Could ADHD be part of the picture?

Preparing for a conversation with a qualified clinician

Notice difficulties that keep showing up

ADHD can involve ongoing problems with attention, organisation, restlessness or acting impulsively. An assessment considers how these affect different parts of life and whether symptoms were present in childhood.

There can be other explanations

Similar difficulties can have other causes. Tell the clinician about sleep, mental health, medical conditions, alcohol or other drug use and medicines. This worksheet cannot diagnose ADHD or tell you what is causing your difficulties.

Bring examples rather than a label

Write down two or three situations: missed appointments, difficulty completing tasks or decisions you later regret. Note when they began. School reports or someone who knew you growing up may help, if available; ask what records are useful.

Ask how to get the right support

Try: "I am having ongoing difficulties with attention and organisation, and I am also working on my drinking. Could we look at what might be contributing and whether an ADHD assessment is appropriate?" Ask about costs, referral steps and support while you wait.

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.

Two examples of difficulties and their impact...

When I first remember these difficulties...

What changes when I drink, sleep poorly or feel stressed...

Medicines, health concerns and substance use to discuss...

My questions and the appointment I will arrange...

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.