

Overthinking and ADHD

Breaking the Vicious Cycle

Overthinking is often blamed on anxiety - but for people with **ADHD**, it's more than that. It's a constant mental loop where every small decision feels like a giant one, and every thought branches into a dozen more. What seems like indecision from the outside is, on the inside, a storm of over analysis, self-doubt, and exhaustion.

What It Feels Like

Imagine standing in front of a shelf filled with books - every one of them titled *Overthinking*. That's the ADHD brain trying to make a simple choice.

"Should I answer that email first?"

"Wait, maybe I should eat something."

"But what if I forget this idea?"

Before you know it, hours pass - and nothing gets done.

ADHD overthinking isn't about caring too much, it's about the brain struggling to *filter* what matters most. It's a tug-of-war between endless ideas, distractions, and the fear of making the wrong move.

Why People With ADHD Overthink

1. Scattered Focus

ADHD minds don't focus on one thing - they focus on *everything*. Thoughts jump tracks constantly, creating endless loops of "what ifs" that make decisions harder to close.

2. Executive Function Challenges

Planning, prioritizing, and making choices all rely on executive functioning - the mental "management system." When this system is glitchy, even choosing lunch can feel like solving a puzzle with missing pieces.

3. Fear of Making Mistakes

Years of being misunderstood or criticized can create a deep fear of "messing up." That fear turns every decision - even small ones - into a test you don't want to fail.

4. Emotional Sensitivity

People with ADHD often feel emotions intensely. A tiny worry can snowball into full-blown rumination. What started as, "Did I say the wrong thing?" becomes, "Everyone must think I'm terrible."

How to Break the Overthinking Loop

- Set Time Limits

Give yourself a deadline for decisions - 5 minutes for what to wear, 10 minutes for what to eat. It forces focus and prevents endless mental spirals.

- Write It Out

Get thoughts out of your head and onto paper. Lists, pros-and-cons, or quick notes help declutter your mind and make choices clearer.

- Trust Your Gut

Not every decision needs deep analysis. Practice saying, “This feels right,” and move on - even if it’s imperfect. Mistakes are part of learning, not proof of failure.

- Practice Mindfulness

Ground yourself when thoughts spiral. Deep breathing, stretching, or a two-minute body scan can reset your focus and calm your nervous system.

- Seek Support

If your thoughts feel too heavy to manage alone, a therapist or ADHD coach can help. Therapy/Coaching is especially helpful in challenging thought loops and easing decision anxiety.

Embracing the ADHD Mind

Overthinking isn’t proof of weakness - it’s the flip side of an *active, creative, hyperconnected* brain. The same wiring that causes mental chaos also fuels imagination, problem-solving, and deep empathy.

The goal isn’t to silence your mind - it’s to guide it.

To recognize when you’re spiralling, pause, and redirect your focus.

ADHD isn’t just about distraction - it’s about *deep perception*.

You see more, feel more, and think more. That can be overwhelming - but it’s also extraordinary.



So next time your brain is flipping through its shelf of “overthinking books,” remember:

You’re not broken. You’re just wired for more thought than the world was built for.

And learning to work *with* that wiring - instead of against it - is where peace begins.