

HOW TO WORK AND CONTROL THE CONCENTRATION OF DISADVANTAGED ADULTS



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the presentation:

Providing participants with the knowledge and skills needed to support disadvantaged adults in improving their concentration effectively.



Key rules in education of adults

Principles of education of adults formulated by Malcolm Knowles as a guide in preparing the training process for each educator working with adults:

- adults need to know why they need to learn;
- adults want and need to learn through experience;
- adults approach learning as problem solving;
- adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value to them (Knowles, 1972).

CONCENTRATION

Concentration is a feature that every person has. However, it is not an innate competence that everyone has to some extent and which is difficult to change.

Concentration is a skill and is subject to, like all others, changes that can be managed in a fully conscious and purposeful way.

Concentration is the ability to focus on a specific activity while consciously and purposefully avoiding all distractions.



CONCENTRATION – THROUGH THE EYES OF AN EDUCATOR

Thanks to constant interactions in a group of people during a training, workshop, focus group, etc., changes and processes take place in it as well as relations between participants and the educator/trainer/leader.



It is worth remembering that the more difficult and new the task is for the participant, the more attention resources they must engage in their performance, and therefore the fewer resources the person has to filter out disturbing stimuli.

Therefore, if the participant is performing a routine activity, you can afford a less favorable environment.

However, if they are learning something, they should make sure that there are as few distractions as possible.

By performing regular, though not too strenuous or long-lasting concentration exercises, you can improve your daily functioning. First of all, what is easy to notice is the increase in the time you will be able to devote to training without breaks. The longer you can exercise continuously, the longer you will be able to work.



Some key functions of attention



Vigilance – understood as the ability to wait for a specific signal to occur. A typical feature of vigilance is focusing only on specific stimuli, while others are ignored

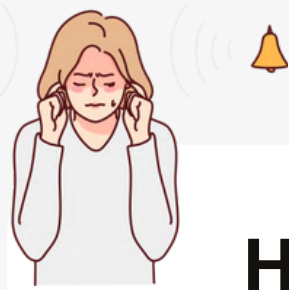
Selectivity – involves the decision to focus on a specific object, thought or activity while ignoring other stimuli

Control of simultaneous activities - this is the so-called ability to divide attention, i.e. focus on several different activities at the same time

Searching – in this case, the focus is on searching for information

Challenges in the environment and rhythm of life of adults, including those in disadvantaged situations, can have a significant impact on concentration.

Factors that may affect the concentration of adults:



Hustle and noise:

Everyday life of adults is often full of noise and bustle, both at work and at home. Noise can be a distracting factor, making it difficult to focus on tasks.



Information overload:

In today's digital world, adults are bombarded with enormous amounts of information from all sides. Scrolling through social media, messages, emails, and other notifications constantly can be distracting and make it difficult to focus on a single task.



Time pressure:

Adults often struggle with limited time and many tasks to complete. Time pressure can affect concentration because it can lead to rushing and focusing on completing a task rather than completing it thoroughly.



Low value tasks:

Performing tasks that are not interesting enough or have little meaning can lead to a loss of concentration. Adults may lose motivation and focus when they have to perform routine or dull tasks.

Working environment:

Environmental conditions in the workplace, such as noise, lack of privacy, and an uncomfortable workplace, can affect concentration and work efficiency.

Tiredness and stress:

Physical and emotional tiredness, as well as stress, can make it difficult to concentrate. Adults who are overtired or experiencing difficult situations may have difficulty focusing on tasks.

Remember

It is important that disadvantaged adults are aware of these factors and take action to minimize their impact on concentration. Conscious environmental management, time planning, implementing relaxation techniques and adjusting priorities appropriately can help build concentration in unfavorable conditions.

Sources of problems with concentration and memory in adults, including those in disadvantaged situations, part 1

Biological sources include in particular:

- Disorders of perceptual and motor functions
- Temperament that causes problems with concentration
- Immaturity of the nervous system
- Complications from the perinatal period, e.g. microdamage to the nervous system, genetic predispositions
- Diseases related to, among others: with the functioning of the nervous, circulatory and digestive systems
- Getting sick with COVID-19
- The mother's use of psychoactive substances or smoking during pregnancy
- Prematurity



Sources of problems with concentration and memory in adults, including those in disadvantaged situations, part 2

However, much more often, problems with concentration result from **environmental factors**, which include:

- **Stress** and strong emotional experiences
- **Tiredness** and overwork
- **Sleep deficiency** - to prevent problems with concentration, you should ensure the appropriate length of sleep, approximately 7-8 hours in the case of an adult
- **Life in a hurry**
- **Improper diet**



Sources of problems with concentration and memory in adults, including those in disadvantaged situations, part 3

The presence of many distractors, i.e. stimuli that make it difficult to focus and promote distraction. These include:

- **Music**
- **Moving images**
- **Social media** and often even the mere presence of a smartphone
- **Unfavorable family situation** or financial difficulties
- **Low internal motivation** to take action
- **Lack of ability to organize** activities
- **Perfectionism**
- **Low self-esteem** and the resulting lack of faith in the success of implemented activities





Many responsibilities:

Stress and pressure factors affecting concentration:

Everyday demands and responsibilities, both in private and professional life

Lack of time and too many tasks to do

Disruption of our concentration and ability to act effectively

Time pressure:

Deadlines, schedules and social expectations

The feeling that we have to do everything quickly and perfectly

Negative impact on our concentration and effectiveness

High expectations:

Setting high standards for yourself and others

The desire to meet other people's expectations

It creates pressure and stress that makes it difficult to focus on one task

BARRIERS TO BUILDING CONCENTRATION IN ADULTS, INCLUDING DISADVANTAGED ONES

Negative attitude towards education, lack of faith in the possibility of change

- A holistic approach to adult education
- Reaching out to excluded people
- The use of activating teaching methods
- Indicating and justifying the value of learning as a way to cope with difficult life situations
- Individual support, focus on individual needs
- Positive reinforcements

Low motivation

- Discussing the objectives of the classes and indicating opportunities to use knowledge and skills
- The use of activating teaching methods
- Persuading learning as a developmental activity



Lack of self confidence

- Building a climate of acceptance, trust and cooperation
- Giving a sense of security, not judging
- Appreciating progress (even the smallest ones)
- Building an educator-adult relationship based on cooperation, mutual respect, dialogue, mutual learning and exchange of experiences



Procrastination as a threat to building concentration

Building a climate of acceptance, trust and cooperation
Giving a sense of security, non-judgment
Appreciating progress (even the smallest ones)
Building an educator-adult relationship based on cooperation, mutual respect, dialogue, mutual learning and exchange of experiences

Effects of procrastination:

- It leads to time loss and increases the time needed to complete tasks
- It increases stress and pressure, which negatively affects concentration and performance

Reasons of procrastination:

- Fear of failure or rejection
- Lack of motivation and clearly defined goals
- Excessive distracting stimuli and lack of ability to manage them



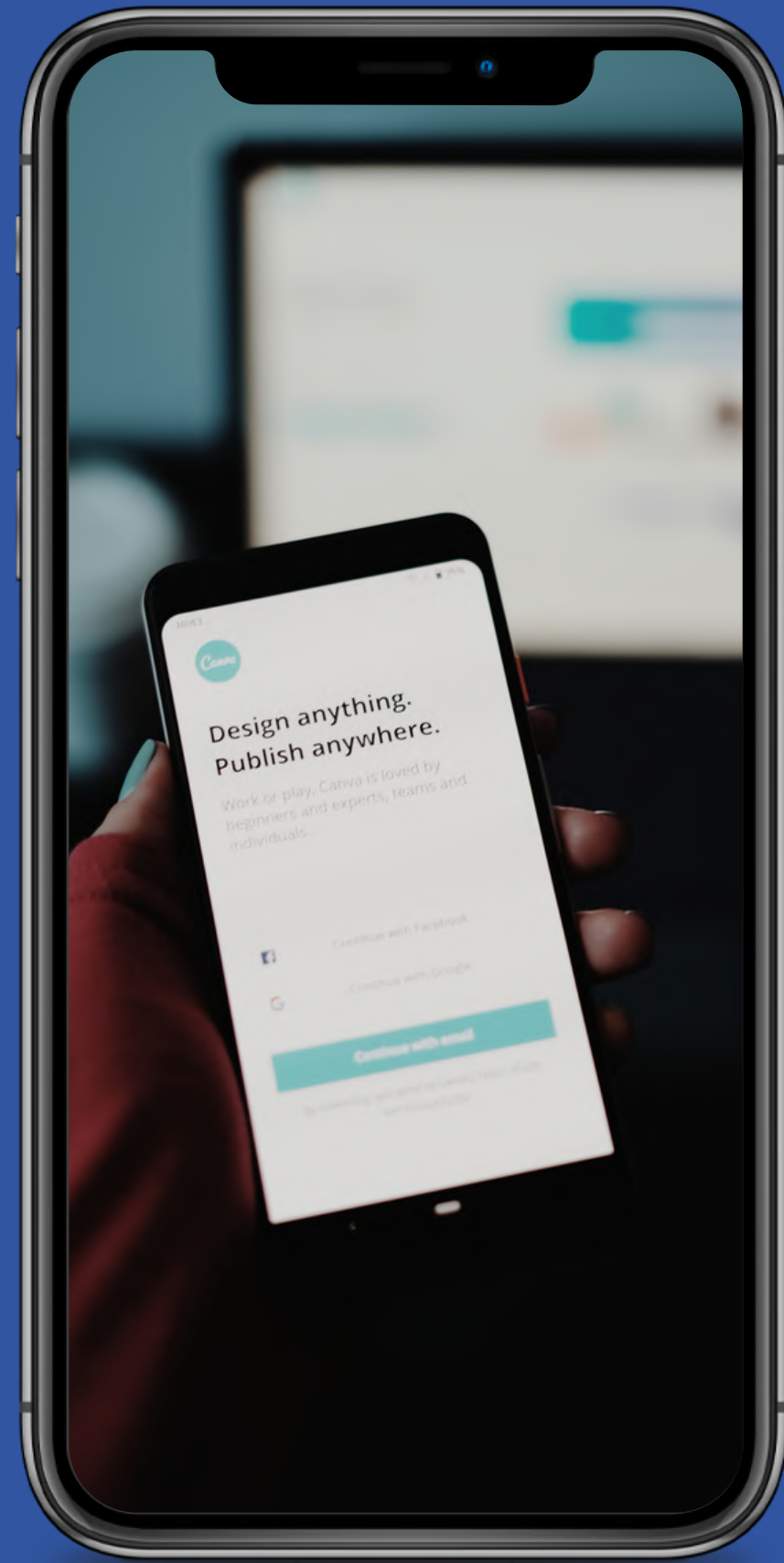


Procrastination as a threat to building concentration

Counteracting procrastination:

- Prioritize and set realistic goals
- Create action plans and stick to them
- Find motivation by finding meaning and benefit in the tasks you perform
- Use time management techniques such as the Pomodoro technique

Procrastination is a threat to building concentration. It can lead to loss of time, increased stress and pressure, and decreased productivity. It is crucial to understand the reasons of procrastination and use effective countermeasure strategies. Setting priorities, planning activities, finding motivation and using time management techniques will help you overcome procrastination and enable you to focus on completing tasks.



Technological distractors

- Smartphones, tablets, computers - numerous devices that affect our concentration
- Social media - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter - a source of endless entertainment and information
- Messages, e-mails, notifications - constant bombardment of information and the need to react



The impact of technology on concentration

- **4.2 billion social media users** worldwide (source: statista.com)
- **On average, we spend 3 hours a day** using mobile devices (source: Global WebIndex)
- We generate **2.5 quintillion bytes of data** every day (Source: IBM)
- **70% of employees report** that they regularly check messages and notifications while working (Source: American Psychological Association)



The impact of technology on concentration

- **46% of people believe** that too much information makes it difficult for them to concentrate on tasks (source: Pew Research Center)
- **82% of American adults find** social media distracting (Source: Pew Research Center)
- **40% of people feel pressure** to be online 24/7 (Source: Statista)



Remember

Technological distractions have a huge impact on our concentration. Social media, news, email and constant access to information challenge our ability to pay attention. Statistics confirm the excess of information we are bombarded with every day. In the following sections of the presentation, we will discuss how to deal with these challenges and restore focus in our lives.

The phenomenon of information overload



1

Information overload - a challenge of the modern world

2

Almost unlimited access to information through various sources

3

Consequences for our concentration and information processing

The phenomenon of information overload

Information overload has a negative impact on our concentration. Too much information can lead to misinformation, difficulty in selecting important content and distraction. In the following parts of the presentation, we will discuss how to effectively deal with these problems and build strong concentration in the dynamically changing world of information.

Consequences for concentration

Information overload has a negative impact on our concentration. Too much information can lead to misinformation, difficulty in selecting important content and distraction.

In the next parts of the presentation, we will discuss **how to effectively deal with these problems and build strong concentration in the dynamically changing world of information.**





Consequences for concentration

Disinformation:

Information overload makes it difficult to distinguish reliable sources from fake ones

Widespread dissemination of false information and fake news

Disturbance in our perception of reality and decision-making

Distraction:

The huge amount of information results in difficulties in focusing on one task

Jumping between different topics and content

Decreased effectiveness and productivity at work and in everyday life

Difficulties in selecting important content:

Difficulty filtering and selecting important information from the multitude of available content

Risk of overlooking important facts and issues

Disturbance in the ability to concentrate on acquiring knowledge and deeper understanding

MODULE: METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING CONCENTRATION

WAYS TO DEAL WITH CONCENTRATION PROBLEMS

- You must remember that **problems with concentration at work** may result from an improperly balanced diet, too little physical activity and poor sleep. So take care of these basics! Also bear in mind the fact that, for example, too high or too low a temperature in the office forces your body to make additional effort, which also directly affects the level of concentration on the task at hand.
- You also need to constantly exercise your mind and memory, including: solving all kinds of puzzles and crosswords. Additionally, if you want to learn interesting **ways to deal with concentration problems**, check out various applications that support concentration. Most often, they are based on the Pomodoro technique, which is very helpful in measuring working time and breaks. This technique favors working in the so-called blocks and full concentration on the task for 25 minutes, followed by a 5-minute break.



POMODORO TECHNIQUE

What is Pomodoro?

- When people read about the Pomodoro technique, they are surprised that it is **so simple and therefore seems unreliable to some!**

To put it very simply, it's about::

- **Creating a clear list of tasks** to be done in the near future, e.g.: I will write back to Ania, make a shopping list, clean the room, vacuum the apartment.
- **Setting the timer to ring after 25 minutes.** It may be an alarm clock, a kitchen timer or a special application.





- **Turn off all distractions and work on the tasks on your list.** If a new idea or any kind of distraction comes up, we write it down so we don't forget and get back into action as quickly as possible.
- **When the alarm goes off, we finish work and take a 5-minute break.** It's good when it requires physical movement.
- After these 5 minutes, we can do another "Pomodoro", i.e. 25 minutes of concentration, but **after four Pomodoros in a row, you need to take a longer break.**

IN SHORT:

we set a plan, limit the time, get into action and turn off distractions, and finally take a break. Some people use several such 25-minute "Pomodoro sessions" during the day, while others only need one.



Key strategies for building concentration

Time management and planning techniques

Eliminating distractions and creating a favorable work environment

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and good habits

Mental exercises and relaxation techniques

Using tools and applications that support concentration

Practical tips for adults in building concentration



1

Time management and planning techniques

2

Eliminating distractions and creating a favorable work environment

3

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and good habits

Conscious planning

- **Choose the right environment:**
 - Find a quiet and distraction-free place to work on your assignments
 - Keep your surroundings clean and tidy
- **Practice awareness while working:**
 - Focus on the present moment and the task at hand
 - This prevents distraction and helps you focus
- **Tasks step by step:**
 - Break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable parts
 - Focus on one step at a time to avoid overwhelm

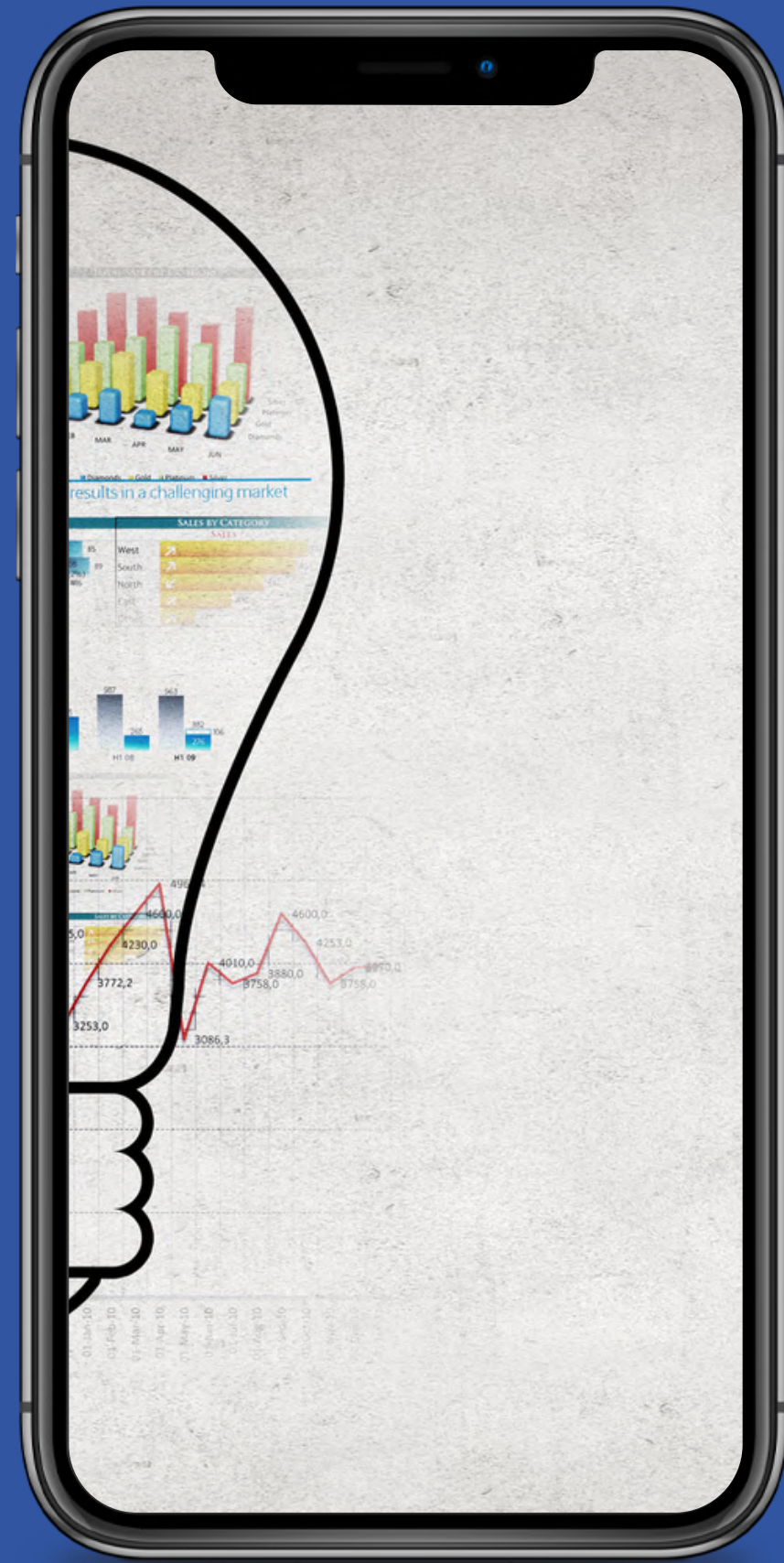


Eliminating distractions and creating a favorable work environment

- **Turn off notifications**
 - Turn off notifications from your phone, tablet and computer while working on tasks
 - This prevents interruptions and maintains focus
- **Manage distractions online**
 - Set specific times to use social media and check the news
 - Use tools to block access to websites or apps that distract you
- **Minimize physical distractions**
 - Eliminate or minimize things around you that may distract you
 - Organize your work tools in a way that makes it easier to access and focus on the task at hand



Conscious planning



- **Regular physical exercises**
 - Regular physical activity improves blood flow to the brain and increases mental performance
 - Plan time for regular training or physical activity
- **Balanced diet**
 - Healthy eating provides essential nutrients for the brain and affects its cognitive functions
 - Try to eat balanced meals rich in vitamins, minerals and nutrients
- **Sufficient sleep**
 - The right amount of sleep is crucial for brain function and concentration
 - Get regular sleep of adequate length and quality
- **Stress management**
 - Effective stress management helps you maintain focus and concentration
 - Try relaxation techniques, meditation or deep breathing
- **Digital Detox**
 - Regularly disconnecting from electronic devices and social media helps you regain focus
 - Plan breaks from technology and spend time on other activities


MODULE: TASKS AND GAMES THAT IMPROVE CONCENTRATION

WAYS OF ADAPTING TEACHING MATERIALS AND METHODS TO DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES AND SKILL LEVELS OF DISADVANTAGED ADULTS


- **Listening:** preference for listening to information, using audio recordings, podcasts.
- **Watching:** preference for learning through observation and visual presentation of information, using multimedia presentations, films, illustrations.
- **Doing:** preference for learning through action and practical use of knowledge, using practical tasks, simulations, projects.
- **Reading:** preference for learning by reading text and analyzing information, using textbooks, articles, written materials.



MODULE: TASKS AND GAMES THAT IMPROVE CONCENTRATION



Mental exercises and
relaxation techniques



Using tools and
applications that
support
concentration

**USE THE WORKSHEET PREPARED FOR THE TOPIC. CONCENTRATION
(WORKSHEETS 1 to 10)**



Make a task list

- **Mental exercises**
 - Use a variety of logical games, puzzles and tasks that require concentration
 - Practice problem-solving and tasks that require analytical thinking
- **Mindfulness meditation**
 - Practice mindfulness meditation, which involves focusing your attention on the present moment
 - Take a break from the rush of thoughts and focus on observing your thoughts and feelings
- **Breathing techniques**
 - Try deep breathing techniques to help calm your mind and focus on the present moment
 - Take deep and calm breaths, focusing on your inhalation and exhalation
- **Progressive muscle relaxation**
 - Learn the progressive muscle relaxation technique, which involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups
 - This helps relieve tension and focus your attention on how your body feels
- **Visualization techniques**
 - Use visualization techniques to create mental images that help focus your attention
 - Imagine a place of peace and focus or visualize completing a specific task

Using tools and apps that support concentration

1. Note taking applications

- Use note-taking apps to help you record important information, ideas and thoughts
- Keep your thoughts organized and refer back to them easily when needed

2. Blocking distractors

- Install apps that block access to distracting websites, social media, and other apps while you work
- Limit your exposure to impulsive technology use and focus on tasks at hand

3. Focus timer

- Use a focused time-keeping app like the Pomodoro technique, which involves working for a set amount of time and then taking breaks
- Use work-break cycles to stay focused and prevent burnout



Using tools and apps that support concentration

4. Time management

- Try time management apps that will help you plan and allocate time for specific tasks
- Set time goals and use reminders to stay on track

5. Task list

- Use task list tools to help organize and prioritize tasks
- Monitor your progress and stay focused on specific tasks



SUMMARY

Building concentration requires a conscious approach and the use of appropriate strategies. Eliminating distractions, planning and prioritizing tasks, practicing relaxation techniques, performing mental exercises and leading a healthy lifestyle are key points that will help you build and maintain concentration.

Remember these strategies and practice them regularly, to achieve optimal results at work and in everyday life.



THE EDUCATOR PROJECT A PILLAR OF SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ADULT EDUCATION

Thank you for
your attention!



Co-funded by
the European Union

