

Understanding Time Blindness (CBT, ACT, Psychoeducation, and Mindfulness)

Objective:

Clients will identify how time blindness affects their daily functioning and learn two tools to increase time awareness and planning capacity.

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Ask: “Have you ever felt like time got away from you—like an hour disappeared in five minutes, or five minutes felt like forever?”
- Explain that this feeling is common for individuals with ADHD and is called **time blindness**.
- Let clients know that today’s session is about understanding this better and trying tools to help make time feel more manageable.

Psychoeducation (10 minutes)

Therapist Script:

“People with ADHD often struggle with a concept called time blindness. This means having difficulty sensing how much time has passed, estimating how long something will take, or recognizing future consequences tied to time. It’s not laziness—it’s a brain-based difference in how time is perceived.”

Key Points to Teach:

- ADHD impacts the brain’s executive functioning, especially in managing time.
- Time blindness can show up as:
 - Being late or missing deadlines
 - Procrastinating until the last minute
 - Getting stuck in hyperfocus and losing track of time
- Understanding time blindness is the first step to managing it—not fixing it perfectly, but improving awareness.

Skill Building (15 minutes)

Tool 1: Time Anchoring (ACT + Mindfulness)

- Teach clients to “anchor” themselves in time by checking the clock at key moments and verbally noting the time.
- Practice with an in-session task: Give a 5-minute timer, have them guess when they think the 5 minutes has passed without looking, and then compare.

Tool 2: Visual Time Mapping (CBT)

- Introduce the concept of planning the next 3 hours with a visual “time map.”
 - Use blocks (15-minute, 30-minute, or 1-hour segments) to sketch out how they *want* to spend their time.
- Show how to break tasks down and allocate time for each.

Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes)

Prompts:

- “What surprised you about how time felt during the 5-minute test?”
- “How do you think time blindness affects your school/work/family life?”
- “Which tool do you think would help you the most in your daily routine?”

Therapist can write a “Time Goal” with the client based on today’s session (e.g., “I will check the time every 30 minutes during homework.”)

Homework Options (Choose one or more):

1. Use the time mapping worksheet to plan part of a day and reflect on how close the plan matched reality.
2. Set a phone alarm every hour for a day and write down what you’re doing when it goes off.
3. Share what you learned today with a friend or family member and ask them how they experience time.

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Worksheet: Time Awareness Practice

Part 1: My Time Patterns

Think about your usual day. When do you usually:

Activity	Time It Usually Happens	How Long It Feels (Short/Long/Just Right)
Wake up		
School/Work starts		
Homework/Work tasks		
Favorite activity (game, etc.)		
Go to bed		

Part 2: My Time Map (Next 3 Hours)

Break your next 3 hours into blocks and fill in your plan.

Time Block	What I'll Do
Example: 3:00–3:30	Snack + phone break

Part 3: Timer Practice

Guess how long these feel without checking the clock:

Activity	My Guess (Minutes)	Actual Time
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Sitting silently		
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Drawing/coloring/notes		
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Talking with someone		
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Reflection

- What part of time management is hardest for me?

- One thing I want to try this week to help with time is: _____