Making recovery routines easier

Small experiments for people with ADHD or difficulties staying organised

Make the next step visible

Try one calendar for appointments and support meetings. Set a reminder that says what to do: "Put shoes on and leave for the meeting." Keep contact numbers somewhere easy to find.

Make the task smaller

Instead of "finish my workbook," try "open it and answer one question." Ask your counsellor to help choose the first step. Starting small is allowed; you can stop and return later.

Plan for boredom and overload

Keep two or three options ready: a quiet space, a simple hands-on task, a short walk if comfortable, or a call with someone supportive. Try one at a time and notice what actually helps you.

Build in help and a restart

Ask for a reminder, written session notes or a check-in if those would help. On a difficult day, use a smaller plan: one supportive connection and one manageable action. Missing a task is a cue to adjust the plan, not a reason to give up.

Before you change your drinking

If you drink heavily or regularly, need alcohol to feel steady, or have had withdrawal before, speak with a doctor before stopping or sharply reducing. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening. Shaking, sweating or feeling unwell after cutting down needs prompt medical advice. Call 000 for seizures, severe confusion or hallucinations.

Australia: Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline 1800 250 015 (free, confidential advice). Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support). Call 000 if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency.

Make it personal

Write a few words. You can leave questions blank or talk them through with someone.

One recovery task I want to make easier...

The smallest first step...

A reminder I will use, and where I will put it...

Two options for boredom or overload...

My difficult-day plan: one action and one person...

You do not have to do this alone.

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Inspired by The Freedom Room blog: thefreedomroom.com.au/the-link-between-adhd-and-addiction/. Clinical background: nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd-what-you-need-to-know; adhdguideline.aadpa.com.au/adhd-and-substance-use-disorders/. Safety and support: healthdirect.gov.au/alcoholism; adf.org.au/insights/safely-withdrawing-alcohol/; lifeline.org.au/131114; medicarementalhealth.gov.au/provider/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-hotline-16469. Checked 1 October 2026.