



HOW TO BE YOUR CHILD'S EXECUTIVE FUNCTION CHEERLEADER

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WHY ARE WE HERE?

1. To take a **clarify and define** the 8 Executive Functions (EF)
2. To see where underdeveloped **EF's and study skills may be the root cause** of common school challenges
3. To share ways to more **effectively communicate** with your student around homework to:
 - reduce struggles and
 - “grow the seeds” of effective strategies.

Our Executive Function Tanks are Running Low

CHALLENGES WE ARE SEEING DUE TO LOW EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS:

- Getting started
- Staying focused
- Organizing (thoughts, too!)
- Tracking work
- "Chunking" work
- Asking for help
- Transitioning
- Setting goals
- Managing emotions
- Resisting distractions

WHAT EXACTLY ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS?

What are Executive Functions?

- Executive functions are the “self-management system of the brain”
- Having strong EF skills helps you get what you want to get done.



INHIBITION INITIATION
SHIFTING EMOTIONAL CONTROL
WORKING MEMORY
PLANNING & ORGANIZATION
MATERIALS ORGANIZATION
SELF-MONITORING

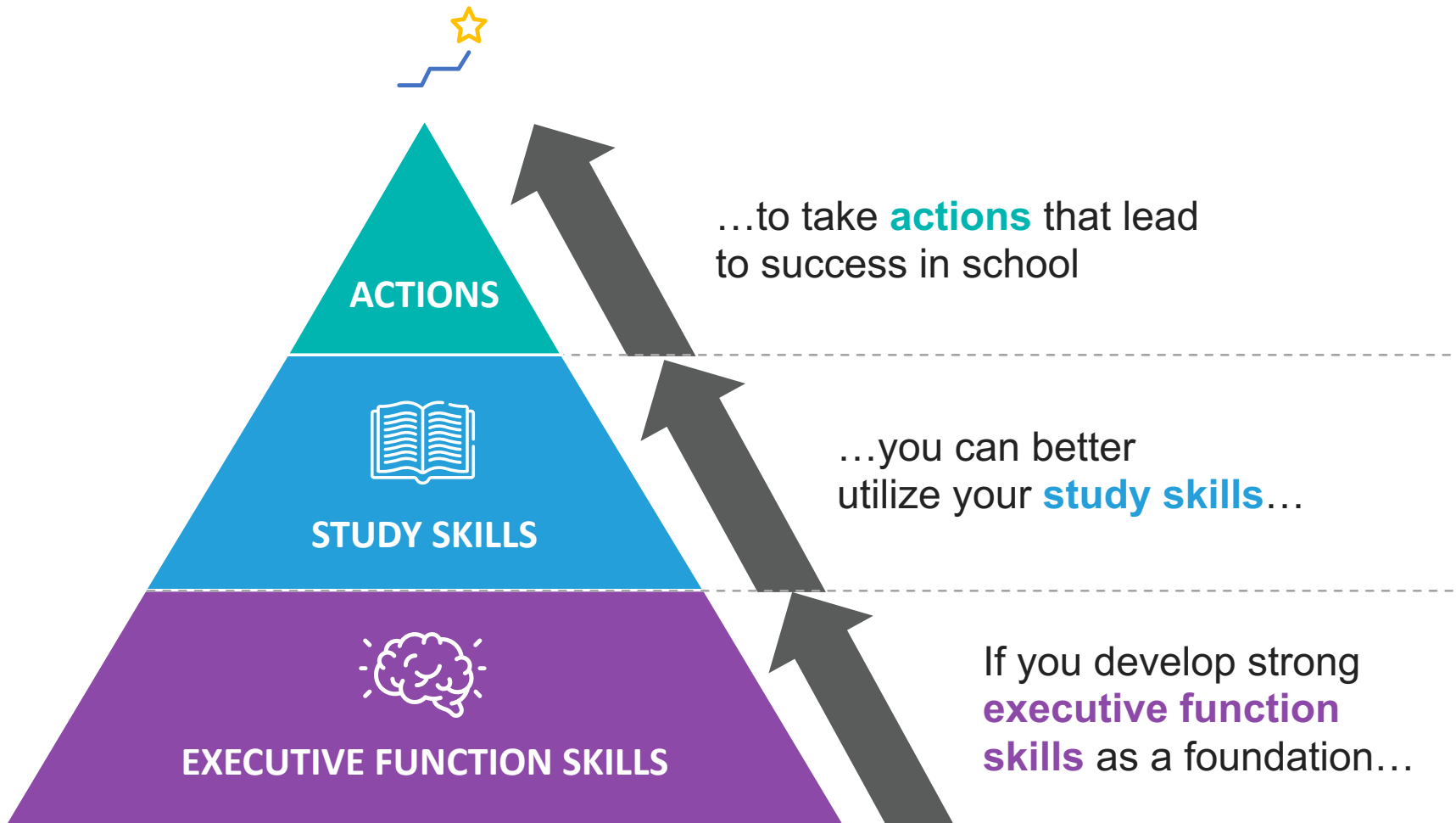
EF-BRIEF's clinical scales (Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function)

What are Study Skills?

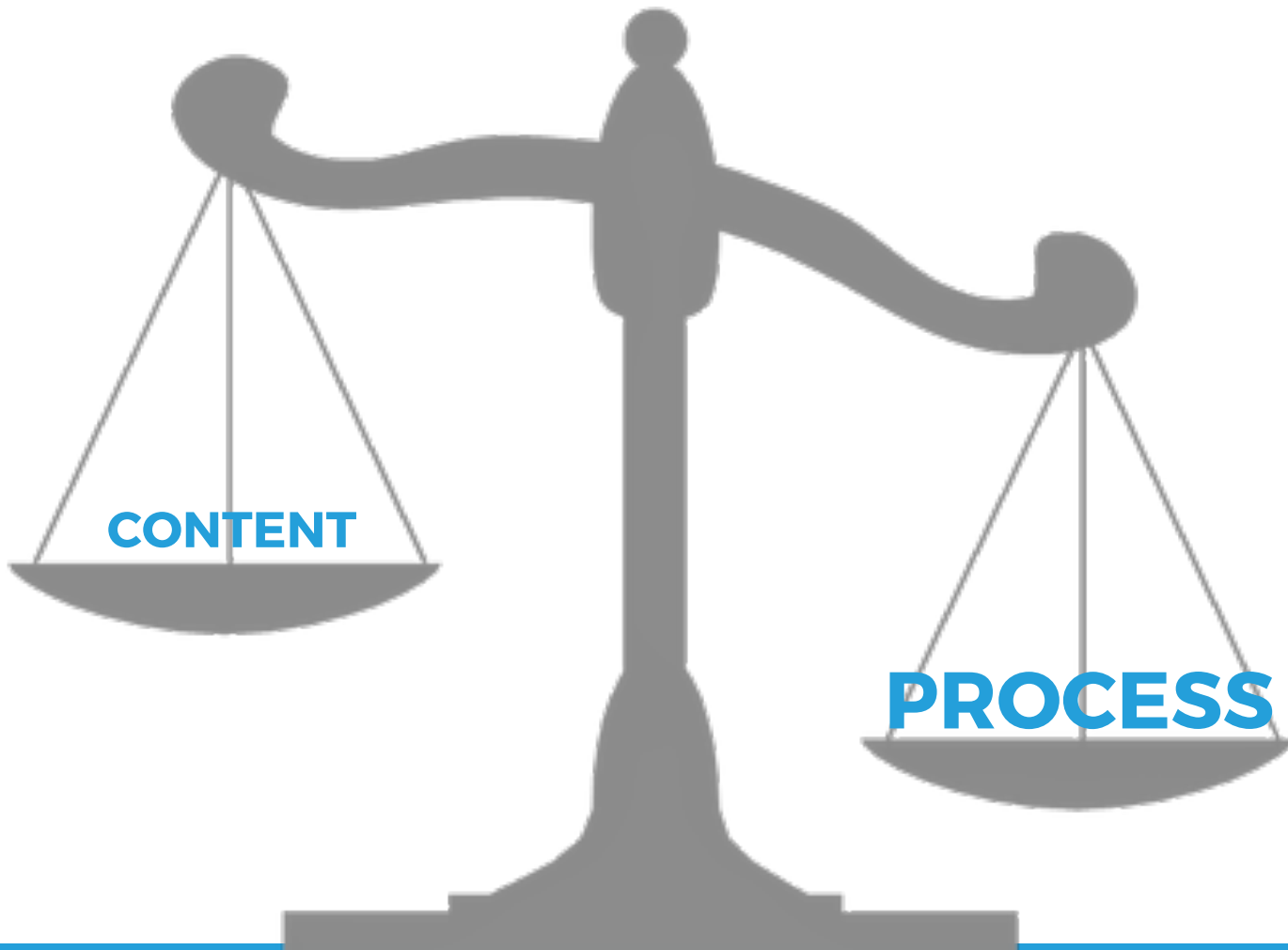
- Study skills are tactics and strategies that improve how students acquire, retain, recall, and apply information.



Executive Functions are the Foundation



What happens when?



IQ is a natural gift, but
LEARNING is a skill.

Strategies can fill the gaps.

RECOGNIZING MISSING EF SKILLS MATTERS

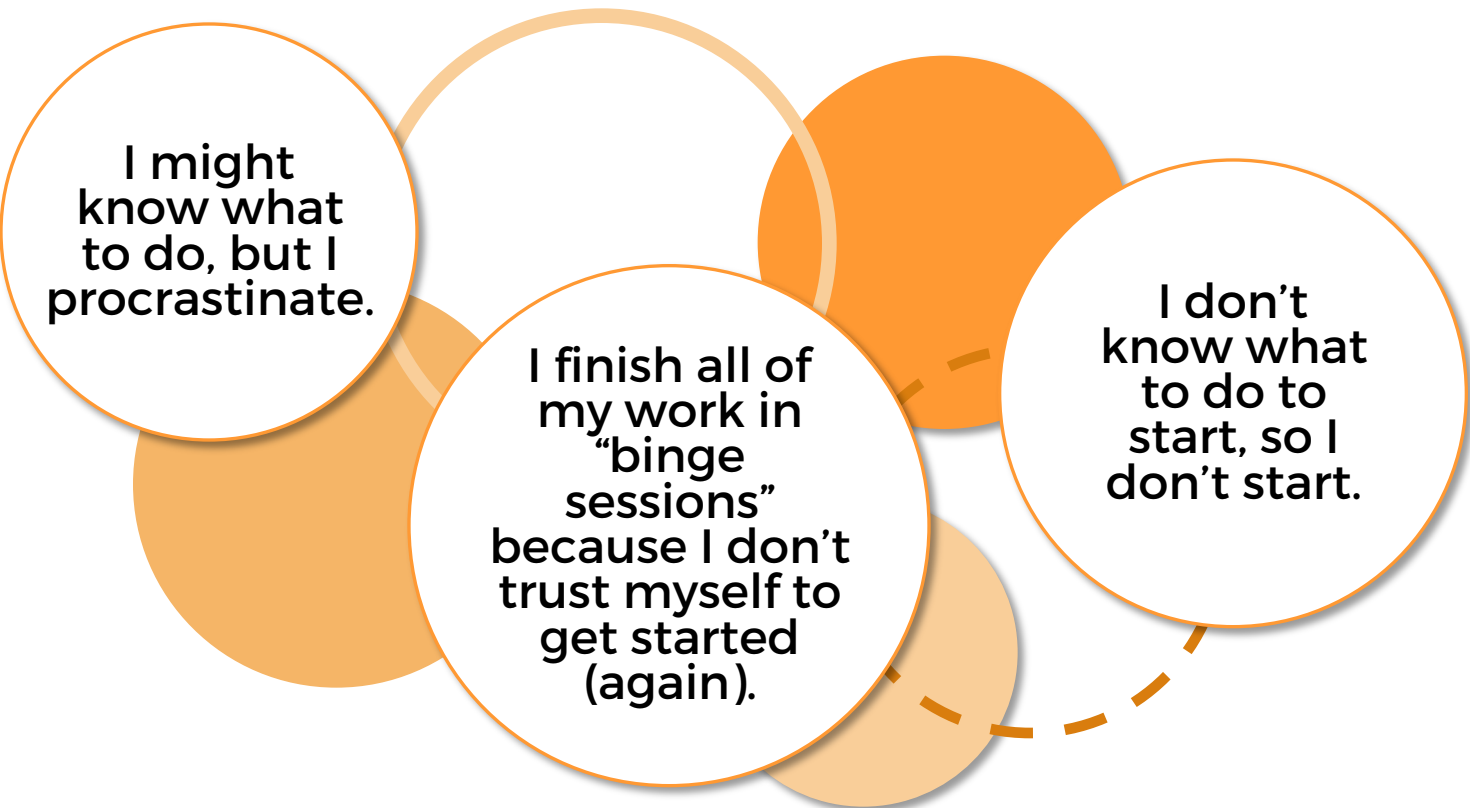
- It's tempting to think:
 - They are lazy
 - They just need to be able to chunk their work
 - They aren't motivated
 - They are wasting time
 - They don't care about the quality of their work
 - They rush through work
 - They make careless / repeated errors

**It is only by identifying
the underlying cause
for a challenge can we
apply the **right**
approach**

In most cases the “why” is due to the need for a skill

Let's Take a Deeper Dive:

**HOW ARE EXECUTIVE
FUNCTIONS USED
“IN REAL LIFE”?**



I might know what to do, but I procrastinate.

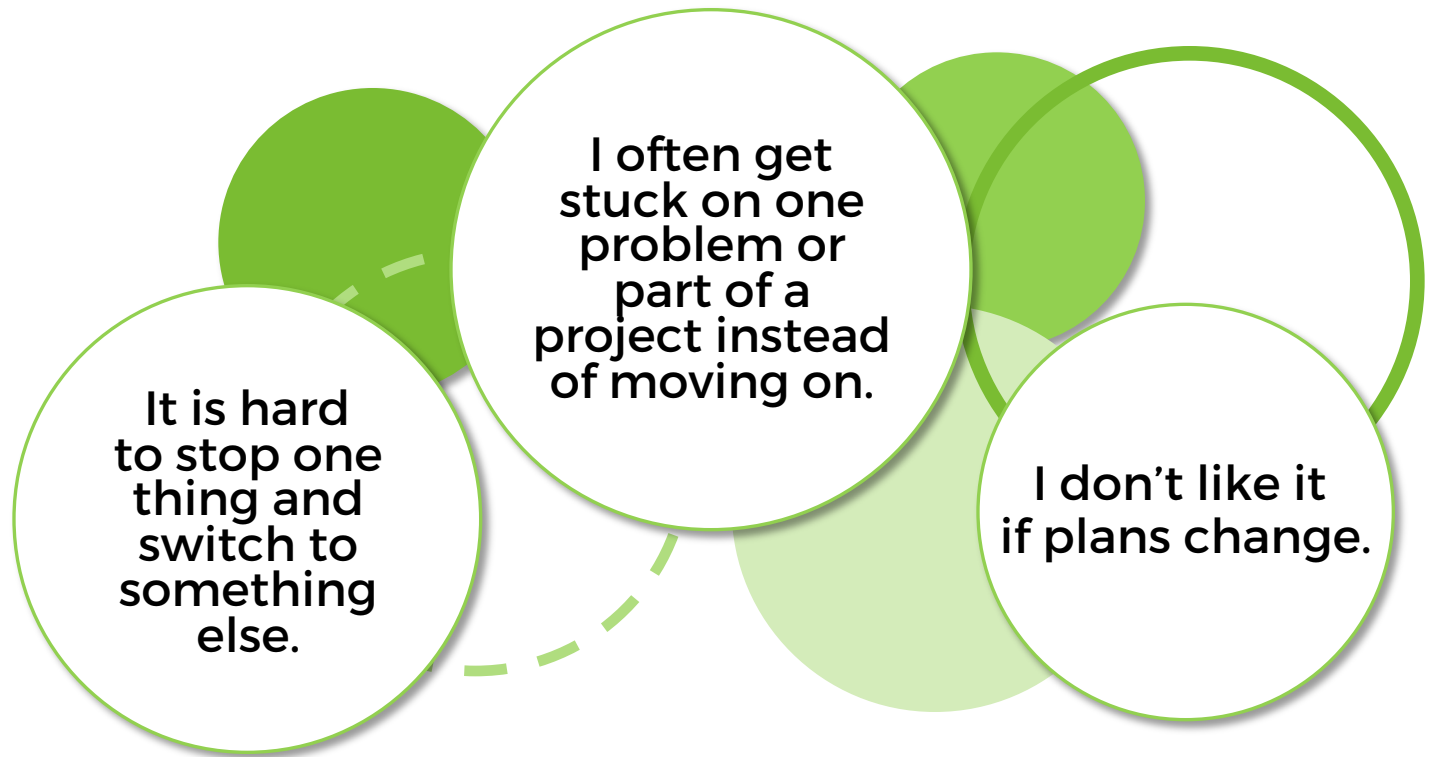
I finish all of my work in “binge sessions” because I don’t trust myself to get started (again).

I don’t know what to do to start, so I don’t start.



INITIATION

The ability to take action and get started



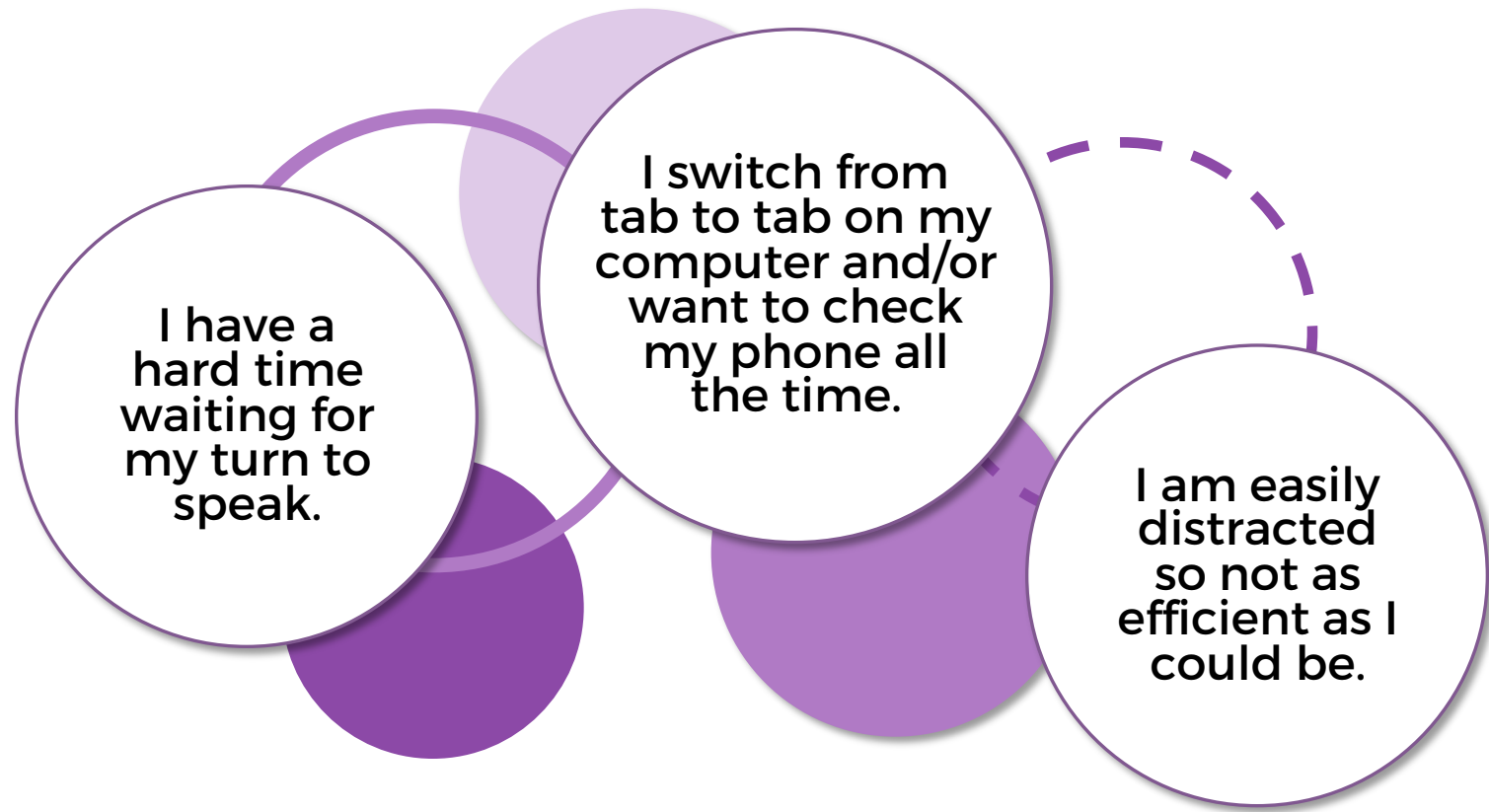
SHIFTING

Having the mental flexibility to easily switch from one task or thought process to another

INHIBITION



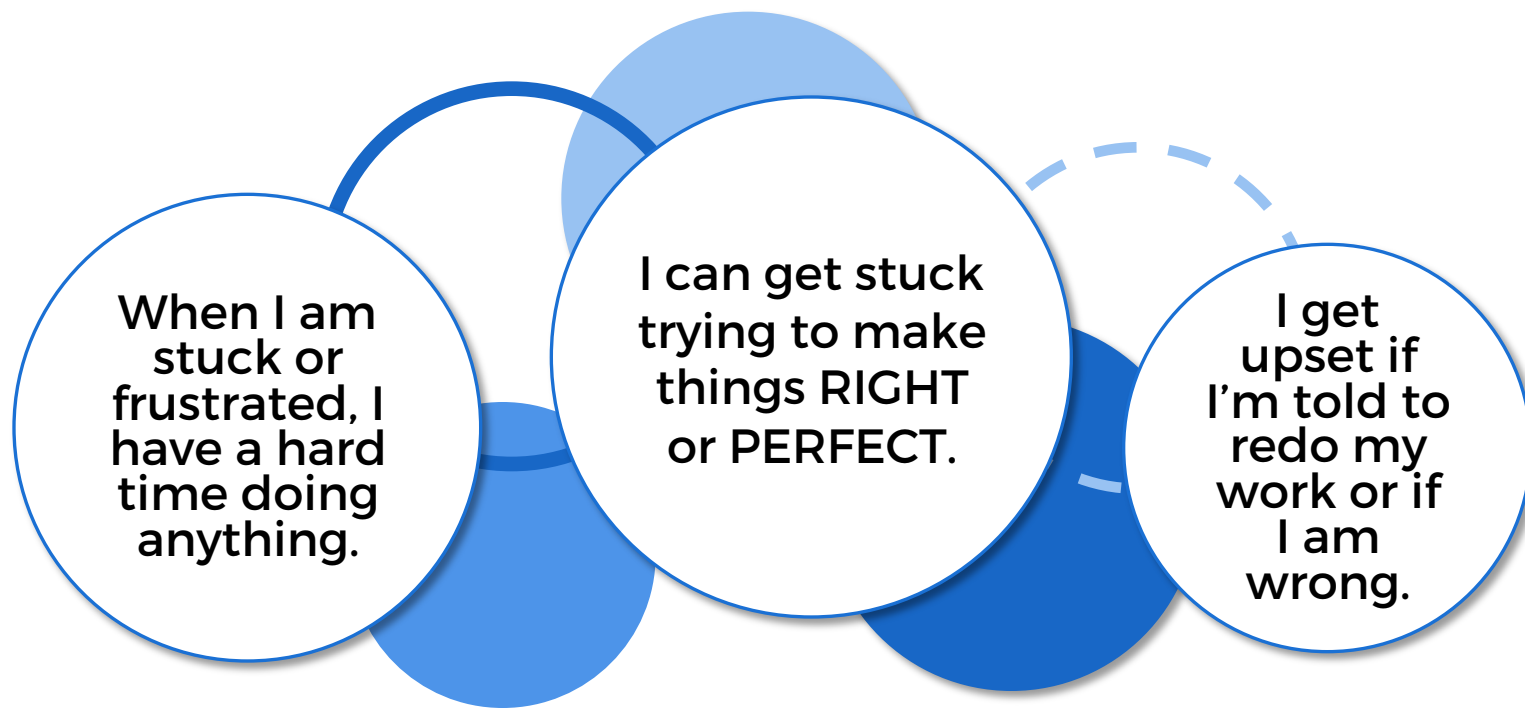
The ability to ignore distractions and resist temptations





EMOTIONAL CONTROL

The ability to manage your feelings to achieve a goal



WORKING MEMORY

The ability to hold on to information and use it effectively



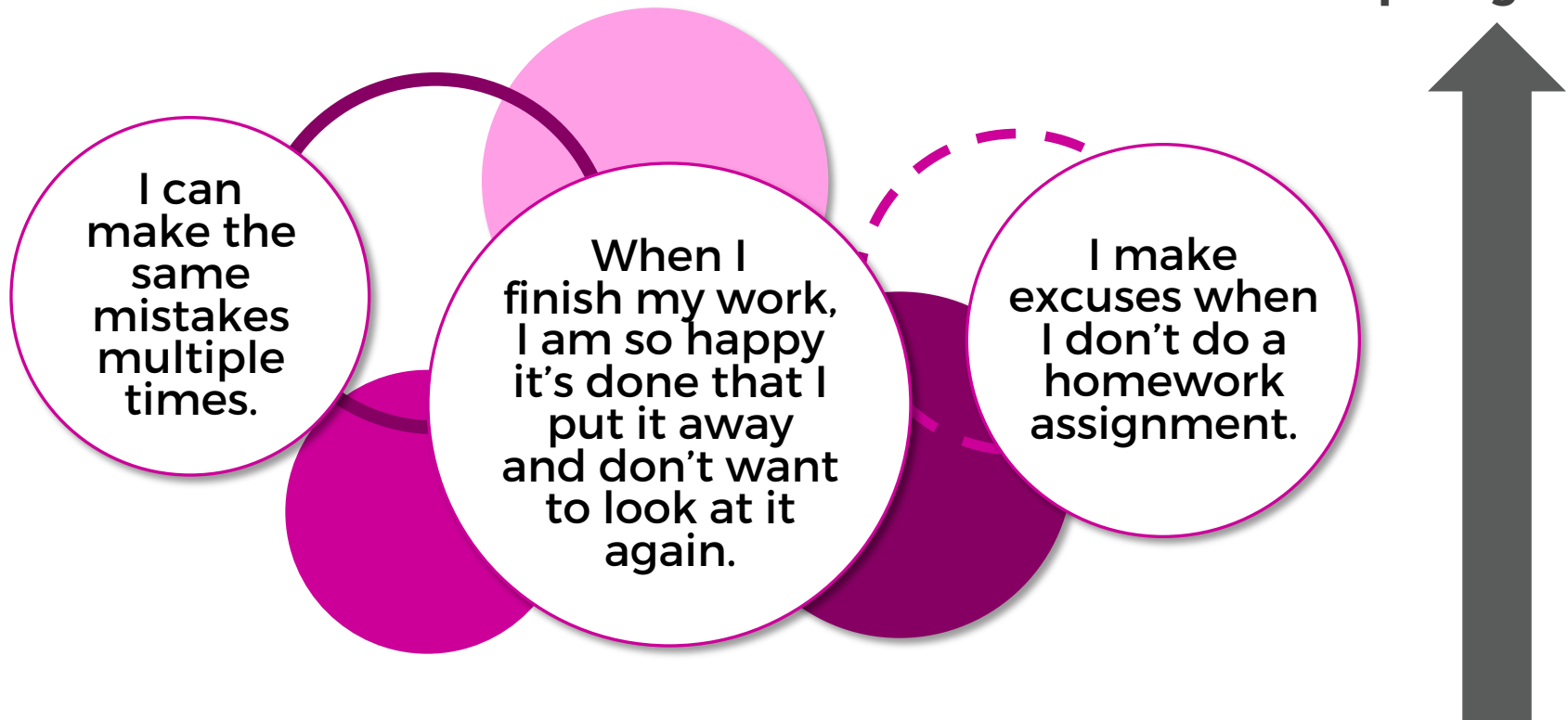
I need
to reread
things I
have read.

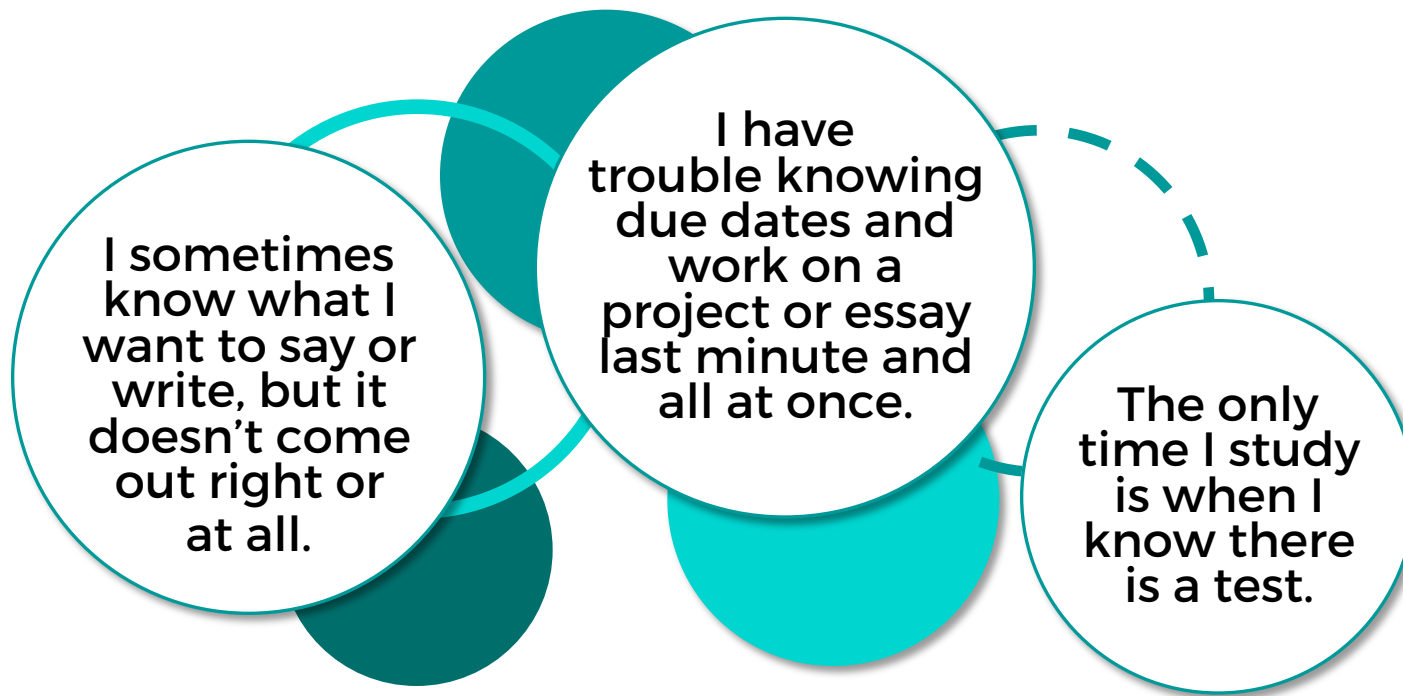
I need a lot of
repetition to
remember
things.

I have
trouble
remembering
multiple
directions.

SELF-MONITORING

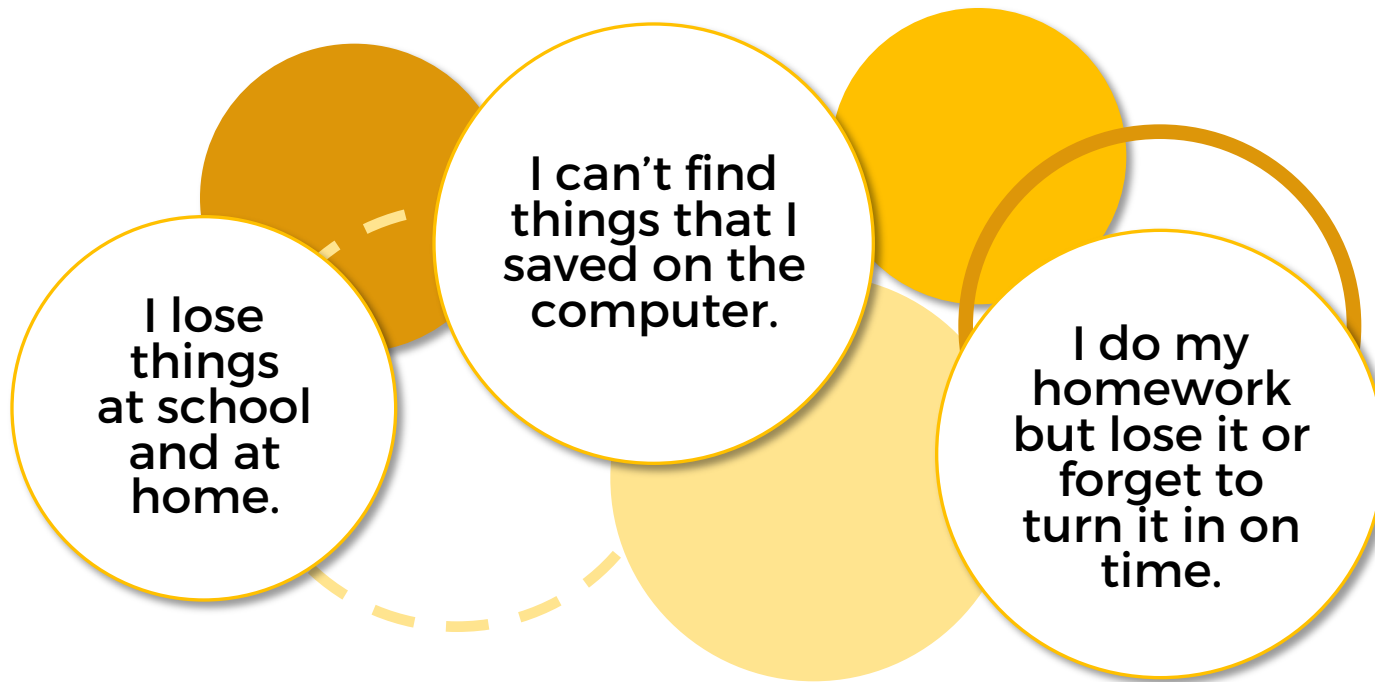
The ability to monitor and evaluate performance and keep track of actions that impact goals





PLANNING & ORGANIZING

The ability to set goals and use a strategic approach to achieve them



MATERIALS ORGANIZATION



The ability to create and maintain systems to keep belongings and plans in order

How Parents Can Help:

HOW CAN THIS AWARENESS ALLOW US TO BE OUR STUDENTS' EF CHEERLEADERS?

HOW CAN PARENTS BE THEIR CHILDREN'S EF CHEERLEADERS?

1. Looking for the “need behind the behavior” (behaviors are language)
2. Bringing a solutions-orientation (suggesting strategies vs. problem-seeking)
3. Watering the seeds (not the weeds)

The “Need Behind the Behavior”

Challenges	Possible Missing Skills	What it is NOT
Missing Work	Planning (I knew what to do but I didn't do it); Emotional Control (avoidance, perfectionism) Initiation (I don't know how to get started) Working Memory (My teachers are posted in so many different places and I can't keep track)	Lack of motivation Laziness

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Low Test Scores	Self-Monitoring (Not checking work before turning in, missing parts of directions) Inhibition (Rushing through to get to a preferred activity) Emotional Control (anxiety) Shifting (moving on to the next problem/section) Study Skills (note-taking, active study, test-taking strategies)	Lack of motivation Not Trying

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Not Paying Attention in Class	Inhibition (Inability to ignore distractions such as phone, chats, other homework, etc.) Shifting (Moving from a preferred to a non-preferred activity) Working Memory (Tracking multiple directions given simultaneously)	Lack of motivation or caring, Disrespect to teacher

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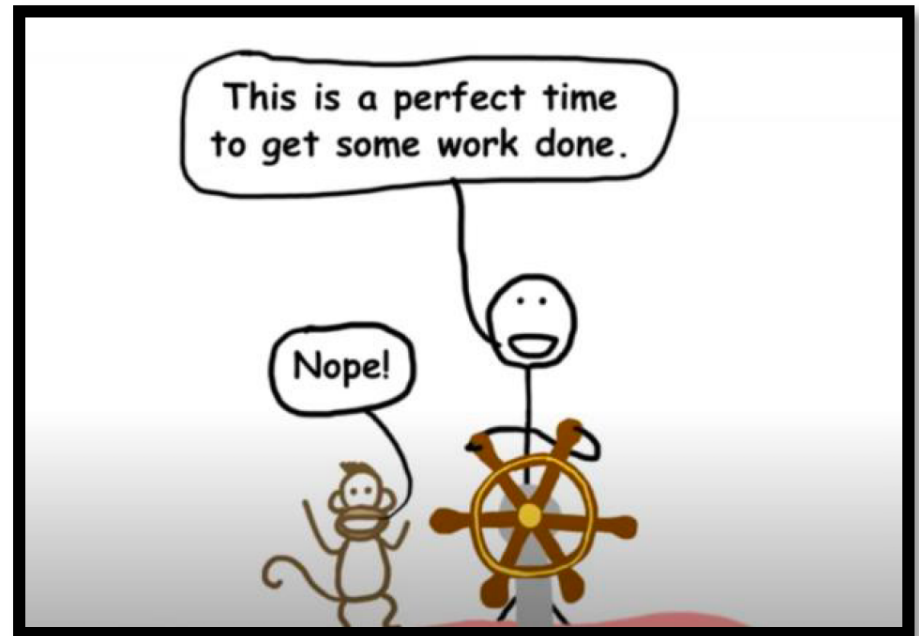
THE “ANTI” SOLUTIONS ORIENTATION

What we typically say....

- “DO YOU HAVE HOMEWORK?”
 - “HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR HOMEWORK?”
 - “WHAT HOMEWORK DO YOU HAVE TONIGHT?”
- ARE YOU ALL CAUGHT UP WITH YOUR HOMEWORK?

COMMON BARRIERS TO STARTING

- ☐ I don't know what I have to do.
- ☐ It's not due for a few days / week.
- ☐ I think it will take a long time to finish.
- ☐ I don't know how to do it.
- ☐ I don't have the materials I need.
- ☐ I don't feel like it / don't feel motivation.
- ☐ It's only worth a few points.
- ☐ It's worth such a big part of my grade, it's overwhelming.
- ☐ It seems harder than I feel like doing or think I can do.



THE SOLUTION:
1) MAKE A PLAN
2) BUILD “ON—RAMPS”

A LIST OF
WORK IS
NOT A
PLAN

My List of Work

	Formal assessment on The Moon's Orbit and Lunar Phases. Science — Due Apr 23
	The Giver Utopia Project English — Due Apr 22
	Complete Integrals IXL Math — Due Apr 17
	Elections and Democracy Quiz History — Due Apr 17
	Problem set-Integrals pgs 14 and 15 #1-31 odd Math — Due Apr 17
	Take Home Quiz-Lunar phases Science — Due Apr 17
	The Giver Vocab Quiz English — Due Apr 17

Just knowing the DUE DATE doesn't help you start...

KEYS TO PLANNING

1. IDENTIFYING THE SPECIFICS OF THE ASSIGNMENT (VS. "MATH HOMEWORK")
2. PREVIEW THE ASSIGNMENT (REDUCES THE BARRIERS)
3. ALTERNATE EASY/HARD ("EASY" vs. STRESSFUL)

THE STUDYPRO
PLAN YOUR WORK | WORK YOUR PLAN

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____ Total Time I Have: _____

ASSIGNMENT (BE SPECIFIC!)	DUE DATE	TIME ESTIMATE	ORDER*	START TIME	END TIME	WHAT'S LEFT?
HISTORY/SS:						
MATH:						
SCIENCE:						
ENGLISH:						
FOREIGN LANGUAGE:						
OTHER:						
OTHER:						

Total Time I Need: _____

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Homework Success Plan

- 1 Look online **and** in your planner.
- 2 Write down all work that is due tomorrow **and** "chunks" of work that are due in the future.
- 3 *Start with something easy to warm your brain up. Then move to something more challenging. Repeat.
- 4 Take breaks every 20 - 40 mins (depending on age).
- 5 Do something (even small) from every assignment with a due date.
- 6 Transfer the "What's Left" column from today's sheet to tomorrow's.

DOWNLOAD AT:

<https://thestudypro.com/remote-coached-homework-center/>

Building On-Ramps

ON-RAMP EXAMPLES

BUILD ON-RAMPS:

GET STARTED IN EVEN A SMALL WAY

- **English / History Assignment**
 - Topic Exploration
 - Ideas Diagram
 - Rewording Questions for Clarity
 - Identify where to connect with the Q
 - Chunking into Steps
- **Math / Science Assignment**
 - Preview the assignment
 - Watch a video on the topic
 - Do only the odd questions
 - Draw a picture or create clues to define/connect

OTHER STRATEGIES TO INITIATE

- Change your location – sit in a different room.
- Put your phone in another room where you can hear and set the timer.
- Close tabs, except for the one you need open for your work.
- Call a friend to help you get started / work on the assignment.
- Set your intention to yourself or share with someone else.
- Make a plan that is specific (e.g., do problems 1 to 5 vs. “do math homework”).
- Set up motivators to give you rewards for completing task(s).
- Start with something easy.
- Read the directions.
- See if there are any materials you have to get (e.g., graph paper, poster board, etc.).
- Title the page for a paper.
- Do the first 5 problems or questions.
- Set a timer and work for 5 minutes and see how far you get (helps with time estimation to finish).
- Put 1 single keyword to answer each question to help get started.
- Use Google Voice to record a brain dump for a rough draft.

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HOW PARENTS CAN “WATER THE SEEDS”

POSITIVE REMINDERS AND REFLECTIONS

Avoid the “gotchas” or implication of the negative.

- Instead of “Do you have homework tonight?”

Try saying

“What is the first thing you could get started with tonight that would be easy to get off your plate?”

“Have you found Quizlet or notecards to be more effective for you?”

- Instead of “Did you study for your test yet?”

Try saying....

“Did you find anything interesting about the periodic table when you were studying?” “I always wanted to how to read a periodic table...I’d love to see your hard work there!”

HOW PARENTS CAN “WATER THE SEEDS”

FOCUS ON USE OF STRATEGIES

Praise for specific use of EF skills / strategies.

- Instead of “Wow, you got an A!”

Try saying...

” Wow, what worked there?”

” How did you study?”

- Instead of “That’s awesome you finished that!”

Try saying...

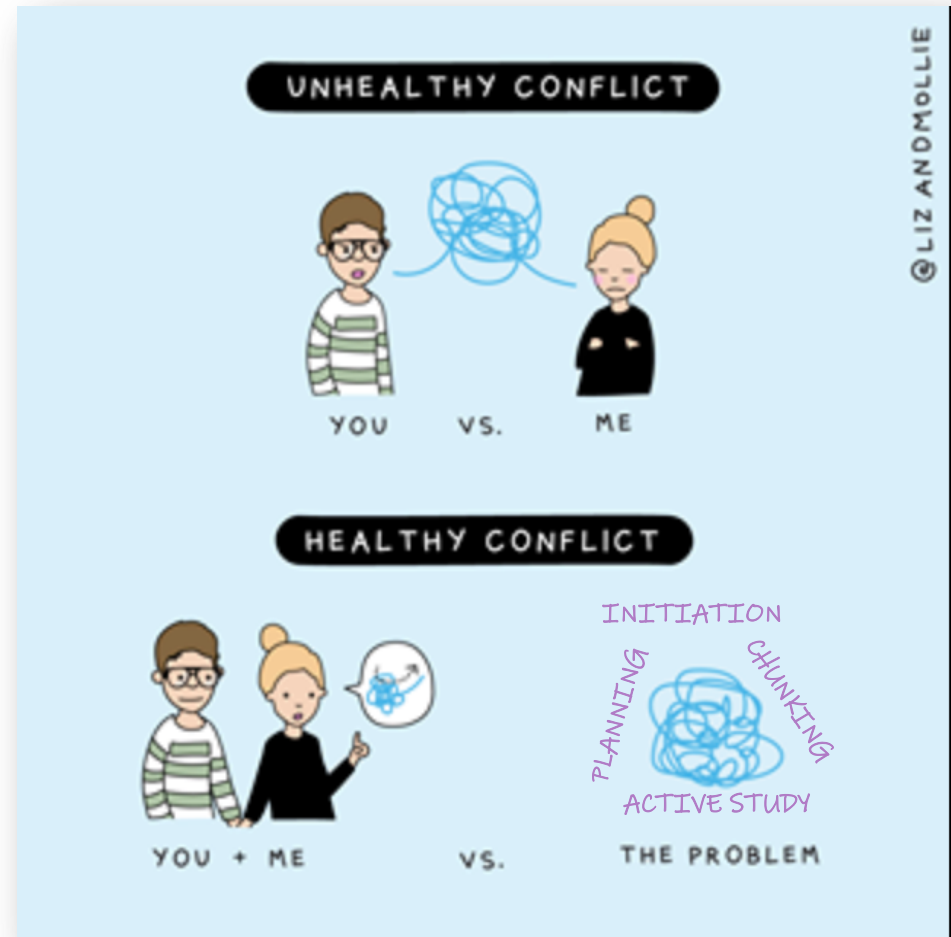
“That must feel so great...what helped get over that hurdle?”

More examples:

“I love how you <set a timer>, <did your homework at the dining room table>, <got started so quickly after school>, <studied over time>, <chunked up that work>...”.

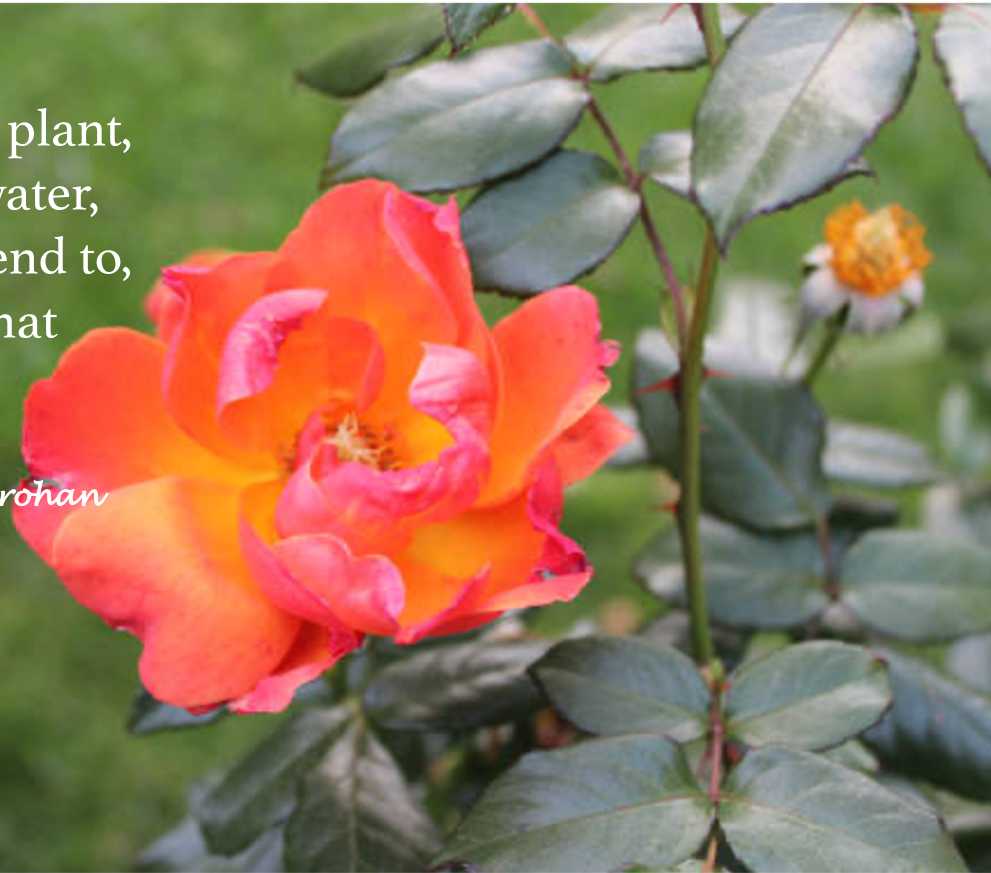
HOW PARENTS CAN “WATER THE SEEDS”

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING



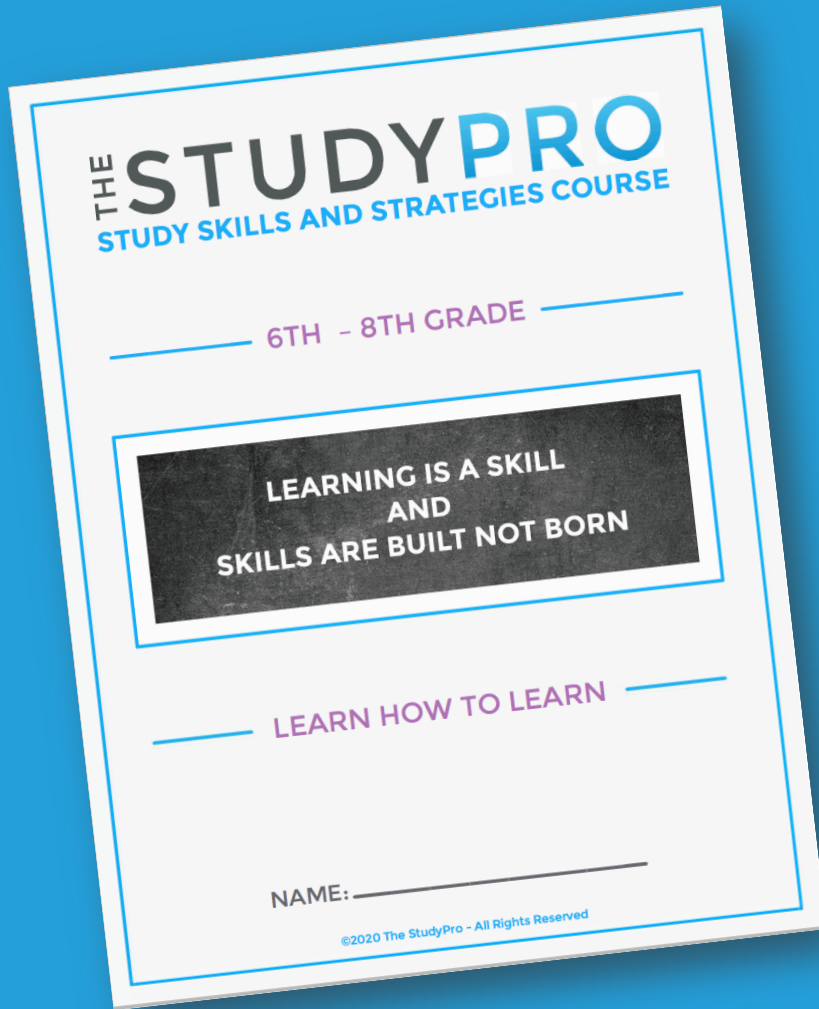
“The seeds we plant,
the seeds we water,
the seeds we tend to,
Are the ones that
bloom.”

Lisa A. McCrohan



Key Takeaways

- There is always a **missing skill** behind the behaviors we see.
- **Start by introducing one skill** (e.g. location of work, being specific, previewing, on-ramps, etc.) and work on that until it sticks.
- These are longer-term **goals that will take time**.
- Cheer on your student by watering the **EF and study skills that provide the foundation to learning**. This is what will help those skills grow.



THE STUDYPRO

- Executive Function Coaching
- Study Skills and Strategies Course
 - New Classes in Jan!**
 - Limit 6 students/course**
 - 4th and 5th grades
 - 6th – 8th grades
 - 9th – 12th grades
- Remote Homework Center
 - Writing Coaching

www.TheStudyPro.com

Executive Function Coaching

- Expert in cognitive processing, development, and learning differences
- Process goals
- Instruction on *how* to learn
- Coach guides students to reflect on the use of strategies and EF skills: roadblocks and successes

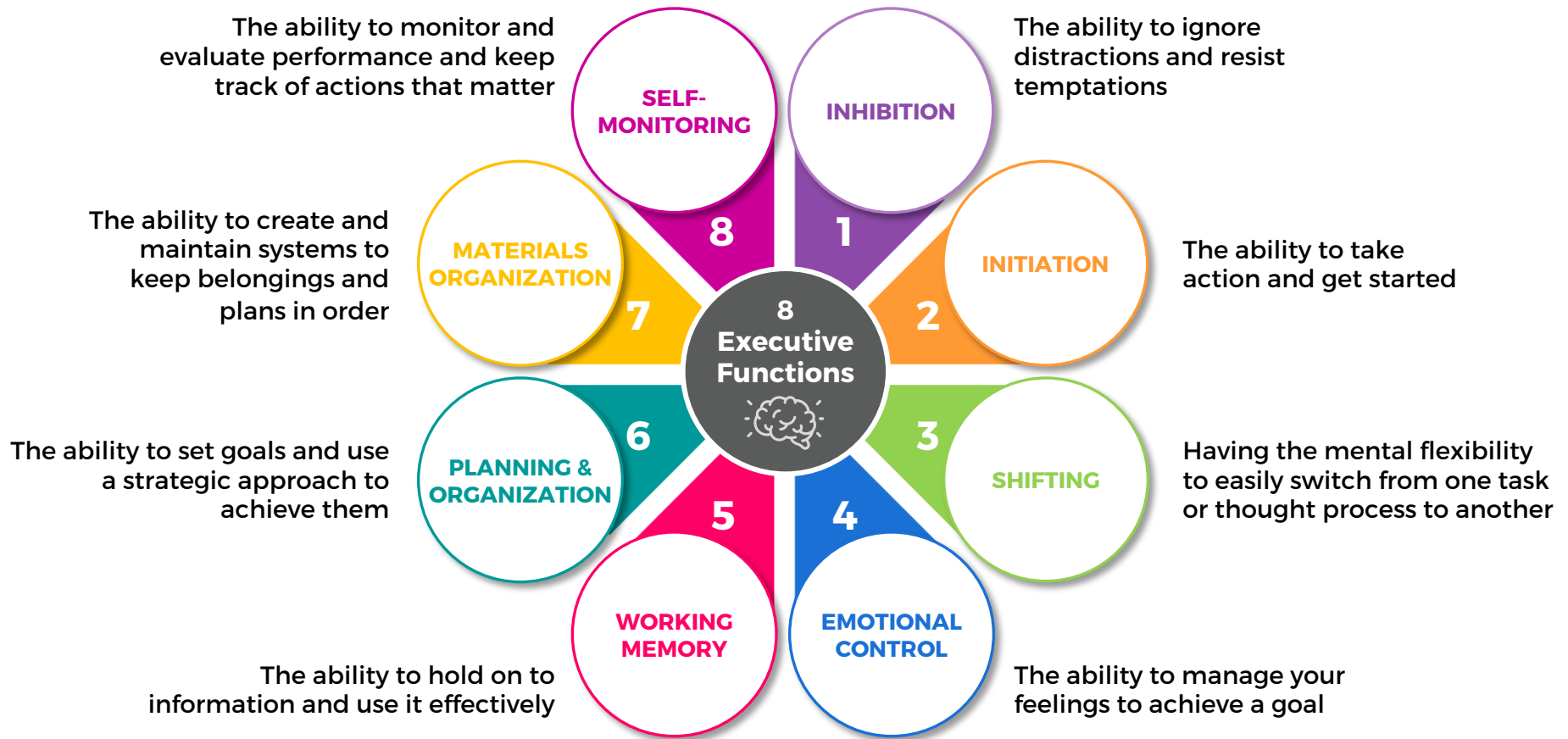
Content Tutoring


- Specific subject matter expert
- Goals based on results
- Instruction on *what* to learn
- Tutor reflects on the results

1:1

Uses a student's academic work during a session

Executive Functioning





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