



NEURODIVERGENCE BY DESIGN: SAMPLE WORKBOOK COLLECTION

Discover Your Neurodivergent Strengths Through Self-Understanding and Assessment Preparation

OVERVIEW

This is a curated sample from three comprehensive workbooks designed for self-discovery and clinical assessment preparation. Your journey toward authenticity and clarity begins here.

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Welcome & Orientation

Welcome

These workbooks were created from over 20 years of clinical experience and the lived experiences of hundreds of adults navigating late diagnosis. They are designed to support your journey toward self-understanding and meaningful conversations with healthcare providers.

Workbook Sections

Adult ADHD Self-Discovery & Assessment Prep	Adult Autism Self-Discovery & Assessment Prep	Personal Profile Builder (Supplemental Guide)
<i>Understand ADHD traits, masking, emotional dysregulation; prepare for evaluation</i>	<i>Explore autistic identity, camouflaging, sensory profiles; build diagnostic clarity</i>	<i>Integrate traits, co-occurring conditions, and clinical communication into one organized resource</i>

Key Benefits

Whether you are newly exploring neurodivergence, preparing for an assessment, or seeking to understand yourself more fully, these workbooks offer structured self-reflection, evidence-based tools, and a compassionate, neurodiversity-affirming approach.

ADHD Workbook Sample

Purpose and Vision

This workbook is designed to support self-awareness, advocacy, and informed collaboration with healthcare providers. It frames ADHD as a form of human diversity rather than a personal deficit, encouraging a strengths-based perspective for individuals navigating their diagnosis.

Understanding Adult ADHD

Adults with ADHD often demonstrate distinct cognitive profiles characterized by creativity, adaptability, and innovative thinking. However, they may also face difficulties with attention regulation, executive functioning, and emotional processing. These challenges are frequently intensified in environments structured around neurotypical norms, where

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expectations for linear focus, rigid schedules, and continuous productivity can turn daily life into a source of ongoing stress.

The Hidden Struggle for Recognition

Many adults face challenges in getting an accurate ADHD diagnosis, as systems often overlook symptoms that don't match traditional criteria focused on hyperactivity. Women and gender-diverse people frequently display internalized traits like daydreaming, perfectionism, or emotional sensitivity, which are easily missed. Unrecognized patterns can lead to years of low self-esteem and social anxiety, while those seeking help may encounter dismissive responses that ignore the impact on work, relationships, and health. High achievers can be doubted too, as their success may hide the significant effort required to cope.

The Cost of Misdiagnosis

ADHD symptoms often resemble those of anxiety and mood disorders, leading to misdiagnosis in many adults who then miss out on proper treatment. This can leave underlying neurocognitive issues unresolved and sometimes worsen symptoms like fatigue and poor motivation. Misdiagnosis takes an emotional toll, increasing risks such as suicidal thoughts and attempts, risks that are notably higher for women with ADHD. Recognizing ADHD accurately is essential for effective support and safety.

Beyond Deficit-Based Thinking

This workbook approaches ADHD through a neurodiversity-affirming lens, viewing traits like curiosity, hyperfocus, and pattern recognition as potential strengths. ADHD is treated as a neurological difference with both vulnerabilities and capacities. The exercises prompt you to consider the effects of masking, overcompensation, and perfectionism, examine the psychological impacts of existing systems, and reevaluate early self-beliefs shaped by misunderstanding or rejection.

Using These Workbook for Personal Insight and Medical Preparation

These pages offer a structured way to record your experiences, strengths, challenges, and questions. Using checklists, self-screening tools, and prompts, you can track patterns in your life that may otherwise be overlooked. Compiling this information can be helpful for ADHD or autism assessments, as recalling details is often difficult under time constraints. Sharing your workbook with professionals provides concrete evidence of symptoms and coping strategies beyond what standard forms capture, which aids accurate diagnosis, supports accommodation requests, and encourages collaborative care.

Self-Screening for Adult ADHD

Purpose of Self-Screening

Self-screening tests let individuals identify potential ADHD symptoms and consider seeking a professional diagnosis. In adults, ADHD often appears as internal restlessness, executive function problems, and emotional dysregulation, with distractibility and procrastination being more common than hyperactivity.

Adult ADHD Self-Report Screening Scale for DSM-5 (ASRS-5)

(© New York University and President and Fellows of Harvard College from Composite International Diagnostic Interview for DSM-5 (CIDI-5.0))

Instructions: Check the box that best describes how you've felt and behaved over the past 6 months. Discuss your results with a healthcare professional at your next appointment.

Question	Never (0)	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Often (3)	Very Often (4)
1. How often do you have difficulty concentrating on what people are saying to you even when they are speaking to you directly?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. How often do you leave your seat in meetings or other situations in which you are expected to remain seated?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. How often do you have difficulty unwinding and relaxing when you have time to yourself?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. In conversation, how often do you find yourself finishing the sentences of the people you are talking to before they finish them?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. How often do you put things off until the last minute?	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. How often do you depend on others to keep your life in order and attend to details?	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Total Score: _____

Reflective Self-Assessment for Adult ADHD

Reflecting on your experiences helps you understand how ADHD traits affect your life and communicate these effects more clearly to healthcare providers and others.

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Instructions

Answer each question thoughtfully, using your own experiences. If unsure, ask a friend or family member for input. This questionnaire is for self-awareness and clinical discussion, not diagnosis.

1. Careless Mistakes & Attention to Detail

Consider whether you often make careless mistakes or overlook details, particularly when performing tasks, you find boring or routine.

Examples of Severity:

Severity	Description
Mild	Occasional minor errors like typos.
Moderate	Frequent errors needing extra revisions.
Severe	Significant mistakes affecting overall performance.

Your Experience:

2. Distractibility & Difficulty Sustaining Attention

Reflect on whether you are easily distracted by unrelated thoughts or noises, especially when engaged in tasks you do not enjoy.

Examples of Severity:

Severity	Example
Mild	Occasionally zoning out.
Moderate	Frequently losing track of tasks or needing reminders.
Severe	Consistent inability to focus, causing disruptions.

Your Experience:

Autism Workbook Sample

Purpose and Vision

This workbook helps individuals understand themselves, advocate for their needs, and engage in the community. It values autism and ADHD as natural human differences and aims to empower people by highlighting their experiences and strengths.

Autistic Adulthood and Self-Discovery

Navigating adulthood with autistic traits can be enlightening and challenging, especially for those exploring neurodivergence later in life. This workbook offers a supportive, neurodiversity-affirming space, drawing on clinical experience, lived narratives, and research to aid self-assessment, reflection, and communication with healthcare providers. Its focus is on understanding each individual's unique profile rather than promoting conformity.

Neurodiversity, Spectrum, and Overlap

Current research views autism and ADHD as evolutionary adaptations whose benefits are clearer in supportive environments, not simply as deficits. The neurodiversity movement reframes these neurological differences as natural human variations, emphasizing intersectionality, culture, gender, and context in shaping experiences. This workbook regards autism and ADHD as overlapping spectrums, encouraging readers to consider how factors like gender and culture influence traits, whether or not they pursue a diagnosis.

Camouflaging, Delayed Recognition, and Harm

Many autistic adults, especially women and gender-diverse people, use camouflaging strategies like mimicking social norms or excelling academically, which can obscure autism and lead to misdiagnoses such as anxiety or depression. This often leaves core autistic needs unmet, as healthcare systems frequently do not accommodate autistic communication and sensory differences. The result is a higher risk of medical trauma, mental health issues, unsuitable medication use, and suicidality, highlighting the importance of autism-informed and affirming care.

Autistic Identity and Reclaiming Self

Autistic identity involves distinct ways of experiencing and interacting with the world, often contributing to creativity and problem-solving. Many autistic adults have been misunderstood despite outward success, facing social fatigue and sensory challenges. This workbook rejects deficit-focused views, emphasizing strengths like deep focus and

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pattern recognition. It uses guided exercises to help readers document their experiences, value their differences, and move beyond past misconceptions.

Self-Screening and Reflective Exploration

Self-screening: A Starting Point for Reflection

Self-screening tools are not diagnostic, but they can help you recognize whether autistic traits may be present and whether deeper exploration or professional evaluation might be worthwhile.

About the AQ-10 Screening Tool

The Autism Spectrum Quotient – 10 item version (AQ-10) is a quick screening tool for adults that assesses social preferences, attention to detail, and communication. Scores of six or higher suggest further clinical evaluation may be beneficial, but results are not definitive.

Self-Screening as a Personal Discovery

Many adults diagnosed with autism later in life first noticed similarities through self-screening tools or conversations. Self-screening can be validating, especially for those who have long felt different without a clear reason.

How to Use Screening and Reflection Together

The following pages provide a self-screening tool and sample reflection questions. The screening offers a brief overview, while the prompts encourage personal description. Used together, they give a more complete view of how autistic traits may affect your life, though neither can they diagnose autism alone.

Next Steps Toward Understanding

A formal autism diagnosis requires professional assessment, but tracking your sensory needs, communication habits, and responses to routine can provide valuable information for that process.

Autism Spectrum Quotient (AQ-10) – Screening Tool for Autistic Traits

#	Question	Definitely Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Definitely Disagree
1	I often notice small sounds when others do not	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	I usually concentrate more on the whole picture, rather than the small details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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3	I find it easy to do more than one thing at once	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	If there is an interruption, I can switch back to what I was doing very quickly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I find it easy to 'read between the lines' when someone is talking to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	I know how to tell if someone listening to me is getting bored	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	When I'm reading a story, I find it difficult to work out the characters' intentions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I like to collect information about categories of things (e.g., types of car, bird, train, plant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	I find it easy to work out what someone is thinking or feeling just by looking at their face	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	I find it difficult to work out people's intentions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Scoring Instructions:

- Score 1 point for "Definitely Agree" or "Slightly Agree" on items: 1, 7, 8, 10.
- Score 1 point for "Definitely Disagree" or "Slightly Disagree" on items: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9.

Interpretation:

- A total score of 6 or more suggests the presence of significant autistic traits.
- Consider referral for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment if the individual scores above the threshold.

Total Score: _____

Qualitative Reflection

The Power of Reflection

Qualitative reflection can be valuable for autistic adults, especially those diagnosed later in life. Reviewing past experiences through an autistic lens may offer explanation and

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emotional clarity. Using structured prompts ties personal stories to clinical concepts, helping avoid abstraction.

Documenting Lived Experience

Providing specific examples of communication styles, sensory issues, repetitive actions, and coping methods helps improve both diagnosis and therapy. Adults who bring these written examples to assessments are typically more prepared and can demonstrate their autism more accurately than during a short appointment.

Storytelling, Criteria, and Self-Identification

For many late-identified autistic individuals, reflecting on memories through an autism-informed lens fosters self-understanding and compassion. Journaling or discussing these experiences clarifies identity beyond others' perceptions. This workbook encourages linking personal experiences to diagnostic criteria, such as those in the DSM-5-TR. Mapping traits like difficulty with sarcasm or preference for routines helps form a clear, evidence-based view of your neurotype, regardless of formal diagnosis.

Reflection, Self-Identification, and Advocacy

Some self-identify as autistic due to barriers like cost, limited specialists, or experiences of disbelief, often after research and reflection that the autistic framework fits them best. Formal assessment can offer validation, documentation, and access to support, while reflective tools like this workbook help organize narratives for professionals. Qualitative reflection is therapeutic, allowing individuals to process past misunderstandings and connect with the autistic community. When answering communication questions, use specific examples; these exercises are for personal insight and advocacy, not diagnosis.

Reflective Self-Assessment of Adult Autism

Looking back on your experiences allows you to better recognize how autistic traits influence your daily life, making it easier to explain these impacts to healthcare professionals and those around you.

Instructions

Answer each question based on your experience. If unsure, consult someone you trust. This questionnaire is for self-awareness and discussion only, not diagnosis.

Communication Challenges and Self-Reflection

1. Joining Conversations & Small Talk

Reflect on your comfort with joining conversations, especially informal ones. Consider if participating or making small talk (like discussing the weather or life updates) is difficult for you. Use the table below to assess how challenging these experiences are.

Severity	Description
Mild	Occasional discomfort but participation when necessary
Moderate	Regularly avoiding small talk or having difficulty finding the appropriate words
Severe	Extreme difficulty or complete avoidance of social interactions

Your Experience:

2. Speaking Tone & Voice Inflection

Notice if you tend to speak in a flat or monotone voice, or if others mention your speech. Consider how often this happens and its impact on your interactions. Use the table below to evaluate severity.

Severity	Description
Mild	Occasional monotone speech
Moderate	Frequent lack of vocal variation
Severe	Consistently flat affect, making emotional expression difficult to interpret

Your Experience:

Personal Profile Builder Workbook Sample

Purpose and Use of the Personal Profile Builder

What the Personal Profile Builder Is For

The Personal Profile Builder helps you organize your traits, patterns, and history to better understand your neurodivergence. Instead of checklists, it lets you describe your experiences in your own words for more accurate assessment and support. Use this section to explore your authentic experiences, there are no right or wrong answers.

How the Personal Profile Builder Expands on the ADHD and Autism Workbooks

The ADHD and autism workbooks let you examine each condition thoroughly, while the Personal Profile Builder brings your findings together. It covers:

- Developmental history (childhood to adulthood)
- Sensory and motor traits
- Family influences (genetic or environmental)
- How your experiences relate to typical ADHD and autism profiles

Combining this information gives you a clearer understanding of yourself and helps in discussions with clinicians.

Narrative-Based Reflection, Not Just Scores

Standardized tools can be useful, but they may miss important context. The Personal Profile Builder uses narrative prompts to help you share:

- Early developmental signs that might have been missed
- Sensory and motor differences and your coping strategies
- Patterns of neurodivergence or related traits in family members

This qualitative detail is useful for underdiagnosed groups, such as women, AFAB, and culturally diverse adults, whose experiences often differ from traditional diagnostic stereotypes.

A Framework for Organizing Your Story

Inside the guide, you will:

- Track repeating traits and experiences in school, work, relationships, and health.
- Highlight prompts or descriptions that strongly resonate with you.

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- Outline when key traits or strengths appear and link them to major life events.
- Flag topics for discussion with a clinician by turning reflections into questions or examples.

You may keep your profile, share it with trusted individuals, or provide it to healthcare professionals alongside formal assessments.

Developmental History Checklist

Early developmental markers are crucial for distinguishing between neurodivergent presentations and acquired conditions, as well as for establishing patterns of developmental trajectories. The following checklist is intended to document foundational aspects of an individual's early development.

Developmental Area	Yes	No	Unsure
Premature birth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delay in talking (age started talking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delay in walking (age started walking)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Held back in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had an IEP in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Developmental and Sensory Processing Assessment

The following assessment focuses on early physical, sensory, and cognitive patterns frequently associated with neurodevelopmental differences. Childhood traits identified here can be instrumental in adult neurodivergent assessments.

Assessment Domain	Questions	Present
Motor Development Patterns	As a child did you walk on your tiptoes, sides of your feet, or balls of your feet? Do you still do that?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading Acquisition Style	When learning to read, did you find it more straightforward to memorize whole words rather than decoding them phonetically?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play and Organization Preferences	Did you enjoy organizing your toys as much as playing with them when you were a child?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attention and Internal Processing	Did you daydream as a child or adolescent?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensory Sensitivity Patterns	Do you tend to notice details, sounds, or smells before others? For example, can you hear fluorescent lights?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spatial and Motor Coordination	Do you find that you are clumsy or have poor spatial awareness?	<input type="checkbox"/>

What's Inside Each Full Workbook

Workbook	Sections/Parts
Adult ADHD Workbook	Part 1: Understanding Adult ADHD; Part 2: Self-Screening for ADHD (ASRS-5, ASRS); Part 3: Understanding ADHD Masking; Part 4: Reflective Self-Assessment; Part 5: Diagnostic Cross-Reference; Part 6: High-Functioning ADHD & ADHD Burnout
Adult Autism Workbook	Part 1: Adult Autism Overview; Part 4A–B: Self-Screening Tools (AQ-10, AQ-50, GQ-ASC, CAT-Q); Part 5A–B: Self-Directed Qualitative Questions & Camouflaging; Part 6: Diagnostic Cross-Reference; Part 7: Autistic Burnout
Personal Profile Builder	Section 1: Integrated Neurodivergent Profile; Section 2: Trait Summary & Co-Occurring Conditions; Section 3: Impact Timeline & Life Domains; Section 4: Clinical Communication Guide; Appendix: Family Context & Advocacy Scripts

Key features include:

- ✓ Evidence-based screening tools
- ✓ Neurodiversity-affirming language
- ✓ Cross-referenced diagnostic criteria (DSM-5-TR, ICD-11)
- ✓ Prompts for self-reflection
- ✓ Assessment prep guidance
- ✓ Burnout and masking recognition
- ✓ Downloadable and interactive formats

Research Foundation

- Adult ADHD Workbook: Based on numerous peer-reviewed studies on adult ADHD, emotional regulation, gender, and co-occurring conditions. Includes citations and a reference list.
- Adult Autism Workbook: Draws from research on adult autism, camouflaging, healthcare disparities, late diagnosis, and identity. Offers diagnostic cross-references and thorough references.
- Personal Profile Builder: Combines findings on neurodivergent assessment, qualitative methods, and underdiagnosis into a clinician-friendly documentation framework.

How to Use This Sample & Next Steps

For Individuals

This sample introduces our style. If it aligns with you, the full workbook includes:

- Clear psychoeducation about your condition
- All screening tools with scoring instructions
- 15–20+ custom reflective questions for your neurodivergence
- Diagnostic cross-references to clinical criteria
- Room to process your identity at your own pace

For Clinicians

These workbooks help with assessment prep, improve diagnostic accuracy, and foster clinician, client collaboration. Clients who use them bring:

- Structured symptom histories and trait examples,
- Clear evidence of neurodivergence in daily life,
- A recorded timeline of impacts and patterns,
- Less anxiety about communication and disclosure.

Consider recommending one or all three during intake or assessment.

Next Steps

- Download the workbook(s) that suit you.
- Complete them at your pace.
- Share with a clinician or trusted person for feedback.
- Use your insights for self-advocacy, assessments, or personal clarity.

About the Creator

Jay Getten, M.Ed., LCPC, LMFT, is a counselor educator and author specializing in neurodiversity-affirming care for adults with ADHD and autism. He has developed integrated behavioral health programs serving rural and tribal communities, co-founded Behavioral Health Consulting Solutions, and created Seidr Assessment Systems to support research-based clinical decisions. With decades of experience, Jay designed these workbooks to unite lived experience, thorough assessment, and compassionate self-discovery.

Where You Can Find the Workbooks

Access the full Neurodivergent Self-Discovery series at the Neurodivergence by Design store. Available resources include:

- Adult ADHD Self-Discovery & Assessment Prep Workbook (PDF, Kindle, print)
- Adult Autism Self-Discovery & Assessment Prep Workbook (PDF, Kindle, print)
- Personal Profile Builder: Supplemental Guide for Neurodivergent Assessment (PDF)

Visit <https://www.ndbydesign.org/category/adhd-autism-workbook-series> for downloads.

Digital editions are delivered via secure link and accessible in “My Orders” if you have an account.

For bulk licensing, clinical use, or consultation, please contact Jay directly.

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Your neurodivergence is not a flaw to be fixed. These tools are here to help you understand your story, advocate clearly, and move toward environments that fit your brain.