School Skills

change attitudes, change outcomes

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Functions of Behavior

1. **Goal Directed**: (intentional behavior)
2. **Skills Deficit** (unintentional, unconscious or the individual’s best attempt to cope)
Executive Function Tasks

1. **Initiate** Getting started, asking for help
2. **Inhibit** stopping, filtering, censoring, tolerating
3. **Shift** focus, attention, topics, activities
4. **Plan** looking before leaping, goal-setting
5. **Organize** prioritize, establish & maintain order
6. **Self-Monitor** Checking work, monitoring resources, social awareness
7. **Emotional Control** Modulating and monitoring emotional response
8. **Working Memory** Process & execute directions
Causes of Executive Function Deficits

1. Biological
2. Environmental
Crisis in the schools

- **Disrespect**
  - for self- negative self-talk to increased self-harming behaviors (substance abuse, risky sex, eating disorders, etc)
  - For others- increased behavioral issues, oppositional defiant, disruptive, violent

- **Discouragement**
  - Students with different learning needs
  - Teachers struggling to be all things to all people
  - Everyone struggling with doing more with fewer resources- everyone falling short.

- **Disengagement**
  - Work-avoidant, failure, drop-out
  - Non-responsive to intervention
Proof Proofs

1. Strong Executive Function = Success on standardized testing
2. Mindfulness Practice = Strong Executive Function
3. Mindfulness Practice = Success on Standardized Testing
Proof Proofs

1. Strong Relationship = Success in school
2. Validation Strategies = Strong Relationships
3. Validation Strategies = Success in School

Mindfulness + Validation = Willingness
“Respect, Rapport and Hope….these are our tools”

-Matthew Alexander
Process of Change

1. Establishing & Maintaining Motivation to Change (Validation)
2. Increasing Skills for Change (Willingness)
3. Increasing Awareness (Mindfulness)
School Skills: Stealing from the Best

Psychology:
- Cognitive & Dialectical Behavior Therapies
- Motivational Enhancement & Validation Oriented Treatment
- Marketing

Education:
- Best Practices
- Positive Behavioral Supports
The facts

Right mind

My reality

memories

urges

Other random junk

wishes

worries

judgements

emotions

Your brain

You are here
Sometimes, **MOST** of the time, our brains are like puppies or monkeys. Jumping, running around, not doing what we want them to do, not staying where we want them to stay. Puppies and monkeys are fun but after awhile, they get annoying.
What is Mindfulness?

- Mindfulness is exercise for the muscle in your brain that helps you get into your Right Mind.
- Right mind is where you find your Smartest and Best self and the answers that are right for you.
- You might not always choose to do what Right Mind says, but you should at least be able to find it.
Mindfulness 101

1. Pick an Object of Focus (OoF)- can be anything, an activity, an object, your breathe.
2. Do your best to focus on it- think about it like target practice
3. When distractions happen, NOTICE you got distracted
4. Try to come back to your OoF
5. Go back to #2
Validation vs. Invalidation

- Engaging
- Reinforcing
- Responsive
- Transparent
- Meaningful

- Oversimplifying Problem Solving
- Rejecting someone’s perception of reality
- Punishing responses
- Missing the boat
- Saying I understand when you can’t
- Trying to fix the problem when that is not what someone asked for.
Validation 101

- Tune In, notice where someone is at
- Try to understand their perspective
- Use we instead of you
- Use and instead of but
- Don't compete
- Try not to make it worse
- Don't always try to make it better
Willingness vs. Willfulness

Willingness is:
- the bobbing & weaving of the boxer
- the swaying of the palm tree in the hurricane.
- when the door is open a little bit.
- when you might say no anyway but you will listen to the offer first.

Willfulness is:
- When you ask Why? Just because
- The oak tree that gets knocked over in the storm.
- Closing the door
- Deflection pretending to be protection
Willingness 101

1. Blow it out - Exhale completely and quickly until you’re forced to breathe in again - do this three times

2. Shake it off - start at your head, wiggle all the parts of your body all the way down - then try it from the bottom up. Or try tensing/releasing muscles in the same order - or massage

3. Laugh it off - start with a little bit of a smile, then giggle - progress to full laughter when ready.

4. Goof it off - Do something silly, play a game - do a little dance, sing a little song

5. Learn Something New - be ready to stink at it at first.
Upcoming Events

May 30, 2009  9-12pm
    Save the Drama for Your Mama
    Westfield, MA
August 25 &26 9-4pm
    School Skills
    Springfield, MA

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