

Adapting Tasks to Fit Your Needs

We all have a task, that no matter what we do, presents a challenge and we may lean into avoidance. But, there is typically a specific obstacle in our way, but when we take steps to reduce it, it can make the task more doable. If you're not sure what your obstacle may be, use this worksheet to explore what about a task is difficult for you and brainstorm ways to adapt it.

Example

What is the task that you find difficult?

- I tend to struggle with deadlines for my school assignments. No matter what the assignment is and no matter how much time I have, I always find myself waiting until the last minute to start, causing me anxiety and struggling to finish on time.

What about the task is difficult? Consider if it's energy/motivation, a sensory experience (i.e., smell, sight, sound, touch or taste), a disability, or some other factor?

- I tend to find starting the task difficult, it might be because it appears like I have so much time to do it that I can wait, but eventually I just end up freezing as the deadline nears. Maybe it's also that nobody is holding me accountable to starting the assignment.

Considering what about the task is difficult, brainstorm some ways that you can adapt the task to make it easier for you.

What can you do to make this task easier for yourself?

- I can actively work on creating earlier deadlines to have certain parts of the assignment done by certain dates. So instead of having an essay due in three weeks, I can break it up to rough outline and research "due in one week," first draft "due in two weeks," and final essay due in three weeks.

Is there something that someone else can do to assist you?

- Since I know I struggle to hold myself accountable to deadlines, I can ask a friend to check in with my progress when I have an assignment and maybe show them what I worked on.



Next, take action. Test out your technique the next time you can, and then come back and consider the following:

Did it work? If so, what about your strategy was helpful?

- It did work to an extent. I found that I was able to get the portions that I had set out to get done completed by the deadlines I set, but I also saved them for last minute because I wasn't able to start them ahead of time.

Did you find that your strategy didn't help as much as you thought it would? If so, it can feel discouraging, but remember, it's a process in figuring out what your needs are, especially as we begin to make strides to meet them. If you need to switch up your process, continue to brainstorm ideas, considering:

- Was there an aspect that was helpful?
- Was there something that didn't help?
- What could have been missing?
- While I was able to reduce the stress associated with doing my assignments the night before and struggling to finish them on time, I also found myself under the same stress the night before my preferred deadlines when I wanted to initially start earlier to avoid the stress.
- What was missing from my plan was something to make me start well before my deadlines.
- It might have been missing something that would help me transition into the task so that I could start ahead of time easier. Maybe I could try getting myself to start for five minutes so it feels like there's less commitment. If I do this, I might find it easier to keep up with the task and get my assignments done with less stress.



What is the task that you find difficult?

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What can you do to make this task easier for yourself?

Is there something that someone else can do to assist you?



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