts such as “What would success look like?” “What resources do you have?” And “What might you try differently?” Use these consistently across sessions to build a habit of reflective dialogue. Challenges: Clients may initially resist deeper questioning, preferring quick fixes; coaches need to model patience and validate the client’s effort to explore.

Reward Structuring – Related terms: positive reinforcement, incentive system. Explanation: Reward structuring designs a system of immediate, meaningful incentives that reinforce desired behaviors,

compensating for the ADHD brain's heightened need for prompt gratification. Example: A client earns a 10-minute "play" break after completing three 25-minute focus blocks, linking productivity with enjoyable downtime. Practical application: Co-create a "reward menu" with the client, ranking preferred activities (e.G., A favorite snack, a short video) and assigning them to specific achievement thresholds. Review and adjust the menu quarterly to maintain novelty. Challenges: Over-reliance on extrinsic rewards can diminish intrinsic motivation; coaches should gradually shift focus toward internal satisfaction (e.G., Sense of mastery) as habits solidify.

Self-Monitoring – Related terms: tracking, self-audit. Explanation: Self-monitoring involves systematic observation and recording of one's own behavior, emotions, and outcomes. It creates data that the client can analyze to detect patterns and adjust strategies. Example: A client uses a habit-tracking app to log daily study minutes, noting spikes in distraction during afternoon meetings. Practical application: Introduce a simple "daily log" template with columns for task, time spent, distraction type, and rating of focus (1-5). Review logs together weekly to identify trends and brainstorm adjustments. Challenges: The act of logging can feel burdensome; coaches should keep tracking tools minimal and integrate them into existing routines (e.G., Logging while brushing teeth).

Time Blocking – Related terms: calendar segmentation, thematic days. Explanation: Time blocking allocates defined chunks of the calendar to specific categories of work, reducing decision fatigue and providing visual structure. For ADHD clients, visual blocks help anchor attention and limit multitasking. Example: A client reserves 9:00-11:00 Am for "deep work," 11:00-12:00 Pm for "admin tasks," and 2:00-3:00 Pm for "creative brainstorming."

Practical application: Use a color-coded digital calendar where each block is a distinct hue; set alerts at the start of each block to cue transition. Include buffer periods to accommodate inevitable overruns.

Challenges: Rigid blocks can feel restrictive; coaches should teach "soft blocks" that allow flexibility while preserving overall structure.

Visual Scheduling – Related terms: wall calendar, picture board. Explanation: Visual scheduling presents upcoming tasks and appointments in a highly visible format, reducing reliance on memory and supporting time awareness. This is particularly helpful for ADHD clients who struggle with abstract time concepts. Example: A client creates a magnetic board with icons representing work, exercise, meals, and leisure, moving each icon to the "today" column each morning. Practical application: Provide templates for weekly visual planners; encourage the client to use stickers or emojis to make the schedule engaging. Review the board at the start and end of each day to reinforce commitment. Challenges: Boards can become cluttered; regular "clean-up" sessions are needed to keep the visual schedule clear and motivating.

Working Memory Aids – Related terms: external memory, chunking. Explanation: Working memory aids are tools and techniques that offload information from the mind onto external supports, allowing the client to focus on processing rather than retention. Example: A client uses a "to-do" notebook to capture every incoming task, then groups tasks into "urgent," "important," and "later" categories. Practical application: Teach the "5-item rule": No more than five items are kept in mind at once; everything else is written down immediately. Pair this with a digital note-taking app that syncs across devices. Challenges: Forgetting to transfer items from mind to aid can re-introduce overload; establishing a habit of immediate capture (e.G.,

Voice memo button on phone) mitigates this risk.

Attention-Regulation Exercises – Related terms: mindfulness, breathwork. Explanation: Attention-regulation exercises train the brain to sustain focus and return to a chosen point of attention after distraction. Regular practice builds neural pathways that support sustained concentration. Example: A client practices “box breathing” (4-seconds inhale, 4-seconds hold, 4-seconds exhale, 4-seconds hold) for two minutes before starting a work session. Practical application: Incorporate a short (2-minute) attention reset at the beginning of each coaching session; encourage the client to repeat the exercise before any high-stakes task. Track perceived focus levels after each practice. Challenges: Initial resistance is common; framing the exercise as a performance tool rather than a “relaxation” activity can increase acceptance.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) – Related terms: change talk, reflective listening. Explanation: MI is a client-centered communication style that elicits intrinsic motivation for change by exploring ambivalence and reinforcing self-efficacy. In ADHD coaching, MI helps clients articulate personal reasons for adopting new structures. Example: The coach asks, “What would be different in your life if you could consistently finish your projects?” Prompting the client to envision positive outcomes. Practical application: Use MI techniques (open questions, affirmations, summarizing) in each session to surface “change talk.” Document statements that reflect commitment and revisit them during moments of low motivation. Challenges: Some clients may initially provide “sustain talk” (arguments for staying the same); coaches must patiently explore underlying fears without confronting directly.

Neurodiversity-Inclusive Language – Related terms: person-first vs. Identity-first, stigma reduction. Explanation: Using language that respects neurodiversity promotes self-acceptance and reduces internalized stigma. Coaches model respectful terminology, allowing clients to choose descriptors that feel empowering. Example: Offering the option to refer to oneself as an “ADHD-identified professional” versus “person with ADHD” based on personal preference. Practical application: Include a brief discussion in the intake session about preferred terminology; update all coaching documents to reflect the client’s chosen language. Challenges: Inconsistent usage across environments (workplace, family) may cause confusion; coaches can provide a “language cheat sheet” for the client to share.

Task Chunking – Related terms: breakdown, micro-tasks. Explanation: Task chunking divides larger projects into discrete, manageable units, reducing overwhelm and facilitating clear start points. This aligns with the ADHD tendency to avoid initiating ambiguous tasks. Example: Instead of “write report,” the client creates chunks: “Outline sections,” “draft introduction,” “populate data table,” each with a specific time estimate. Practical application: Teach the “2-minute rule” for each chunk: If a chunk can be started in two minutes, do it immediately; otherwise schedule it in the calendar. Review chunk completion rates weekly. Challenges: Over-chunking can lead to excessive planning; coaches must help clients balance detail with action, pruning unnecessary sub-tasks.

Time-Perspective Coaching – Related terms: future orientation, present bias. Explanation: Time-perspective coaching addresses the ADHD tendency to prioritize immediate reward over long-term goals (present bias) by creating vivid future scenarios and linking them to current actions. Example: A client visualizes graduating with honors, then identifies the specific study habits required to make that vision a reality.

Practical application: Use a “future-self” worksheet where the client writes a letter from their future self, describing the benefits of today’s disciplined actions. Pair this with short-term incentives that bridge the gap to the long-term vision. **Challenges:** Some clients find future visualization abstract; coaches may use concrete artifacts (e.G., A photo of a desired outcome) to anchor the future perspective.

Digital Tool Integration – Related terms: app ecosystem, workflow automation. **Explanation:** Digital tool integration involves selecting, configuring, and harmonizing software applications that support ADHD coaching objectives (task management, reminders, note-taking). Effective integration reduces friction and cognitive load. **Example:** A client syncs a task manager (e.G., Todoist) with a calendar app, enabling tasks to appear as time-blocked events automatically. **Practical application:** Conduct a “tool audit” to identify redundant apps; then create a step-by-step onboarding guide for the chosen suite, including shortcuts and notification settings. Review usage after one month. **Challenges:** Too many apps can cause “tool fatigue”; coaches must prioritize simplicity and ensure each tool serves a distinct purpose.

Emotion Regulation Techniques – Related terms: affect labeling, coping skills. **Explanation:** Emotion regulation techniques help clients recognize, label, and modulate intense feelings that often accompany ADHD stress, preventing emotional spillover into productivity. **Example:** A client practices “affect labeling” by saying, “I feel frustrated because I’m stuck on this task,” before choosing a coping strategy. **Practical application:** Develop a “emotion toolkit” with options such as deep breathing, a brief walk, or a grounding object; coach the client to select a tool within three minutes of noticing heightened emotion. **Challenges:** Clients may default to avoidance (e.G., Procrastination) rather than confronting emotion; systematic practice and reinforcement are required to build adaptive habits.

Self-Advocacy Coaching – Related terms: disclosure, workplace accommodations. **Explanation:** Self-advocacy coaching empowers clients to communicate their ADHD needs effectively, negotiate accommodations, and set boundaries in personal and professional contexts. **Example:** A client prepares a concise script to request a flexible deadline from a supervisor, highlighting how the adjustment will improve output quality. **Practical application:** Role-play disclosure conversations, develop a “rights and resources” handout, and practice assertive language. Follow up with a debrief after the real conversation to reinforce learning. **Challenges:** Fear of stigma may inhibit disclosure; coaches must respect client autonomy while providing information about legal protections and benefits.

Positive Psychology Interventions – Related terms: strengths-based, gratitude practice. **Explanation:** Positive psychology interventions focus on cultivating strengths, optimism, and well-being, counterbalancing the deficit-oriented narrative often associated with ADHD. **Example:** A client identifies three personal strengths (e.G., Creativity, energy, empathy) and designs a weekly activity that leverages each strength. **Practical application:** Introduce a “gratitude log” where the client records one thing they are grateful for each day; review entries monthly to highlight patterns of positive affect. **Challenges:** Some clients may view positivity exercises as superficial; linking interventions to tangible outcomes (e.G., Improved mood leading to better focus) enhances relevance.

Goal-Tracking Dashboard – Related terms: KPIs, visual analytics. **Explanation:** A goal-tracking dashboard aggregates progress metrics into a single visual display, allowing ADHD clients to see real-time status,

celebrate wins, and identify gaps. Example: A client uses a spreadsheet with conditional formatting: Green cells for tasks completed on time, amber for delayed, red for overdue. Practical application: Co-design a simple dashboard template with the client, incorporating key indicators (tasks completed, hours worked, mood rating). Review the dashboard at the start of each session to set the agenda. Challenges: Over-complex dashboards can become another source of overwhelm; keep the number of metrics limited to 3-5 core indicators.

Task Initiation Protocol – Related terms: starter ritual, pre-task checklist. Explanation: The task initiation protocol is a repeatable sequence that signals the brain to transition from idle to active mode, reducing the “starting-gate” barrier common in ADHD. Example: The protocol might include: (1) Clear desk, (2) Open task file, (3) Set timer for 5 minutes, (4) Begin with the easiest sub-task. Practical application: Have the client practice the protocol for three consecutive days, then record the time taken to begin each task. Adjust components based on feedback (e.G., Replace “clear desk” with “open music playlist” if that increases motivation). Challenges: Rigid protocols may feel burdensome; flexibility to swap steps while preserving the overall ritual helps maintain adherence.

Mindful Transitions – Related terms: pause practice, transition cue. Explanation: Mindful transitions are brief moments of conscious awareness used when moving between activities, helping to reset attention and reduce carry-over of distraction. Example: Before switching from email to a report, a client takes three deep breaths and states the next task out loud. Practical application: Teach clients to set a short “transition alarm” on their phone; when it rings, they perform the mindful cue before commencing the new activity. Track the impact on error rates. Challenges: Clients may skip transitions when rushed; reinforcing the habit through immediate reward (e.G., A quick stretch) can embed the practice.

Energy Management Planning – Related terms: ultradian rhythms, peak-performance windows. Explanation: Energy management planning aligns tasks with the client’s natural energy cycles, recognizing that ADHD brains often experience fluctuating alertness throughout the day. Example: A client identifies a morning “high-energy” window for complex problem-solving and an afternoon “low-energy” window for routine admin work. Practical application: Use a simple energy-log (rating 1-5 every two hours) for a week; analyze patterns and map tasks accordingly. Incorporate short “re-charging” activities (e.G., A walk, a snack) during low-energy periods. Challenges: External constraints (meeting schedules) may limit flexibility; coaches help clients negotiate adjustments or create micro-breaks within existing structures.

Structured Reflection Sessions – Related terms: after-action review, debrief. Explanation: Structured reflection sessions provide a consistent framework for reviewing what worked, what didn’t, and why, fostering continuous improvement and self-awareness. Example: After completing a project, the client spends 15 minutes answering three prompts: “What was my biggest win?”, “What distracted me?”, “What will I do differently next time?”

Practical application: Schedule a monthly “reflection block” in the client’s calendar; use a template to guide the discussion and capture insights in a shared document. Review trends over multiple cycles. Challenges: Reflection can feel tedious; integrating a creative element (e.G., Drawing a timeline or using emojis) keeps the process engaging.

Neuro-Coaching Alliance – Related terms: trust, collaborative partnership. Explanation: The neuro-coaching alliance is the relational foundation built on mutual respect, empathy, and shared responsibility for growth, recognizing the unique neurocognitive needs of ADHD clients. Example: A coach openly acknowledges the client's past frustrations with "one-size-fits-all" approaches and commits to co-creating personalized strategies. Practical application: At the start of each coaching engagement, establish clear expectations, confidentiality, and a feedback loop; revisit the alliance periodically to adjust roles and responsibilities. Challenges: Power dynamics can emerge if the coach dominates; maintaining a stance of partnership and regularly soliciting client input mitigates imbalance.

Self-Compassion Practices – Related terms: self-kindness, mindfulness, common humanity. Explanation: Self-compassion practices cultivate a gentle inner stance toward perceived failures, reducing the harsh self-criticism that often fuels ADHD-related shame. Example: When missing a deadline, the client pauses to say, "It's okay; I'm learning how to manage my time better." Practical application: Introduce a "compassion mantra" to repeat during moments of self-judgment; pair it with a brief body-scan meditation to anchor the feeling of kindness. Track self-compassion ratings weekly. Challenges: Clients accustomed to self-criticism may view compassion as "letting themselves off the hook"; coaches need to frame compassion as a catalyst for constructive change rather than excuse.

Task-Specific Cue Cards – Related terms: prompt, visual reminder. Explanation: Task-specific cue cards are small, portable prompts that outline the exact steps needed to start and complete a particular task, reducing decision paralysis. Example: A "laundry" cue card lists: (1) Gather dirty clothes, (2) Load washer, (3) Add detergent, (4) Start machine. Practical application: Have the client create cue cards for recurring tasks (e.G., Weekly grocery shopping, monthly bill payment) and place them in a visible location (e.G., Fridge door). Review usage after two weeks. Challenges: Over-reliance on cards may inhibit internalization of the process; gradually fade the cards as the client gains confidence.

Neuro-Feedback Loop Coaching – Related terms: feedback, iterative improvement. Explanation: Neuro-feedback loop coaching applies the principle of real-time feedback to behavioral change: The client receives immediate data on performance, reflects, and adjusts actions, mirroring the brain's own feedback mechanisms. Example: After a focus session, the client rates their concentration on a 1-10 scale and notes factors that helped or hindered; the coach uses this data to tweak the next session's structure. Practical application: Use a simple "focus score" chart captured on a phone; compare scores across days to identify patterns, then co-design interventions targeting low-score periods. Challenges: Data collection can become a task in itself; keep the rating process brief (under 30 seconds) to avoid adding cognitive load.

Strategic Break Planning – Related terms: restorative pause, micro-recovery. Explanation: Strategic break planning schedules intentional, restorative pauses that align with the brain's need for periodic downtime, preventing burnout and sustaining attention. Example: After each 45-minute work block, the client engages in a 5-minute "micro-stretch" routine that includes shoulder rolls and eye exercises. Practical application: Create a break-schedule matrix that pairs break type (e.G., Physical, mental, social) with work intensity level; coach the client to experiment with different break activities and log perceived benefit. Challenges: Some clients may skip breaks due to "getting ahead" mindset; reinforcing the science of recovery and tracking performance improvements helps legitimize breaks.

Task-Related Self-Talk – Related terms: positive affirmation, internal dialogue. Explanation: Task-related self-talk involves consciously shaping the internal narrative to support focus and reduce anxiety during task execution. Example: Before starting a report, the client says, “I have the skills to organize this information; I will take it one paragraph at a time.”

Practical application: Develop a list of “task-triggered affirmations” that the client can recite when encountering a specific task cue; practice these during coaching role-plays. Challenges: Automatic negative self-talk may surface quickly; coaches need to teach the client to intercept and replace it within the first few seconds of the cue.

Time-Perspective Visualization – Related terms: future-self, temporal discounting. Explanation: Time-perspective visualization helps clients bridge the gap between present actions and future outcomes by creating vivid, emotionally resonant images of long-term goals. Example: The client imagines themselves receiving a diploma, feeling the pride, and then links that feeling to the present study session. Practical application: Use a guided imagery script at the start of each week, prompting the client to visualize the end result of their current efforts; record key sensory details to reinforce motivation. Challenges: Some clients may find visualization abstract; supplement with concrete artifacts (e.G., A photo of the graduation stage) to anchor the mental image.

Multi-Modal Learning Integration – Related terms: auditory, visual, kinesthetic. Explanation: Multi-modal learning integration combines auditory, visual, and kinesthetic approaches to reinforce information retention, catering to the ADHD brain’s preference for varied stimulus. Example: When learning a new productivity method, the client watches a short video (visual), reads a checklist (auditory via text), and practices the steps while standing (kinesthetic). Practical application: For each new skill, design a three-step learning path: (1) Watch a 2-minute explainer, (2) Summarize key points on a sticky note, (3) Perform a quick practice run. Review the experience in the next session. Challenges: Managing multiple modalities can feel overwhelming; limit each learning episode to one core concept to avoid cognitive overload.

Neuro-Educational Resources – Related terms: psychoeducation, ADHD literacy. Explanation: Neuro-educational resources provide accurate information about ADHD neurobiology, symptom presentation, and evidence-based strategies, empowering clients to make informed decisions. Example: A client reads a concise infographic on dopamine pathways and how certain tasks stimulate dopamine release. Practical application: Curate a resource library (PDFs, videos, podcasts) organized by topic (e.G., Executive function, medication basics, lifestyle). Assign a “resource of the week” for the client to explore and discuss. Challenges: