Self-Accommodation

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What is Self-Accommodation

What is self-accommodation?

Self-accommodation can take many forms and may involve changes to physical surroundings, work, or how you approach social interactions.

Generally, it entails checking in with yourself, your body, and stress level and asking yourself if you need anything to make things feel more comfortable or easier.

Similar to how a person with a physical disability may use assistive technology , such as a wheelchair or hearing aid, to help them navigate their environment and communicate effectively. You as an ADHD person, can make changes to your behavior and environment to make things easier for you.



WHAT DO I NEED TO HELP MYSELF WITH THIS STRESS?

Why Don't you Know How to Self-Accommodate?

If you were properly accommodated as a neurodivergent girl you would have learned how to self-accommodate. As we have learned, often this is not the case. When neurodivergent and ADHD girls are not given the accommodations they need in school and at home, it can significantly impact their mental health and overall well- being. They should be taught about their unique brain and nervous system and how to work with its strengths. Instead they are taught to they need to become like the gold standard “ girl” and that they have only weaknesses.

ADHD girls don't learn to self accommodate. They learn to **mask and push through discomfort** in order to do things to function "normally" and be acceptable.



Costs of Not being Accommodated

As a result these things often occur:

Frustration, Anxiety, Depression, and Stress:

Without accommodations , ADHD girls may struggle to keep up with academic, social, and family demands, follow classroom routines, or manage sensory stimuli. This can lead to frustration, stress, overwhelm, and even depression and anxiety. But they learn this is the normal!

Low Self-Esteem:

When ADHD girls are not provided with accommodations and are not taught about their strengths and to value their differences, there are consequences to their sense of self. They often feel like they are not meeting expectations and can't measure up to peers. This can lead to low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, and a sense of failure.

Behavioral Issues:
ADHD girls may experience behavioral problems when they are not provided with accommodations. These behaviors result from frustration , overwhelm, or a lack of understanding about how to meet unreasonable neurotypical expectations. However, girls are more likely to internalize their frustrations and may develop eating disorders, substance abuse issues, or self-injurious behaviors.

Costs

Loneliness:

When ADHD girls struggle to fit into the world, they may be at risk for social isolation and a lack of peer connections. This can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. When accommodations are not provided ADHD girls, they do not thrive and reach their full potential. This is so devastating and unnecessary.

Masking:

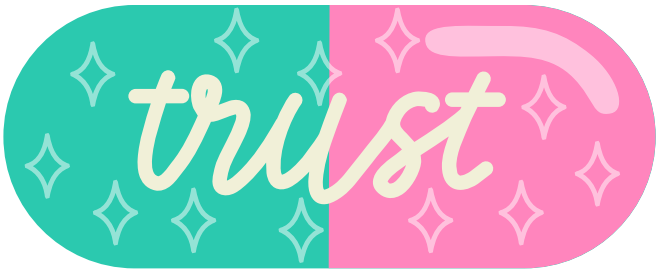
Instead, girls learn to mask. Masking involves hiding or suppressing natural behavior or traits to fit in with societal expectations, which can negatively affect mental health and well-being to a significant degree. The good news is you can begin to self-accommodate and get back in touch with what you need!



Disability Advocacy

Self-accommodation is often an essential component of disability advocacy and empowerment as it allows individuals to take control of their own lives and participate more fully in society. By making changes to your environment and behavior you can make life easier without relying solely on external accommodations or supports, which are often not available.

Self-accommodation should be viewed as a complementary strategy that can enhance your sense of self-confidence and self-trust. It can decrease your stress, increase your sense of control, and help you be more emotionally regulated.







Is Self -Accommodation Hard?

It might be hard to practice self-accommodation There can be various reasons why women have a hard time giving themselves accommodations, including:

Societal Expectations

Women are often expected to be caretakers and nurturers, which can lead to a tendency to prioritize the needs of others at the expense of their own. This can make it difficult for women to advocate for their needs and

prioritize self-care and self-accommodations.

Internalized Stigma

Neurodivergent women may internalize negative societal messages about their abilities and worth, which can lead to feelings of shame or inadequacy. This can make it difficult for women to give themselves accommodations, as they may fear being seen as weak or incapable if they help themselves in this manner - or even see themselves that way.

Lack of Awareness

It may not even occur to women that they need to self- accommodate because they are so used to pushing through their discomfort and stress.

Is Self -Accommodation Hard?

Fear of Judgment/Self-Judgment

Women may fear discrimination or adverse treatment if they begin to ask for consideration or even if they give it to themselves.

Lack of Self-Compassion

When women try to be kind to themselves, the self-critical voice can creep in. Self-compassion can help, and starting small can be easier. The skills of Self-compassion, self-advocacy, and self- accommodation must be built slowly and together!

Perfectionism

Women may feel pressure to meet high standards and expectations and may view accommodations as a sign of weakness or failure. This can make it difficult for women to acknowledge their limitations and to ask for help or give themselves necessary accommodations.

It's important to note that these factors can interact in complex ways.

By recogni zing and addressing these barriers and using all your new skills together, you can begin to overcome some of the obstacles put in front of you and start to thrive and heal.

Self -Awareness and Self Accommodation

How Self Awareness is Related to Self Accommodation

Self-awareness is crucial in identifying triggers and warning signs before a situation becomes unmanageable, enabling you to practice self-accommodation effectively.

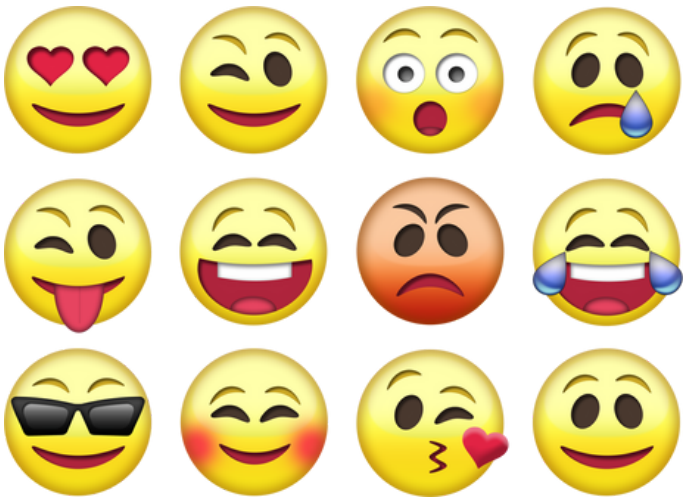
Being mindful of emotions and physical signs can help identify anxiety or tension before you tip over into overwhelm, cluing you in to the fact that you might need some accommodation to make it easier for you.

Physical or mental signs of stress, like worry or tension headaches, muscle tightness, or increased heart rate, indicate the need for taking a break or reducing stressors in the environment.

By paying attention to emotional and physical cues, and TRUSTING THEM EARLY ON you can begin to learn when you need to practice self-accommodation.

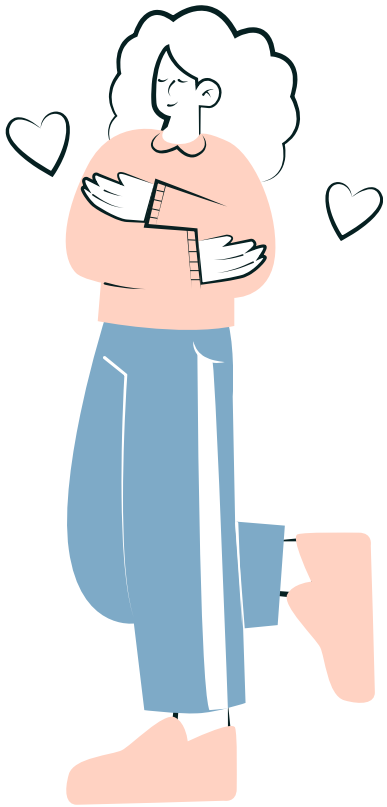
Remember our unit landmarks of emotion had lots of information to help you with learning about your signals.





Self-Compassion and Self Accommodation

Self-compassion involves treating yourself with kindness, understanding, and non-judgment when faced with challenges or setbacks. Self-accommodation aligns with this by creating a supportive environment that reduces stress and anxiety, helps to prevent overwhelm, and promotes overall well-being.



Self-Advocacy and Self- Accommodation

Self-Advocacy and Self-Accommodation

Self-advocacy and self-accommodation are closely related because both involve taking an active role in identifying your own needs and taking steps to meet those needs.

Self-advocacy involves advocating for yourself by communicating to others your needs and rights, and seeking support or accommodations when necessary. Self- accommodation involves identifying your own needs and taking steps on your own to create a supportive environment that accommodates those needs.

We will learn more about the skills of self-advocacy in our communication, boundaries and workplace units.





Self-Care and Self-Accommodation

Self-Care and Self-Accommodation

Practicing giving yourself accommodations is a form of self-care because it involves taking steps to meet your own needs and prioritize your own well-being. Self-care involves engaging in activities or practices that promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being, and self-accommodation is a key aspect of this.

Build Self-Trust and Self-Confidence

Being able to give yourself accommodations can build self-trust and self-confidence because it demonstrates a willingness to acknowledge and meet your own needs in a way that you haven't been allowed. This is an act of healing.



Examples of Self-Acommodations
Sensory Issues

Many ADHD women have sensory issues. So it's a great place to get started! Here is a general list of examples:

- ☑ Wear comfortable clothing made from soft, non-irritating fabrics.
- ☑ Use sunglasses or a hat to reduce glare and bright light.
- ☑ Use a fidget toy or stress ball to manage nervous energy or anxiety.
- ☑ Take breaks to step outside for fresh air and a change of scenery.
- ☑ Use a weighted blanket or compression clothing to manage sensory overload.
- ☑ Choose quiet environments for work or study, such as a library or private office.
- ☑ Use essential oils or aromatherapy to create a calming environment.
- ☑ Take breaks from screens to reduce eye strain and overstimulation.
- ☑ Use white noise machines to reduce background noise.
- ☑ Wear noise-reducing earplugs or loops to manage noise sensitivity.
- ☑ Use a standing desk or adjustable seating to manage discomfort from prolonged sitting.
- ☑ Use dim lighting or natural light to reduce sensory overload.
- ☑ Ask friends to meet in quieter, less stimulating places.
- ☑ Seek comfort from animals or through human touch when you feel dysregulated .
- ☑ Use soft material to stroke for self-regulation.
- ☑ Use music or exercise to help when you are under or overstimulated.

Self-Accommodations for Stress

☑ Prioritize self-care activities that promote relaxation and well-being, even though you feel guilty.

☑ Pursue your special interests, even if they seem silly.

☑ Take regular breaks, exercise, or engage in sensory activities.

☑ Allow yourself to practice self-care activities more frequently than you think you're "allowed" to.

☑ Provide a calming or sensory-friendly space where you can retreat when feeling overwhelmed.

☑ Use deep breathing exercises or relaxation techniques when overwhelmed.

☑ Take breaks or allow extra time to complete tasks when overwhelmed.

Self-Accommodations for Communication

Self-accommodations related to effective communication can help to combat hiding and silencing. Asking yourself, “What can help me communicate, remember, or understand better ?” is a good question to lead you to accommodations here.

☑ Ask for clarification if you don't understand something.

☑ Use anything that feels comfortable to help you with communication at work and with loved ones at home. This could mean making choices about where and when important conversations happen to get the best outcome.

☑ Take notes during meetings or conversations to help you remember important details.

☑ Give yourself permission to use email or text to communicate important information if you prefer this over in-person communication.

☑ Avoid interruptions with "Do Not Disturb" signs or apps.

☑ Repeat important information back to ensure you understood it correctly if it’s helpful. This can help reduce misunderstandings or miscommunication that exacerbates feelings of failure or inadequacy.

☑ Use recording devices or apps to capture information so you don't lose it.

Self-Accommodation for Task Management

When shaming and criticizing yourself or struggling with procrastination, first ask yourself:

Is there something I can do to make this easier or more comfortable for myself? Can I self-accommodate?

Some ideas:

- ☑ Do things according to how your brain works rather than how the world has told you to do it.
- ☑ If possible, don't do tasks you aren't suited to.
- ☑ Don't force yourself to get good at things that don't work for you.
- ☑ Make tasks more enjoyable with music or podcasts.
- ☑ Allow regular breaks to reduce stress and improve focus.
- ☑ Use self-talk to encourage yourself with kindness and compassion.
- ☑ Delegate or offload tasks you dislike when possible rather than telling yourself you should be better at or should be able to do something.
- ☑ Break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.
- ☑ Prioritize tasks based on your strengths, values, and stress level.
- ☑ Say no to things that don't matter to you.
- ☑ Simplify complex or multi-step tasks.

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Self- Accommodation for Social Interactions

You don't have to do things the way neurotypical people do.

If you are comparing yourself to others or struggling with a task, that's the time to be creative and self-accommodating.

☑ Choose to meet at social environments that are comfortable and accommodating of your needs.

☑ Set boundaries around social interactions, such as limiting the duration or number of interactions.

☑ Take breaks during social interactions to recharge and prevent overwhelm.

☑ Bring a trusted friend or family member with you to social events for support.

☑ Use social scripts or role-playing to practice social interactions in a safe and supportive environment.



Self-Accommodation for The Home

If you find yourself getting frustrated with keeping up with daily housekeeping tasks, ask yourself about your standards.

Are you trying to do things the way Gold standard or neurotypical women do them?

Is there a way you can accommodate YOUR brain?

Here are a few ideas:

☑ Arrange your fridge in a different way, such as using drawers or labels, to reduce overwhelm.

☑ Eat in a different way, such as snacking or eating from a platter, to reduce stress.

☑ Don’t fold your clothes; instead, use baskets.

☑ Buy things that don’t need to be ironed.

☑ Buy all the same socks so they don’t need to be matched.

☑ Have similar outfits so you don’t have to make choices.

Three Questions to Find Self-Accommodations

How can I make things easier for myself?

What obstacle can I remove that would enable me to do this thing?

How can I make myself more comfortable?

Reflection Activity for Self-Accommodations

Worksheet prompts

What are some new self-accommodation strategies you would like to try?

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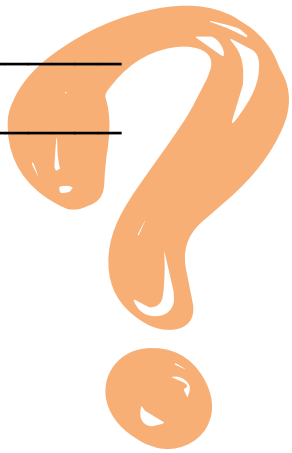
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Self-Accommodation Examples

You are working on a project that requires a lot of visual concentration. Instead of pushing through the strain on your eyes, you decide to practice self-accommodation by adjusting your screen settings, using a larger font size, or taking regular breaks to rest your eyes.

You are attending a social event, but you know that the noise and crowd will be overwhelming. Instead of avoiding the event altogether, you decide to practice self-accommodation by setting boundaries for yourself. You give yourself permission to leave early if you feel overwhelmed, or to take breaks throughout the event to recharge.

You are feeling overwhelmed and anxious, but you don't have time to take a break. Instead of pushing through the discomfort, you decide to practice self-accommodation by taking a few deep breaths and getting a glass of water

You used to force yourself to do laundry the hard way, but now you use tools such as a laundry sorter with wheels, a laundry bag with shoulder straps, and a portable steamer to make the task easier and more efficient for you even though it might seem indulgent.