Mental Health Counselling Geelong
Focussing on Your Health and Wellbeing

ADHD, Autism & AuDHD

A practical worksheet to understand your neurodivergent profile and plan supportive next steps (Teens)

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This worksheet is for teens (and the adults who support them). You can use it on your own, or bring it into a counselling session.

A quick note on safety: Learning about neurodivergence can bring up big feelings (relief, grief, anger, confusion). If you notice you're becoming more activated, pause and use the grounding options on Page 3. If you are in immediate danger or need urgent support, contact your GP, Lifeline on **13 11 14**, or emergency services.

Important: This worksheet is not a diagnosis and does not replace assessment by a psychiatrist or other qualified professional. It is designed to help you explore your experiences and support self-understanding, including validating your own identification if that feels right for you.

Understanding neurodiversity (ADHD, Autism, and AuDHD)

Purpose of this page: This page gives you a clear, shame-free foundation. Many teens spend years thinking they are lazy, too much, not trying hard enough, or broken. Understanding neurodiversity can reduce self-blame and help you make sense of patterns that have always been there. This page sets the scene so the rest of the worksheet feels practical, not overwhelming.

What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is the idea that brains naturally vary. Some people are **neurotypical**, and some people are **neurodivergent** (for example: ADHD, Autism, dyslexia, Tourette's). Neurodivergence isn't a character flaw. It's a different nervous system and information processing style.

ADHD and Autism: a simple overview

ADHD often involves differences in attention regulation, motivation, impulsivity, and activity level. Many people with ADHD can focus deeply on interesting tasks and struggle with tasks that feel boring, unclear, or too big.

Autism often involves differences in sensory processing, social communication, predictability needs, and energy management. Many autistic people experience the world as louder, brighter, or more intense.

What is AuDHD?

AuDHD is a term many people use when they identify with both ADHD and Autism. Some traits can look like they cancel each other out on the surface (for example, craving novelty but also needing predictability), which can make it harder to recognise.

Why labels can help (and when they don't)

Why this matters: A label can be a tool for understanding and support (not a box you must fit into). It can help with self-compassion, communication, and finding the right strategies. It's ok if your answer changes over time.

What to do: Tick what fits for you.

- [ ] A label helps me make sense of my life
- [ ] A label feels confronting or emotional
- [ ] I'm curious but unsure
- [ ] I'm seeking assessment/diagnosis
- [ ] I'm not seeking diagnosis, but I want better strategies

Choose one focus area for today:

This worksheet works best when you focus on one area.

- [ ] Energy and burnout
- [ ] Sensory overload
- [ ] Executive functioning (planning, starting, finishing)
- [ ] Emotional regulation and rejection sensitivity
- [ ] Social energy and masking
- [ ] Relationships and communication
- [ ] Work/study support

My focus area: _____

My traits map (patterns, strengths, and support needs)

Purpose of this page: This page helps you map your lived experience. Many teens have been told their needs are too much or that they should be able to cope the way others do. Mapping patterns helps you advocate for yourself, reduce shame, and choose supports that actually fit.

Step 1: What I relate to (tick what fits)

Why this matters: Neurodivergent traits can show up differently across people, genders, cultures, and life stages. Ticking what fits helps you name your experience without needing to prove it.

Attention, interest, and focus (ADHD-leaning)

- ☐ I can hyper-focus on interests but struggle to start boring tasks
- ☐ I lose track of time easily
- ☐ I forget tasks unless they're visible or urgent
- ☐ I feel driven by urgency, pressure, or deadlines
- ☐ I sometimes interrupt or speak quickly when excited

Sensory and predictability (Autism-leaning)

- ☐ I'm sensitive to noise, light, textures, smells, or crowds
- ☐ I need recovery time after social situations
- ☐ I like routines or predictability
- ☐ I feel overwhelmed by sudden change
- ☐ I notice details others miss

Emotions and relationships (common across ADHD/Autism/AuDHD)

- ☐ I feel emotions strongly or suddenly
- ☐ I experience rejection sensitivity (real or perceived)
- ☐ I mask (hide traits) to fit in

- [ ] I feel exhausted after performing socially
- [ ] Boundaries can feel hard, especially if I'm trying to keep the peace

Step 2: My strengths (what works well for me)

Why this matters: Support works best when it builds on strengths, not just fixing problems.

Write 3-6 strengths (big or small):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Examples: deep empathy, pattern recognition, creativity, humour, loyalty, intense curiosity, strong values, problem-solving.

Step 3: My support needs (what helps me function)

Why this matters: Needs are not excuses. They're information. When needs are met, capacity improves.

Complete these prompts:

When I'm overwhelmed, what helps is: _____

My early signs of overload/burnout are: _____

Things that make it worse are: _____

The kind of support I wish people offered is: _____

Nervous system and overload: becoming less activated

Purpose of this page: Many neurodivergent people live with a higher baseline of sensory input, social effort, and cognitive load. This can mean your nervous system becomes activated faster and takes longer to recover. This page helps you notice your early signs and practise strategies that reduce activation before you hit shutdown, meltdown, or burnout.

Step 1: My overload scale (0-10)

What to do: Rate your current level of activation.

Right now I'm at: ___ /10

- **0-3:** steady enough
- **4-6:** activated (I need a reset soon)
- **7-10:** highly activated (I need immediate support/reduction in demands)

Step 2: My early warning signs

Why this matters: Catching overload early is often the difference between I can recover and I crash.

Tick any that fit:

- ☐ headaches / nausea
- ☐ tight chest / racing heart
- ☐ irritability
- ☐ brain fog
- ☐ tears close to the surface
- ☐ urge to escape
- ☐ shutting down / going quiet
- ☐ sensory sensitivity increases
- ☐ feeling snappy or numb
- ☐ My environment isn't set up (noise, phone, clutter, interruptions)

My top 3 signs are:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Step 3: My 5-minute reset menu (choose 1-3)

What to do: Pick one option, do it for 2-5 minutes, then re-rate your activation.

- [ ] Reduce sensory input (dim lights, noise-cancelling, hoodie/hat)
- [ ] Body grounding (feet into floor, hands under cold water)
- [ ] Breathing (longer exhale: in 4, out 6)
- [ ] Movement (walk, stretch, shake out arms)
- [ ] One small task (choose a tiny, clear next step)
- [ ] Safe stimming/fidgeting

Re-rate: ___ /10

Executive functioning: making tasks doable

Purpose of this page: Many neurodivergent people don't struggle with knowing what to do, they struggle with starting, sequencing, switching, and finishing. This is executive functioning. This page helps you design tasks in a way your brain can actually access, without relying on shame or last-minute panic.

Step 1: Pick one stuck task

My task is: _____

Step 2: Identify the real barrier

Why this matters: Different barriers need different strategies.

Tick what fits:

- ☐ It's too big / unclear
- ☐ It's boring / low interest
- ☐ I'm afraid I'll do it wrong
- ☐ I don't know where to start
- ☐ I'm overwhelmed / too activated
- ☐ Im tired / burnt out

Step 3: Make it smaller (the next 5 minutes plan)

What to do: Write the smallest possible next step.

My next 5-minute step is: _____

Examples: open laptop; find the document; write one sentence; put dishes in sink; set a 5-minute timer.

Step 4: Add scaffolding (choose 1-2)

Timer (5-15 minutes)

- [ ] Body double (someone nearby / on a call)
- [ ] Visual cue (leave it out where I can see it)
- [ ] Remove friction (prep the tools the night before)
- [ ] Reward (small, immediate)

My scaffolding today: _____

Masking, self-compassion, and therapy planning

Purpose of this page: Many people with ADHD/Autism/AuDHD have spent years masking to survive socially, at school, or at work. Masking can protect you short-term, but it can also increase anxiety, exhaustion, and identity confusion. This page helps you reflect on what you want to keep, what you want to change, and how therapy can support you in a practical, respectful way.

Step 1: Where do I mask?

What to do: Tick any that fit.

- ☐ At work/study
- ☐ With friends
- ☐ With family
- ☐ In healthcare settings
- ☐ Online

What masking looks like for me: _____

Step 2: Cost vs benefit

Why this matters: This helps you make intentional choices.

Benefits of masking (what it protects me from): - _____

Costs of masking (what it takes from me): - _____

Step 3: A kinder reframe

Old story: _____

New story (more accurate and compassionate): _____

Example:

Old story: I'm too much.

New story: My nervous system has different needs. I can learn supports that fit me.

Step 4: What I want from therapy

Tick any that fit:

- ☐ Understanding my patterns without shame
- ☐ Practical strategies for overwhelm and executive functioning
- ☐ Support with relationships and communication
- ☐ Support with identity, self-esteem, and burnout
- ☐ Support with trauma or past experiences
- ☐ Help exploring assessment/diagnosis pathways (if desired)

My top 2 goals are:

1) _____

2) _____

Want support with this?

If you'd like personalised support, you're welcome to book an appointment with **Mental Health Counselling Geelong**.
Book here: https://www.mentalhealthcg.com and simply follow the prompts.