



# Strategies to support executive function in daily life

## Tips for supporting attention and memory

- Take regular movement breaks during learning tasks
- Record, or request, information in multiple formats (e.g. written, verbal and/or visual)
- Break down large tasks into smaller parts
- Seek clarification if you do not understand instructions
- Use visual timers to facilitate self-monitoring of progress
- Set short-term goals
- Allow extra time to complete assigned tasks, and request extensions if required
- Consider suitable seating for learning tasks, for example a clear space with few distractions
- Keep important objects in the same central location
- Place visual reminders in helpful locations (e.g. post-it note on bathroom mirror, reminder flag on computer desktop)
- Turn off distractions (e.g. television, email and phone notifications) when concentrating on tasks
- Use sensory tools to support attention and/or reduce distractions (e.g. noise cancelling headphones, fidgets)
- Use an enjoyable activity as a reward for completing a task
- Apply for reasonable accommodations at work or study



## Tips for supporting activity levels and impulse control

- Address underlying triggers, for example reduce sensory overwhelm and take regular movement breaks
- Seek out additional support from trusted people during transition times and unexpected events or changes of plan
- Establish clear routines and structure within your day, with support
- Practice energy conservation strategies and managing your daily routines around fluctuating energy levels
- Practice pausing before responding in conversations
- Consider seeking advice about big decisions

## Tips for supporting emotional regulation

- Practice skills in recognising emotions and body states, with professional support
- Practice utilising emotional regulation strategies while regulated, to facilitate being able to utilise strategies in times of dysregulation
- Look for signs of stress/overwhelm building up and seek additional support or adjustments, for example more frequent movement breaks, use of noise cancelling headphones, accessing a quiet space
- Seek support for building positive self-identity and self-esteem
- Seek coregulation from a trusted support to help implement emotional regulation strategies when dysregulated, for example, taking a break, movement, breathing and mindfulness
- Trial a range of meditation, mindfulness and mental health apps to identify ones that work for you e.g. Calm, Ten Percent Happier, Smiling Mind, Worry Watch, Bearable, Happify
- Use physical activity to channel frustration in a positive way

## Tips for supporting planning and problem solving

- Use highlighters to mark key aspects of learning tasks and assessments
- Develop mind-maps to support planning of tasks
- Use post-it notes to write down ideas for learning tasks and then organise them logically ready to expand on
- Colour code schedules, records and filing systems to facilitate retrieval of important information
- Seek support to learn goal setting and problem-solving strategies
- Use checklists and to-do lists
- Use daily, weekly, or monthly planners to organise short and long-term tasks, and take time to review these regularly
- Check in with others to seek feedback on your progress
- Practice asking for help and advocating for your support needs
- Practice considering the pros and cons of various possible solutions to problems



## Tips for supporting task initiation and motivation

- Practice a consistent daily routine which includes regular breaks from sedentary activities and regular opportunities to engage in enjoyable activities
- Use reminders and notifications on smartphone or tablet to start and remain on a regular schedule
- Plan regular rewards for starting and completing difficult tasks
- Trial a range of productivity apps to identify ones that work for you e.g. InFlow, Trello, Todoist, HabitNow, Evernote, Forest, Cozi, Joon

