

**EXECUTIVE FUNCTION &
BRAIN BASED DISABILITIES**
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EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

Executive functioning is a brain based skill that gives us the ability to organize, plan, control impulses & exercise cognitive flexibility.

Memory is integral to effective executive functioning

The brain continues to develop the frontal lobe into the mid 20's.

Higher level cognitive abilities that assist in the control and regulation of a behaviour.

Enables one to organize and direct an action or behaviour.

Allows for adaptations/changes to an activity or routine in the moment and to manage the stresses of daily living.

Provide for the inhibition of inappropriate behaviours and impulses during everyday life.

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

The DSM 5 defines ADHD as:

...a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. *Inattention* manifests behaviorally in ADHD as wandering off task, lacking persistence, having difficulty sustaining focus, and being disorganized and is not due to defiance or lack of comprehension. *Hyperactivity* refers to excessive motor activity (such as a child running about) when it is not appropriate, or excessive fidgeting, tapping, or talkativeness....*Impulsivity* refers to hasty actions that occur in the moment without forethought and that have high potential for harm to the individual (e.g., darting into the street without looking). Impulsivity may reflect a desire for immediate rewards or an inability to delay gratification. Impulsive behaviours may manifest as social intrusiveness (e.g., interrupting others excessively) and/or as making important decisions without consideration of long-term consequences (e.g., taking a job without adequate information).

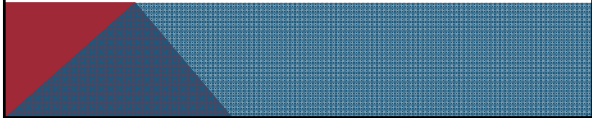
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, 2013, (p. 61)

DR. RUSSELL BARKLEY

Dr. Russell Barkley describes ADHD as an Executive Function Disability, as the components that are integral to ADHD all exist from the Frontal Lobe/Executive Functioning part of the brain.

The following link takes you to a YouTube video where Dr. Barkley does a great job of describing this relationship. I have shown the first part of the video to parents and they have found it interesting and helpful.

[VIDEO from the Burnett Lecture: Part 1](#)

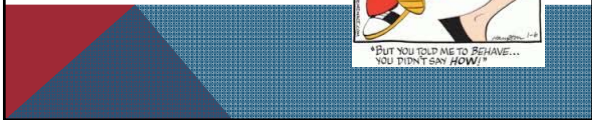


WHEN EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING GOES AWRY

- Impaired ability to abstract
- Rigid thinking (perseveration)
- Impaired ability to generalize/apply learning appropriately
- Impaired/inconsistent memory
- Impulsivity
- TROUBLE...



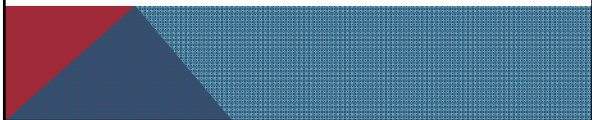
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PRINCIPLE DOMAINS OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Executive Function	Description
Activation	Organizing, Prioritizing, Planning & Initiating Action
Timeliness	Awareness of time; Scheduling; Time Management
Planning	Imagination, Evaluation, Selection of Possible Options & Outcomes
Attention	Focusing, Sustaining and/or Shifting Attention
Effort	Regulating Level of Alertness, Sustaining Effort and Process Speed
Emotional Control	Modulate Emotions & Manage Frustration
Memory	Utilizing Working Memory; Memory Storage & Retrieval
Action	Self-Monitoring & Regulation of Action

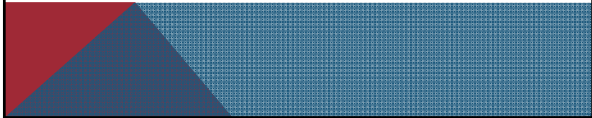
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COMORBIDITY (MORE THAN ONE DISORDER)

The combination of a brain based disability and ADHD can also lead to a number of comorbid challenges, including:

- Cognitive/academic/learning challenges & disabilities
- Behavioral
- Neurologic (nervous system, sensory issues)
- Environmental
- Mental health (According to the DSM 5, approximately *half* of those diagnosed with ADHD will also be diagnosed with conduct disorder)
- Attachment issues



STRATEGIES

Do we teach Executive Function and/or do we make accommodations?

Discussion...

