

## Women and ADHD Series:

### Conscious Communication and Helpful Tips for Managing PMS Symptoms in Relationships

After completed the needs assessment and prioritizing a couple keys areas that are most pressing, use the following as a guide to normalize and discuss with your partner.

| INATTENTION EXECUTIVE FUNCTION                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                          |
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| SYMPTOM                                                    | POTENTIAL IMPACTS                                                                                                                                                                                                | HOW TO ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED                                                                                                                                                                     | HOW TO CHECK IN WITH PARTNER                                                                                             |
| Poor time management and time blindness                    | <p>The routine feels off, not being able to estimate how long something will take.</p> <p>Being late for commitments.</p>                                                                                        | <i>I'm having a hard time completing tasks this week, can you do ____ for us?</i>                                                                                                                | <i>Can you let me know if there is anything really important happening this week?</i>                                    |
| Short attention span for non-preferred tasks               | <p>Tasks that usually seem doable, now seem impossible and not rewarding.</p> <p>Your partner may not know how to help since you tend to take care of everything.</p> <p>Starting, and not finishing, tasks.</p> | <i>I feel as though my ability to solve problems is not where it usually is, so we can hold off on this difficult conversation?</i>                                                              | <i>What do you find frustrating about this?</i>                                                                          |
| Trouble completing tasks and frequent procrastination      | <p>Not knowing where to start.</p> <p>Feeling overwhelmed with daily tasks.</p>                                                                                                                                  | <i>Can you check in with me about ____ deadline?</i>                                                                                                                                             | <i>What is the impact of this for you?</i>                                                                               |
| Lack of focus, disorganization and difficulty prioritizing | <p>Spending time on things that don't matter, like cleaning the basement, rather than pertinent deadlines.</p>                                                                                                   | <p><i>Can you help me prioritize the 3 tasks that I need to get done this week?</i></p> <p><i>I'm having a hard time completing tasks, can we hold off on cleaning the house until ____?</i></p> | <i>I know you probably don't agree with how I'm spending my time, but I really appreciate you being patient with me.</i> |
| Forgetfulness or poor working memory                       | <p>Missed appointments/events/deadlines.</p>                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>I really need to use the calendar this week. Please make sure that anything you need done is on the calendar.</i>                                                                             | <i>What is important for you this week? I don't want to miss it and I feel like I might.</i>                             |
| Making careless mistakes                                   | <p>Feeling worthless or like you are missing something.</p>                                                                                                                                                      | <i>I feel like I'm missing something all the time. I hate it.</i>                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                          |

## HYPERACTIVITY: EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

| SYMPTOM                                                         | POTENTIAL IMPACTS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | HOW TO ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED                                                                                                       | HOW TO CHECK IN WITH PARTNER                                                                                                               |
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| Emotional withdrawal                                            | <p>Need to be alone, withdraw from others.</p> <p>Quality time with partner is less enjoyable.</p> <p>Partners may need reassurance that you are not mad/angry/sad about something they did.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><i>I'm feeling ____, and would like ____.</i></p>                                                                               | <p><i>I don't mean anything intentionally, and I do love you, but I just value my alone time these days. I hope you understand.</i></p>    |
| Rejection sensitivity dysphoria<br>or<br>Emotional hyperarousal | <p>Instant rage, or at the more extreme end, suicidal ideation.</p> <p>Constantly feeling like you are being rejected or criticized by people in your life.</p> <p>Falling short of your own high stands and the standards of others.</p> <p>Feeling like giving up, or alternatively going into full people pleasing mode.</p>                                                                                                                                                              | <p><i>I feel really overwhelmed about my extreme feelings.</i></p>                                                                 | <p><i>I'm sorry if I misunderstand or seem to over react to something you are telling me.</i></p>                                          |
| Mood swings, emotional dysregulation                            | <p>Partner might feel like they don't know how to help and withdraw for fear of making the situation worse.</p> <p>If this is a common pattern, going through it each month can be tough for everyone involved. Consider how much you speak to your partner after experiencing something stressful together, not necessarily to rehash specific details or play the blame game, but to foster an understanding of the principles at play, and the way things work for you in the moment.</p> | <p><i>Can you please ask me how I'm doing?</i></p> <p><i>I appreciate you trying to not take things personally these days.</i></p> | <p><i>Was there ever a time you felt ____?</i></p>                                                                                         |
| Inability to reasonably manage strong emotions (anger, sadness) | <p>Inability to respond to problem solving, the need to offload is stronger.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p><i>I just need to express myself/get this off my chest. Can you just listen and not try to give me advice?</i></p>              | <p><i>I want to support you by trying to give you an idea of what I feel like. Do you have a sense of how I feel in the aftermath?</i></p> |

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|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>I think I'm going to hop on a call with a friend. I just need some time alone.</i> | <i>Can you give me an idea as to why you feel distant or uncommunicative?</i>             |
|                                    | Lack of energy for daily tasks, less motivation to keep bedtime/hygiene routine.                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                       |                                                                                           |
| <b>Fatigue</b>                     | By anticipating changes to energy levels that week, you can have your partner prioritize convenience through meal subscriptions, a cleaning service, or helping pick up additional responsibilities in the home. | <i>Can you help me make sure I get to bed at ____ tonight?</i>                        | <i>I'm sorry I don't have as much energy as I usually do, but I just need a few days.</i> |
|                                    | <a href="#">Studies</a> show that exercise can increase the release of dopamine, so try taking more energy breaks throughout the day and consider scheduling active time with your partners.                     |                                                                                       |                                                                                           |
|                                    | Eating more or less, craving specific foods.                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                       |                                                                                           |
| <b>Changes in appetite, libido</b> | Changes in sexual desire/desire for intimacy, may isolate partners.<br><br>Opportunity to consider <a href="#">love languages</a> and find other ways to connect during this time.                               | <i>I'm really craving ____, can we have this for dinner tonight?</i>                  | <i>Is there something I can do instead of ____?</i>                                       |

Track your own symptoms, unique to your own presentation of ADHD throughout your cycle, and think about what has worked well for you at different times in your life:

| SYMPTOM | POTENTIAL IMPACTS | HOW TO ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED | HOW TO CHECK IN WITH PARTNER |
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