

6 Books for Adults Living With A.D.H.D.

Psychiatrists, counselors and researchers shared their recommendations.

By Hope Reese

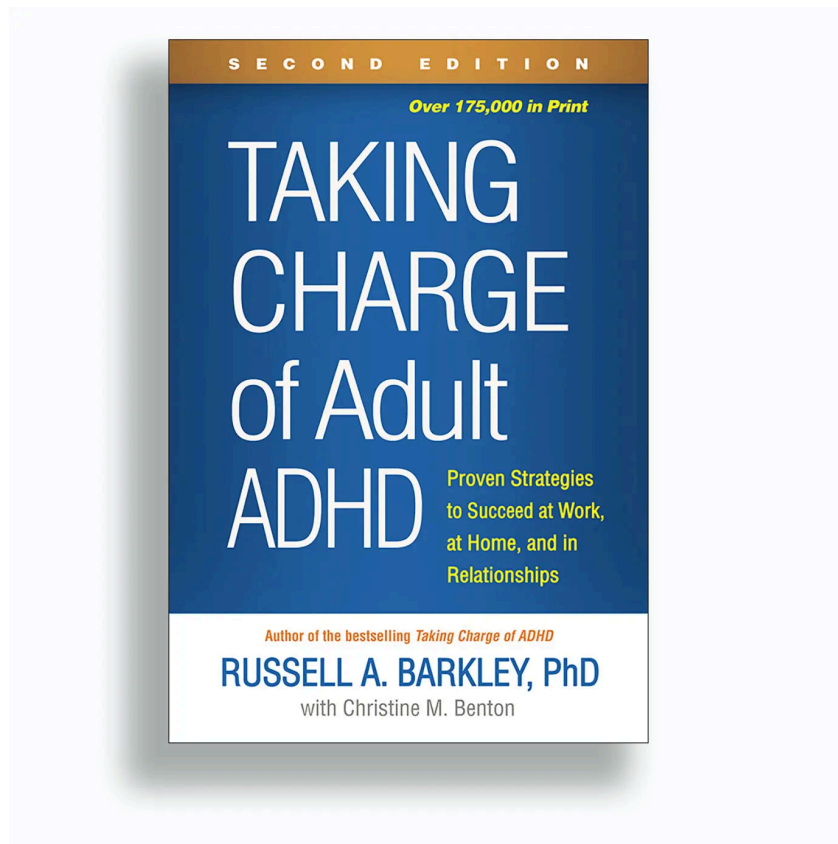
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Staying focused in a world of distractions can be incredibly challenging. But for people living with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder — a neurodevelopmental disorder often marked by difficulty maintaining attention, disorganization, hyperactivity and impulsivity — it can be even harder. Adults are diagnosed less often than children, but A.D.H.D. can still create problems at work and in friendships and romantic relationships.

Books can be “the entree into understanding whether you should consider getting a diagnosis and evaluation for A.D.H.D.,” said Melissa Orlov, the founder of A.D.H.D. and Marriage, a website and consulting company that provides resources for couples living with the condition.

Sharon Saline, author of “What Your A.D.H.D. Child Wishes You Knew: Working Together to Empower Kids for Success in School and Life,” says the right book can combat misinformation. It can also help people close to someone with A.D.H.D. by providing a “toolbox for engaging with them, supporting them and loving them,” she said.

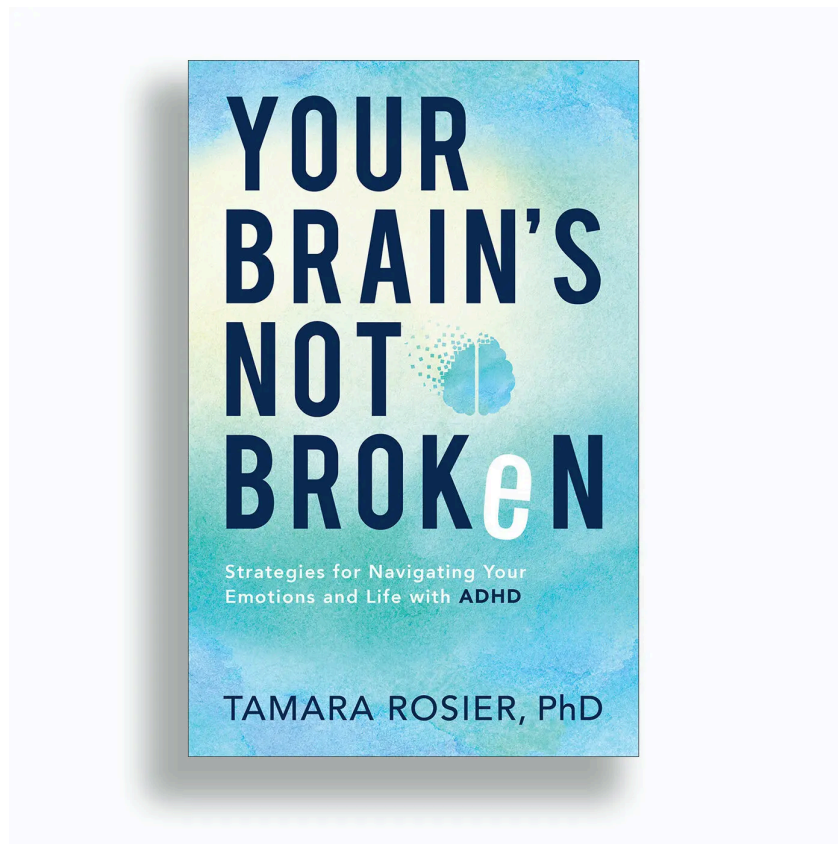
To demystify the subject, we asked experts — psychiatrists, counselors and researchers — to recommend books on A.D.H.D., focused on adults.



1. Taking Charge of Adult A.D.H.D., by Russell A. Barkley with Christine M. Benton

This book, first published in 2010, is full of information and practical tools from Dr. Barkley, “one of the leading, if not *the* leading expert on A.D.H.D. in the world,” Dr. Saline said. It’s a “combo workbook/info book, which is great for people to get a better sense of who they are,” she said.

“No one knows more about A.D.H.D. or does a better job of integrating all the research on it,” said Ari Tuckman, a psychologist in West Chester, Pa., who specializes in A.D.H.D.

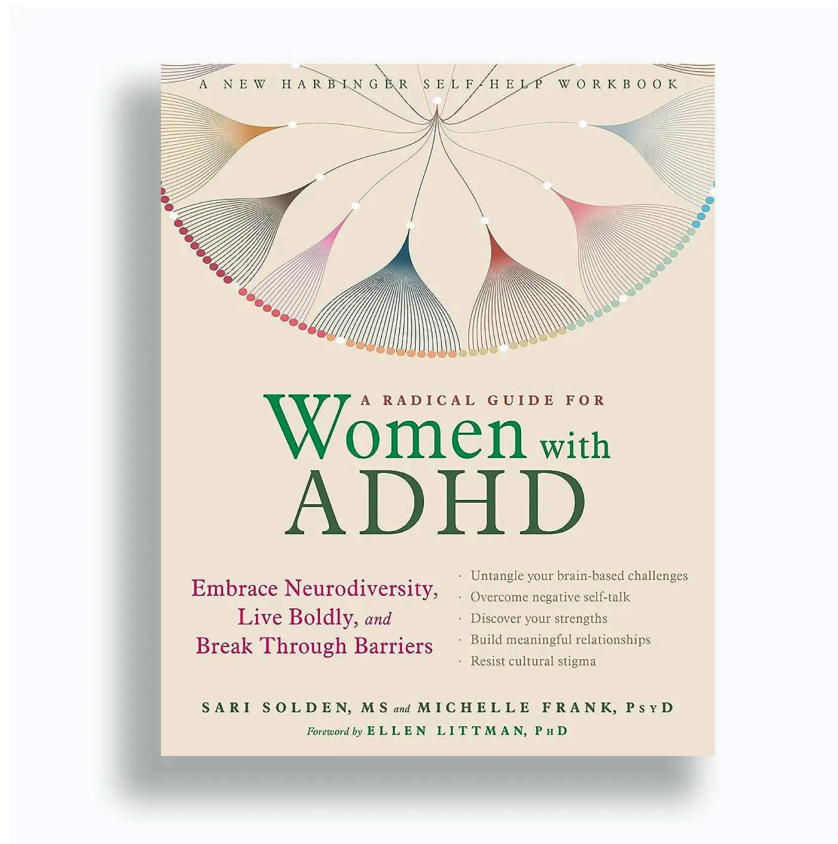


2. Your Brain's Not Broken, by Tamara Rosier

If you want a book that's both current and personal, this 2021 title might fit the bill. Dr. Rosier is “in touch with modern A.D.H.D.,” said Margaret H. Sibley, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington.

Dr. Rosier and some of her family members have A.D.H.D., and she shares her story with “a lot of warmth, a lot of humor,” Dr. Saline said.

She also offers a “really positive” perspective and provides tips for people with A.D.H.D. to assess and organize information, Ms. Orlov explained, “which is a huge part of being a successful adult.”

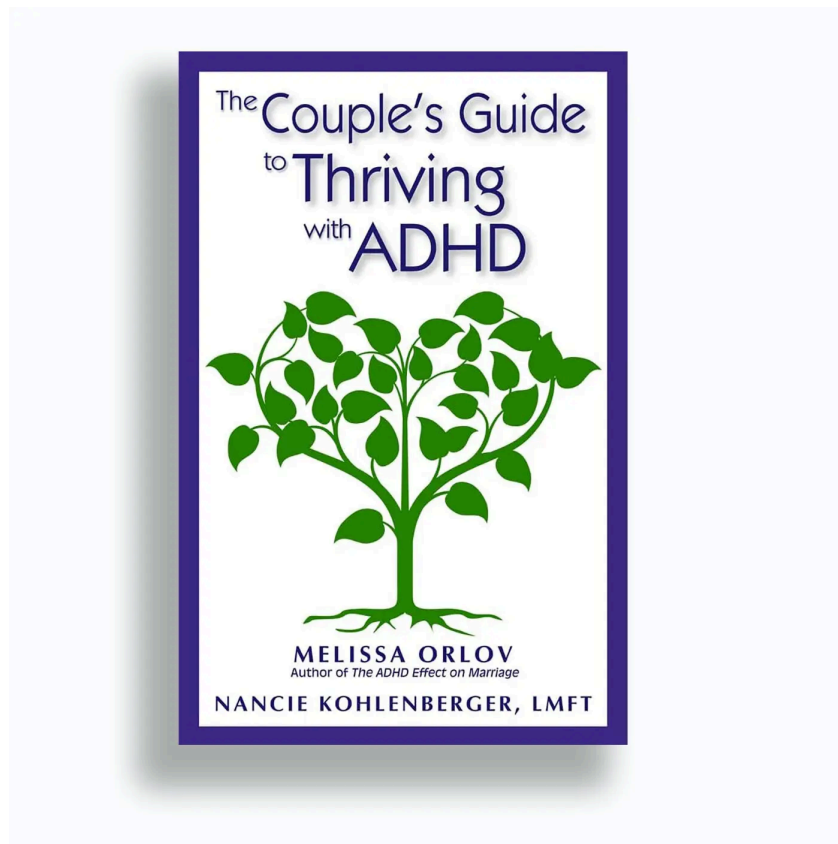


3. A Radical Guide for Women With A.D.H.D., by Sari Solden and Michelle Frank

“A.D.H.D. manifests differently in women,” Dr. Saline said, “and young women are often not diagnosed or diagnosed later on.” That’s because symptoms like “dreaminess or low self-esteem or anxiety” are often incorrectly diagnosed as anxiety or depression, she said.

This 2019 workbook addresses those issues, tackling the specific ways that women experience A.D.H.D. and the ways they can learn to live with the condition.

“It’s a very relatable and practical guide,” Dr. Tuckman said.

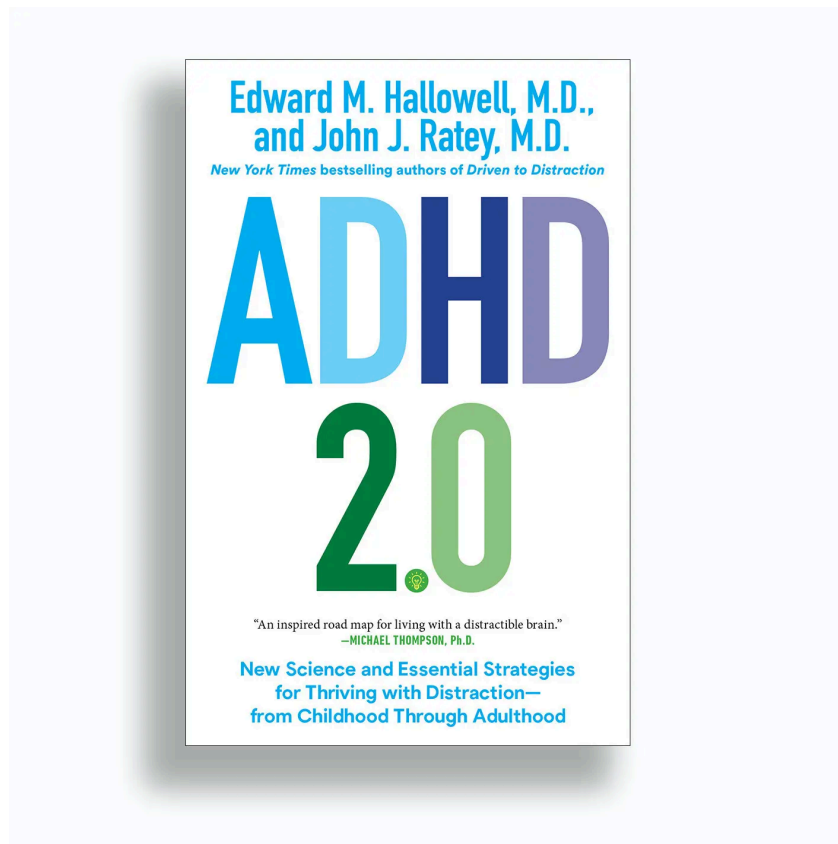


4. The Couple's Guide to Thriving With A.D.H.D., by Melissa Orlov and Nancie Kohlenberger

A.D.H.D. can pose unique roadblocks for couples. For example, distracted behavior might be misinterpreted by a partner as lack of care. This 2014 title, which Dr. Saline calls “a classic,” was written by Ms. Orlov and Ms. Kohlenberger, a licensed marriage and family therapist. (Ms. Orlov was one of the sources for this piece, but several experts also said hers is the top book for couples.)

It includes useful information to help partners understand the signs and symptoms of A.D.H.D. and how to work together to resolve issues that arise. Dr. Tuckman, who works with couples, said his clients have “found it eye-opening.”

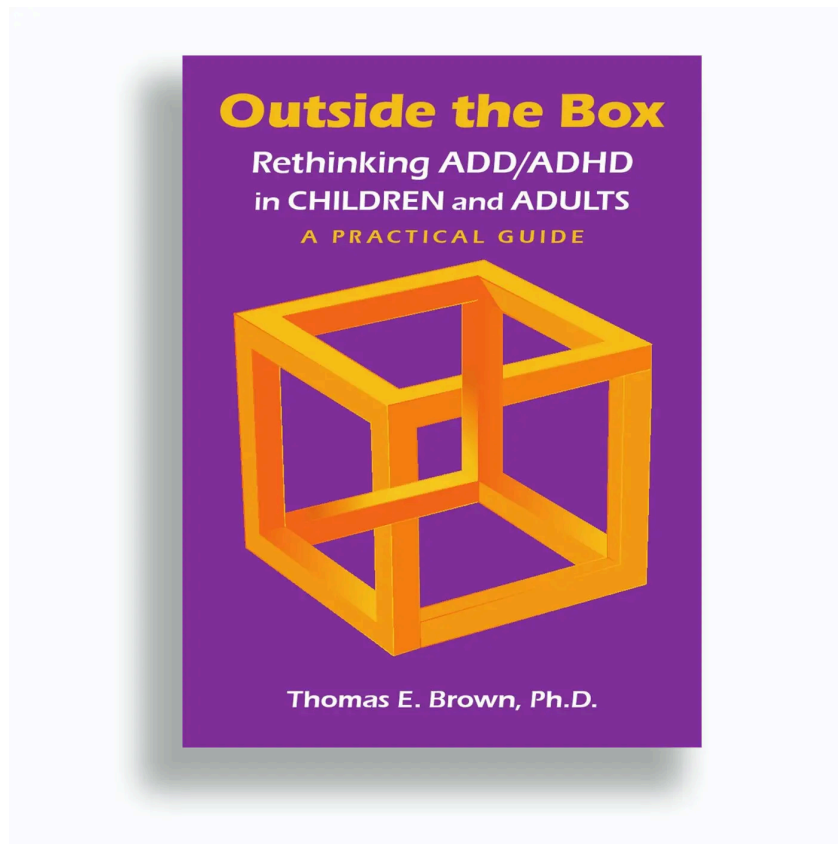
“A.D.H.D. can have a big impact on one's relationship that can leave both partners unhappy and feeling powerless,” he said. “This book explains that impact and normalizes the struggles that couples fall into and the common dynamics that result.”



5. A.D.H.D. 2.0, by Dr. Edward M. Hallowell and Dr. John J. Ratey

This 2021 title is a follow-up to “Driven to Distraction,” by the same authors, published in 1992. It offers “important updates about recent research on A.D.H.D.,” Dr. Saline said, along with advice that people with A.D.H.D. can use to “alter their environments to serve them better and reduce negativity.”

Ms. Orlov noted that this book illustrates “how a person with A.D.H.D. can really focus a lot on things like a phone or a video game or even their work, and not be able to focus on things that are less interesting.”



6. Outside the Box, by Thomas E. Brown

This 2017 title “hits the sweet spot,” Dr. Tuckman said. “It’s definitely driven by the research, and sophisticated, but it’s accessible. It helps illustrate what A.D.H.D. looks like at various stages of development, which can be helpful for those with A.D.H.D., family members of people with the condition and educators.”

“Brown’s approach to A.D.H.D. and executive functioning is very helpful,” Dr. Saline said. She likes “Outside the Box” because, in contrast with other workbooks, it offers “an informational narrative” without exercises. “He has a lot of research,” she said, “but this is also a book you can just sit back and read.”