



Executive Functioning at Work: Practical Strategies to Support Independence and Retention

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AND ASSISTIVE
TECHNOLOGY**

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Things Related to Executive Functioning Skills?



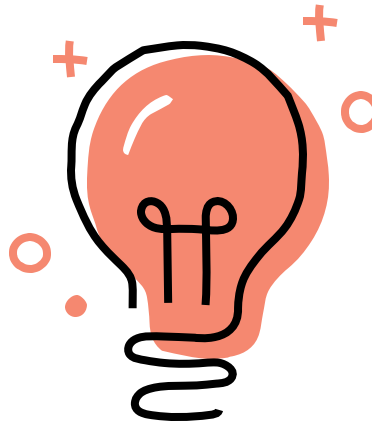
fast bold
creative
leader focus
transpiration inspiration

Learning Objectives



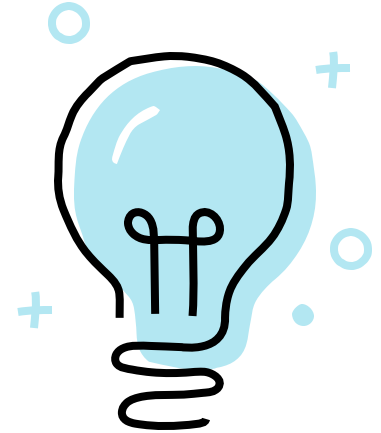
Identify

Identify EF-related barriers impacting employment



Apply

Apply OT and SLP strategies and assistive technologies to improve outcomes.



Integrate

Integrate EF supports into individualized vocational and job coaching plans

impulse control/self-regulation



What are Executive Functioning Skills?

A

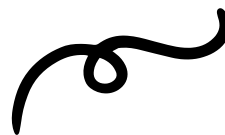
Planning & Organization

The ability to set goals, develop steps, prioritize, and manage time

B

Working Memory

The ability to hold and use information in mind to complete a task



C

Cognitive Flexibility & Impulse Control

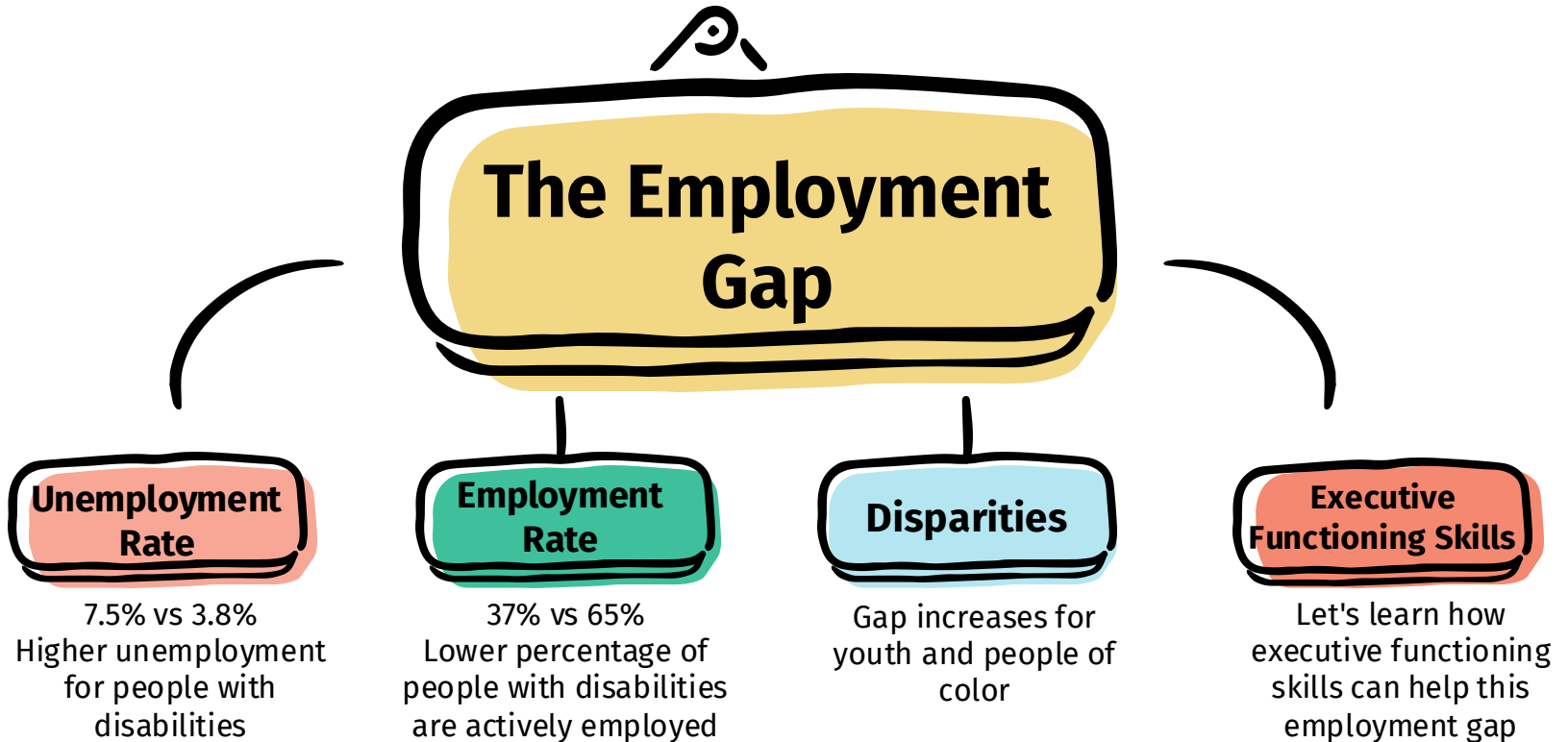
The ability to shift thinking and think before acting

D

Initiation & Sequencing

The ability to start tasks and complete the steps in the correct order

Why are Executive Functioning Skills Important?

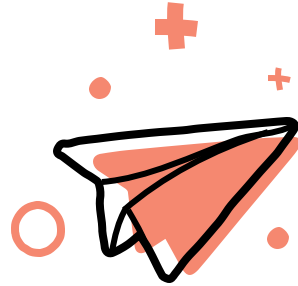


Research Foundations



**Zhou et al.
(2025)**

Assistive technology
reduces barriers and
increases
independence



**Wilson et al.
(2024)**

Structured executive
functioning supports
improved retention



**Scharlach & Rios
(2023)**

Coaching strengthens
self-regulation



**Lee et al.
(2023)**

Community-based
interventions enhance
executive functioning in
employment

EF Breakdowns in the Workplace

TIME MANAGEMENT

Difficulty arriving on time, completing tasks in a timely manner, difficulty prioritizing tasks



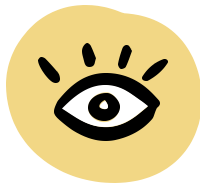
ORGANIZATION

Misplace materials, cluttered workspace, difficulty with maintain tracking system, overlooks details



ATTENTION

Easily distracted, difficulties with directions, switches between tasks limiting productivity



SEQUENCING

Completes steps out of order, increased reminders, difficulty recalling multiple steps



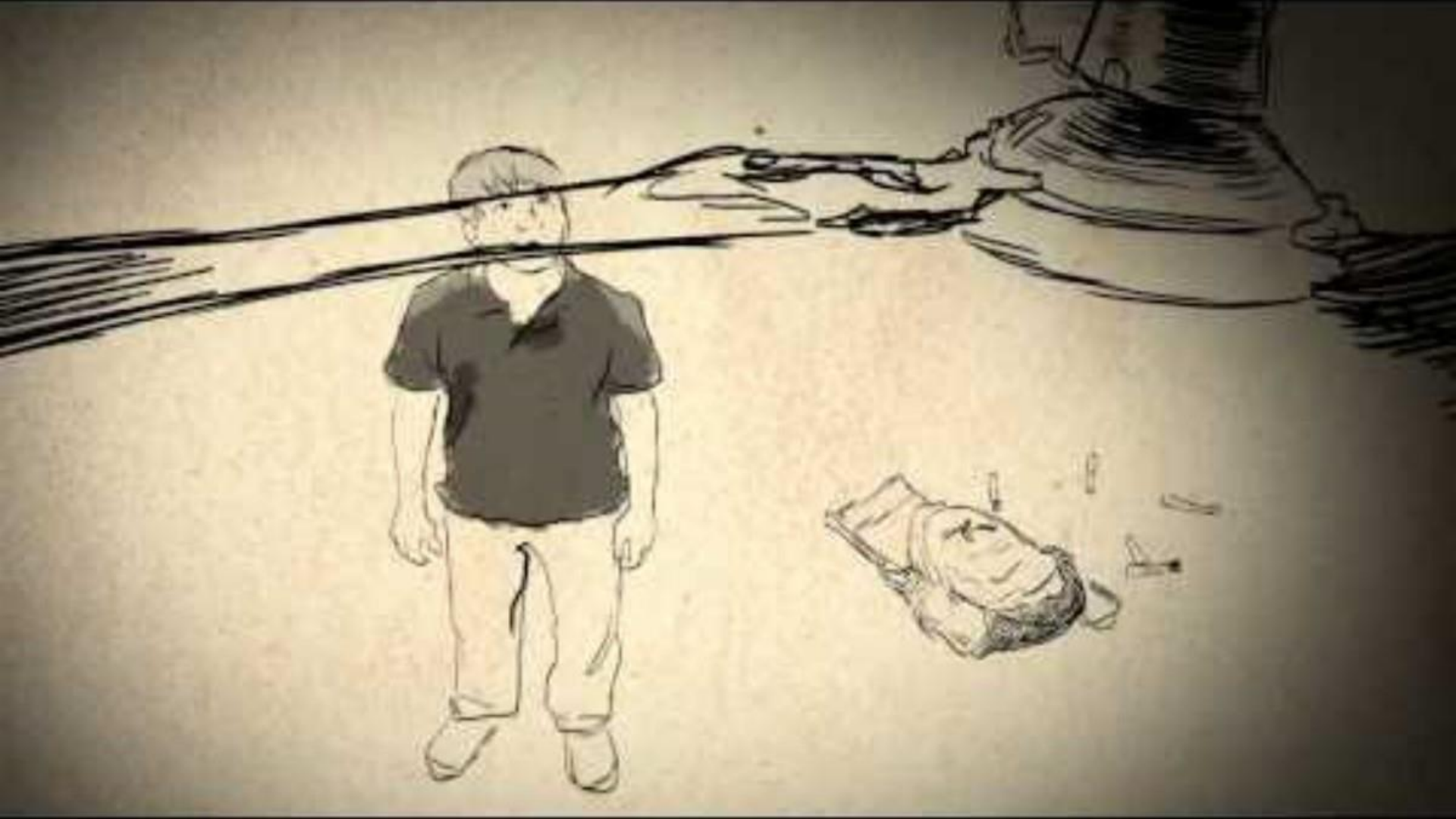
FLEXIBILITY

Frustrated when routine changes, difficulty shifting between tasks, resists feedback

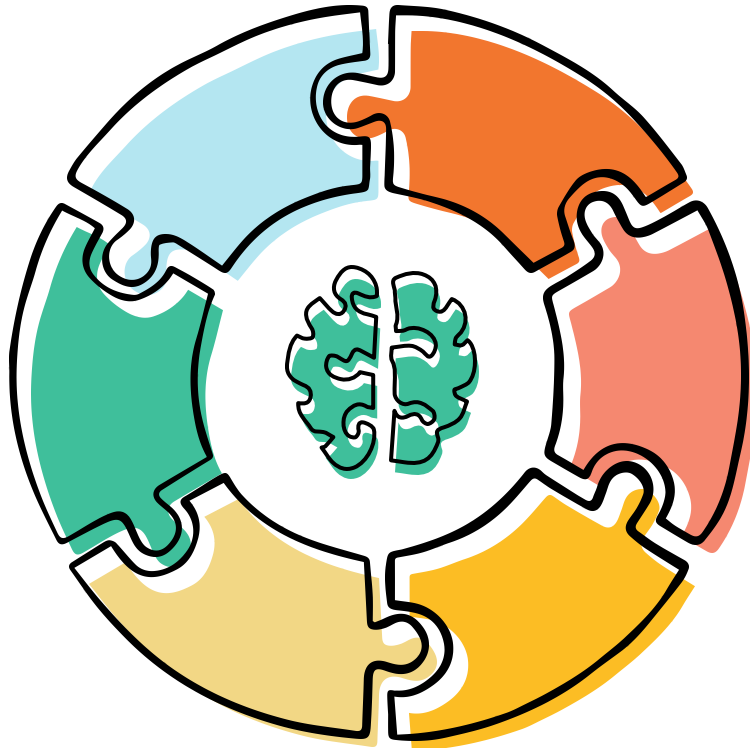


PROBLEM SOLVING

Difficulty finding solutions, relies on others to solve problems, may become stuck if things don't go as planned



Interdisciplinary Framework



OT

- Environment**
Adapts the workspace to decrease distractions and support task completion
- Task Structure**
Breaks tasks into manageable steps, uses checklists, and visual supports
- Sensory Regulation**
Uses sensory strategies to support attention and self-regulation during tasks

Speech

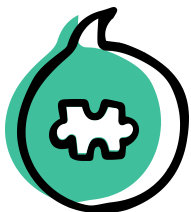
- Metacognition**
Help reflect on their own thinking, plan strategies, and monitor progress
- Problem-Solving**
Practice reasoning and flexible thinking through conversation and scenarios
- Social-Pragmatic & Communication**
Goal directed interactions for effective communication in the work environment

OT Evidence-Based Strategies



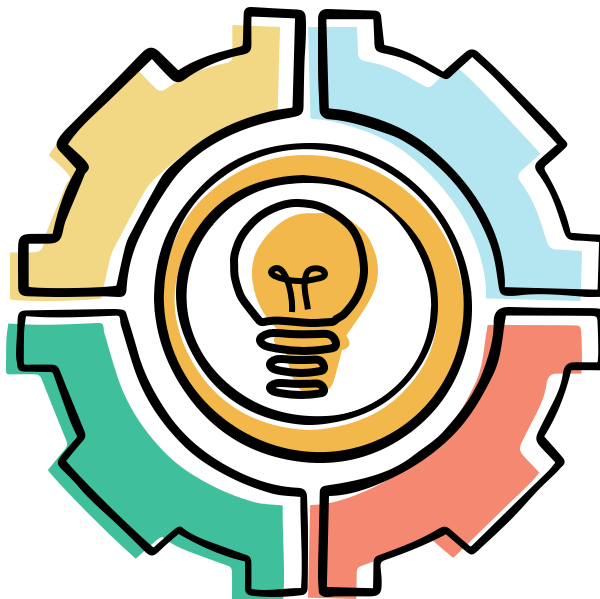
Time Management Tools

Timers, alarms, visual time trackers



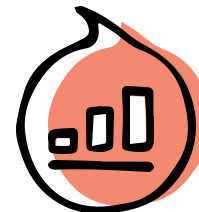
Task Analysis

Break down multistep tasks into sequences; use visual aids



Environmental Structuring

Visual schedules, job aids, color coding, noise control



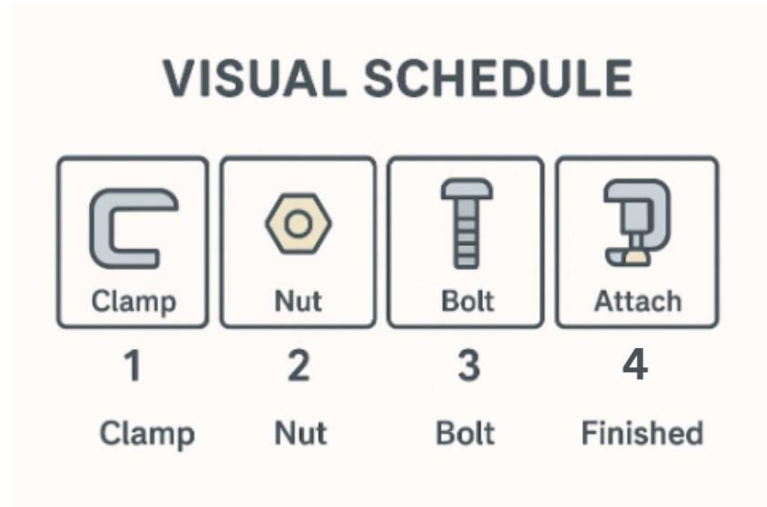
CO-OP

Model that focuses on Goal-Plan-Do-Check

OT Supports Examples

Task Analysis

1. Motor skills
2. Executive functioning skills
3. Cognitive skills
4. Sensory processing skills
5. Psychosocial skills



CO-OP

Goal: Putting the clamp together

Plan: Review the steps needed, is there a breakdown, how can this be supported

Do: Complete the steps needed to put the clamp together

Check: Reflect on the performance

SLP Evidence Based Strategies



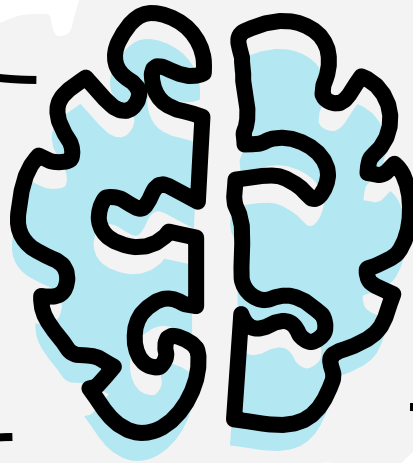
Metacognitive Strategy Instruction

Teach self-monitoring and “thinking about thinking”



Goal Management Training

Teach to stop, define goal, make a plan, and monitor performance



Cognitive Communication Strategy

Memory strategies, sequencing language, and summarizing tasks



Social Pragmatic Coaching

Practicing feedback, clarifying directions, and professional communication

Assistive Technology Support for Executive Functioning Skills



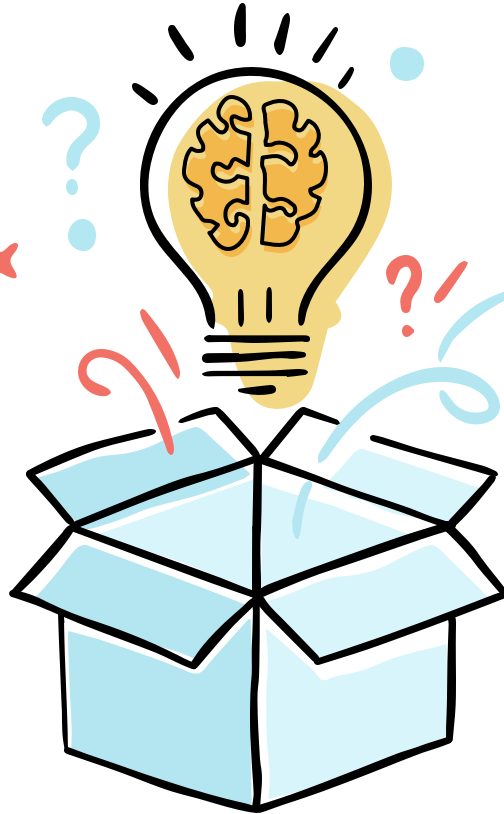
Low-Tech

Whiteboards, sticky notes, picture cues.



Mid-Tech

Smart timers, vibrating watches



High-Tech

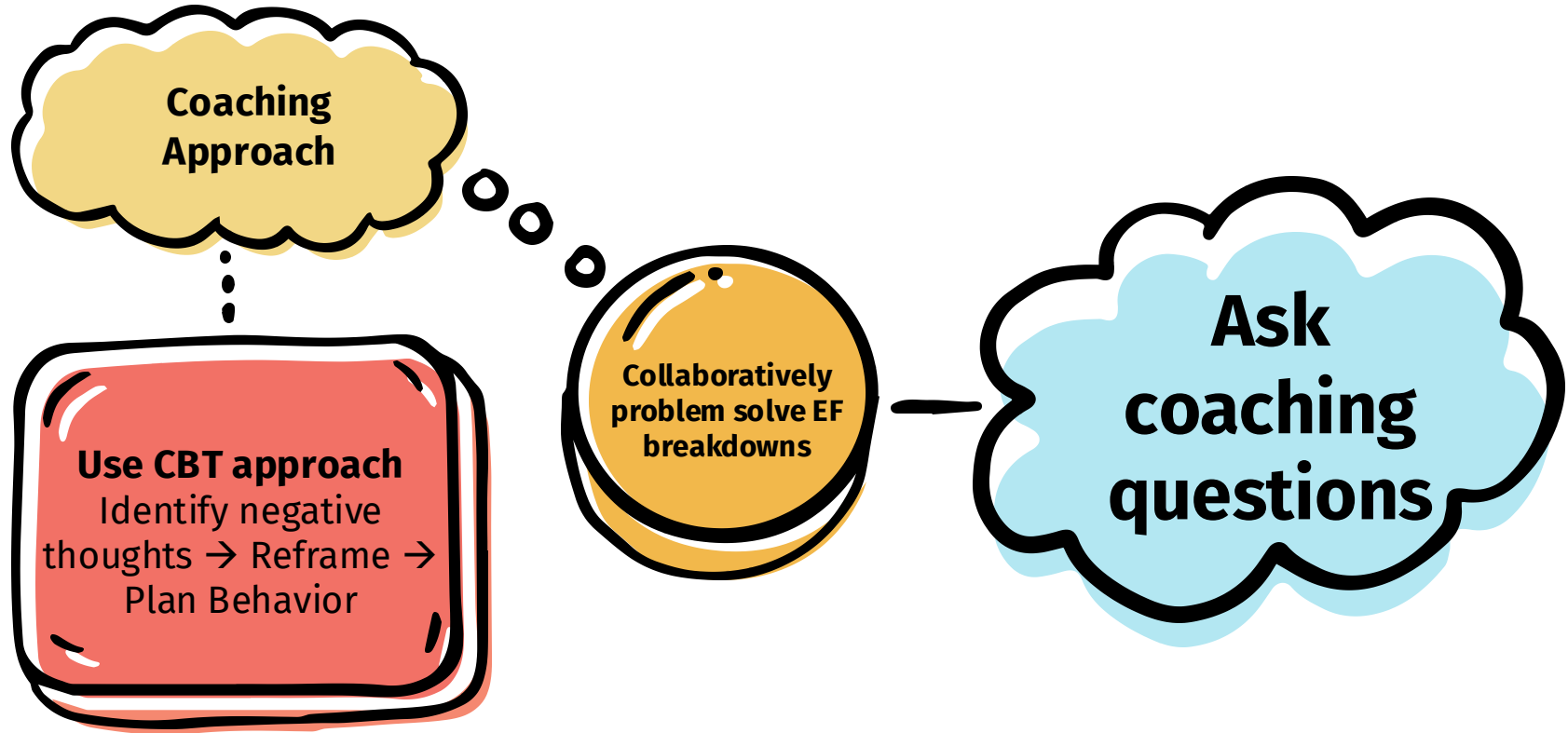
Tiimo, Microsoft To Do, Time Timer, Notion, Google Keep



Training Tips

“Model then fade”
Build habits before removing prompts

Coaching and Behavioral Supports



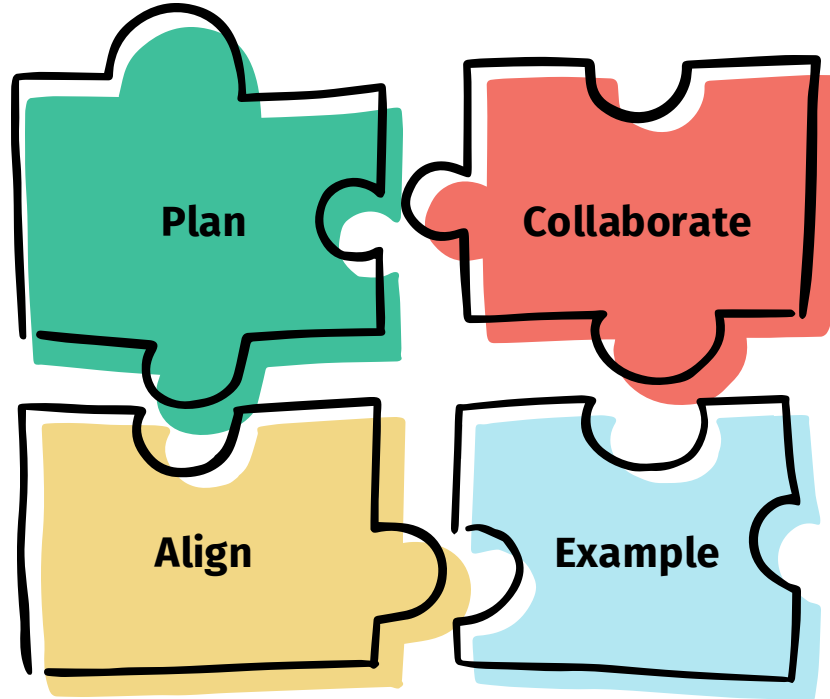
Integrating into Vocational Plans

1

Embed EF objectives into employment or rehabilitation goals

2

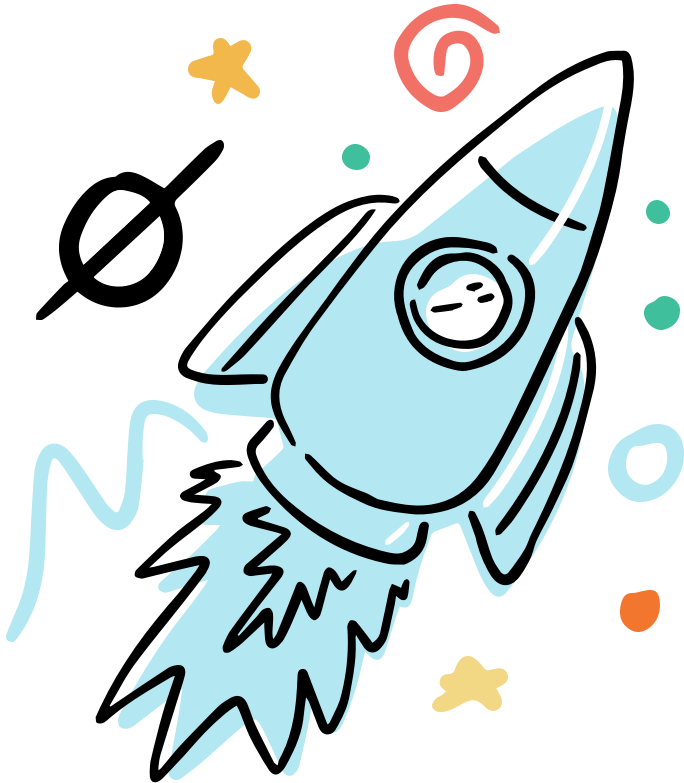
Align with job goals, VR plans, and coaching sessions



3

OT can assist with structuring environment and provide supports. SLP can assist with building self-regulation and communication supports

Measuring Outcomes



OT Measures

Executive Function
Performance Test
(EFPT), AMPS, COPM



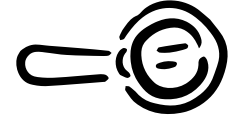
Functional Outcome Tracking

Attendance, task
accuracy, supervisor
feedback



SLP Measures

Functional
Communication
Measures (FCMs),
task recall logs



REMEMBER

Measure both
independence and
carryover

Case Application Activity

BACKGROUND

24-year-old with developmental disability, new retail warehouse job



EF BARRIERS

- Starts tasks without directives
- Cannot prioritize tasks
- Forgets multi-step directions
- Struggles to transition between tasks
- Does not ask for help when stuck

1. Which executive functioning challenges are present?
2. What OT and SLP strategies could you use?
3. How would you integrate these strategies into a vocational plan or on-the-job support?

Key Takeaways



Executive Functioning

Critical factor in employment readiness and retention



OT Supports

Supports structure, environment, and sensory regulation



SLP Supports

Supports communication and cognitive self-regulation



Together

Build independence and job stability



Interdisciplinary collaboration is the bridge from readiness to retention

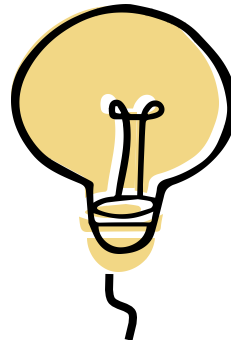
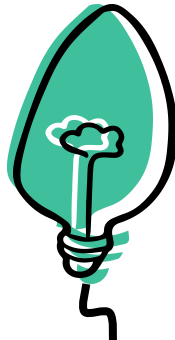
Thank you

Do you have any questions?

Please connect with us!

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