

Managing Time, Distractions, and Differences

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ADULT ADHD?

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



I'm always late when I get together with my friends, and now it's kind of a joke in our group. How do I help them see that I am really trying, even if it doesn't show?

I have been in that situation many times myself. Time management is a constant personal struggle for me. I know how hurtful it can be when people you care about make fun of you for it.

For me, personally, sincerity and honesty have gotten me far. I think a good way to convey this to your friends is to say something like, "When you guys joke about me being late, I feel like you don't think I'm trying to be on time and it is hurtful. Being on time is a constant struggle for me and a sensitive subject, so I would feel better if we didn't joke so much about it."

I also find that the more considerate and mindful I am about it, the less upset people are about my lateness. And they are more likely to see that I am trying. I always text people when I am late, offer a brief apology, and give them my ETA. Good luck!

Sabine Harmon | Young Adult with ADHD

I'm doing a retail job while I make my way through college. The job isn't hard, but I keep making dumb little mistakes. How do I convince my boss that I really am a good employee?

I also worked a retail job through school. I came to realize that when things got busy at school, I would often get distracted at work and ended up making the same little mistakes.

Once, during finals week before the holiday break, we offered a gift-wrapping service at work. I can't tell you how many customers walked out of the store with their newly wrapped presents only to have the sensors start beeping at the door because I got distracted in the process.

Turns out, unwrapping presents isn't fun when they aren't for you—especially when you have to just wrap them up again. To avoid getting in trouble, I started writing down little reminders to check for sensors, and I put them around the registers and wrapping stations. Having visual reminders helped me avoid those mistakes.

I ended up talking with my boss and struck a deal. Instead of gift wrapping sensors, as I was prone to do, I could spend more time interacting with the customers and getting them to sign up for a company card. This challenge not only played to my strengths, but it helped turn work into my main focus in a fun way.

Hawken Vance | Art Director | Adult with ADHD





How can one partner with ADHD make a marriage work when the other has OCD? We are barely staying afloat!

The old saying that opposites attract has some truth to it—it's helpful to find a partner who has the skills that we are weak in. The challenge, however, is to be able to work together with these different skills, especially when there is a big difference between you.

But however different you were when you first met, there is a process called polarization in which partners push each other to greater and great extremes. For example, your partner reacts to your disorganization by becoming even more organized, perhaps past the point where it's helpful. You react to your partner's rigidity by becoming even more spontaneous. The challenge then, for all couples, is to find a place more in the middle.

Negotiate what needs to get done, and how, and be willing to compromise, meaning that neither of you gets everything you want. It can also help to make a real effort to understand your partner's position and what it does for him or her. Try to avoid moralistic absolutes (for example, "Reasonable people do it this way"). Look for the positives of your partner's different ways of doing things and ask your partner to appreciate the positives of your way. Good relationships are complementary; both partners bring some strengths to the table.

Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA | Psychologist | Author, *More Attention, Less Deficit* 

A psychologist in private practice in West Chester, Pennsylvania, Ari Tuckman, PsyD, MBA, specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in children, teens, and adults. A contributing editor to Attention magazine, he also serves on the CHADD board of directors and conference committee.



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