

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

FLEXIBILITY



Stretch your potential.

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

ABILITY_{KC}
Goal Worksheet

My Goal: Learn to cook
Why: I want to live on my own

Goal Break Down
(What all is involved in this goal)

Safety
Learn tools
Microwave
Recipe
Gather ingredients

Grocery shop

What am I doing now? Making Sandwiches & cereal

Next Steps:
learn Kitchen Safety
learn tools
COOK with Microwave
COOK with Stove

My Weekly Plan

- M: Research Kitchen Safety
- T: Research Recipe with new tool
- W: Make grocery list
- TH: Cook ~~at~~ M Grocery shop
- F: COOK
- Sat/Sun: Enjoy!

ABILITY_{KC}

What can I do on my own?
- Research

What do I need help with?
- Safety
- ~~PE~~ Hands on instruction

Resources:
OT
Parents
food.com

Plan Summary:
I will research safety and tools. I will find a recipe to use that tool. I will cook with my OT and apply that knowledge



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:

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