A NOVEMBER ADHD TOOL

Hosting or Visiting?

An ADHD-friendly plan for family gatherings

Family gatherings can ask an ADHD brain to manage noise, timing, food, people, transitions, and expectations all at once. A little planning can reduce the scramble and protect your energy.

1 If You’re Hosting

Reduce the number of decisions your brain must hold

- Make the plan visible. Write down the menu, cooking times, errands, and the order things need to happen.
- Choose good enough on purpose. Store-bought food, paper plates, and a house that looks lived in all count.
- Delegate specific jobs. Try “Please bring dessert” or “Will you take care of drinks?” instead of asking generally for help.
- Build in a buffer. Aim to finish the important preparation earlier than your brain insists is necessary.
- Protect a reset space. Give yourself permission to step away for a few quiet minutes, even when you are the host.

2 If You’re Visiting

Protect your energy before it runs out

- Decide your timing before you go. Choose an arrival time and a realistic leaving time rather than deciding when you are already depleted.
- Keep your contribution simple. Bring one manageable item and set a reminder so it makes it out the door with you.
- Keep an exit option. Drive yourself when possible or discuss your departure plan with the person you came with.
- Plan sensory breaks. Step outside, help in the kitchen, take a short walk, or find a quieter room before overload peaks.
- Prepare one boundary sentence. Try “I’m not getting into that today” or “I need a few quiet minutes.”

FOR EITHER ONE

Family gatherings are not a test of your executive functioning.

Leave room afterward for quiet, comfortable clothes, familiar food, and recovery.

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