

What To Do When You're Clueless

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ADULT ADHD?

Email them to attention@chadd.org and highly qualified experts will respond.

What can you do when you're clueless? Sometimes everything seems important—and nothing seems more important than anything else. People keep telling me to prioritize and I just don't understand how to do that.

"Clueless" is often the *excuse* that I use rather than a legitimate state of mind I might find myself in. There are clues *everywhere*, and they exist in two forms: answers to questions we ask ourselves and prefabricated to-do lists, mind maps, brain dumps, etc.

Prioritization can be as simple as asking yourself, "*What task (or set of tasks) can I complete today that will make my life easier this week?*" Or, you can replace the second half of the question with something more specific "...*help me write that article due Friday?*" or "...*make me the most profit today? This week? This month?*" Setting goals, long-term or short, is super healthy, but for we adults with ADHD need

to break these goals down into smaller parts or tasks that we can more easily map out and manage.

Personally, I use a powerful app called *Habitica*, which took the average Reminder app and turned it into a Dungeons & Dragons-influenced group quest game. My Habits, Daily Tasks, and general To-Do list are the resources from which I pull experience points, health, armor, and weapons to attack various "productivity foes." On top of the micro-rewards that I receive from completing my To-Dos and Dailies, I am in a "Party" of friends also using the app—they are my Accountability Partners!

So, begin by removing the word "clueless," move on to answering a single question, and then consult your Lists for further assistance—and defeat your Productivity Foes!

Stephen Tonti | Writer, director, public speaker | Adult with ADHD

My insurance won't cover medication for adult ADHD. What can I do?

Unfortunately, you are not alone. In an attempt to control pharmacy expenses, insurance companies have designated some medications as being on the approved list (on formulary) with a smaller copay, while non-formulary medication will cost more or require an appeal.

While long-acting stimulant medication is often recommended as first-line treatment because they will reduce ADHD symptoms over 8–14 hours, short-acting stimulants are usually the least costly through insurance and/or out of pocket. With long-acting stimulants, insurance companies often want the patient to try the less expensive formulary medications before they will approve a non-formulary medication. Keep in mind that these lists can change over time, so be sure you have a current list.

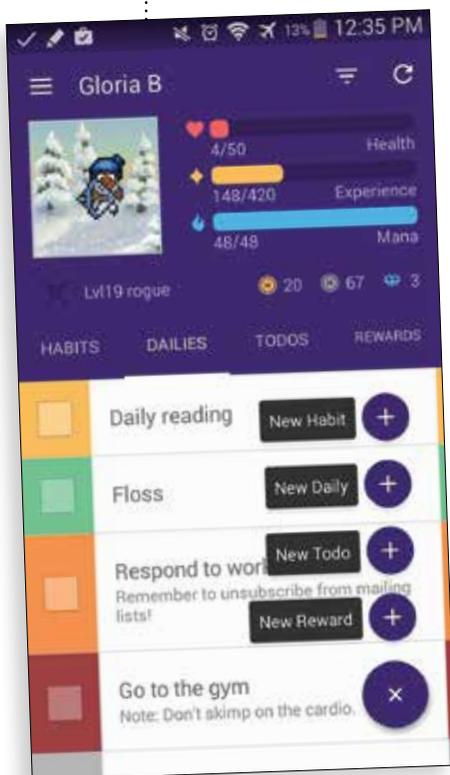
There are also nonstimulants such as atomoxetine, bupropion, guanfacine, and clonidine.

Look online or call the insurance company and ask for a list of all ADHD medications available under your plan. Any medication that is not FDA-approved for ADHD, like bupropion, will not be on that list but may still be an option to treat ADHD. Then speak with your treating clinician about the sequence of medication trials based, in part, on cost to you.

David W. Goodman, MD, FAPA | Psychiatrist | Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine | Director, Adult Attention Deficit Disorder Center of Maryland, Baltimore

Even though I studied really hard, I failed one of my classes in my first semester of college. I would read the same page over and over again but I couldn't remember anything I had read. I was diagnosed with

Habitica app, sample tasks page



OCD when I was a little girl. Recently I was also diagnosed with ADHD and I wonder if there's a connection. What can I do about it?

This is something I struggled with all through high school and college. It was especially bad in classes that I didn't have much interest in. Sometimes I could get lost in a book that I loved and be so hyper-focused that I'd forget to eat! But if you put an organic chemistry book in front of me: Game over. I would "read" five pages into the book, then stop and realize that I didn't remember the last four pages, let alone the last sentence.

So, I learned a trick for reading material I wasn't much interested in that helped



me throughout school. I would grab a notebook and highlighters and I would start taking notes. I would underline and recap concepts in my notebook. I would make notes or drawings of the things I was reading to help keep my attention. This forced me to be active with the material and be a part of it, rather than just scanning it automatically and forgetting it. Much of the time, I never even read back through my notes; just the act of writing and drawing it out helped me learn and retain the material I was reading.

Hawken Vance | Art Director | Adult with ADHD

Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA, is a psychologist, author, and speaker. He serves as a member of CHADD's board of directors and co-chair of its conference committee.

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It will change your life.

Now I'm more willing to listen. To hear. To tackle a challenge.

I have so much more confidence about what I can accomplish.

My learning differences don't control me anymore. Now I'm in control.

I never dreamed I'd be going to college.

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