



CASE STUDY

From “Brain on Fire” to **Laser Focus**

How an *18-Year-Old* University Student **Rewired Her
Anxiety into High Performance**

STUDENT PROFILE



Tarika, 18 years old.

Undergraduate student at the University of Warwick (UK).

Core Struggle

Severe procrastination ("Adrenaline Junkie"), undiagnosed ADHD, and crippling Hyper-Vigilance.

Program

Inside Out Labs Full Curriculum

The Result

Shifted from relying on "panic-induced productivity" to sustainable, calm focus. Developed specific neural tools to manage undiagnosed ADHD and moved from a "Pleaser" mindset to healthy boundary setting.



THE CHALLENGE

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“My Brain Would Not Stop Firing”

Tarika, 18 year old

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When Tarika joined the HKT’s Inside Out Labs program, she was a high-functioning student at a prestigious university. On paper, she was doing well. **Inside, she was running on pure cortisol.**

The “Invisible Struggle”

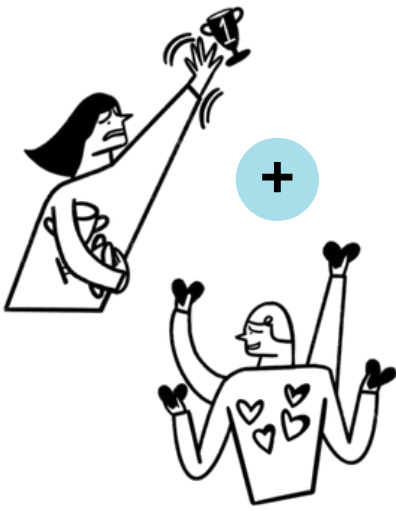
Perhaps the most telling detail was that Tarika didn’t realize her level of distress was abnormal. *“I didn’t even know my brain was over-firing,”* she recalls. *“I thought this level of constant internal noise was just what ‘being a student’ felt like.”*

THE 3 KEY "SURVIVAL BRAIN" PATTERNS

The "Adrenaline Junkie" Loop

Tarika believed she needed stress to perform. She would wait until 12 hours before a deadline to start, relying on the chemical rush of the fight-or-flight response to trigger focus.





The Preemptive “Self-Roast”

To avoid the pain of external judgment, she became the “Class Clown,” roasting herself publicly before anyone else could. This safety mechanism was quietly eroding her self-worth and confidence.

The Judge+Hyper-Vigilant Sabotage

Stemming from years in boarding school, Tarika’s “internal judge” was constantly scanning for danger or mistakes. This state of “Red Alert” consumed massive amounts of mental energy, leaving her exhausted before she even opened a textbook.



THE INTERVENTION

Skepticism Meets Neuroscience



**Positive
Intelligence®**

Tarika was initially skeptical of the HKT tools. When introduced to **PQ Reps** (brief exercises to shift brain activation), she hesitated.

"How can focusing on a little line on my thumb help me write a dissertation?"



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I used to think self-love meant doing skincare or going on solo dates. I didn't realize my internal dialogue was actually bullying me.

Tarika

The Turning Point



During her final dissertation, the internal "noise" became unbearable. She decided to try a **Visual PQ Rep** (focusing intensely on a tree outside her window) for **just 10 seconds**.

The Shift



For the first time, the **"overthinking loop" broke**. She realized she didn't need to fight her thoughts; she simply needed to shift the blood flow in her brain.

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I realized it's very important to do this at a young age. Trying to rewire this when you are mature is much harder. I finally have the manual for my own brain.



THE CURRICULUM IN ACTION

1 Breaking the Cortisol Addiction

We replaced "deadline panic" with the **Energy Matrix**, teaching her to map tasks by energy levels rather than just time.

2 Addressing the Undiagnosed ADHD

Tarika was diagnosed with **ADHD** after starting the program. However, because she had already been practicing Mental Fitness, she had the tools to regulate her focus regardless of the label.

3 Reframing Vulnerability as a Strength

She moved from "self-roasting" (using humor as a defense mechanism) to authentic vulnerability. She learned that the ability to admit struggle is not a weakness, but a **prerequisite to overcoming it**.

4 Internal Dialogue Transformation

She systematically replaced her "inner judge"—the voice of self-bullying and criticism—with a deliberate **practice of self-appreciation, kindness, and support**.

5 Gaining Command Over Survival Patterns

Through consistent brain-rewiring exercises, Tarika shifted from being "at the mercy" of her thoughts to becoming an observer of them. She recognized the "firing" as a neural pattern rather than her identity, allowing her to course-correct in real-time.



THE RESULT

Beyond the Grades

After one year in the Inside Out Labs Curriculum, **Tarika** reported **profound changes in her "Invisible Report Card"**

Sustainable Productivity

She no longer waits for the 12-hour panic window. She can access "Laser Focus" without the adrenaline crash. By regulating her hyper-vigilance, she now preserves mental energy for her highest priorities.

High Performance Mindset

She is now her own greatest supporter. By learning to replace the "internal bully" with Self-Love, she has built a foundation of self-confidence that isn't dependent on external validation or grades.

Emotional Hygiene

She realized that self-care isn't a spa day; it is the "Mental Shower"—the daily practice of washing away the emotional debris so I can sleep and start fresh."

Social Sovereignty

She moved from "People Pleasing" to setting healthy boundaries. **"I have better friends now",** she says. **"I can say 'no' without the fear of rejection."**

Ripple Effect

Her transformation was so visible that her parents (who observed her becoming calmer and more grounded) asked her siblings to join the program.



EXPERT ANALYSIS

Why This Worked

By **Aparna Gupta**, Founder - Inside Out Labs Curriculum, Helping Kids Thrive



Tarika's story is a classic example of **Neural Hardwiring**.

Her brain had "wired" procrastination and anxiety as the only pathways to productivity. She wasn't lazy; her **Survival Brain (Limbic System/Left Brain)** was simply running the show.

Traditional counseling often focuses on the "why" of procrastination. Mental Fitness focuses on building the **Self-Command Muscle** to recognize the pattern and physically rewire it.



By doing **daily 3-minute 'reps'**, even when she was skeptical, Traika strengthened her ability to intercept survival patterns. Simultaneously, exercises to activate the **Thrive Brain (Middle Prefrontal Cortex/Right Brain)** allowed her to access calm focus and self-confidence. This shifted the balance of power in her brain from survival-based reactivity to thriving-based intentionality.

The Takeaway for Parents & Educators: We often mistake anxiety for a personality trait. Tarika proves it is a **pattern** — and patterns can be broken if you have the right “gym” for your mind.

