

# Crafting Balance:

## Managing the Emotional, Practical, and Regulatory Aspects of ADHD

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It is essential to acknowledge both strengths and weaknesses inherent in all parts of the ADHD experience/ the ADDept ADHD Experience Triad:

- Regulatory
  - The on/off switches of an ADHD brain
    - Go all in and all out
      - Ie, hyperfocus/ mind wandering
  - The core neurobiological underpinning of ADHD brains
    - Different from the dimmer switches of Neurotypical (NT brains)
  - All-in/ all-out regulation is different, not deficient
    - Has strong benefits
    - Has vulnerabilities
  - The goal is to offer choice- the ability to find a middle ground when needed, even though extremes will always be more comfortable
    - 6 ways of doing that:
      - Sleep
      - Nutrition
      - Medication
      - Meditation
      - Exercise
      - Connection
- Practical
  - The ways regulatory difference shows up in everyday life
  - Easy to see ADHD practical strategies as wrong
    - But just different with different pros/ cons
      - Ie, procrastination= is a strategy of using time pressure
    - Strategy crafting harnesses the strength of natural ADHD strategies while protecting against the vulnerabilities
- Emotional
  - 2 parts of the emotional experience
    - The suffering that comes from running the race without the explicit understanding that it's the race that is causing an ADHD brain to fall behind, not the brain itself
    - The on/off processing of emotion
      - Cause emotions to go all in or all out

- It can have huge negative effects
      - I.e., violence, depression, anxiety, etc
    - But all-in/ all-out emotions have benefits as well
      - I.e., all in enthusiasm
    - The big problem is not the big emotions its the big reactions to emotions
      - Destroy intentions, values, and goals
  - We help ADHD brains with all-in/all-out emotion with:
    - ADHD-friendly emotional regulation training
    - Pharmacology
    - Well-translated emotional processing tools
  - Seeing the positive in big emotions is essential to dismantling the shame that inhibits access to the tools that help navigate the responses to big emotions.
- The Interplay
    - All 3 aspects of the ADHD experience triad interplay, raising each other up and bringing each other down, depending on the circumstances.
      - Seems mystical and unknowable
        - That creates helplessness
      - But it can be known, just many factors to consider
      - We tend to get stuck in one corner
        - This leaves us with an incomplete and inaccurate picture of what's going on
        - Need to zoom out

How to take the full picture into account to create supports that celebrate the strength and support the weakness of ADHD brains

1. Recognize the multifactorial nature of the struggle
  - a. Be patient with yourself as you try to see the other things at play
  - b. This is knowable and doable
2. Assess the full equation
  - a. The fly-on-the-wall technique-
    - i. Whats going on internally and externally
  - b. What are all the factors (ADHD and not) at play
3. Celebrate the strength
  - a. What are the good things about the factors at play?
  - b. When do they serve you?
4. Craft the supports
  - a. How can you use those strengths and protect against the vulnerability
5. Create the plan
  - a. What external plan can you create to protect against the vulnerability
    - i. what/when/where/ what accountability?
6. Play out plan
  - a. What hurdles are going to come up?

- b. How will you get over those hurdles?
- 7. Circle back
  - a. How's it going? What needs to change?

Creating supports and structures are useful and huge part of the process, but the greatest impact we can all have is in our ability to recognize the inequity of the race and work to support and celebrate all brains as differently but equally valuable.

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