

## Executive Functioning 'Tricks' We All Use

### **Inhibition:**

- Empathy.
- Count to 10!
- Deep breaths.
- Take a breath or drink of water/tea/coffee.
- Verbalize internally.
- Smile.
- Reduce voice volume.
- Self talk – think of consequences.
- Wait time.
- Consequences, take a deep breath.
- Walk away.
- Think about the outcome if I inhibit or don't inhibit.

### **Shift:**

- When I'm reading a book and I get a text message, I finish the paragraph, deal with the text and then continue reading.
- Organize closure by cleaning up an area or folder.
- Short transition activity.
- I think about the clock!
- Self-competitiveness
- Timer – 5 minute warning.

### **Emotional Control:**

- Taking space.
- Staff switch when feeling frustrated with a student.
- Deep breaths.
- Rate the size of the problem.
- Acknowledge my physical state (racing heartbeat, breathing etc.).
- Switch activities.
- Go for a walk.
- Active listening with think/wait time.
- Take a break – self time-out.
- Check my physiological responses (i.e. clenching teeth, shoulders, etc.) to regulate breathing and reaction.

### **Initiation:**

- Active Procrastination (?)
- "I need help."
- Imagine end result/goal.
- Make a visual to-do list.
- Peer help.

- When writing papers in college I would get started by just writing the heading.
- List
- Force myself to 'take the first step' if it's an undesired task – that feels great!

### **Working Memory:**

- Take notes.
- Checklists.
- Use my calendar.
- Daily schedule.
- Use coping mechanisms to pay attention: gum, water, drawing.
- Visuals (pictures, colors).
- Looking over an entire math unit's materials to see the skill projection.
- Look for patterns/connections.

### **Planning/Organization:**

- Make lists.
- Calendar with codes.
- Careful thought of all variables before outright plan.
- Time management.
- List in order of importance.

### **Organization of Materials:**

- Place materials by subject at different locations of a table.
- Strategic piles of papers to be filed/addressed.
- Make lists - -\*color code.
- Label files/boxes.
- Create systems (such as designated spaces/agreed upon best practices and maintain when possible with openness to change/re-evaluation.
- Folders and notebooks.

### **Self-Monitoring:**

- Voice control (looked around, lowered voice).
- Non-verbal cues from others.
- Ask for help/reminder from others.
- Think about who I'm with (audience) and where I am (place).
- Scan the faces in the room and look at nonverbal cues (i.e. body language) and think about how I'm reacting.
- Knowledge of social rules/roles.
- Perceptions of others about me.