

Executive Function:

Why Doesn't Everyone Think Like Me?

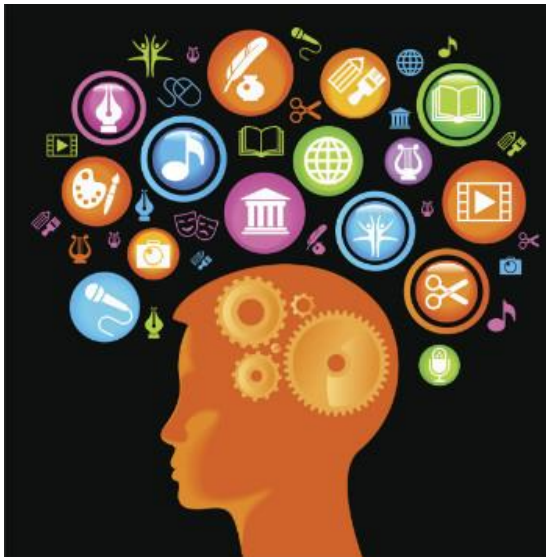
PA Family Support and Home Visiting
Conference

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Executive Function



The mental processes that enable us to...

- Plan
- Focus Attention
- Remember Instructions
- Juggle Multiple Tasks Successfully

Executive Function Skills



EXECUTIVE FUNCTION DEVELOPMENT

When do skills typically emerge?

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Emerging Skills

Learning to pay attention
Learning to control behavior & impulses
Shifting behavior to follow rules
Following 2-3 step directions



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Emerging Skills

Learning to think ahead to plan actions & to solve problems
Managing & following a daily routine
Modifying behavior in changing environments



HIGH SCHOOL

Emerging Skills

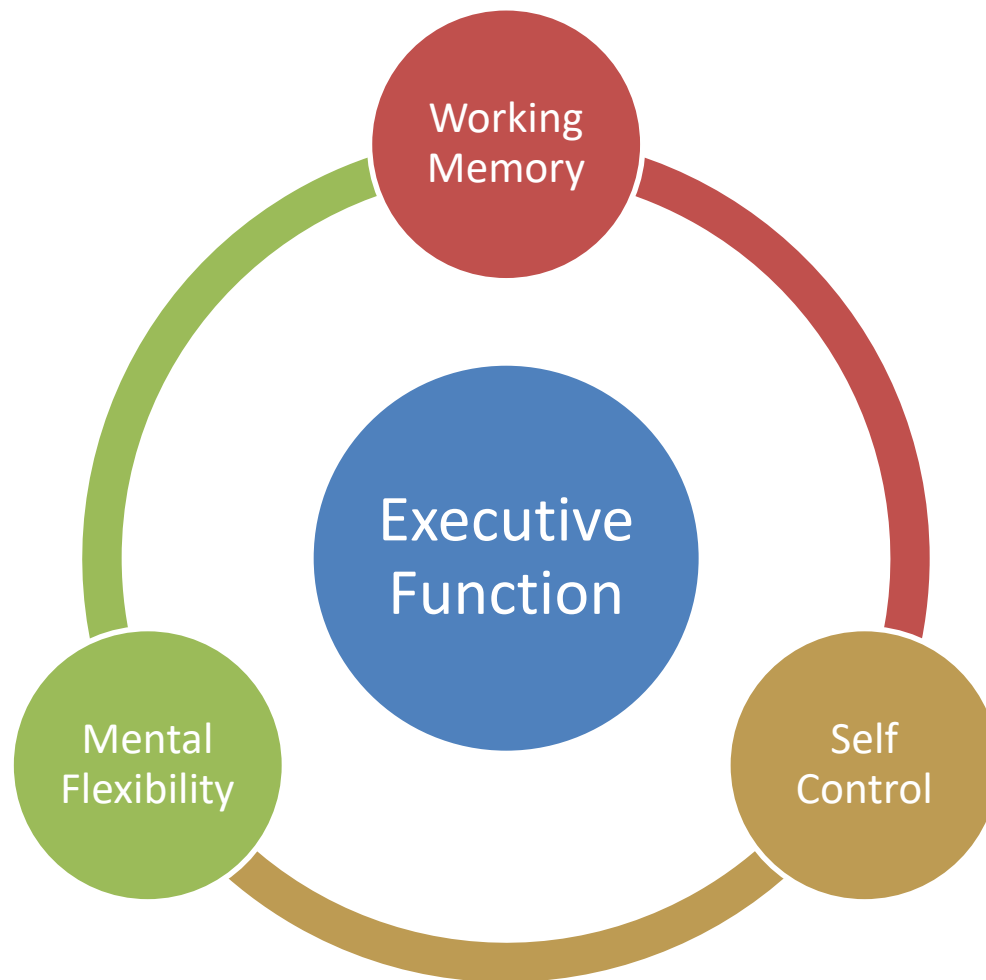
Learning to think & behave flexibly
Organizing & planning projects or activities with friends or classmates
Adapting to changing rules
Deepening self-awareness



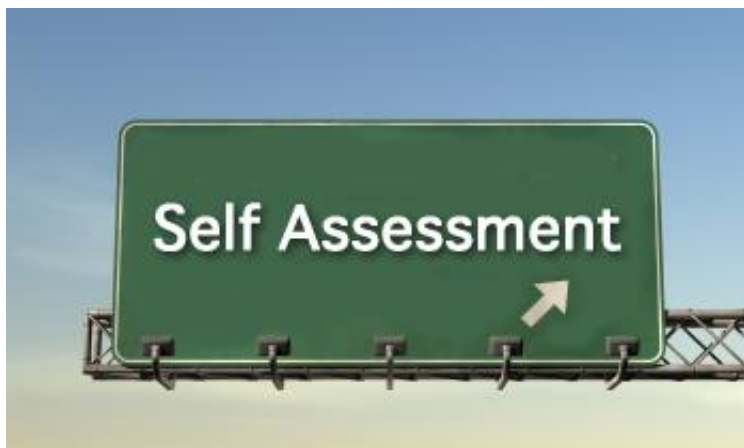
Why is Executive Function Important to me as a Leader?



Executive Function Skills



Executive Skills Questionnaire



Executive Skills Questionnaire

Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well it describes you. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key at the end of the questionnaire to determine your executive skill strengths (two to three highest scores) and weaknesses (two to three lowest scores).

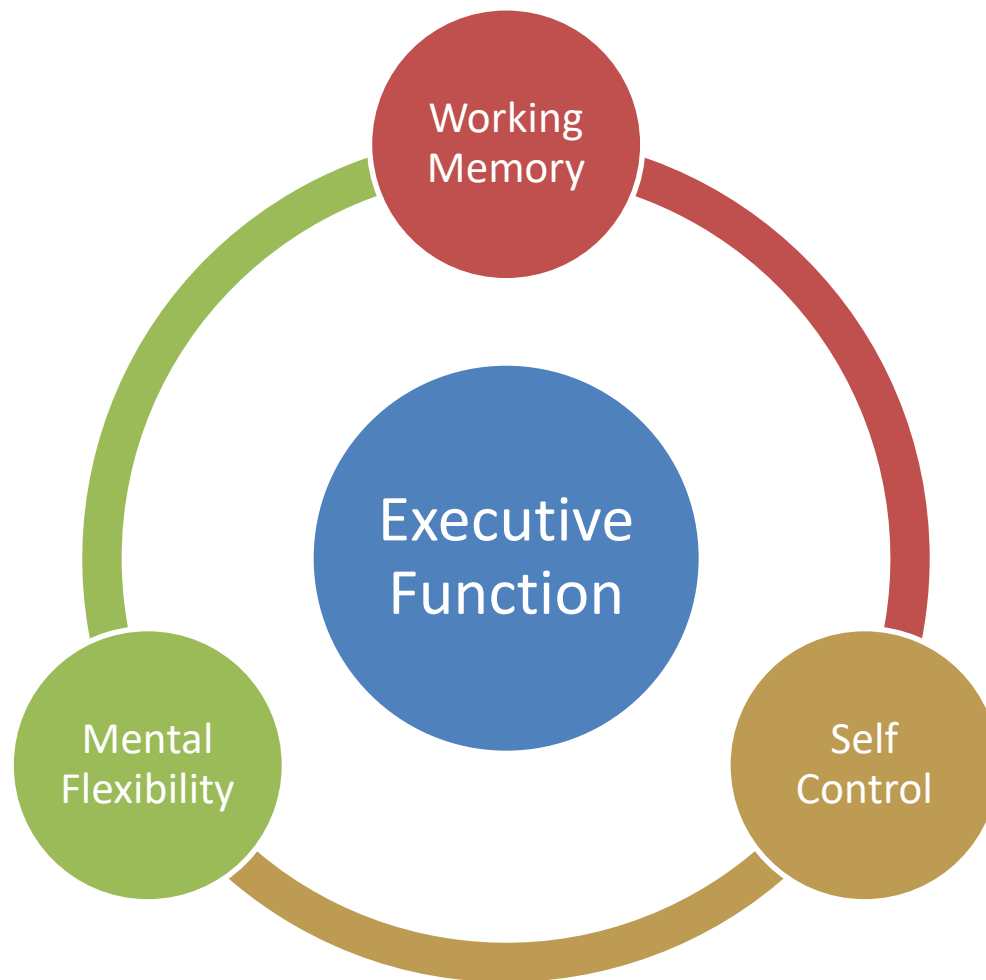
1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly	Disagree	Tend to	Tend to	Agree	Strongly
disagree		disagree	agree		agree

Item	Your score
1. I don't jump to conclusions.	_____
2. I think before I speak.	_____
3. I make sure I have all the facts before I take action.	_____
TOTAL	_____
4. I have a good memory for facts, dates, and details.	_____
5. I am very good at remembering the things I have committed to do.	_____
6. I seldom need reminders to complete tasks.	_____
TOTAL	_____
7. My emotions seldom get in the way of my job performance.	_____
8. Little things do not affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand.	_____
9. When frustrated or angry, I keep my cool.	_____
TOTAL	_____
10. No matter what the task, I believe in getting started as soon as possible.	_____
11. Procrastination is usually not a problem for me.	_____
12. I seldom leave tasks to the last minute.	_____
TOTAL	_____
13. I find it easy to stay focused on my work.	_____
14. Once I start an assignment, I work diligently until it's completed.	_____
15. Even when interrupted, I find it easy to get back and complete the job at hand.	_____
TOTAL	_____
16. When I start my day, I have a clear plan in mind for what I hope to accomplish.	_____
17. When I have a lot to do, I can easily focus on the most important things.	_____
18. I typically break big tasks down into subtasks and timelines.	_____
TOTAL	_____

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Executive Function Skills



Executive Function Skills



Response Inhibition

The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.



Working Memory

The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks.

Incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.



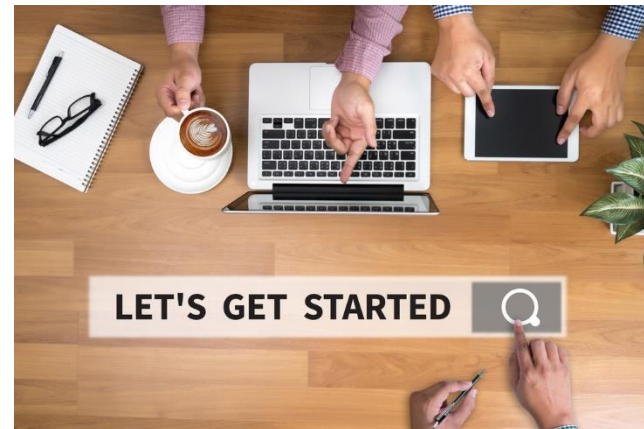
Emotional Control

The ability to
manage
emotions to
achieve goals,
complete tasks,
and direct
behavior



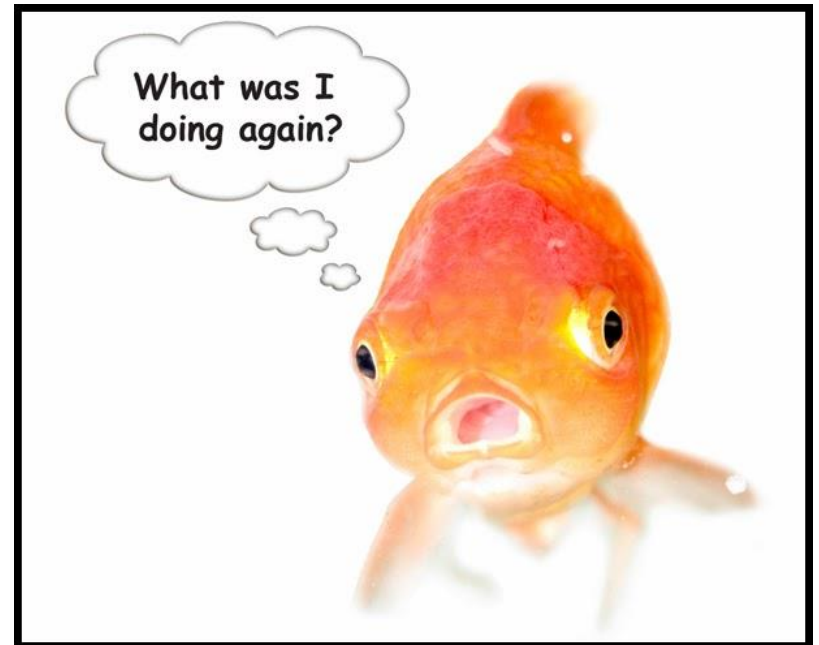
Task Initiation

The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.



Sustained Attention

The capacity to keep attention on a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue or boredom.



Planning and Prioritizing

The ability to create a road map to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.



Organization

The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.



Time Management

The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.



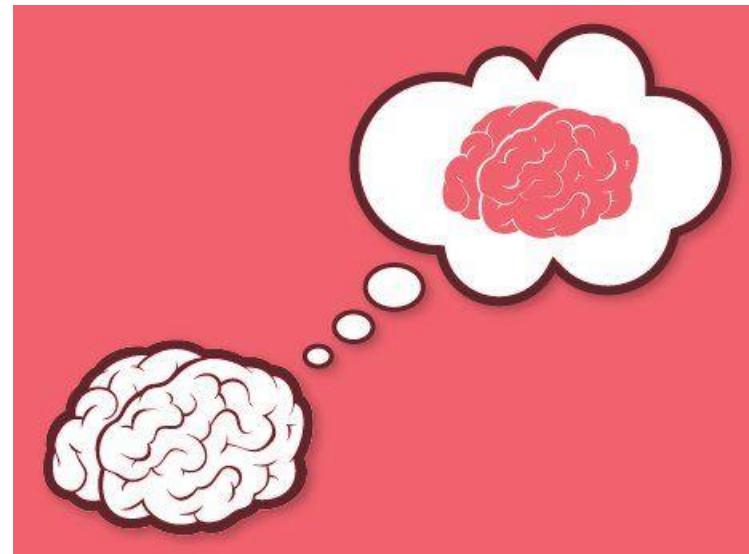
Flexibility

The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.



Metacognition

The ability to stand back and take a bird's-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (for example, asking yourself, “How am I doing?” or “How did I do?”)



Goal Directed Persistence

The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.

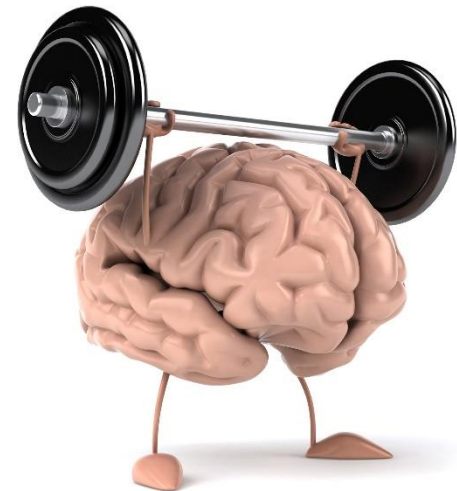


Stress Tolerance

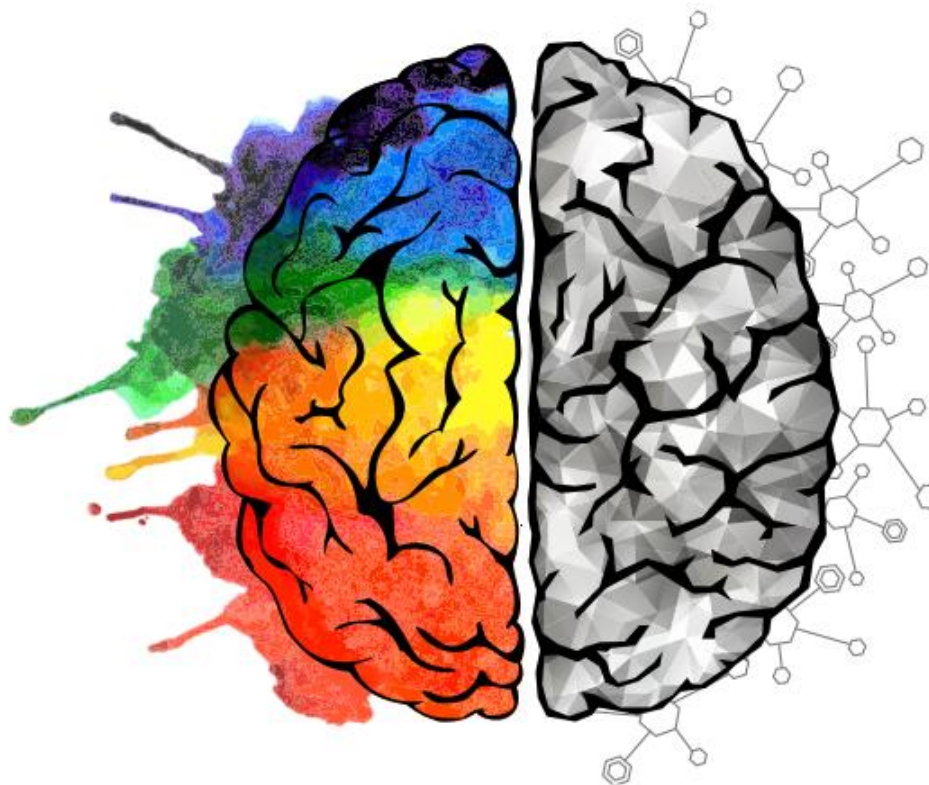
The ability to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands.



Executive Function Skills

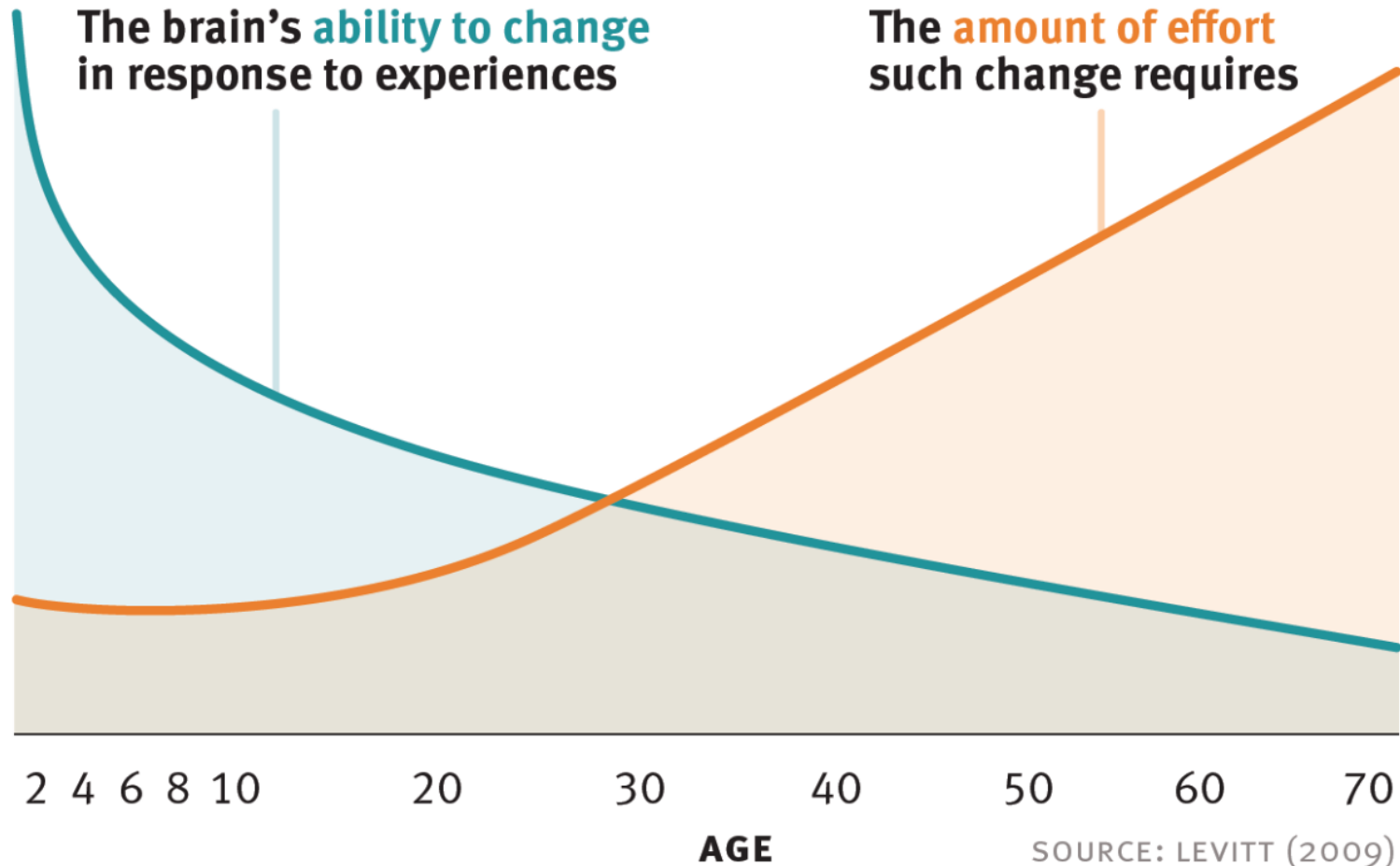


Neuroplasticity



NEUROPLASTICITY

Neuroplasticity



BRAIN AGILITY



Mindset Mastery



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Worksheet 1

1. What are your three executive skills strengths and your three weaknesses?
2. What aspects of your job do you find easiest and hardest?
3. How can you use this information?

Dawson & Guare, 2016

Using Strengths More Effectively



- Draw on strengths more often and more effectively
- Use a strength to compensate for a weakness

Dawson & Guare, 2016

Worksheet 3

1. Enter an area of weakness in the first column.
2. Answer the questions in the next three columns.
3. Make the last column an action step
*"What **will** you do?"*

Dawson & Guare, 2016

Working with People Whose Profiles Differ from Yours



Dawson & Guare, 2016

Working with People Whose Profiles Differ from Yours

- Divide job tasks based on executive skill strengths
- Talk things through using “I” statements



Dawson & Guare, 2016

Supervising Someone with Executive Skill Weaknesses That Interfere with Job Performance

- Explore changes in responsibilities that are a better match
- Identify environmental supports that might minimize the impact
- Incorporate executive skills into annual performance reviews

Dawson & Guare, 2016

Executive Skills Questionnaire

Executive Skills Questionnaire

Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well it describes you. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key at the end of the questionnaire to determine your executive skill strengths (two to three highest scores) and weaknesses (two to three lowest scores).

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Tend to disagree 4 Tend to agree 5 Agree 6 Strongly agree

- | Item | Your score |
|---|------------|
| 1. I don't jump to conclusions. | _____ |
| 2. I think before I speak. | _____ |
| 3. I make sure I have all the facts before I take action. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 4. I have a good memory for facts, dates, and details. | _____ |
| 5. I am very good at remembering the things I have committed to do. | _____ |
| 6. I seldom need reminders to complete tasks. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 7. My emotions seldom get in the way of my job performance. | _____ |
| 8. Little things do not affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand. | _____ |
| 9. When frustrated or angry, I keep my cool. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 10. No matter what the task, I believe in getting started as soon as possible. | _____ |
| 11. Procrastination is usually not a problem for me. | _____ |
| 12. I seldom leave tasks to the last minute. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 13. I find it easy to stay focused on my work. | _____ |
| 14. Once I start an assignment, I work diligently until it's completed. | _____ |
| 15. Even when interrupted, I find it easy to get back and complete the job at hand. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 16. When I start my day, I have a clear plan in mind for what I hope to accomplish. | _____ |
| 17. When I have a lot to do, I can easily focus on the most important things. | _____ |
| 18. I typically break big tasks down into subtasks and timelines. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |

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Executive Skills Questionnaire for Supervisees

Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well the item describes your supervisee. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key at the end of the questionnaire to determine your executive skill strengths (two to three highest scores) and weaknesses (two to three lowest scores).

1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Tend to disagree 4 Tend to agree 5 Agree 6 Strongly agree

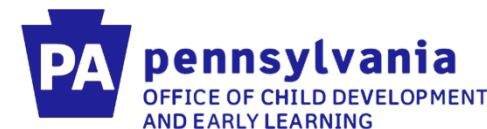
- | Item | Your score |
|---|------------|
| 1. Doesn't jump to conclusions. | _____ |
| 2. Thinks before speaking. | _____ |
| 3. Makes sure he or she has all the facts before taking action. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 4. Has a good memory for facts, dates, and details. | _____ |
| 5. Very good at remembering the things he or she has committed to do. | _____ |
| 6. Seldom needs reminders to complete tasks. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 7. Emotions seldom get in the way when performing on the job. | _____ |
| 8. Little things don't affect him or her emotionally or distract from the task at hand. | _____ |
| 9. Keeps cool when frustrated or angry. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 10. No matter what the task, believes in getting started as soon as possible. | _____ |
| 11. Procrastination is usually not a problem for him or her. | _____ |
| 12. Seldom leaves tasks for the last minute. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 13. Finds it easy to stay focused on work. | _____ |
| 14. Once an assignment is started, works diligently until it's completed. | _____ |
| 15. Even when interrupted, finds it easy to get back and complete the job at hand. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |
| 16. Has a clear plan in mind for what he or she hopes to accomplish each day. | _____ |
| 17. When confronted with a lot of work, can easily focus on the most important things. | _____ |
| 18. Typically breaks big tasks down into subtasks and timelines. | _____ |
| TOTAL | _____ |

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References

- The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success: How to Use Your Brain's Executive Skills to Keep Up, Stay Calm, and Get Organized at Work and at Home. Peg Dawson & Richard Guare, 2016. The Guildford Press.
- Center on the Developing Child Harvard University. www.developingchild.harvard.edu
- The 4 Brain Superpowers You Need to Be a Successful Leader, According to Neuroscience, Leigh Buchanan <http://bit.ly/2nISAXN>
- Infographic: When Do Executive Function Skills Typically Emerge in Children? <http://bit.ly/2B9mg3t>

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