



INTRODUCTION TO PRIMED

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Thanks for getting PRIMED! 🙌

Thank you for signing up for my newsletter. Here's your PRIMED blueprint. I used to offer this as an e-course divided into eight emails but streamlined it into one book.

My goal is to help you lead a joyful, productive life with more ease.

I hope the suggestions I share with you help you feel empowered as you take control.

Here's my story. Can you relate?

I was an adult when I learned that I had ADHD.

As a child, I figured out what made my life easier. I adapted, even though I was unaware of ADHD. I instinctively developed coping strategies for a condition that I didn't know I had. For example, I figured out methods for efficient studying. I discovered what I needed to do to succeed in school.

All through my diverse professional life, I learned my strengths. I discovered the weaknesses. I determined my needs. One of my assets: I'm a good organizer. Examples of my needs: I crave challenge and at least one wall in my workspace.

I had it under control.

Rattled in 2017

When you get sick, do you sometimes ignore the symptoms until they smack you down, leaving you a snotty mess? I was less than one week into a new office contract role when my ADHD hit me hard. The snotty mess from that came not long after when I started crying before work.

Signs of ADHD that I had been only mildly experiencing intensified. Symptoms that had been dormant for a long time aggressively returned. My mental health suffered overall. Depression returned. With ADHD and depression, some of my symptoms included:

- Trouble focusing at work

- Needing to stay at work late to complete tasks
- Anxiety
- Low energy
- Feeling emotional and not feeling strong enough to be assertive at work. I didn't stick to convictions.
- Sensory perception issues

When I realized what was going on with my mental health, I reflected on my work experiences, past and present. In doing so, I gained awareness of when my ADHD was at its worst and when I seemed unaffected - or less affected - by it. I discovered what helped and what hurt my mental health and brain health.

With this fresh perspective, two things happened:

1. I got honest about my needs. I recalled childhood and remembered how I adapted to ADHD without knowing I had it.
2. I decided that I needed to help others who are also experiencing ADHD and who want to lead joyful, productive lives with more ease. I started getting ideas down in online notebooks and paper ones. I created a catchy acronym called **PRIMED**.

I stayed up late on many nights, motivated and inspired by my unhappiness at work. I arrived at work in the morning tired but, on some days, excited to get through the day. Working for my side hustle.

Everybody's working for the weekend? I worked for not only for the weekend but for the years to come when I could pass these learnings on.

How to use this book

This book breaks down the system that I created. Each section of the book will introduce you to one letter in PRIMED and suggest an action that you can take immediately for ADHD relief.

Each section will take less than 2 minutes to read. Read it in one sitting or over time or read it once, and then implement the actions over time. I encourage you to take 6-12 days with it. You can start today or put it on your to-do list for a new week.

As you go through the course, I encourage you to note any questions or feedback that you have for me.

PRIMED is simple, but it's not easy.

I look forward to helping you and again, thank you for allowing me into your inbox.

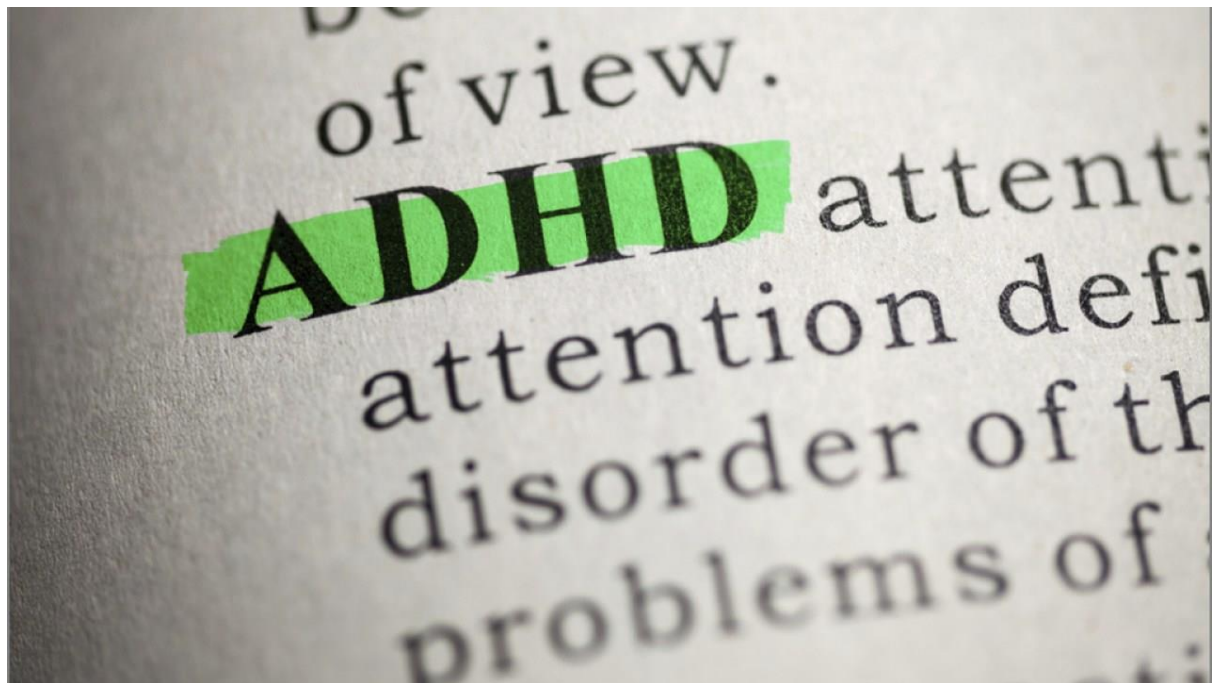
I've got you,

Andrea

Disclaimers:

This information is for educational purposes only. In authoring this book, I am acting as a researcher and teacher. I am not a medical doctor and do not engage directly or indirectly in diagnosing disease, dispensing medical advice, or prescribing the use of any products or services as treatment for any health issue. I do not claim to “cure” disease.

This information does not replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice.



Lesson 1: The “P” in PRIMED

Welcome to **Lesson 1** of your **Introduction to PRIMED**. This section will introduce you to the first pillar of the system and provide a short action item.

The “P” in PRIMED stands for **Physical**.

Exercise improves ADHD symptoms. Neuroscience and self-reported studies confirm this. Exercise is, in essence, doing the same thing to your pre-frontal cortex as medication.

Your PRIMED action:
Get moving today and every day!

The type of movement you do is up to you.

American researchers have found that keeping your heart rate up for 8-13 minutes (aerobic activity) enhances cognition and learning. Other activities have mental health benefits too.

For example, taking a brisk walk gets the blood moving, which improves concentration. A change of scenery can be inspiring.

The best exercise for you is the one you enjoy and do. Enjoying the activity will enhance your mood and motivate you to be more consistent with it.

Examples:

- If you and your dog tend to prefer the dog park over “walkies”, choose the walk or walk to the park if you usually drive there.
- If you have nearby errands to run, walk instead of drive. I like a 30-minutes commuting walk and sometimes take a backpack to the supermarket.
- Put on some music and have a dance party for 1. ([Here's](#) my Spotify playlist, which I call “Pick Me Ups.”)
- Play an active video game (is Wii still a thing?).
- Join a dance class or bowling league.
- Find an exercise video on YouTube.

Of course, if you have a gym membership, use it.

What will you do today to keep active? Feel free to [email me](#) to let me know.

That's it! Next up: The “R” in PRIMED.

Lesson 2: The “R” in PRIMED

Welcome to **Lesson 2** of the **Introduction to PRIMED** email course.

Did you implement the action item from Day 1?

To recap, the “P” stands for “physical”. I challenged you to get moving. If you didn’t do it, today is another chance.

Today I will introduce you to the second pillar of the system and provide a short action item.

The “R” in PRIMED stands for **Routine**.

“Routine” means getting organized and building habits.

Your PRIMED action:

Get organized

If you don’t already have one, create an online calendar. Take that one step further with colour-coded categories. You can do this in Google calendar (my choice), Outlook or another one.

Category ideas:

- Work
- Personal
- Finances (bill payment reminders — *important*, payday — *fun*)

Keep going until you have as many as you need. Colour coding is essential, second only to USING it. The calendar that works is the one you use.

Getting organized will help you build habits. Your to-do list only works if you use it, so remember to check your calendar daily. I have a project management board that I check daily. When I don’t, important tasks fall through the cracks.

What will you do today to establish a routine? What’s your calendar of choice? Feel free to [email me](#) to let me know.



Lesson 3: The “I” in PRIMED

Welcome to **Lesson 3** of the **Introduction to PRIMED** email course.

Did you implement the action items from lessons 1 and 2?

To recap, the “P” stands for “physical,” and I challenged you to get moving. The “R” stands for “routine,” and I advised you to get organized with a colour-coded, categorized calendar.

If you haven’t taken any of these steps yet, today is another opportunity. Remember, though, change is easier done one step at a time. If you procrastinate, the accumulating action items might get overwhelming. That’s why I suggest going through this book over a period of time instead of binging the content. I know that some of you want to do it at all once, and you want to do it perfectly.

Consider this a challenge.

Today I will introduce you to the third pillar of the system and provide a short action item.

The “I” in PRIMED stands for **Intake**.

The Intake step is the one that makes you conscious of what you put in your body.

Food can harm or heal. It’s a challenge for me to keep this lesson short. Nutrition is a significant component of brain health and I’m most passionate about it. I’m also a Certified Transformational Nutritionist. So that it’s not too long, I’m going to keep it super short.

Your PRIMED action:
Cut the sugar.

Go through your kitchen and throw out the foods that are high in sugar. If you hate the idea of waste and have unopened items, consider putting them aside to donate to a food bank.

It’s one simple step, although there are many more you can take.

Nourish your body.



Lesson 4: The “M” in PRIMED

Welcome to **Lesson 4** of the **Introduction to PRIMED** email course.

This section will introduce you to the fourth pillar of the system and provide a short action item.

The “M” in PRIMED stands for “**Mental state**” or “**Mindfulness**”.

Whereas the “intake” step is the one that makes you conscious of what you put in your body, “Mental state” is how you take care of your mind.

This pillar was more challenging to name. I wanted to call it “meditation” because meditation does have proven benefits. Still, people don’t like to do it, and I suspected that I’d lose people here.

Mental state is about minimizing stress and self-care, putting yourself first so that you can be of use to others. What that looks like is up to you.

Here’s what it looks like to me: Meditation, yoga, exercise, long walks with my dog, spending time in nature, cooking.

Today’s action:

Do something good for your mental state. Take time for yourself.

It’s as simple as that.

You do have the time. If you think you don’t, carve it out. Substitute this step for another habit in your life. It’s amazing how much more productive I am when I stay off Facebook for days or weeks. Sometimes when I’m standing in line somewhere, I become mindful of my breathing. That’s an example of multitasking that’s good for your mental state.

Do you have a regular feel-good routine for when things get stressful? Feel free to [email me](#) to let me know.



I took this photo on a Saturday walk.

Lesson 5: The “E” in PRIMED

Welcome to **Lesson 5** of the short **Introduction to PRIMED** email course.

Did you try the previous action items?

The “E” in PRIMED stands for “**Environment**”.

It’s also a tricky one, the most difficult to control. You can manage your home environment. Influencing what happens when you leave home isn’t always possible.

For example, it might be possible to request job accommodations. You might not be comfortable doing that.

It might be easier to arrange your ideal workspace if you’re working from home (such as during Covid time). You might have a room with a door. There might be fewer distractions. You can add plants and arrange your schedule to some degree.

There also might be more distractions. You have TVs. A kitchen. Laundry. Errands. You have co-habitants. (Dear future us: Did the pandemic end?)

This is such a broad topic, and everyone’s needs are specific to them.

Today’s action: **Identify your needs**

As they relate to your productivity, make two lists:

1) Environmental factors that make you feel good, and 2) those that don’t.

You can do this as two columns on a piece of paper. You can type out some notes. Or, you can fill out the table below. Use headings that make sense to you.

First, an example of how your lists might look:

What helps	What hurts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Silence for tasks requiring focus<input type="checkbox"/> A podcast for menial tasks<input type="checkbox"/> A clean desk<input type="checkbox"/> Earphones<input type="checkbox"/> A wall calendar<input type="checkbox"/> Paper, Post-It notes, highlighters and pens in various colours<input type="checkbox"/> Cubicle walls if in public space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Multiple conversations going on around me<input type="checkbox"/> Ringing telephone<input type="checkbox"/> Dark rooms/lack of natural light<input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable seating

Those are mine. Yours might include background chatter, such as coffee shop noise.

Your list

What helps my productivity	What hurts my productivity
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

Some companies have accommodation guidelines for employees with ADHD.

If you're a full-time employee at a company with an HR department, consider looking into it. It might help you. You can't be discriminated against for having ADHD, but the effects of ADHD can get you fired. Having your symptoms under control will contribute to job success. It's the errors relating to those symptoms that can get you fired. Disorganization and chronic lack of attention to detail make you a liability. Control over your ADHD allows you to thrive and be an asset.

If ADHD is damaging your job performance, it's your responsibility to fix it. Do not blame the condition and let it go. Quitting your job might be an option. It might not. Working at jobs you enjoy will help because people with ADHD are more engaged when they like what they're doing. If a company shares your values and you're doing what you love, you're more likely to thrive. If you're bored, you'll check out and not be a good employee. You want to go where it's a good fit.

Sometimes you don't have that luxury. You've got to do what you've got to do and make the best of it using your tools.

At home

Set your home up for calming. Read up on feng shui.

How do you control your environment? Feel free to [email me](#) to let me know.

Lesson 6: The “D” in PRIMED

Congratulations on making it to the end!

You’ve got PRIME now. The final piece to get PRIMED? **Downtime**.

(Sometimes, I want to joke that “D” is for “donut”.)

What do I mean by *downtime*? Well, there’s that self-care that I mentioned in an earlier email. There’s also getting enough sleep. That will be a different amount for everyone. Know how much sleep you need and commit to it.

Downtime might mean “Netflix and chill”. It might mean spending time cooking with your kids. It’s whatever relaxes you.

It is also a good practice to **disconnect** from your mobile phones in the evening. Doing so can help relieve stress and can help you connect to your partner and children if you have either or both. I also recommend taking full-day digital detoxes.

Today’s action:

Watch TV.

Yes, really. Set aside 30 minutes or an hour and watch something. It might shake out the cobwebs and get you ready for the next important thing.

I don’t recommend watching the news or something disturbing. Instead, watch a comedy, dramedy or enjoyable drama. You could watch silly YouTube videos instead. But, that’s more likely to lead you down a “rabbit hole” that will last longer than intended.

That’s it!

You did it! 🏆

Congratulations on taking steps to manage your AD(H)D with my PRIMED system! You’re winning right now.

Over the last ten pages, you’ve discovered six ways to manage your ADHD. You learned how aspects such as your environment and nutrition can affect you. You began taking steps in a positive direction.

You learned that

- The **P** stands for Physical.
- The **R** stands for Routine.
- The **I** stands for Intake.
- The **M** stands for Mental state.
- The **E** stands for Environment.

-The **D** stands for Downtime.

What I provided was a general, basic foundation to PRIMED.

If you make just one change a day and you're consistent, you will see improvement.

Feedback?

If you have any feedback on this mini-course or see any typos, feel free to [email me](#).

Thank you for allowing me in your inbox and taking the time to work the 6 pillars. You're awesome.

Want more?

I'm available to help you identify which of the six pillars are out of balance in your life. You and I will co-create a strategy to get those areas in balance. I'll use activities that suit your lifestyle and your preferences. This system works whether medication is part of your wellness plan or not.

Final action item:

Schedule a Q & A Session

Now that you're on my mailing list, I will notify you when I release new resources for your ADHD toolkit. These resources will be created with ADHD in mind and will integrate with the PRIMED system. Resources created by others will be PRIMED approved!

Schedule a Q & A Session

I look forward to more interactions with you.

All the best,

Andrea