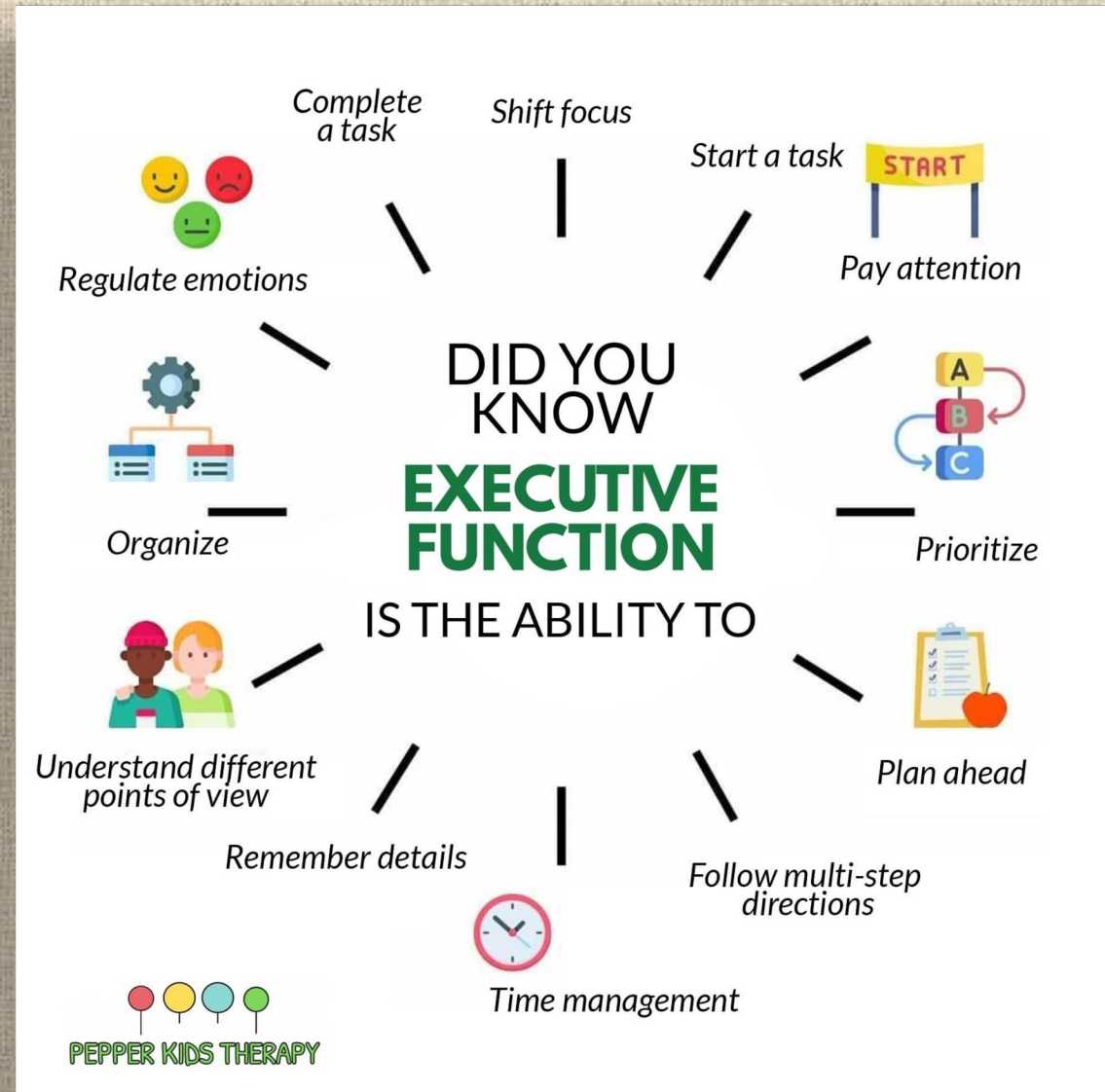


Executive Functioning Skills: Supporting your child's practical skills



A workshop for families at Glebe School



Welcome to our workshop



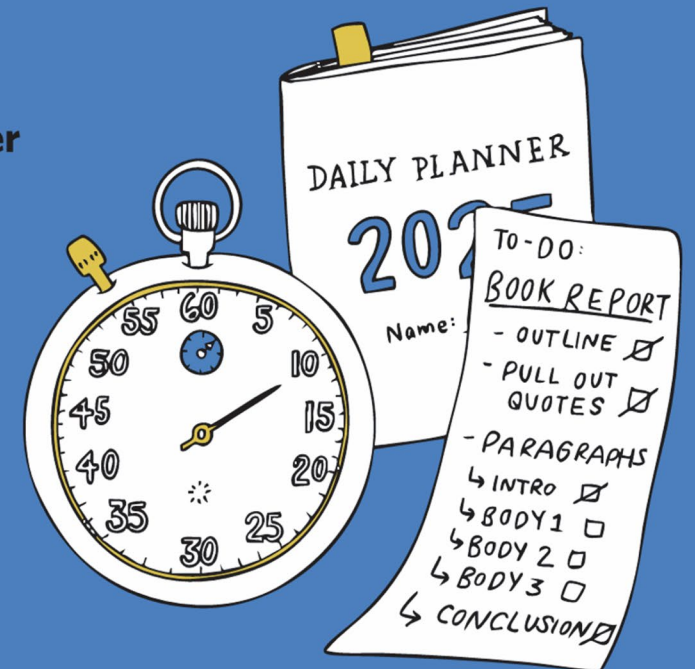
Today we are going to:

- ✓ Look at the everyday skills your young person needs to be independent
- ✓ Lots of simple ideas to support these skills at home as well as at school
- ✓ How you can support your adolescent and their confidence a step at a time

What is Executive Function?

Think, do, feel—
how your brain
keeps it all together

by Kimberly Hildebrandt



Does your young person struggle to:

- ✓ Organise their things?
- ✓ Hold onto and follow instructions?
- ✓ Stay focused and shift their focus?
- ✓ Start and finish tasks?
- ✓ Manage their emotions?



What do these things look like for your young person?

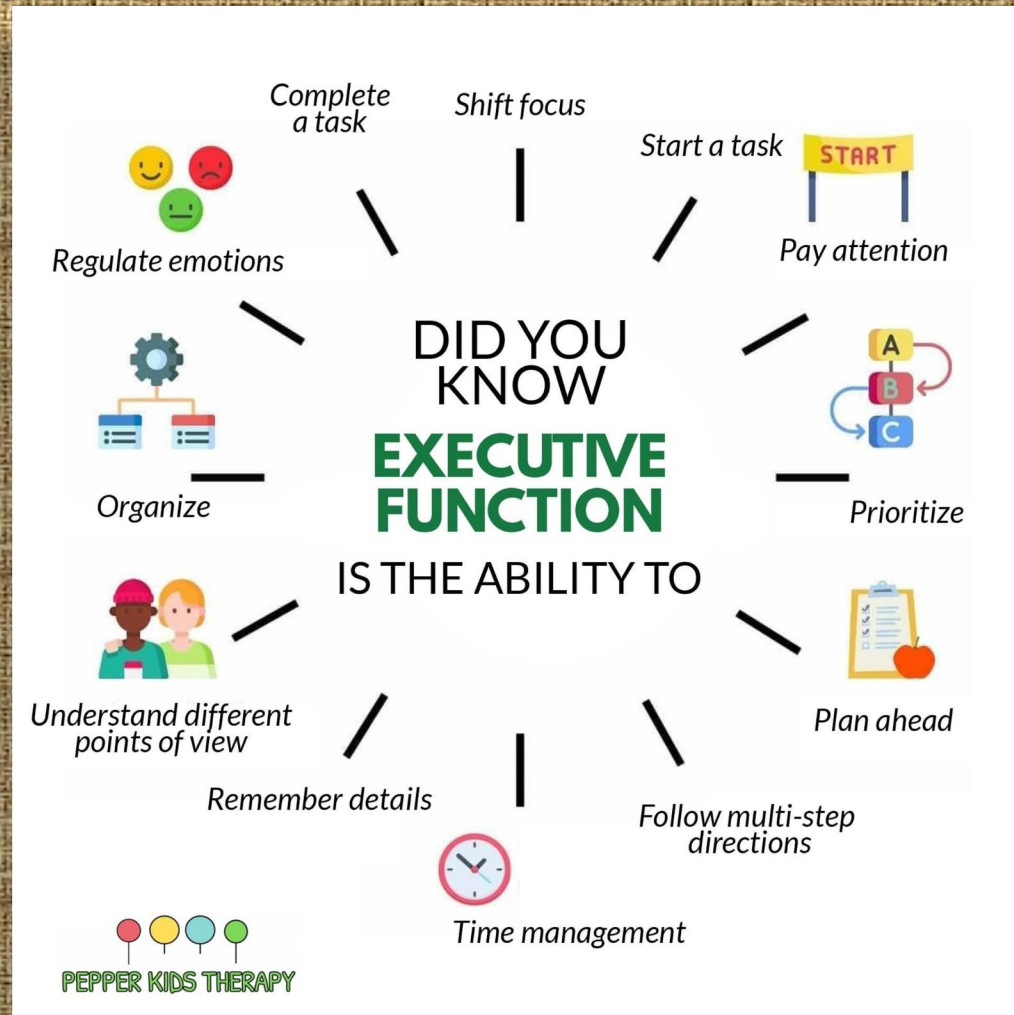


What is Executive Functioning?

Executive Functioning is a fancy way of saying “how the brain organizes life.”

It includes:

- ❖ Planning and prioritizing
- ❖ Remembering things
- ❖ Managing time
- ❖ Staying focused
- ❖ Regulating emotions
- ❖ Starting and finishing tasks



Why might your teen find these things difficult?

language

learning needs

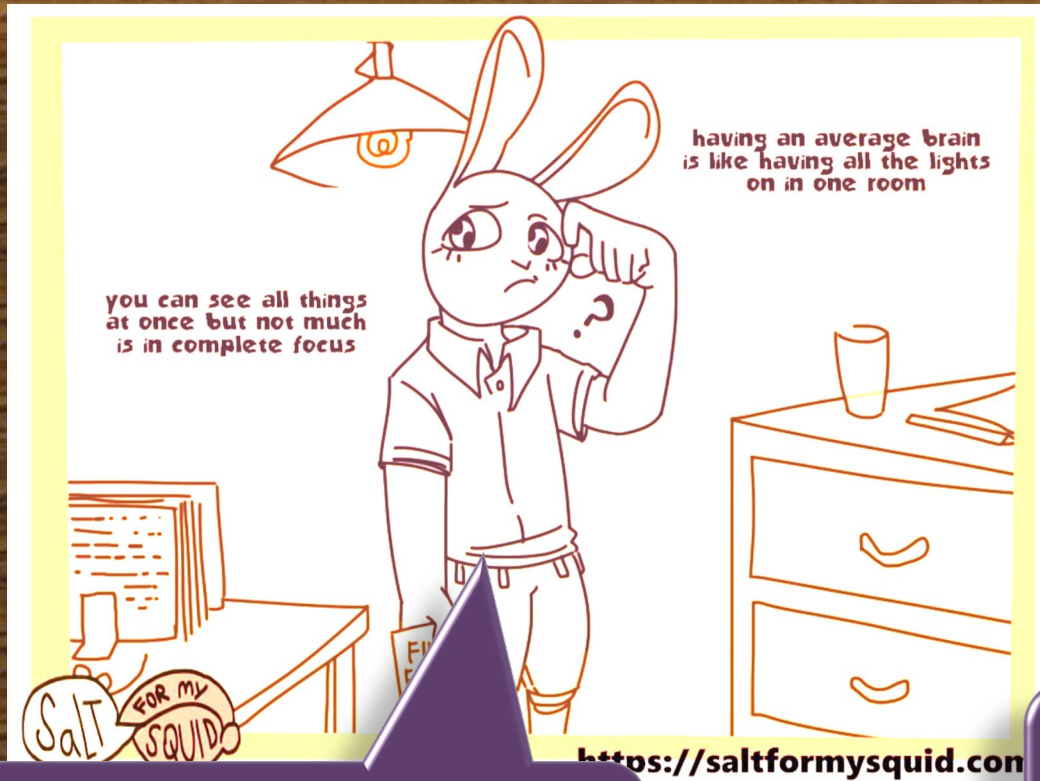
Autism/ADHD

Lack of
experience

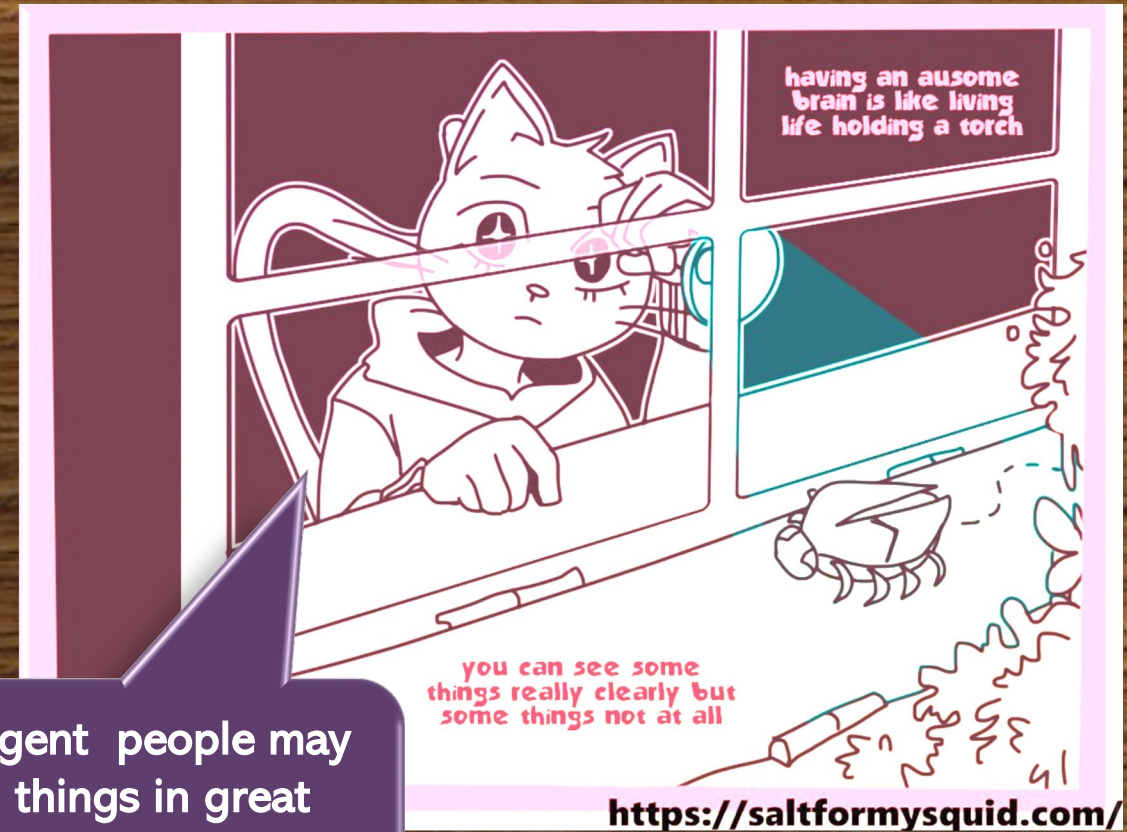
life experience



Why are these things more difficult for people with ASC/ADHD?



Neurotypicals may see the whole picture but not in great detail



Neurodivergent people may see small things in great detail but miss other bits entirely

**Do you recognise
this?**

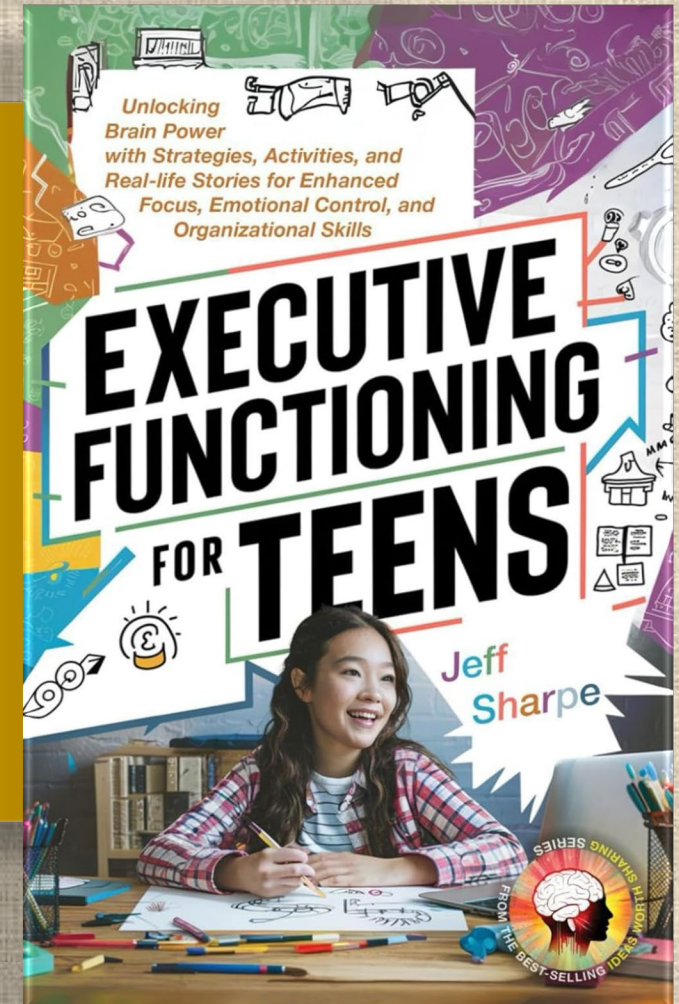
**So, makes daily
functioning
difficult???**

how my brain works



What can you do?

- ❑ Recognise that these skills may be hard for your teen
- ❑ Consistently model/practice with them
- ❑ Give them confidence and time
- ❑ Make them parts of daily routines
- ❑ **DON'T GIVE UP!!!!!!!**



Morning & Evening Routine Chart

_____ 's Daily Routine

Morning	Evening
<input type="checkbox"/> Use Toilet	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean Room
<input type="checkbox"/> Brush Teeth	<input type="checkbox"/> Wash Hands
<input type="checkbox"/> Brush Hair	<input type="checkbox"/> Eat Dinner
<input type="checkbox"/> Make Bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Clean my Plate
<input type="checkbox"/> Get Dressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Use Toilet
<input type="checkbox"/> Put Pjs in Hamper	<input type="checkbox"/> Take Bath or Shower
<input type="checkbox"/> Eat Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Brush Teeth
<input type="checkbox"/> Clean my plate	<input type="checkbox"/> Put on Pjs
<input type="checkbox"/> Pack Backpack	<input type="checkbox"/> Put Clothes in Hamper
<input type="checkbox"/> Put on Shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Read Story

- Focus on key points of the days and try and keep as consistent as possible
- Start small
- Practice the routine in the same way every day

Strategy 1: Create Routines that stick

1. Design the routine together – make visual
2. Try and keep consistent times/part of their day
3. Talk about goals
4. Be prepared to compromise
5. Offer help but not to do for them
6. Harness their motivation!!
7. Review it together



MORNING

WAKE UP

MAKE BED/
PICK UP ROOM

TAKE SHOWER
GET DRESSED
EAT BREAKFAST
BRUSH TEETH

LEAVE FOR
SCHOOL

EVENING

HOMEWORK/
CHORES

DINNER/
FAMILY TIME

BRUSH TEETH
SAY PRAYERS

LIGHTS OUT-
GO TO BED

Strategy 2: Let your teen handle routines

- Use stick it notes for routines – your child can draw or write, and you can change the order



Strategy 3: Introduce timers for routines and tasks



Be selective:

- No pressure!!!
- Use as a game
- The younger your child the shorter the notice...



🕒 "I wonder how long it'll take us to clean up?"

🕒 "Let's see how long it takes Dad to get ready!"

1. Getting Out the Door on Time

Mornings are a great opportunity to practice time management for everyone in the household. For parents with children struggling with EF, assist your child with structure and support, and then relinquish some control over time, letting them be in charge of their routines. [Downloadable](#)



MAKE IT VISUAL

Post a step-by-step routine with pictures. For example: "Eat a healthy breakfast" (list some suggested food options to make decision-making easy), "clean up from breakfast," "brush teeth" and "pack backpack."



USE TIMERS

Set alarms for key transitions, like waking up, taking a shower, or getting out the door.



PREPARE AHEAD

Lay out clothes and supplies the night before. This reduces stress in the morning and builds planning skills.



DON'T RUSH

Carve out extra time into your morning routine to practice.



RELY ON REMINDERS

Set alerts on your phone or write notes on scrap paper the night before.

Strategy 4: Be reflective AVOID reaction

METACOGNITION

HOW WE THINK ABOUT OUR THINKING

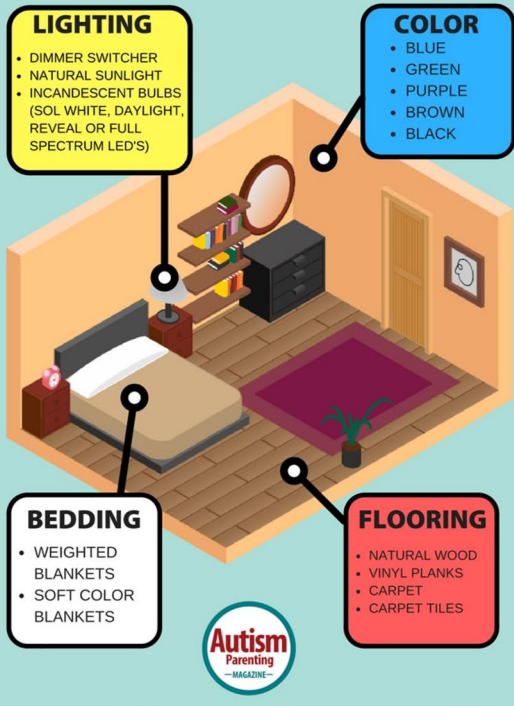


Metacognition is your child's ability to think about their thinking. It's how they learn from mistakes *without* you nagging.

Ask open-ended questions like:

- "Did this go the way you expected?"
- "What might you do differently next time?"
- "How did that feel?"
- Eventually, they'll start asking themselves these questions without your help. That's the goal.

Excellent Ways to Create a Peaceful and Calming Bedroom Space



Strategy 5: A quiet space for focus and for calm

Some children need silence. Others need music. Others need background noise.

Stop trying to create the “perfect quiet space” and instead ask your child:

🎧 “What helps you focus best?”

📍 “Where do you feel most calm?”

Then *create that space together.*

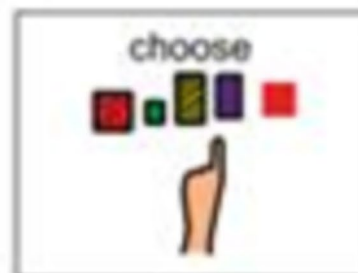
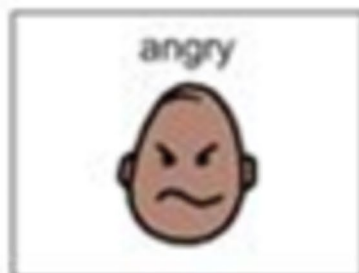
🎧 “What helps you focus best?”

📍 “Where do you feel most calm?”

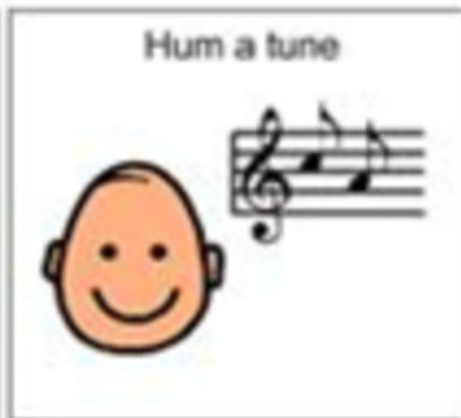
☑️ Then *create that space together.*

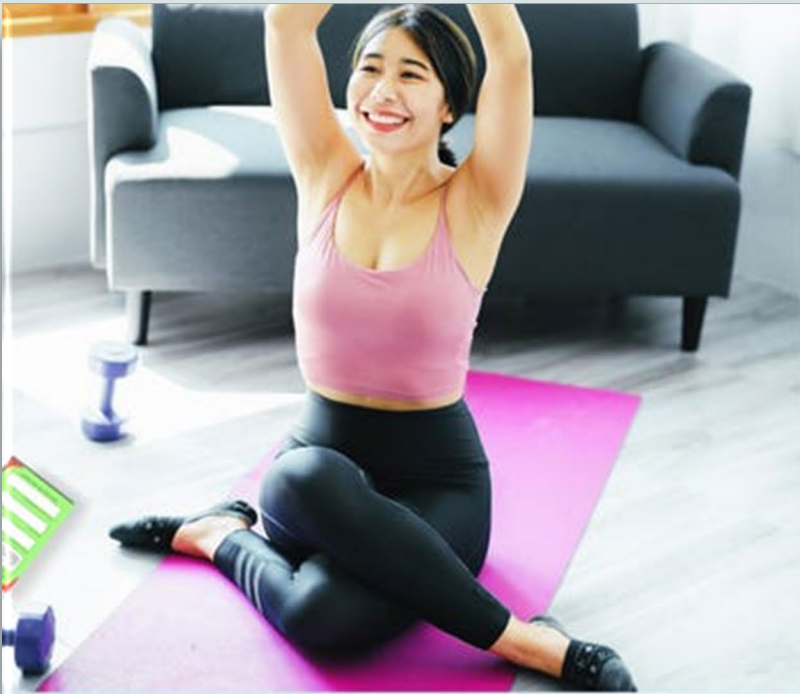


Calm-Down Strategies



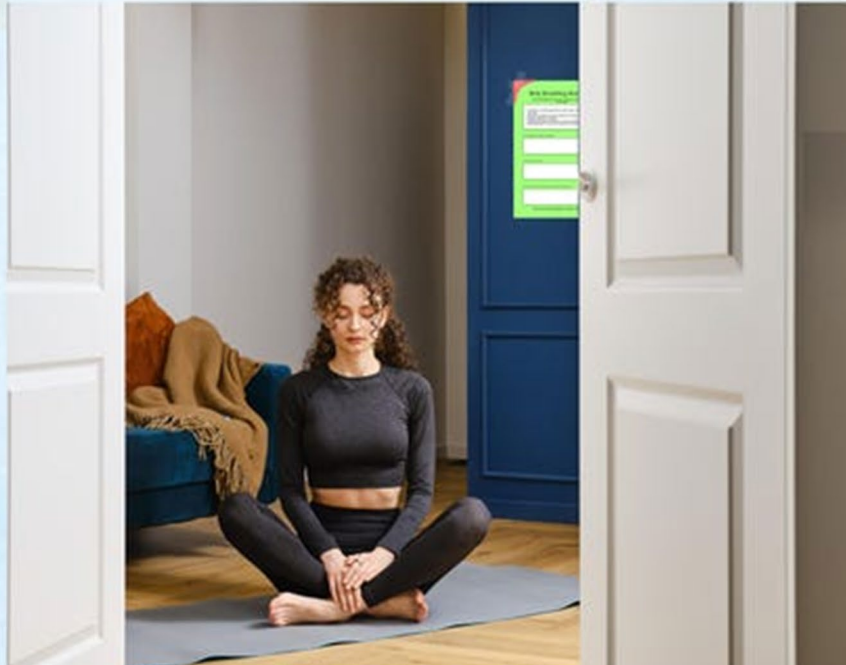
When I am frustrated, angry, or upset, I will choose to...



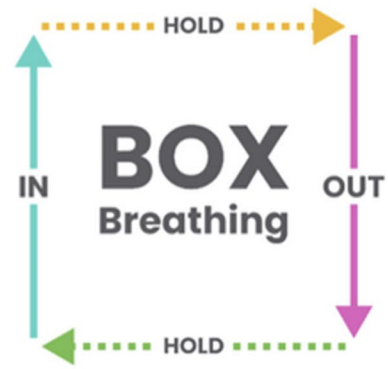


Breathing exercises can help teens by providing a simple and effective way to manage stress and anxiety, fostering a sense of calm and control.

Breathing exercises also enhance emotional regulation and concentration, supporting their overall mental and emotional well-being of teens.



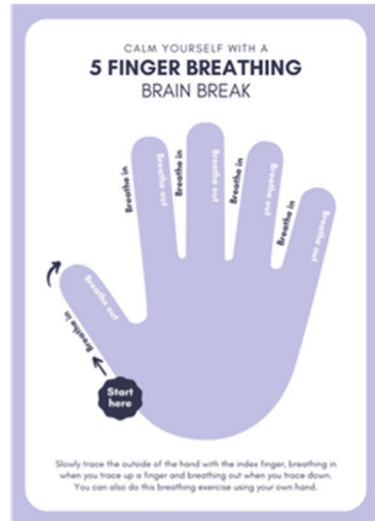
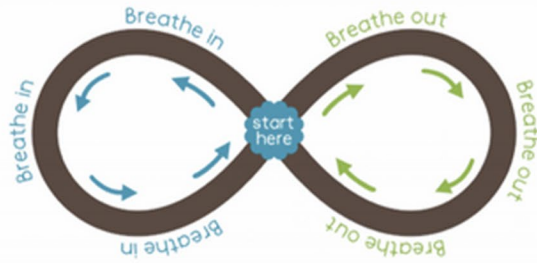
Breathing to calm, relax and reduce anxiety. Why not try together before bedtime?



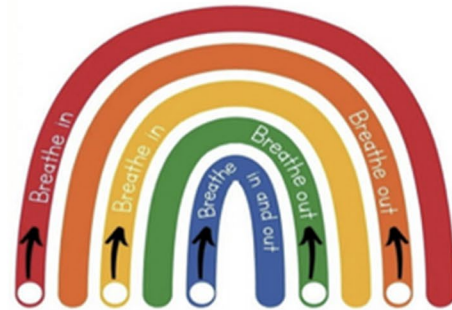
- 4 Close your mouth, inhale through your nose to a mental count of FOUR.
- 7 Hold your breath for a count of SEVEN.
- 8 Exhale completely through your mouth to a count of EIGHT.



AFTER AN ANXIOUS MOMENT



RAINBOW BREATHING



Start on red.
Place finger on white circle.
Breathe in and trace finger to other side of rainbow.
Move to orange.
Breathe out and trace finger back to other side.
Repeat until all colors have been traced.

4-7-8 Breathing Exercise

1

Breathe in for 4 seconds

Hold your breath for 7 seconds

2

3

Breathe out slowly for 8 seconds

Repeat at least 3x

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING



5 THINGS YOU CAN
SEE AROUND YOU

4 THINGS YOU CAN
TOUCH AROUND YOU

3 THINGS YOU CAN
HEAR AROUND YOU

2 THINGS YOU CAN
SMELL AROUND YOU

1 THING YOU CAN
TASTE AROUND YOU

Strategy 6: One minute mindfulness

This doesn't mean sitting in lotus pose for 20 minutes. It means pausing for one mindful minute during the day. Ideas:

- Deep belly breathing
- The 5-4-3-2-1 grounding method
- Mindful stretching or sipping water slowly
- These moments train the brain to pause instead of react—which builds regulation and attention skills.

A calming space...and calm box

- Legos or building blocks
- Kinetic sand, slime, or play-dough
- Bubble push poppers and other fidget-friendly toys
- Art supplies (gel pens, markers, paper, clay)
- Self-regulation activities
- Bubbles and pinwheels
- Items that encourage independent acting out emotions
- Chewing gum
- Calm Down Strategy Cards
- Books
- Sensory Bottles / Calming Jars
- Favourite soft toys
- Fidgeting toys
- Problem-solving worksheets
- Stress balls
- Music

CALM CORNER



Problem Solving



Use daily challenges as opportunities to practice problem solving **WITH** your children.

- 1) **Brainstorm for solutions** during family meetings or with one child.
- 2) **Ask Curiosity Questions** to invite your child to explore solutions.
- 3) **For fights:** "Can you two figure this out together, or do you need help?"
- 4) **For chores:** Brainstorm what needs to be done and invite your kids to create a plan. Be willing to try their plan for a week.

Quotes from the Positive Discipline books © Jane Nelsen

Strategy 7: Problem solving

This one's difficult: Don't 'rescue' too fast.

When your child spills something or gets stuck, resist the urge to fix it.

Say:

🗣️ **"I wonder how you're going to solve that?"**

🗣️ **"What's one idea we can try?"**

Then *wait* at least 90 seconds. Give them the space to think.

That space? It's where their brain grows.



Strategy 8: Organisation

- Place** – Where? Visually clear storage
- Retrieve** – ensure they can access items and easily...
- Return** – when done



They can:
Place, retrieve and
return so ...

You don't need to!!!!

Label storage!!!

week of:

this week

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday

sunday

notes

What if? cards

Example:

If I can't find my way to class

- ▶ I will get out my map in my Filofax and try to work it out
- ▶ I will try to ask someone in my class
- ▶ I will ask a teacher
- ▶ I will ask the secretary in the school office

If I arrive late

- ▶ I will go to the school office and tell the secretary I have arrived at school
- ▶ She will mark the register
- ▶ I will go to my lesson

If I forget my homework

- ▶ I will tell my form tutor
- ▶ I will tell the subject teacher when I get to the lesson
- ▶ The teacher will tell me where to put my homework when I bring it in tomorrow

People who can help me

- ▶ Mr Davis - form tutor
- ▶ Mrs Singh - SENCO
- ▶ Miss Robbs - LSA
- ▶ Jason - mentor
- ▶ Miss Everson - secretary



































Mabor 3Pcs Reminder Board
Portable Visual Daily
Schedule for Kids School
Bag Pendant Detachable
Daily Task Planning Pad with
List Cards Stickers for Kids
ADHD Tools for Kids :
Amazon.co.uk: Stationery &
Office Supplies

**Organisation your
teen can wear!!!**

Strategy 9:
Emotional
Regulation

Supporting
emotions:
Zones of
Regulation

What Zone Are You In?

Blue Zone	Green Zone	Orange Zone	Red Zone
 SAD  HURT  SICK  TIRED	 HAPPY  FOCUSED  CALM  EXCITED	 SURPRISED  CONFUSED  WORRIED  SILLY	 ANGRY  RAGING  TERRIFIED  ANNOYED
What can I do?	What can I do?	What can I do?	What can I do?
<p>REST</p> <p>Take a break </p> <p>Ask for help </p> <p>Talk to someone </p> <p>Jump up and down 5 x </p> <p>I can also.....?</p>	<p>GO</p> <p>Think happy thoughts </p> <p>Finish my work </p> <p>Help others </p> <p>Share ideas </p> <p>I can also.....?</p>	<p>SLOW DOWN</p> <p>Take deep breaths </p> <p>Talk to someone </p> <p>Go for a short walk </p> <p>Count to ten </p> <p>I can also.....?</p>	<p>STOP</p> <p>Take a time out </p> <p>Run a lap </p> <p>Squeeze a stress ball </p> <p>Drink water </p> <p>I can also.....?</p>

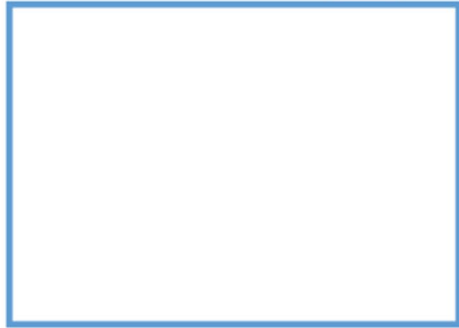
Zones of Regulation Poster

WHAT ZONE AM I IN?

BLUE ZONE



GREEN ZONE



YELLOW ZONE



RED ZONE



Tools to Help Me Get to the GREEN Zone.



rest

go

slow

stop

breath deep



finish work



tell teacher



breath deep



need a hug



keep listening



take a break



count



talk to teacher



happy thoughts



3 breaths



time out



take a break



help others



go for walk



use fidgets



HOW ARE YOU REALLY FEELING TODAY?

Green Zone – I'm Good To Go

I'm feeling...

Focused

😊 Calm

😎 Confident

💬 Social / Friendly

👑 Motivated

🧠 What helps me stay here:

Listening to music

Sticking to my plan

Talking with a friend

Staying organized

Yellow Zone – Something's Off

I'm feeling...

😴 Tired or low energy

😞 Distracted

😞 Bored

😰 Anxious or nervous

😡 Frustrated

🧠 What might help:

Take a 5-minute break

Move around/stretch

Use a focus tool (fidget, timer)

Talk it out or write it down

Red Zone – I'm Struggling

I'm feeling...

😡 Angry or irritable

😞 Sad or overwhelmed

😞 Panicked or shut down

😞 Stuck or hopeless

🧠 What might help:

Deep breathing

Grounding techniques

Ask for space or help

Use a calm-down plan

Be careful of
what you
say...

How are your
words helping
your child to
learn new
skills?

SAY THIS

that sounds really hard

I feel for you

I'm listening

do you want
to tell me more?

how can I help?



NOT THAT

stay positive

you worry too much

why do you let it
bother you?

everything happens
for a reason

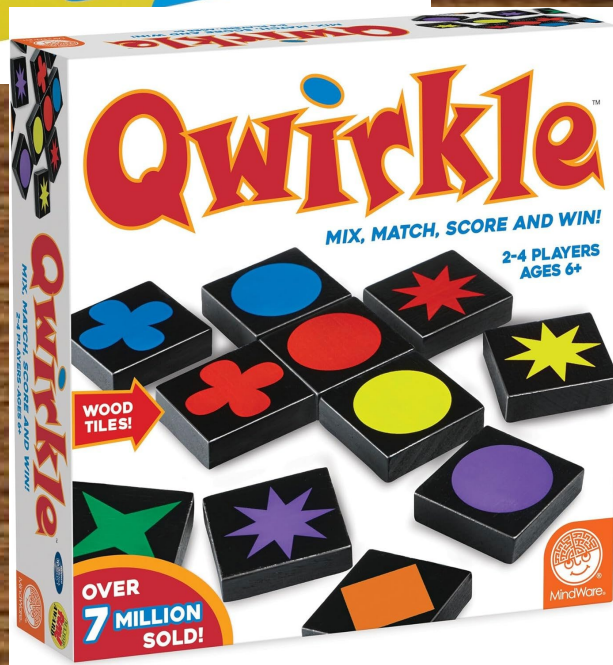
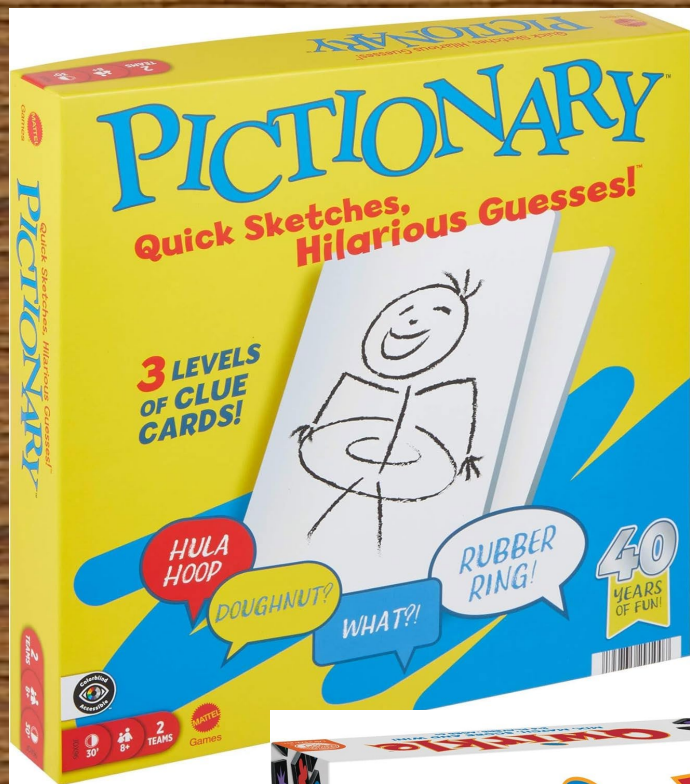
just don't
think about it

emotional intelligence requires
authenticity for human connection,
toxic positivity is invalidating

Tips for supporting Executive Functioning at home:

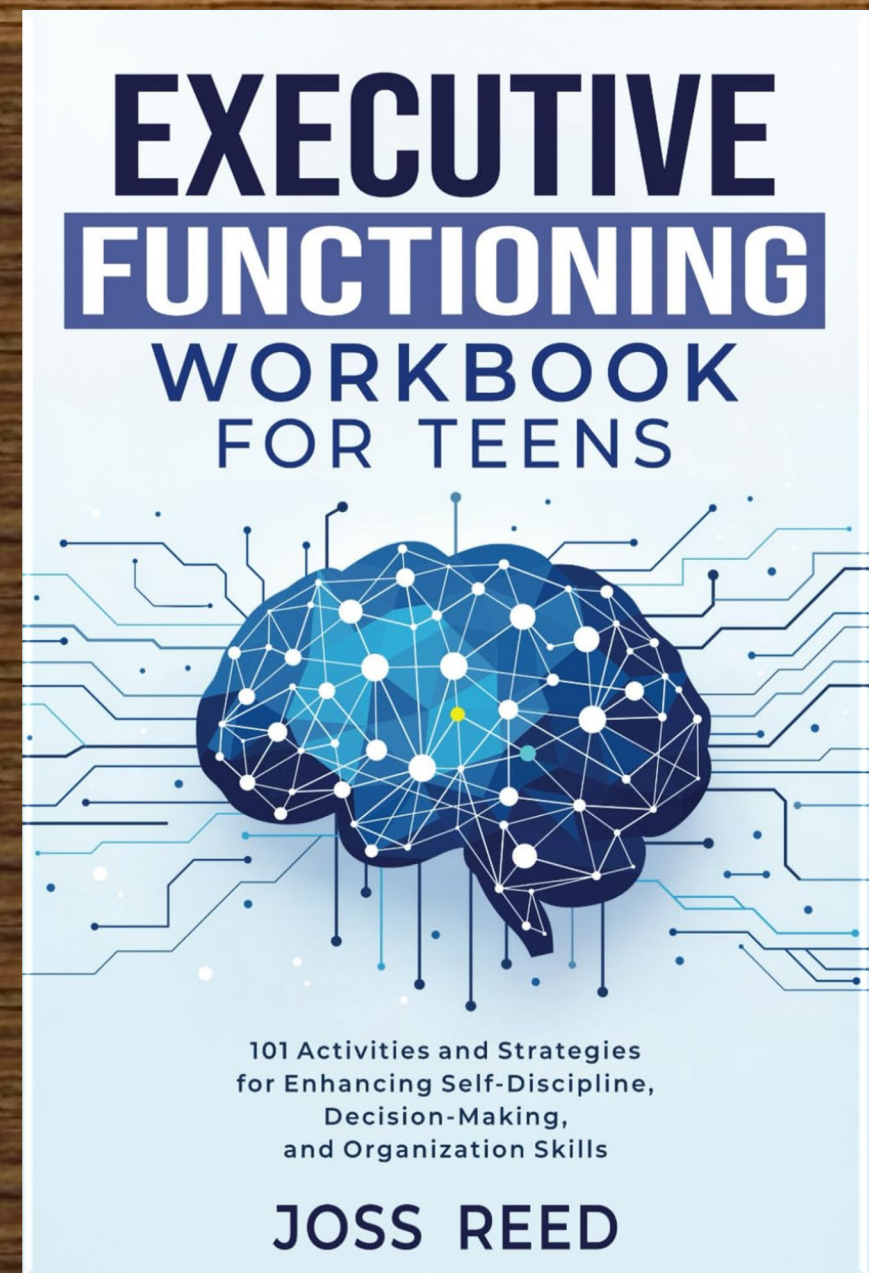
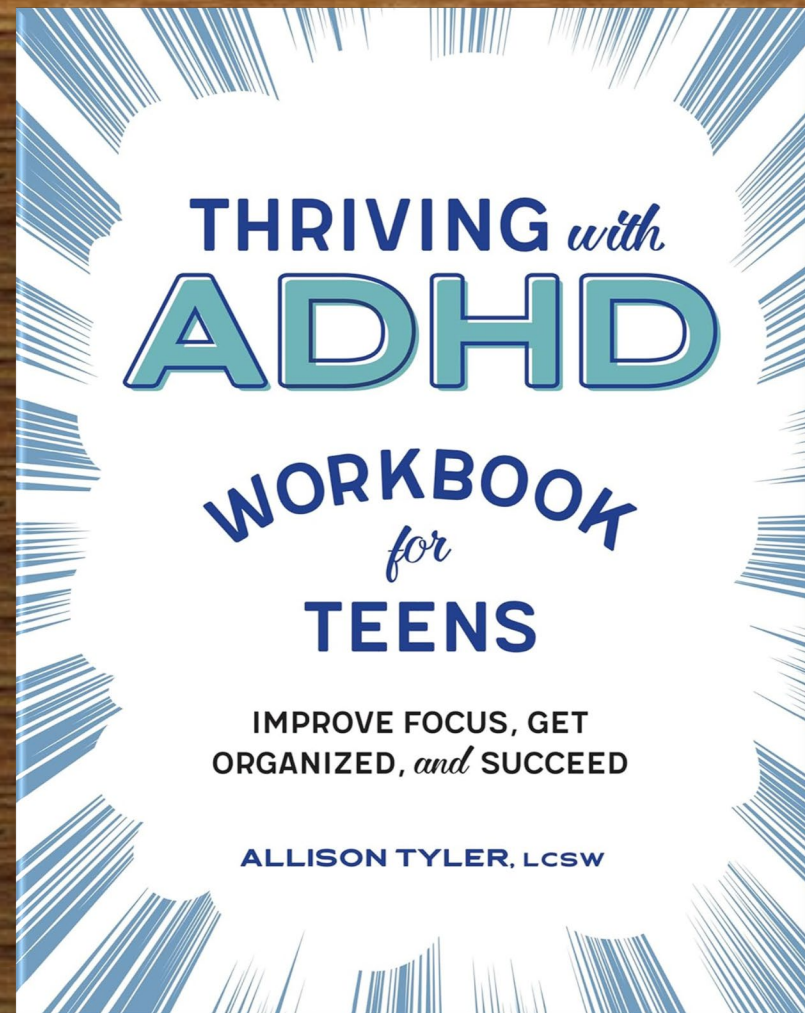
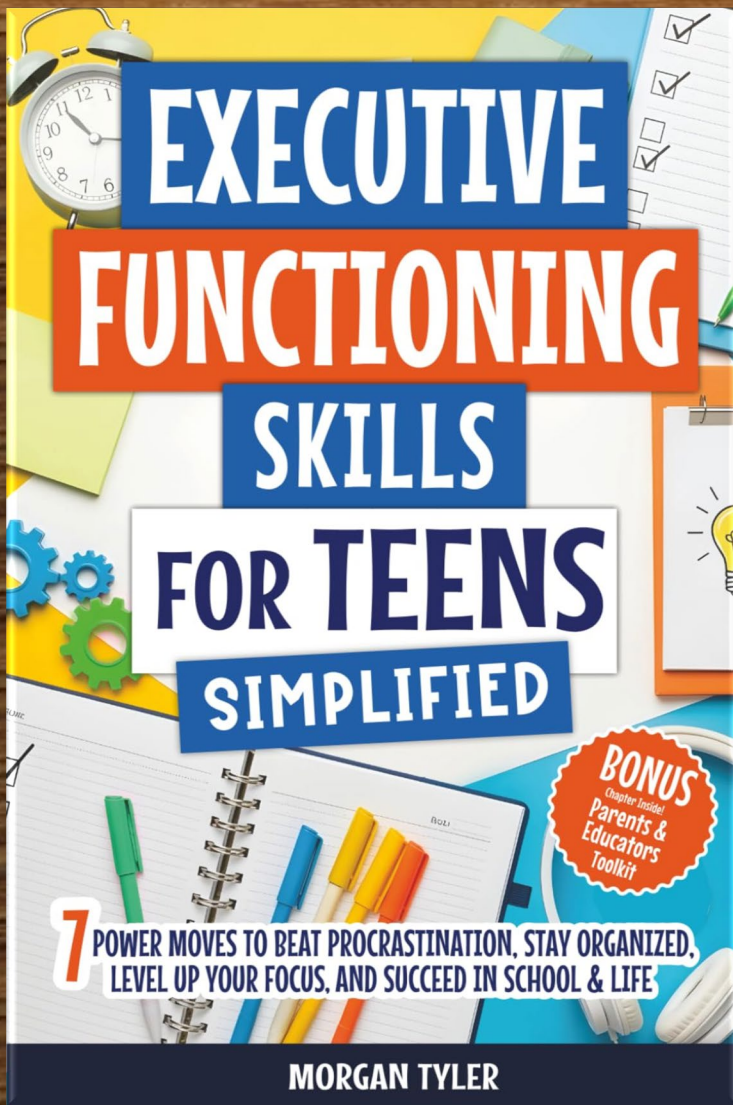
1. Support time management with timers and timetables
2. Build routines which become second nature – what/when/where
3. Make visual/write down reminders – model this yourself!!!
4. Label storage places – remember Place, Retrieve and Return
5. Make it easy to start practical tasks – reflect afterwards – why did it work for them?
6. Allow enough time for them to get ready – it's independence that matters!!
7. Keep demands small and then build them up with practice
8. Try and avoid always sorting out or giving them the answer – try and problem solve and include
9. Ensure that they have a go to place to calm and for quiet/to process
10. Teach ways to calm including breathing and what it means to have a calm body and mind – work on these as a family
11. Help them to name their emotions and agree on strategies
12. Acknowledge difficulties and work on these together – show them the difference practice makes!!

Supporting Executive Functioning challenges is not about being perfect—it's about building consistency and practicing the skills which are going to help your child's lifelong independence.



Board games support
mental reasoning and
Executive
Functioning Skills





Some helpful books



Useful websites links for families:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/leaflets/positive-parenting>

www.exploringyourmind.com/how-to-set-boundaries-for-children

<https://www.verywellfamily.com>

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/parenting-relationships>

<https://families.barnardos.org.uk/pre-school/routines-boundaries>

<https://www.leaplambeth.org.uk/.../important-routines-in-early-childhood>



Any Questions

See these skills as:

- ✓ needing practice every day
- ✓ having to be learnt and praised
- ✓ not always going to plan
- ✓ needing to be modelled by family
- ✓ being all based around consistent routines
- ✓ being life long and so there's plenty of time to develop!!!!

**Thank you for your
time today**

Paul Cabb

**Social Eyes – A Vision for
Inclusion & Glebe School**

