

Executive Functions

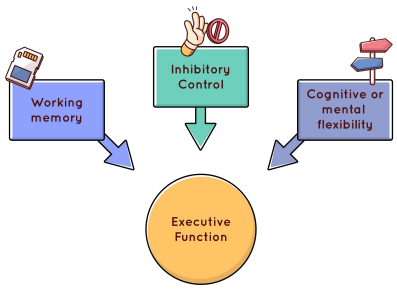
Executive functions are brain processes found in the prefrontal cortex of the brain. They are called executive functions because they help us to **execute tasks**.

Everyone has a unique executive function skills profile and can benefit from working to improve their executive function skills:

You can find out your unique EF profile for **free** here:

For yourself https://su.vc/executivefunction

For your children: https://s.surveyanyplace.com/dczybljg



We work with **11 associated executive function skills -** see chart overleaf.



connections in mind

Why is Essay Writing so hard - executive function perspectives and solutions

Essay writing is fundamental to success in western education systems yet it is a skill so embedded in executive function skills.

Many people from neuro-minorities can feel strong emotions such as fear, frustration, shame and guilt when they try to present their knowledge in the form of an essay.

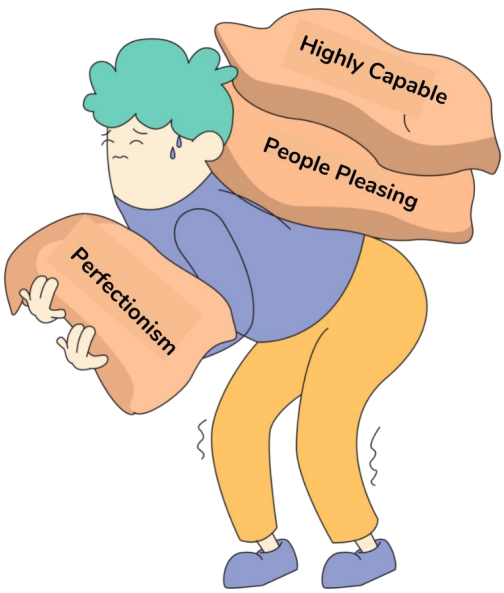
This webinar will explore why this is and suggest some workable strategies and tools that learners, teachers and parents can use to support the development of skills around essay writing.

ADHD or executive function differences can make essay writing a huge challenge

What emotions do you feel before you write an essay?



EFs combine with other factors



Executive Function Definitions

Skill	Definition
Response inhibition 	The capacity to think before you act; this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows your child the time to evaluate a situation and how his or her behaviour might impact it.
Working memory 	The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.
Emotional control 	The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behaviour.
Sustained attention 	The capacity to keep paying attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.
Task initiation 	The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.
Planning/ prioritisation 	The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.
Organisation 	The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.
Time management 	The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.
Goal-directed persistence 	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.
Flexibility 	The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. It related to an adaptability to changing conditions
Metacognition 	The ability to stand back and take a bird's-eye view of yourself in a situation, to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self mentoring and self evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing?" or "How did I do?"

EFS and Essay Writing

Skill	Challenges in Essay Writing	Strategies
Response inhibition 	Can I stop myself going off on a tangent?	Keep strictly to plan (Pg 7) Point evidence analysis - P.E.A. Notice, acknowledge and let go.
Working memory 	Holding the precise question in mind and answering the exact question set.	Have the question front and centre at all times (Pg 4-7) Reference/evidence list (Pg 6)
Emotional regulation 	Can I stop regulated to get the job done?	Self-care menu (Pg 9) Self-regulation strategies
Sustained attention 	Avoiding distractions to keep focused on the task in hand.	Get the environment right first.
Task initiation 	Overcoming perfectionism to get something down on paper.	Sh***y first draft. Write conclusion first (Pg 7)
Planning/ prioritisation 	Can I filter out the key points from what I know, and create a logical argument?	Mind dump (Pg 4) Mind map with evidence (Pg 5) Planning template (Pg 7)
Organisation 	Having all the resources you need at hand when needed	Make a checklist to use for every essay (Pg 13)
Time management 	Not leaving it to the last minute - self sabotage procrastination.	Buddy up with a time management pro.
Goal-directed persistence 	Can I keep going when it gets tough.	Buddy up with a accountability partner to keep you on track.
Flexibility 	Can I argue the other side of the case?	Perspective positioning.
Metacognition 	Am I staying focussed on the question set - Are my emotions taking over? Do I need a break? What's that funny tingling in my stomach trying to tell me.	Reflection journal Body mapping of emotional physical reactions (Pg 12) EF building blocks (Pg 8)

Don't skip this - it will help stay focussed!

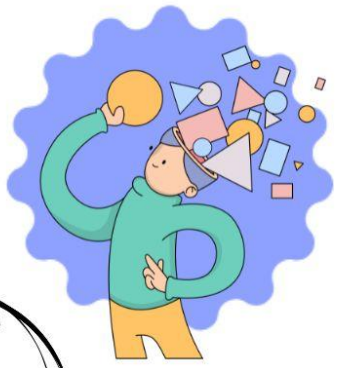
BRAIN DUMP



QUESTION:

Main Topics	Evidence or References
Arguments For Question	Arguments Against Question

MIND MAP



Evidence

Evidence

Idea

Idea

Evidence

Question

Evidence

Idea

Idea

Idea

Evidence

Evidence

Don't skip this - it will help stay focussed!

REFERENCE/ EVIDENCE LIST



QUESTION:

Year	Title	Summary

Don't skip this - it will help stay focussed!

ESSAY PLAN



QUESTION:

Remember you will need analysis and link as you write each paragraph too.

One sentence answer

Introduction

- Hook
- Background
- Summary

Conclusion

Body

Paragraph 1 Against your argument

Point:

Evidence:

Paragraph 2 Against your argument

Point:

Evidence:

Paragraph 3 For your argument

Point:

Evidence:

Paragraph 4 For your argument

Point:

Evidence:

Paragraph 5 For your argument

Point:

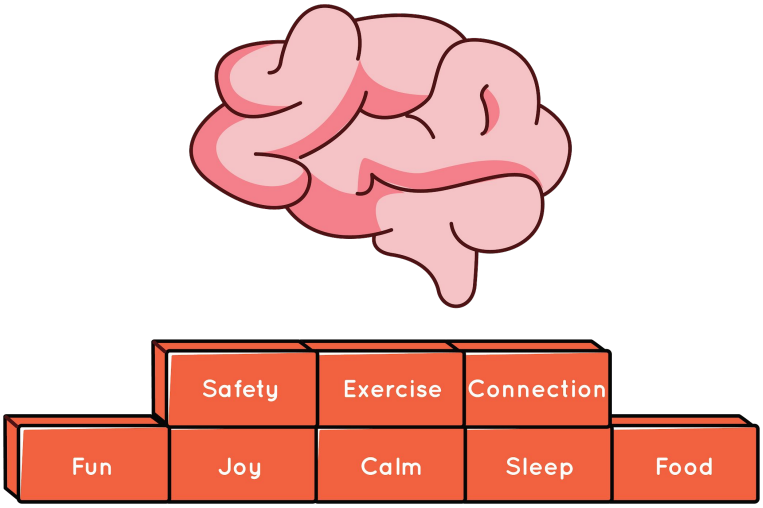
Evidence:

Paragraph 6 For your argument

Point:

Evidence:

Building Blocks for Strong EFs



How would you rate your building blocks right now?

(Circle below: 0=poor, 5=great)

	0	5
Safety		
Exercise		
Connection		
Fun		
Joy		
Calm		
Sleep		
Food		

What have you noticed from your building block ratings to the left?

Which of your blocks do you feel need attention?

Do you have an idea as to why these may be low?

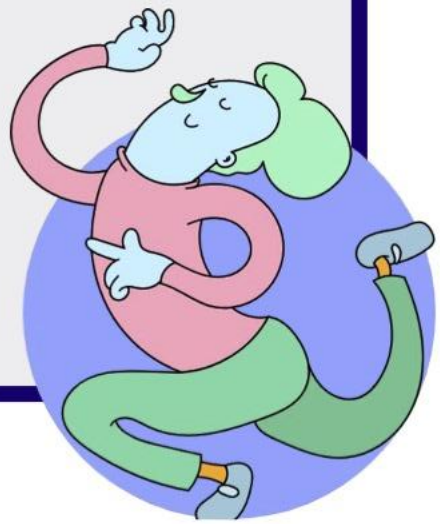


Self-Care menu

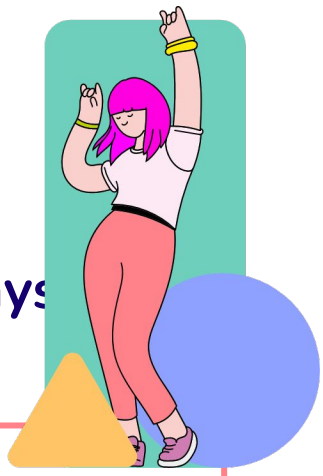
Activity	Cost	Time Investment	Impact (1-5)
Eg. Make a cup of tea	*5p*	*5 mins*	*2*

WOOP Template

Wish & Outcome	Obstacles	Plan



My Plan

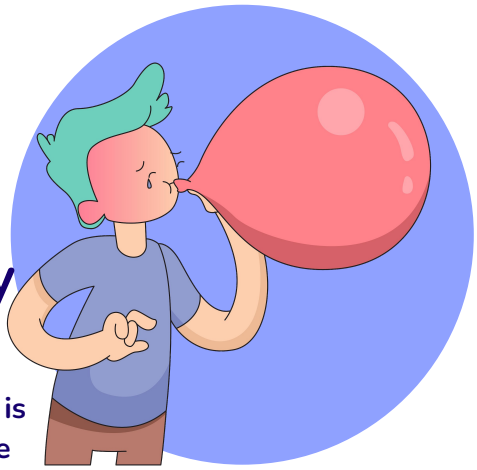


To improve my relationship with essays

MY GOAL/WISH *for the rest of the year*	
OUTCOME - *visualise how this will change my world*	
OBSTACLES - *what will get in the way? Think about:* • *My EFs* • *Knowing my limits* • *Perfectionism* • *People pleasing* • *Neglecting Building Blocks* • *Other*	
PLAN - *use the obstacles to make a realistic plan.* *How am I going to:* • *Work on EF strategies* • *Understand my limits* • *Settle for good enough* • *Find an accountability partner* • *Prioritise my building blocks* • *Other*	
VERBALISE - Who am I going to tell?	
SUPPORT & ENCOURAGEMENT - Who can help me stay on track?	
MONITOR MY PROGRESS - Use tracker on the next page.	
SMALL TWEAKS - Minor adjustments using make it even better.	
REWARDS - Looking after myself - I am building my EFs, and i deserve it.	

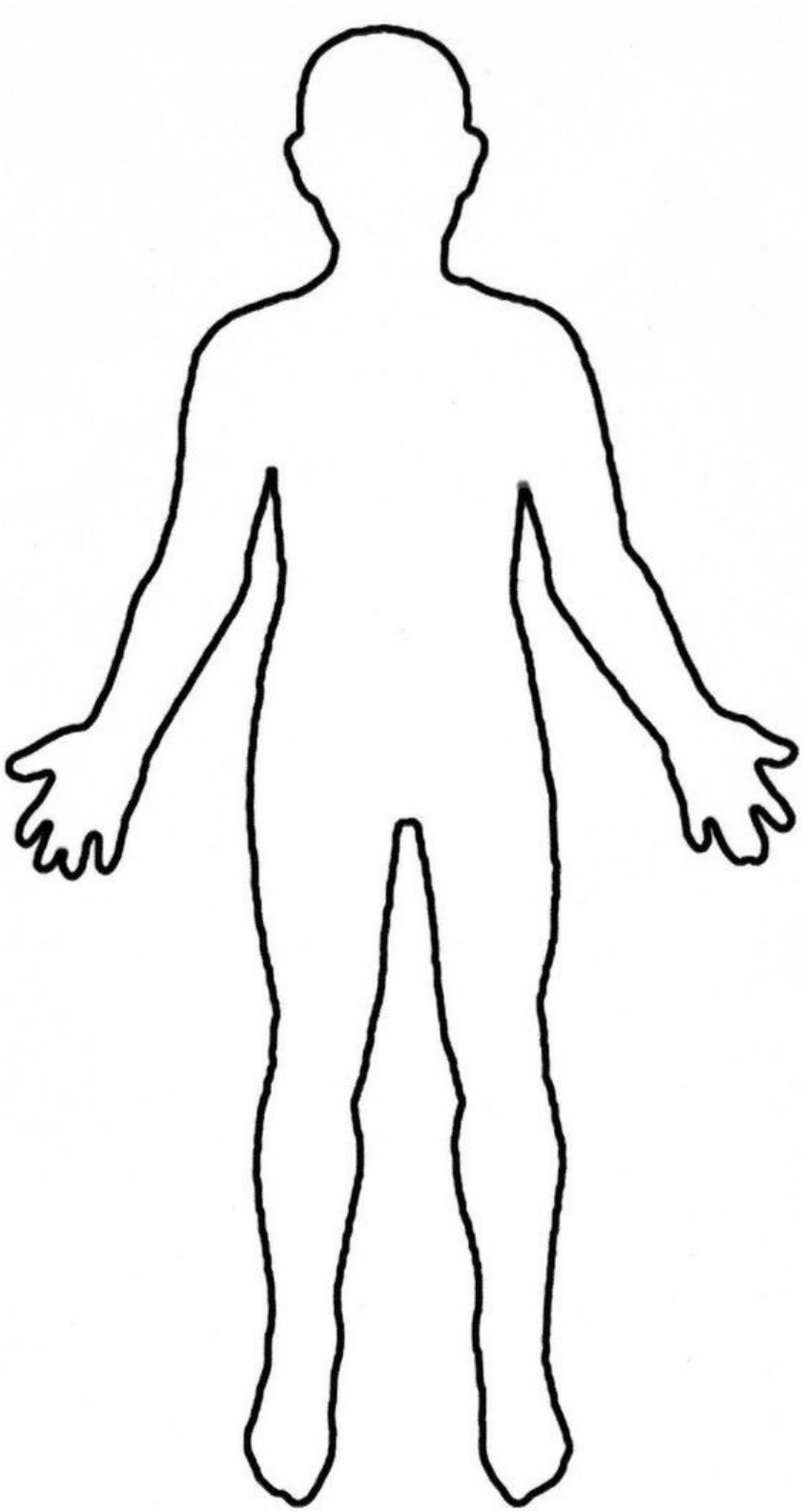


Body Mapping



How do my emotions manifest in my body?

Instructions: Mark on the model when you feel your emotions. What is the sensation? How often I feel it? Use colours if it helps to visualise the feelings.



Essay Checklist

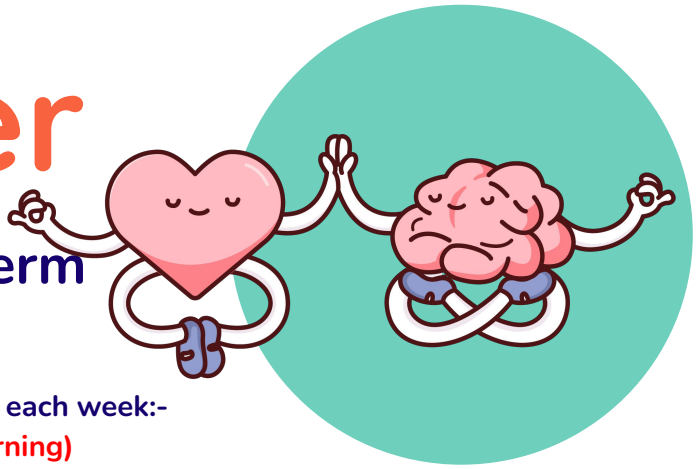
What do I need to get started?



Instructions: Create a checklist of all the things you need to get started on your essay.

Item	Ready?
Notes, quotations and references	
Text books / publications / articles	
Computer with good charge	
Working WIFI	
Healthy snacks and water	
Planning Template	
Assignment schedule / deadline	
Referencing software or format required	

Plan Tracker



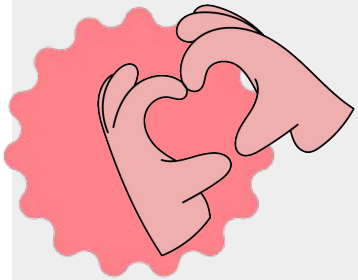
Keep going until the end of term

Instructions: Take time each week to self reflect. Shade in each week:-
green (all good), orange (could be better), red (warning)

My Plan

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Work on EF strategies											
Understand my limits											
Settle for good enough											
Work with accountability partner											
Prioritise my building blocks											
...											
...											
...											
...											

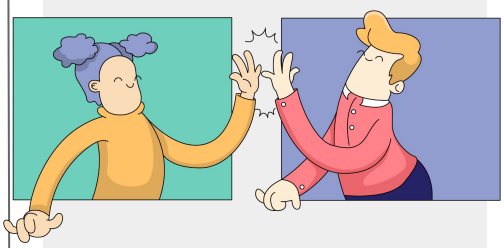
Looking for more support?



1 on 1 coaching support?

Find out more here:

https://connectionsinmind.com/coaching/



Have you seen our Connected Club?

https://cimlearning.com/connected-club-membership-landing-page-1/

Intro to Executive Functions course
https://www.cimlearning.com/courses/intro-efs/

Free Neuroplasticity Video
https://www.cimlearning.com/courses/neuroplasticity

Reading and Resources
https://cimlearning.com/toolkits/

Parent Facebook Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/executivefunctionssupportgroupparents

Adult Facebook Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/204786124308836

Schools Training & Support
https://connectionsinmind.com/schoolseducators/

Support for Workplaces
https://connectionsinmind.com/workplaces/

