



FELT SENSE

PSYCHOTHERAPY

Navigating Work, School, and Relationships with AuDHD

This document is for individuals with AuDHD (Autism + ADHD) who are trying to navigate work, school, and relationships. Living with AuDHD can be exhausting, confusing, and often misunderstood. This guide provides psychoeducation, burnout reduction strategies, and reflections on grief and shame. This is not an exhaustive list and is generalized.

1. Psychoeducation: Understanding AuDHD

AuDHD is the experience of having both Autism and ADHD. This can mean you may experience sensory sensitivities, executive functioning difficulties, emotional intensity, difficulty with transitions, burnout, masking, and feeling misunderstood by others. Many people with AuDHD feel like they are "too much" and "not enough" at the same time — wanting structure but struggling to maintain it, wanting connection but feeling overwhelmed by it.

2. Tips to Reduce Burnout

Reduce sensory input where possible (noise cancelling headphones, comfortable clothing, lighting).

Plan for transitions — transitions are often more exhausting than the task itself.

Use external supports (calendars, reminders, timers, visual lists, people, etc).

Build in recovery time after socializing, work, or school (really any task).

Lower the number of decisions you have to make each day (routine can help!)

Eat regularly and keep easy food available (it is better to eat than not to eat!)

Have at least one space where you do not have to mask.

Break tasks into very small steps (even smaller than you think...)

Your capacity may change day to day — this is not laziness, it is nervous system capacity. You are not a failure because on Tuesday you could and Wednesday you cannot.

Don't use all of your capacity. 100% can mean 70%, okay?



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3. Work and School Strategies

Ask for written instructions instead of verbal when possible.

Use body doubling (working near someone else, even virtually).

Use timers to start tasks, not just to finish them.

Sit in low-distraction environments if possible.

Advocate for accommodations if available.

Create routines, but keep them flexible.

Start with the easiest task to build momentum.

4. Relationships

You may need more alone time than others. You may need direct communication instead of hints. You may feel overwhelmed by conflict or misunderstandings. Healthy relationships for AuDHD individuals often include: clear communication, alone time, sensory understanding, predictability, and repair after misunderstandings.

5. Grief

Many AuDHD individuals experience grief. Grief for how hard things have been. Grief for being misunderstood. Grief for lost time before diagnosis or understanding. Grief for burnout. Grief for relationships that were impacted by not understanding yourself earlier. This grief is real and valid.

6. Shame

Many people with AuDHD carry shame. Shame about being different, struggling with things that seem easy for others, feeling like a burden, or feeling "too sensitive" or "too much." Shame often grows when people are repeatedly misunderstood. Shame reduces when people are understood, accommodated, and accepted.

Reflection Questions

What drains me the most in my life right now?

What helps me recover when I am overwhelmed?



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Where in my life do I feel I have to mask the most?

What would support look like for me at work or school?

What do I feel grief about?

What do I feel shame about?

What would it look like to be kinder to myself?