

EXAM SEASON SURVIVAL KIT

(for ADHD Teens & Their Parents)

Because “just revise” isn’t a strategy



REALITY CHECK

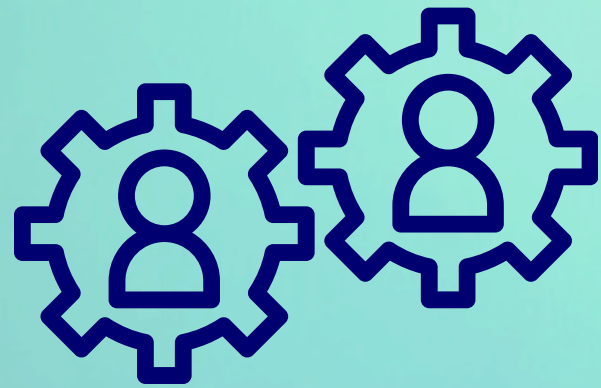
Why exam season feels so hard

- ADHD brains struggle with starting, not knowing
- Pressure = shutdown (not motivation)
- Emotional overwhelm blocks access to thinking
- Time blindness makes planning feel impossible

This isn't a motivation problem



THE 3 THINGS THAT ACTUALLY HELP



1. BODY DOUBLING

Sit together. No talking. Just presence.

2. LOWER THE BAR

“Do 10 minutes” works better than “revise everything”

3. REGULATE FIRST

Snacks, Movement, calm → THEN work



THE “STARTING SCRIPT”

What to say instead of “go revise”

Replace this:

✗ “Have you done your revision?”

With this:

- ✓ “Shall we sit together for 10 minutes?”
- ✓ “You don’t have to finish — just start”
- ✓ “I’ll stay with you while you begin”

This is where most friction disappears



SIMPLE REVISION STRUCTURES

Try these instead of a full timetable

The 3-block method:

- 10 mins → start something small
- 5 min break
- 15 mins → continue or switch

Repeat max 3 times

Stop before burnout

This is where most friction disappears



The Start Small Method

Structure:

- 5 mins → easiest task possible
- 5 min break
- 10 mins → continue
- Stop OR repeat

Why it works:

Reduces initiation overwhelm.

ADHD brains often struggle most with:

👉 beginning
not capability.



THE “MUST / SHOULD / COULD” BOARD

(Excellent for overwhelm) Z

Divide tasks into:

MUST

Urgent / tomorrow’s exam

SHOULD

Helpful but not critical

COULD

Extra if energy allows

This reduces:

- ☞ panic
- ☞ perfectionism
- ☞ shutdown

Very good for students who become overwhelmed by “everything”.



“TIME IS A CONTAINER” METHOD

(Great for time blindness)

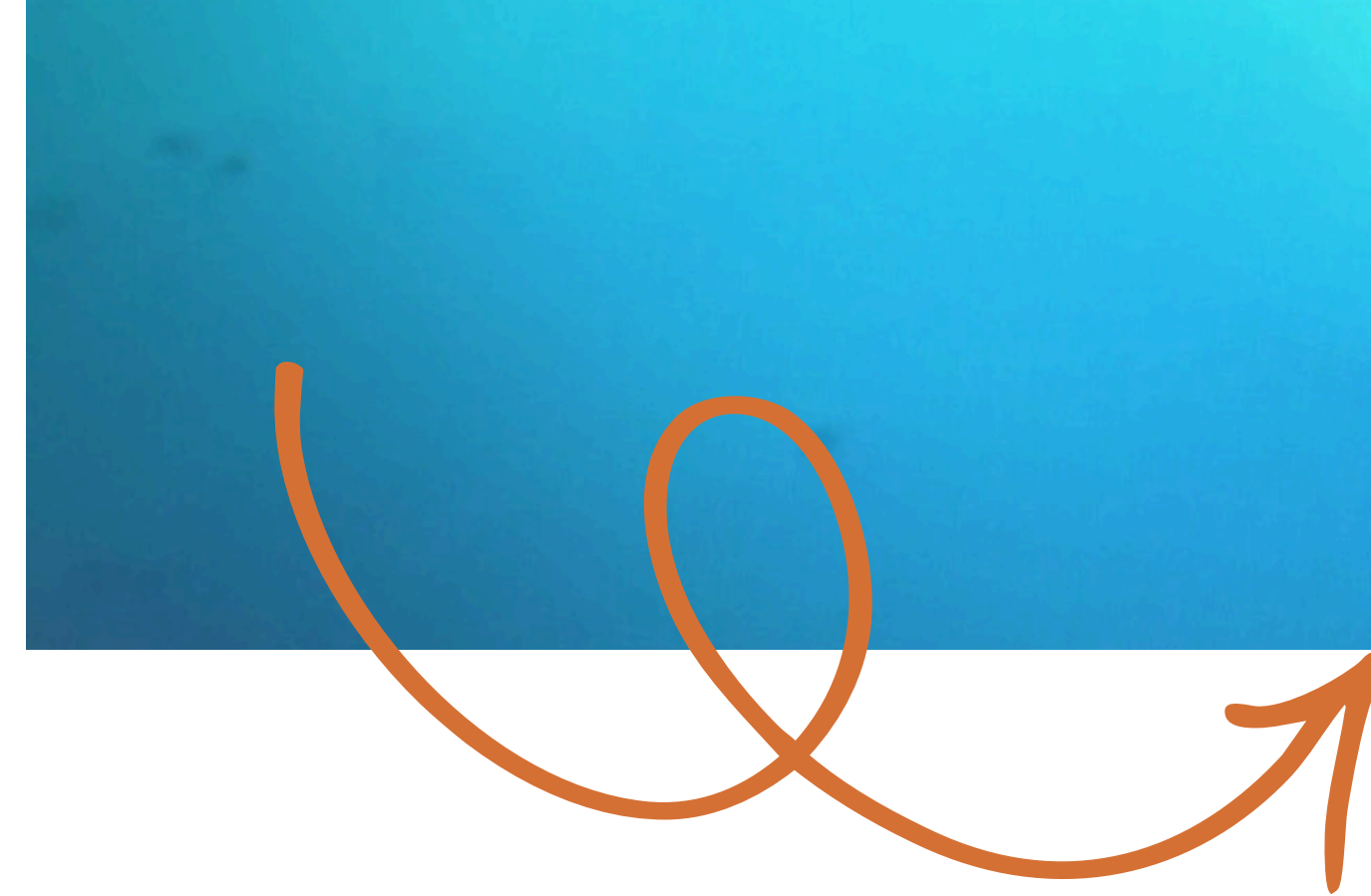
Instead of:

✗ “Revise Science”

Use:

✓ “7:00–7:20 = Science flashcards”

Specific containers feel safer and more achievable.



THE ROTATION METHOD

(Good for boredom-sensitive ADHD brains)

Structure:

20 mins each:

Maths

English

Science

Instead of forcing 2 hours of one thing.

Why it works:

Novelty boosts dopamine.



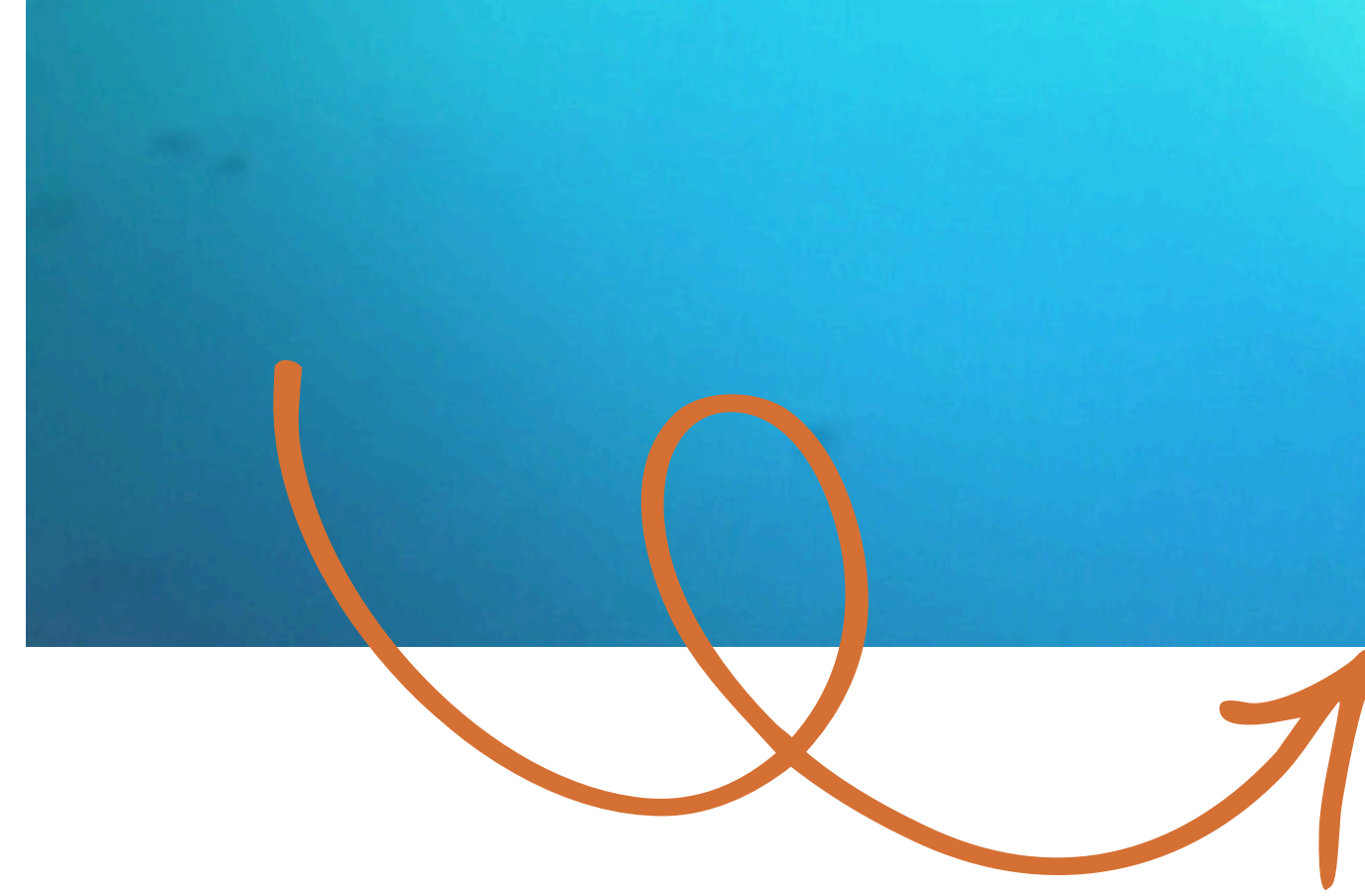
“STOP BEFORE MELTDOWN” RULE (VERY important for ASD students)

Many autistic students:

- overwork
- hyperfocus
- ignore body signals
- crash afterwards

Planned stopping points matter.

Revision should end BEFORE overwhelm peaks.

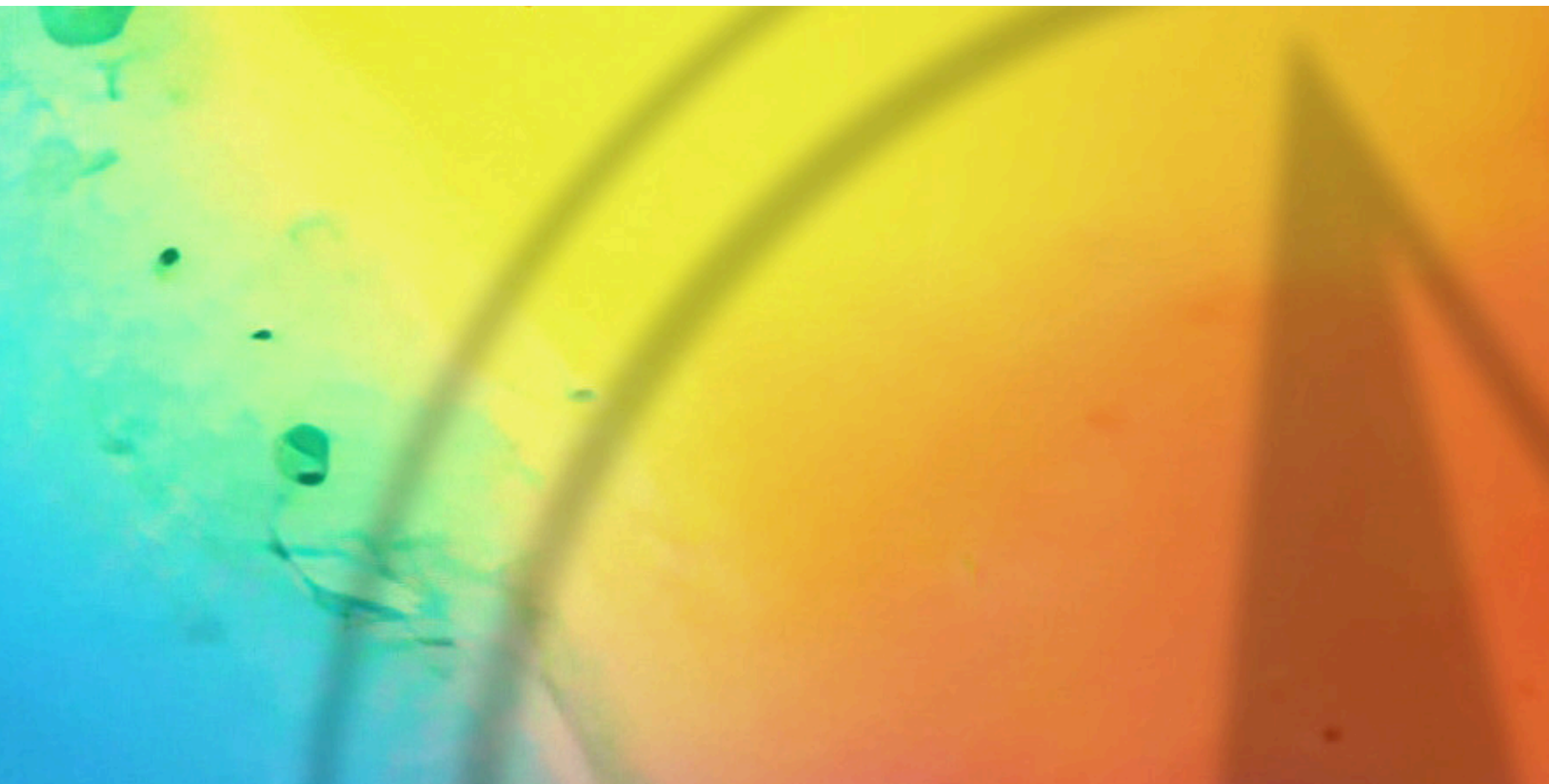


THE “EXTERNAL BRAIN” SYSTEM

(Very ADHD-friendly)

Instead of holding everything mentally:

- visible checklist
- whiteboard
- sticky notes
- printed planner
- visual countdown



WHEN IT'S NOT GOING WELL

- Your child isn't lazy
- This is hard for them too
- Connection works better than control

Not every strategy works for every neurodivergent child.

The goal isn't:

👉 perfect revision

The goal is:

👉 reducing friction enough to access learning.

"You are not behind. You are in it."



NEED MORE SUPPORT?

If exam season is turning into daily stress, we can help.

- 👉 Book a free 30-minute consultation
- 👉 1:1 ADHD coaching for teens & parents

You don't have to navigate this alone.

The Chaos Compass
info.chaoscompass@gmail.com

