

Session 1 Parent Summary: Orientation and Introduction

Session Overview

- ◆ Group orientation
- ◆ Overview of executive functioning (EF) and ADHD
- ◆ Impact of parent EF skills
- ◆ Responding when problems arise
- ◆ Parent-Child Problem-Solving (PCPS)

Key Information

- ◆ The purpose of this group is to provide parents and caregivers with information about how EF impacts their child and tools to support them. It is intended for educational purposes only.
- ◆ Confidentiality is critical:
 - ◆ Do not share personally identifying information about other group members
 - ◆ Legal limitations to confidentiality (e.g., duty to report abuse)
- ◆ “Executive functioning” refers to a group of neurological processes that allow us to engage in goal-directed behaviour (e.g., being able to consciously choose how we want to act, feel and behave in order to have the outcome we want).
- ◆ EF **processes** are related to the structure of the brain, pathways and chemical messengers, and networks that connect different parts of the brain.
- ◆ Parts of the brain involved include:
 - ◆ Frontal lobe (self-regulation, attention, working memory, self-monitoring, inhibition, planning, logic, etc.)
 - ◆ Limbic system (emotions, motivation, reactivity, fight or flight)
 - ◆ Parietal lobe (attention)
 - ◆ Brain stem (arousal, alertness)
- ◆ EF **skills** are evidence that those neurological processes are working well.
- ◆ Problems with EF skills are related to underlying neurological issues, which are **seen** as behaviours or actions (or lack of action). They are often hereditary.
- ◆ Symptoms of ADHD can be linked to one or more areas of executive functioning.
- ◆ Long term goals of supporting EF skills include helping your child develop:
 - ◆ Stronger EF skills and strategies
 - ◆ Strong self-advocacy skills
 - ◆ A strong support network

- ◆ Parent EF profile impacts parenting and support of child with EF deficits. Having a similar or different area of difficulty has pros and cons that depend on the people involved, the situation, and other factors.
 - ✦ Having similar problems may increase empathy and/or make it harder to support skill development.
 - ✦ Having an area of strength that your child does not have may help you support them better in that area, but may make it harder for you to understand their difficulties.
 - ✦ See Session 1 Handout: Parent EF Implications
- ◆ When a young person is not meeting important expectations, we will need to:
 - ✦ Provide **support** when problems arise
 - ✦ **Collaborate** to solve problems with your young person
- ◆ When problems arise, parents often engage in one or more types of responses (see Session 1 Handout: Types of Responses to Problems).
- ◆ When creating a framework for solving problems as a family, you need to apply basic problem-solving steps to each family member involved, taking into account maturity, type of relationship between the people involved, and the nature of the problem (e.g., reoccurring, situational, etc.).
- ◆ Parent-Child Problem-Solving (PCPS) is an approach to solving problems with your child. See Session 1 Handout and Worksheet: Parent-Child Problem-Solving.
 - ✦ Other forms of family problem-solving follow the same steps, but you will need to adapt the conversation to take into account the nature of the problem and the nature of the relationships between the problem-solvers.

Homework Checklist

- Use the Session 1 Worksheet: Parent-Child Problem Solving to work through a problem with your child this week. Choose a problem that is relatively simple/straightforward, and if possible, one that would have a meaningful impact on your day-to-day life, once solved.
- Session 1 Worksheet: Problem Response Styles.