

**Decision
Anxiety,
Executive
Functioning,
OCD, Autism,
& ADHD.**

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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

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1.

WORKING MEMORY

How much information a person can hold in their minds in order to complete a cognitive or physical task

2.

SEQUENCING

Being able to think of all the steps of a task and arrange them in the mind to see how to get from start to finish

3.

REGULATION & SELF-CONTROL

Being able to recognize, identify, and work through emotions and impulses and stay on task without distraction or overwhelm

4.

INITIATION & FLEXIBILITY

Being able to plan for, stop, start, or pause a task in order to deal with unexpected or unplanned circumstances



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IS USUALLY DISCUSSED IN TERMS OF BEHAVIORS

Organized or disorganized

Late or on time

Completes or abandons tasks

Impulsive or strategic

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BUT WE MISJUDGE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AS

CHARACTER & MORALITY

Thoughtful
or inconsiderate



Responsible
or careless



Lazy or
dedicated



Rigid or
flexible

Reliable
or fickle



Easy-going
or picky



Poised or
reactive

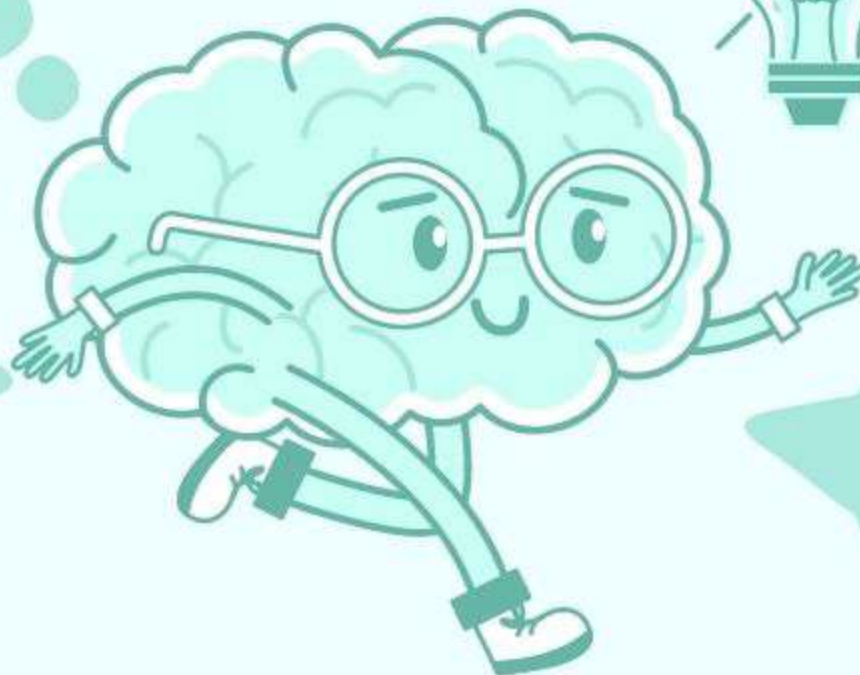
DEFICITS IN EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ARE DUE TO CHEMICAL & STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE **BRAIN**

**RELATED TO
CHEMICALS**
*Adrenaline,
dopamine,
serotonin,
etc.*

Related to
**DISTRIBUTION
OF NEURONS**

Impacts
**EVEN THE ABILITY
TO PLAN, START,
STOP, &
CONTROL
MOVEMENT**

**NEURAL
PATHWAYS**
*Can info
travel to
different parts
of the brain?*



**IS VARIABLE
AND COMPLEX**
*and presents
in everyone
differently*

THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF

EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION

Cannot predict
outcomes for big
decisions

Cannot hold enough
information in working
memory to feel sure of
anything



Cannot arrange
steps in mind to
be able to make
an informed
choice

Cannot imagine
possible scenarios
to plan for,
emotionally or
practically

EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION INNER DIALOGUE

What did I forget to bring or think about? Do I need to cook something? Bring a gift?

Did I forget to ask them how they are doing? Why do they seem disappointed? What did I just say?

Am I going to embarrass myself again by not having done the thing I am supposed to do?



Do I have enough money? Are there groceries in my fridge? What bills are due? Do I have assignments to complete? How long does this stuff take?

When I make this decision, and I forget something important, how much will I pay for it? In what ways?

How can I possibly be emotionally available when everything is behind, and I have no idea what to do or how to start getting it all done?

External dialogue

What people with executive dysfunction hear from others all the time.

Why are you always so negative?! You make everything about how it will impact you! Sometimes you just need to do things because they will make others happy!

Everything I say, you argue! Do you just love to argue for the sake of arguing, do you hate me, or are you just that in love with the sound of your own voice?!

I just asked you to remember this one thing! You could not even be bothered to do the only thing I asked you to do, or to even be on time. I guess I am just not that important to you!

We are trying to be productive, but all you want to do is make excuses. It is not that hard! Everyone else did their part.

What were you thinking? Why would you do that?! You are too smart to act like you could not have imagined how your actions would impact others!



Imagine how it feels to live with executive dysfunction

When you cannot imagine how long something will take, what steps are involved, what the outcomes might be, or how to get there, the chance of everything feels like 50/50. It makes everything feel like a coin toss between survival or disaster.

STAY TUNED FOR PART TWO: PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION

Your instincts about what are driving the behaviors of someone who struggles with executing functioning may have led you to misunderstand people in your life.

In the same way, your well-intentioned support may have caused you to make things harder for them. Part 2 will give you tips to give more effective support.

see you soon!