

## Strategies for Managing Executive Function Challenges

| EF Challenge | Strategies   |
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| Activation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote self-observation to develop awareness of habits of procrastination</li> <li>• Encourage students to ask: “What’s one small step I can take right now?”</li> <li>• Intentionally and explicitly move back and forth between big picture &amp; details</li> <li>• Help students identify and separate the set up from the task</li> <li>• Use projects/next actions format when organizing or planning tasks</li> <li>• Establish maximum/minimum (create a window of time)</li> <li>• Encourage students to identify and plan for hindrances to getting started</li> </ul> |
| Focus        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote self-observation to develop awareness of where focus slips</li> <li>• Break up work sessions with physical activity</li> <li>• Create maximum/minimum guidelines before beginning work, then use a timer</li> <li>• Allow students to stand up to work</li> <li>• Allow students to use a small fidget object</li> </ul>  |
| Effort       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote self-observation to develop awareness of where effort wanes</li> <li>• Teach students to use “multiple pick-up and put down” approach (ex. 20 min. work periods)</li> <li>• Model breaking tasks down into specific next actions to experience “little wins”</li> <li>• Encourage students to use a timer or race a timer</li> <li>• Teach students to expect obstacles to completion and preview overcoming them</li> </ul>  |

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| Emotion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead with empathy and understanding</li> <li>• Use humor to keep atmosphere light</li> <li>• Share information about executive function and emotional regulation with students</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to do 5 minute ‘brain dumps’ – “Take a minute to write down everything that may be cluttering your mind before we move on.”</li> <li>• Help students shift from narrow focus to wider focus, and vice versa</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to develop awareness of facts, feelings, thoughts, sensations around specific situations</li> </ul> |
| Memory  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide visuals, diagrams, mind maps and teach students to create them</li> <li>• Ask students to visualize activities, information, processes, concepts</li> <li>• Encourage students to write down assignments and information, rather than carrying it in their minds</li> <li>• Pair physical action with sequences of steps</li> <li>• Use metaphors and ask students to create metaphors</li> <li>• Use activities &amp; assessments that engage multiple memory pathways – visual, auditory, kinesthetic/procedural encoding.</li> </ul>  |
| Action  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to verbalize what they intend to do</li> <li>• Brainstorm alternative paths of action</li> <li>• Suggest: “You could try it as an experiment.” or “Remember, this is all an experiment to see what works best for you.”</li> <li>• Help students prioritize important tasks from less important tasks</li> <li>• For some students, it will be helpful to show in detail how the same concept or process is present in multiple contexts</li> </ul>   |