

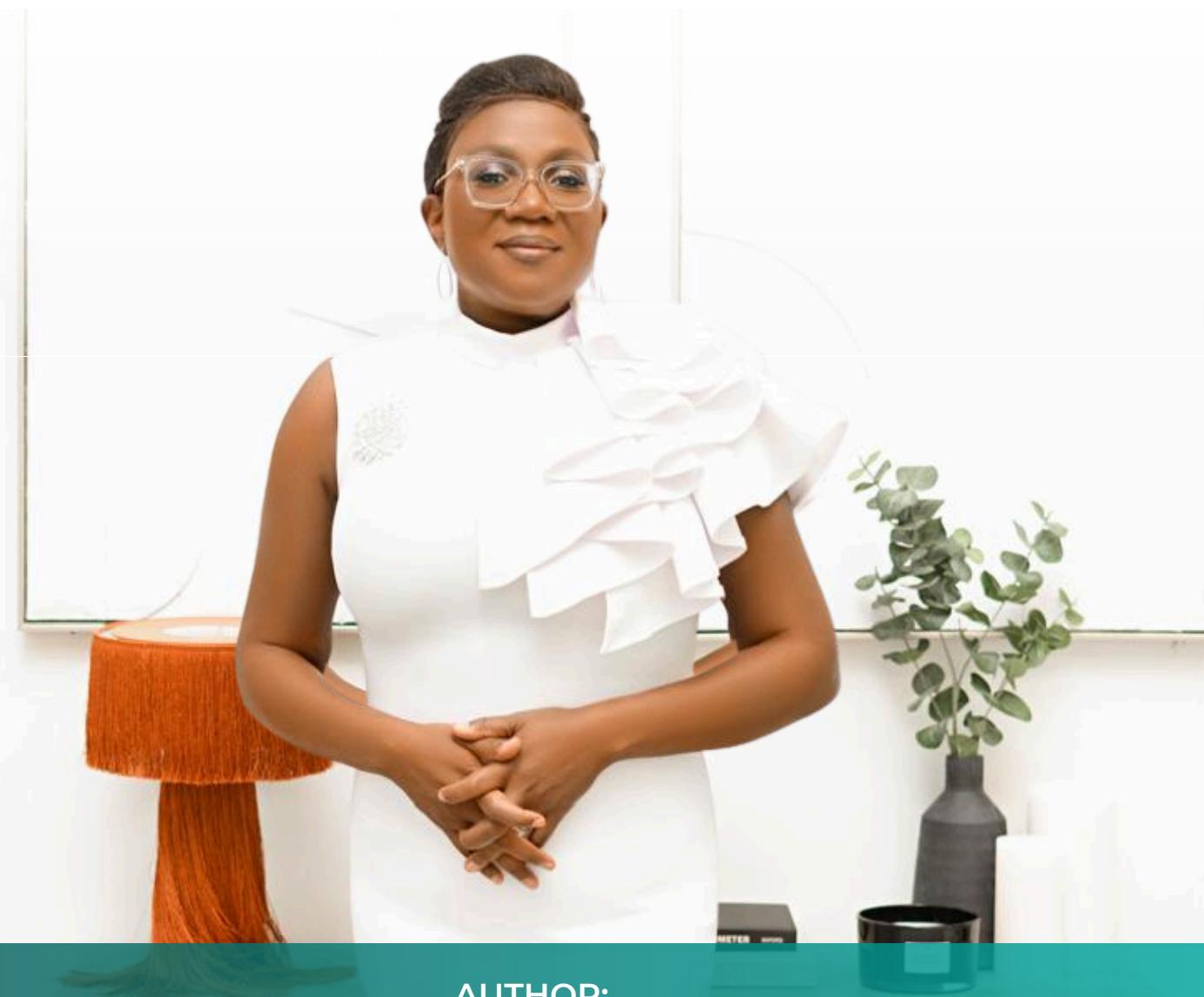


# The Midlife Executive

## ADHD Playbook

**for Black Women Entrepreneurs**

*“How to reclaim focus, confidence, and calm in the middle of your busy, brilliant life.”*



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# “It’s Not Laziness. It’s Neurodiversity.”

You’ve always been the woman who makes it happen for your family, your business, and everyone else. But lately, staying focused feels harder, your mind is always racing, and no matter how much you do, it never feels like enough.

It’s not a lack of discipline it might be ADHD that’s been hiding in plain sight.

This playbook was created for high-achieving Black women who are finally ready to understand their brains, release the shame, and lead their lives with ease, strategy, and self-compassion.



***“You’ve always  
made it work.  
Now, it’s time to  
make it easier.”***

# ADHD in Black Women

## Common Signs You Might Be Overlooking

- Constant mental clutter and your brain never stops thinking
- Starting several projects but finishing few
- Forgetting small details (emails, appointments, names)
- Hyperfocus on things you love... but losing interest quickly
- Difficulty sitting still or relaxing without guilt
- Struggling to prioritize or manage time (“everything feels urgent”)
- Feeling easily distracted or overwhelmed by noise and clutter
- Intense emotional reactions or sensitivity to criticism
- Chronic procrastination followed by bursts of productivity
- Feeling “lazy” or “unmotivated” despite working nonstop

## Masking Perfectionism & Late Diagnosis

For many Black women, ADHD goes unnoticed for decades because we've learned to mask our struggles behind excellence. We overperform, overprepare, and overextend all to avoid being seen as “lazy” or “unreliable.” From childhood, we're taught to work twice as hard and hold it all together, even when our minds are scattered and tired.

That constant push for perfection hides the deeper truth: ADHD isn't a lack of effort it's a different way the brain processes focus, emotion, and organization.

Many women don't realize until their 30s or 40s that the exhaustion, procrastination, and mental chaos they've battled for years weren't personality flaws they were symptoms.

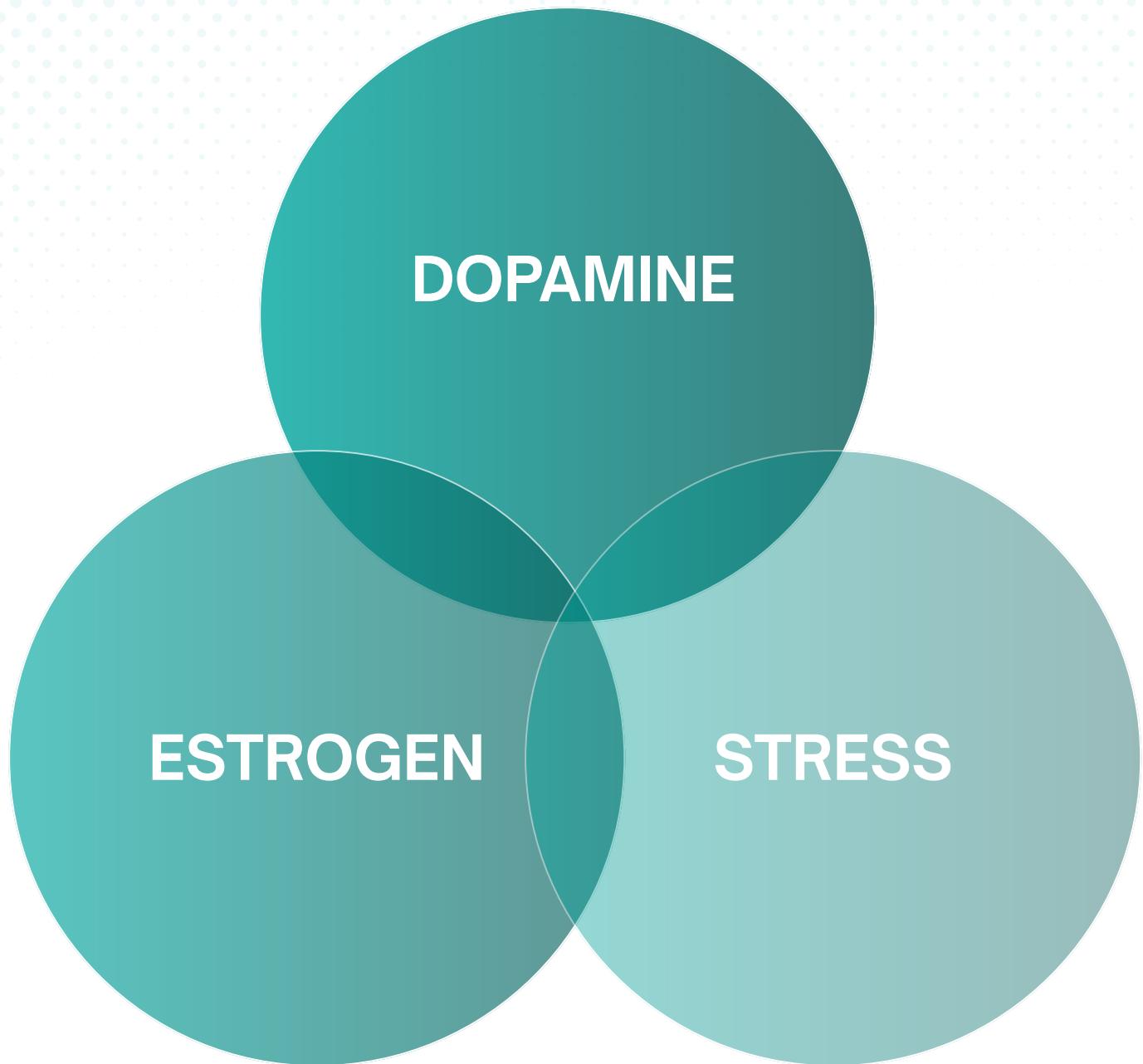
Unmasking isn't weakness. It's liberation.

*“Black women are masters at masking but you deserve clarity, not confusion.”*

# How Executive Function Works

	Everyday Challenges	How It Shows Up	What's Happening Neurologically
	Planning & Organization	Struggling to start tasks, losing track of priorities, messy workspace	Frontal lobe networks responsible for sequencing and prioritization are under-activated, leading to "mental traffic jams."
	Time Management	Running late, underestimating how long things take, feeling like time disappears	ADHD brains often have "time blindness"- the brain's internal clock (linked to the prefrontal cortex) doesn't process time intervals accurately.
	Focus & Attention	Zoning out in meetings or hyperfocusing for hours on one thing	Dopamine imbalance affects attention switching-making it harder to regulate what to focus on and when to shift.
	Working Memory	Forgetting why you walked into a room, missing details, losing train of thought mid-task	Reduced activation in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex limits how much information can be held and manipulated in short-term memory.
	Emotional Regulation	Overreacting, crying easily, feeling frustrated or impulsive	The amygdala and emotional centers are highly active, while regulatory pathways from the prefrontal cortex are slower to calm the response
	Motivation & Reward	Procrastinating until the last minute or thriving under pressure	The dopamine reward system requires higher stimulation-urgent tasks trigger the necessary neurotransmitter surge for focus.

# “When Hormones and Hustle Collide”



*“You’re not losing focus... your brain chemistry is shifting.”*

# The Executive ADHD Toolkit



## Structure

- Replace rigid routines with fluid structure that honors how your brain works.
- Use digital boundaries (time-blocking + reminders) to reduce chaos.
- Keep a single source of truth — one app, one planner, one list.
- Embrace **“Done is better than perfect.”**



## Regulation

- Start mornings with 5 minutes of grounding, breathwork, or stillness.
- Use sensory regulation tools (weighted blanket, calm scent, movement).
- Build in brain breaks every 90 minutes to hydrate, stretch, and breathe.
- Recognize your stress cues and meet them with compassion, not control.



## Strategy

- Align tasks with dopamine flow, do what lights you up first.
- Try body doubling or co-working for accountability and connection.
- Use visual dashboards to simplify goals and progress.
- Redefine productivity as purposeful energy, not exhaustion.

*“You don’t need more discipline you need systems that work for your brain.”*

# From Survival Mode to Strategy

From	To
<b>“I have to do everything myself.”</b>	<b>“I can delegate and still deliver excellence.”</b>
<b>“If it’s not perfect, it’s not good enough.”</b>	<b>“Progress &gt; perfection — I’m learning, not failing.”</b>
<b>“I’m always behind.”</b>	<b>“I’m moving at the pace that protects my peace.”</b>
<b>“My ADHD makes me unreliable.”</b>	<b>“My neurodiversity is my edge and I just need the right systems.”</b>
<b>“Rest is a reward.”</b>	<b>“Rest is a requirement for clarity and creation.”</b>
<b>“I need more discipline.”</b>	<b>“I need strategies aligned with how my brain actually works.”</b>

# How Nouveaux U Can Help

At Nouveaux U Behavioral Health, we help high-achieving Black women reconnect with focus, balance, and emotional well-being without shame or burnout.

Our integrative, evidence-based care is designed for women who carry the weight of multiple roles and are ready to lead from a place of clarity.



## ADHD & Executive Function Coaching

Learn practical systems tailored to your neurodivergent mind.



## Therapy & Medication Management

Compassionate, culturally-informed care for your mental health and mood.



## Mind-Body Integration

Tools that support nervous-system regulation, mindfulness, and holistic healing.



## Leadership & Burnout Recovery Support

Strategies for sustainable success in business and life.

### BOOK YOUR CLARITY CONSULTATION

“You deserve care that honors your culture, your calling, and your chemistry.”

Scan the QR code or visit [www.nouveauxubh.com](http://www.nouveauxubh.com) to schedule your first session.

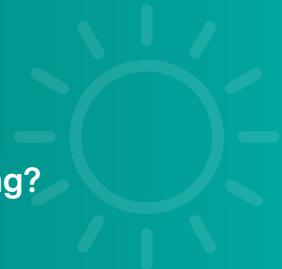


# Bonus Planner Page

This planner is designed to help you create rhythm, not rigidity.  
Use it daily or weekly to reconnect with your goals, energy, and mental clarity.

## Morning Clarity

- **What's one thing I want to feel today?**
- **Which 3 priorities will make me feel accomplished by evening?**
- **What support or system will make my day easier?**



## Midday Check-In

- **What's going well so far?**
- **Where am I losing focus or energy?**
- **One thing I can do right now to reset:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Evening Reflection

- **What worked for my brain today?**
- **What drained me emotionally or mentally?**
- **How can I show myself compassion tonight?**



***“You’re not behind, you’re building your next chapter with intention.”***

# Closing Page



Thank you for taking the time to explore The Midlife Executive ADHD Playbook. If this resonated with you, know that you're not alone, you're part of a growing community of Black women learning to lead with self-knowledge, grace, and aligned strategy.

This is your moment to pause, recalibrate, and choose yourself not as a last resort, but as a leadership move.

Your brilliance doesn't need to burn you out; it just needs better support. Keep giving yourself permission to evolve because your next chapter deserves your full presence, not your constant pressure.

With care,

*Melissa Pauline, NP-BC*

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