The Teenage Guidebook to Executive Functioning

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Objectives

• Identify executive functions that are most applicable to adolescent age
• Develop a therapeutic toolkit to address these skills and increase confidence in treatment of executive dysfunction
• Identifying and addressing executive functions most impactful on the transition to independent living, driving, and post-high school career
Executive Functions Important for Adolescents

• Social, Emotional, Mood Regulation
• Self-Awareness
• Theory of Mind
• Perseverance
• Organization
• Divided Attention
• Working Memory
• Flexibility
• Planning and prioritizing
Social, Emotional, Mood Regulation

- According to longitudinal prospective study, children with moderate-severe TBI experience increased difficulty with self-regulation, social skills, and communication, compared to those with mild-TBI (Ryan et al., 2019)
- Continued self-regulation challenges 6 months post injury sign of difficulty with social adjustment 12 months later.
- Early intervention very important for social wellbeing.
COVID-19 Pandemic

• According to an article by Branje and Morris (2021), adolescents' social-emotional well-being highly impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic, especially those at risk prior to the pandemic.
• Biggest factor was amount of support received from family and community.
• Individuals that had access to resources and pre-pandemic coping skills were less likely to experience negative consequences in relation to social-emotional regulation.
• Social isolation big risk factor for regulation
Self-Awareness

• Insight
• Confidence – both need to be in balance for healthy living/successful functioning
Perseverance

- Leads to independence
- AKA Grit
- Research suggests that the type of feedback that you provide impacts overall ability to persevere (De Meester, Galle, Soenens, Haerens, 2022).
  - Person-oriented feedback < Process-oriented feedback
- According to Hill, Burrow, Cotton-Bronk (2016), understanding purpose for completing task outweighed positive affect.
Organization

• Thoughts
• Vision
• Auditory
• Learning about how they learn/think best
• Trial and error
Attention

• Divided
• Sustained
• Alternating
Memory

- Short-term working memory
- Long-term recall
- Understanding where the deficits lie helps to determine which strategies to use
Planning and Prioritizing

- It is important to develop this skill in order to take over your own self-care.
- Consider multiple factors (time, abilities, transportation, realistic
Theory of Mind

• Put yourself in someone else's shoes
• Understand WHY they respond or react the way they do
Therapeutic Toolkit

- Treatment strategies
  - Coaching model
  - Reflective learning (developing their own toolkit, thinking about daily logs, strategies, organization, apps)
  - Goal attainment scaling
  - Growth Mindset
  - Theory of Mind
  - Learning through experiences – positive and negative
  - Parent/caregiver support
  - Home programming – setting expectations within the home
  - Shifting adolescent perspective on independence by providing opportunities for responsibility and accountability
  - Interactive Metronome
  - Peer support in group settings
  - Providing exposure to positive role models with variety of disabilities
  - Task breakdown
  - Personality tests
  - Learning style tests
Examples

- Setting own goals
- Goal Attainment Scale
- Prioritizing goals individually
Ways to Challenge Flexibility

1. Food Options or locations
2. Song Choices
3. Timing of Events
4. Do something non preferred
5. Games (and not always winning)
6. Having treatment sessions in various rooms/locations
7. Having similar treatment tasks implemented by various therapists
Theory of Mind
Recipes for building executive functions

- Cooking
  - Videos
  - Written recipes
  - Giving list of ingredients and problem-solving possible recipes (Guy's Grocery Games)
  - Using whiteboard to re-write recipe and develop checklist
  - Dividing tasks
  - Use of time management
  - Budgeting a meal, quantities of meals
Grocery Store Shopping

• Planning
• Budgeting
• Time management
• Organization
Planning a Vacation

- Budget
- Location
- Time of Year
- Everyone's interests
- How many people are going
- Transportation
- Activities completed
- What to pack
- Planning ahead for accessibility concerns
Restaurant Simulation

• Ordering
• Taking orders
• Budgeting
• Asking questions
• Speaking up when order was incorrect
• Making on-demand change
Bake Sale

- Planning
- Cooking
- Budgeting
Getting a Job Simulation

- Final week of camp. Really ties in everything. We talk about budget, we talk about advocating for themselves, handling awkward situations, time management, organization, completing a resume, participating in a pretend interview
Realistic IADL Home Programming for Executive Functioning

• Cooking
• Grocery shopping
• Grocery List Formation
• Laundry
• Dishes
• Cleaning
• Going to the gas station and getting an item inside store by themselves
• Scheduling an appointment
• Plan an event for friends or family on a budget
References:


