

UNSTUCK AND ON TARGET

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Conflicts of Interest

LK receives royalties on sales of:

- *Unstuck and On Target* manuals/kits
- *Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function* forms/manuals

GOAL: Increase your understanding of executive functions and how to enhance them

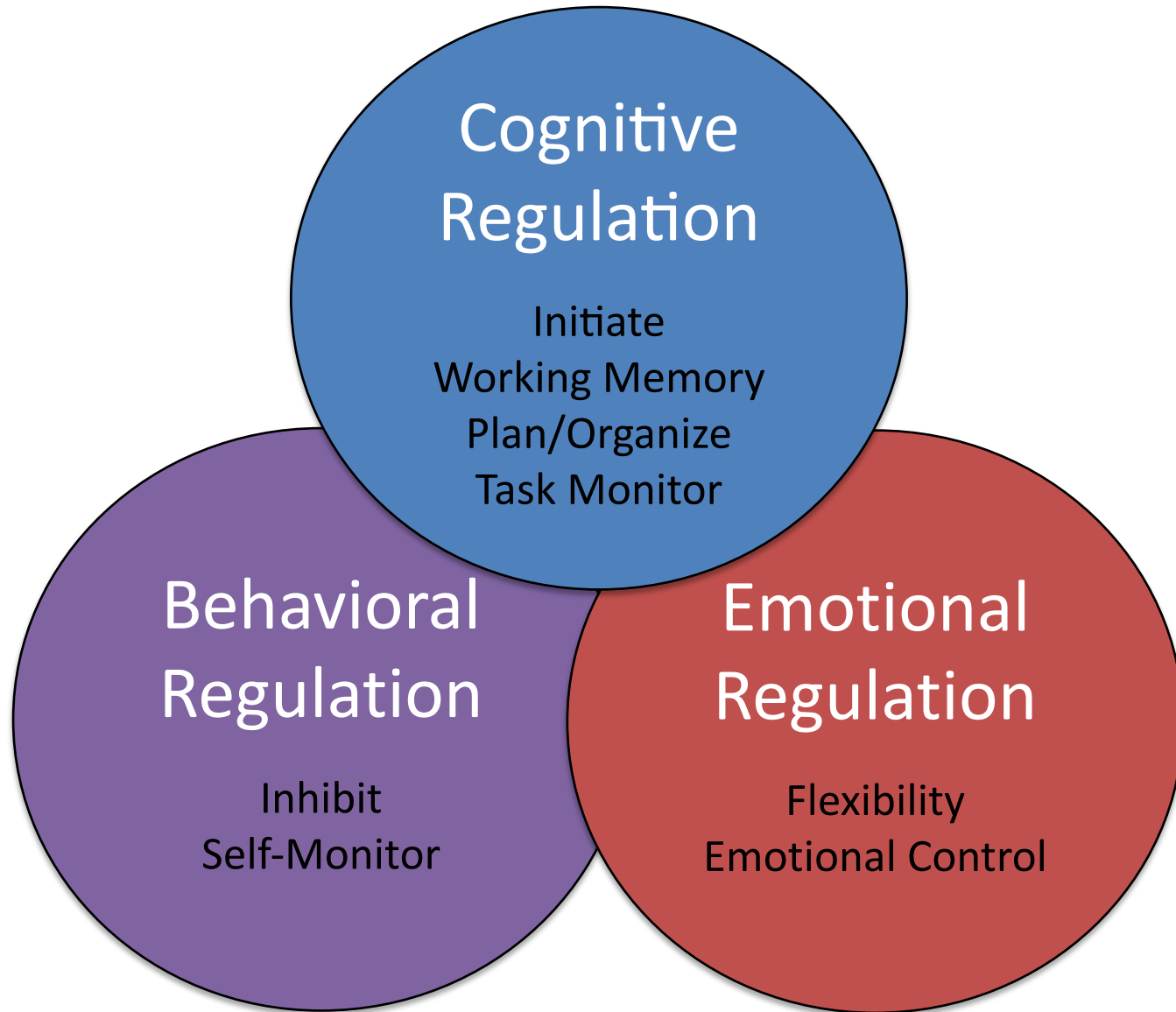
WHY: Executive Functions are necessary and teachable

PLAN:

1. **Understand:** Can't vs Won't
2. **Accommodate:** 6 tools
3. **Teach:** Unstuck curriculum and vocabulary

CHECK: Can we get it all done?
Can I keep you all awake?

“The Unity and Diversity of Executive Functions”



Executive Function: Hot and Cool

- **COOL** = decontextualized, meta-cognitive tasks
- **HOT** = socially, motivationally, emotionally salient
 - Real world decision-making
 - Defer gratification, be flexible and follow plans when there are strong social expectations and feelings involved

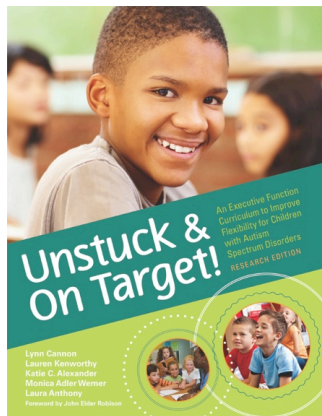


Trial #1: (NIMH R34)

Randomized controlled effectiveness trial of executive function intervention for children on the autism spectrum

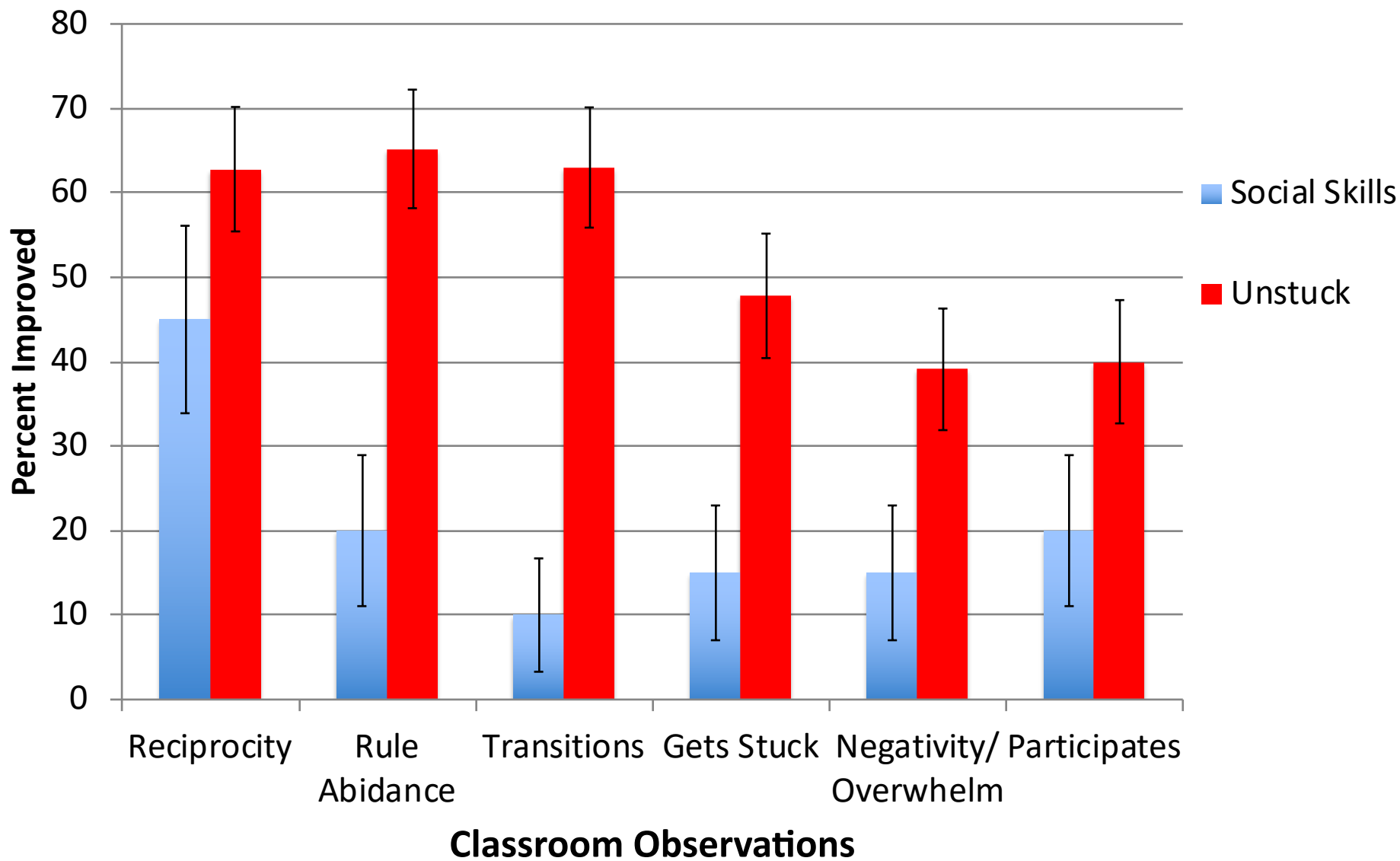
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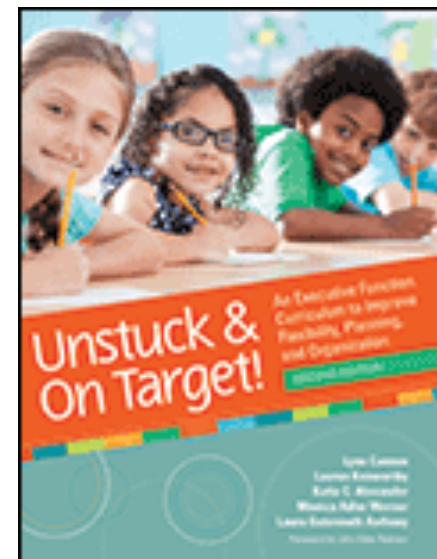
- Unstuck (n=47)
- Social Skills (n=20; Baker, 2009)
- Autistic 3-5th graders, equivalent IQ, Sx, SES
- Equal doses of: Parent, teacher, interventionist training, small group sessions, fidelity monitoring
- Interventions delivered by school staff with fidelity

Treatment-Masked Classroom Observations

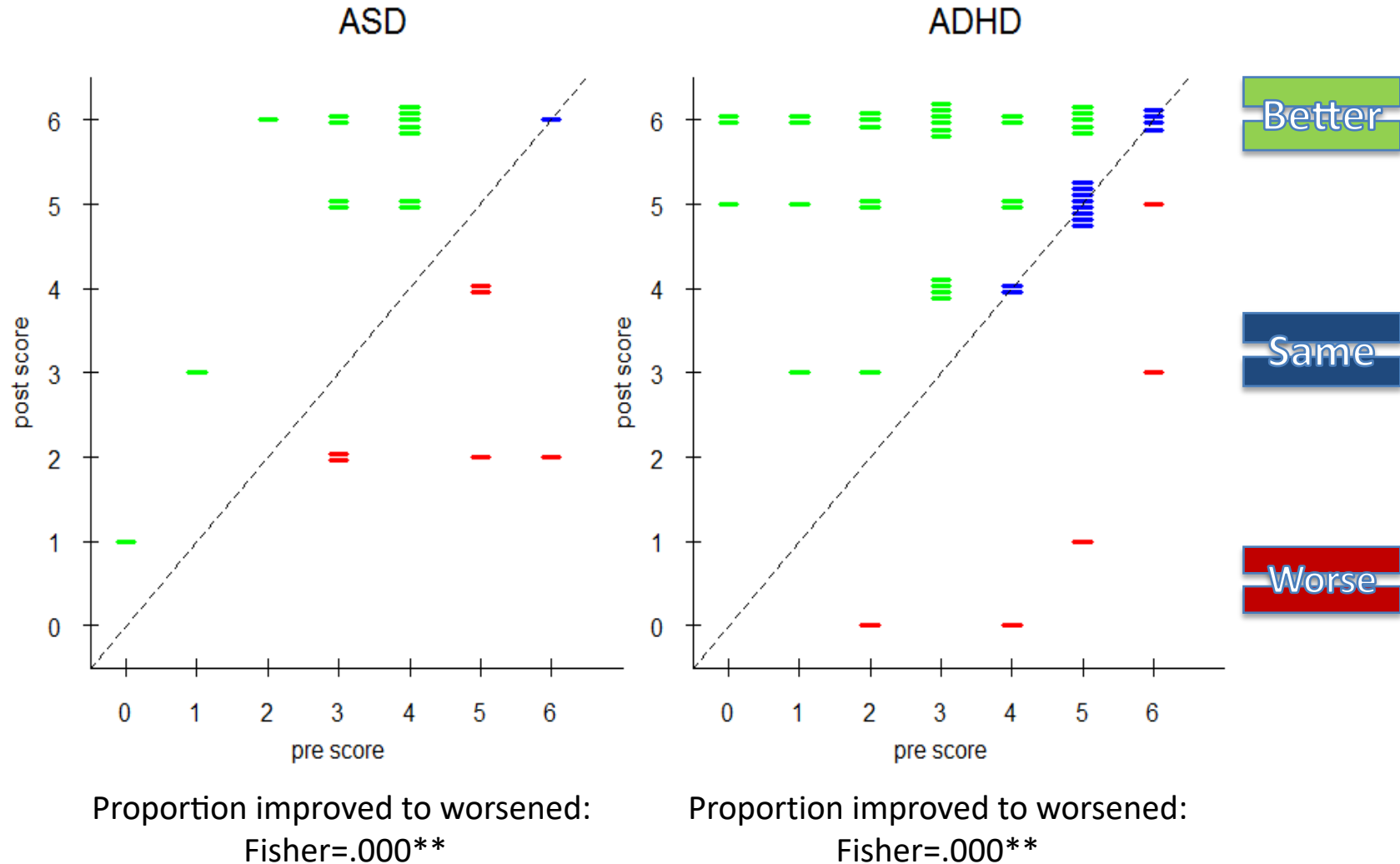


Study #2: Disparities Comparative Effectiveness Trial

- 3rd – 5th graders:
 - 22 Title 1 schools
 - ASD (n=48), ADHD (n=98)
 - Flexibility problems
- Random assignment: Unstuck and On Target, 2nd Ed or adapted Contingency Behavior Management
 - Both target EF/Flexibility
 - Both must be effective
- Adaptations for:
 - Title 1 schools
 - Either ADHD or ASD
 - Spanish or English speaking families
 - Strength based, student centered
- School personnel = interventionists
- Study staff train school staff, parents



Comparison of Classroom Observations for UOT



Study 3: Randomized Comparative Implementation Trial

- **N=91** parents of child with ASD
- **Both groups:** Given published parent manual to read over 10-week trial
- **In-person group:** Two, 2-hour training sessions by an Unstuck author during 10-week trial
- **On-line group:** One, 20-30 minute module each week
- **Results:** Child EF and Caregiver Strain, Competence and Empowerment improved in both groups, (Cohen's *ds*: .26-.55)

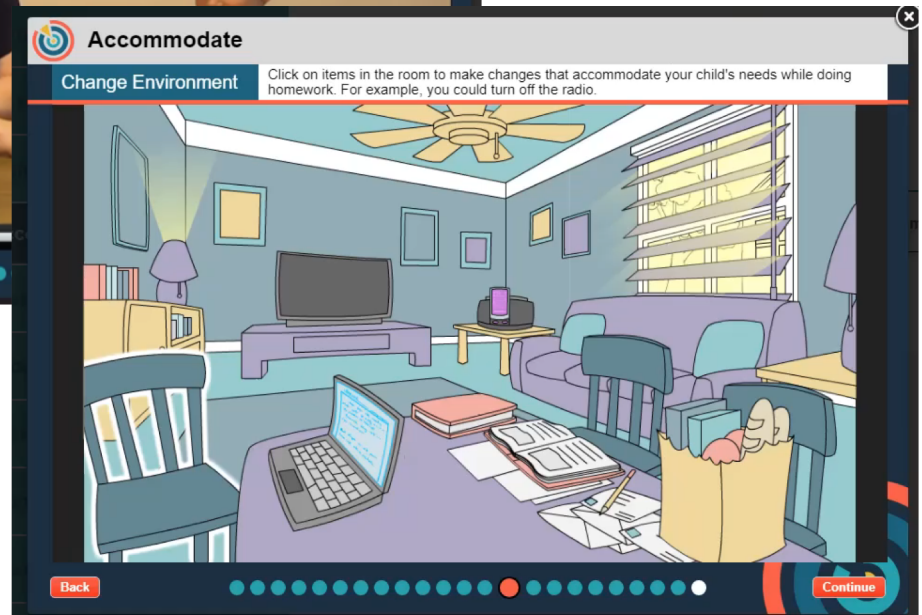
Solving Executive Function Challenges



Leverages technology with variety of tools



Identifying Feelings



GOAL: Increase your understanding of executive functions and how to enhance them

WHY: Executive Functions are necessary and teachable



PLAN:

1. Understand: Can't vs Won't

You can't fix what you don't understand



Understand

Accommodate

Teach new skills

Looks Like *Won't*...

Could be *Can't*

Oppositional, Stubborn

Difficulty shifting
Avoiding overload

Can do it if he wants to

Difficulty shifting
Lack of salience

Self Centered

Impaired social cognition
Poor self monitoring

Won't put good ideas on
paper

Poor fine motor
Disorganization

Sloppy, erratic

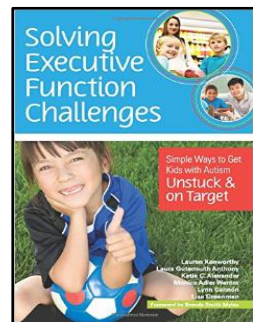
Poor self monitoring
Overloaded

Won't control outbursts

Overloaded
Disinhibition

Doesn't care what others
think

Impaired social cognition
Poor self monitoring

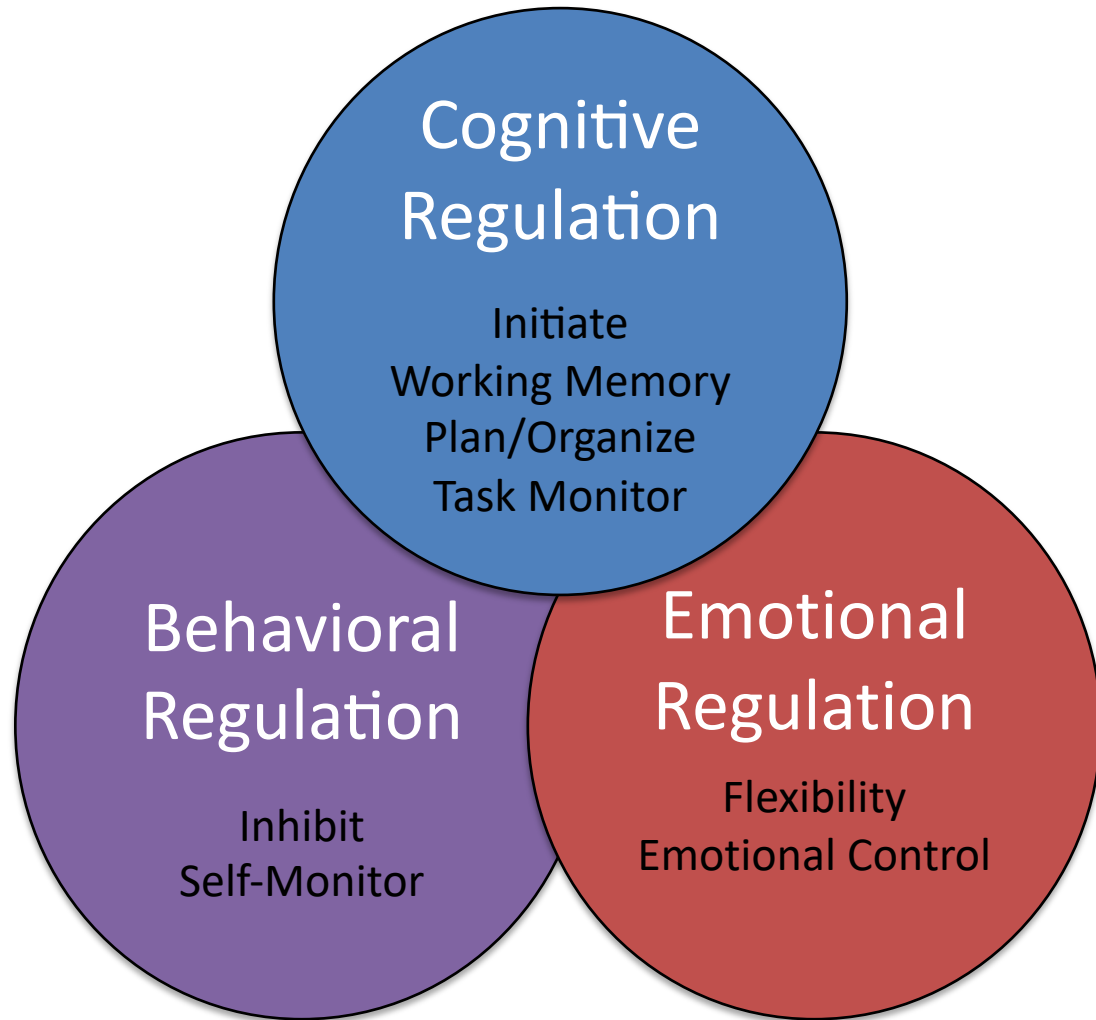


“The Unity and Diversity of Executive Functions”

Flexibility

- Transitioning from one activity to another
- Changes in routine
- Violations of expectations
- Seeing more than one way of doing things
- Easy to get stuck

(Rumsey, 1985; Hill, 2004; Kenworthy et al, 2009; Geurts, 2009; but see Bogte, 2007)



“Asperger’s is like a vise on your brain. And each unexpected event is like another turn on the vise...it just keeps building until you feel like you’re going to explode. Sometimes when you explode, it comes out the wrong way.”

- A young student with ASD

What does cognitive inflexibility look like?

Can't or Won't?

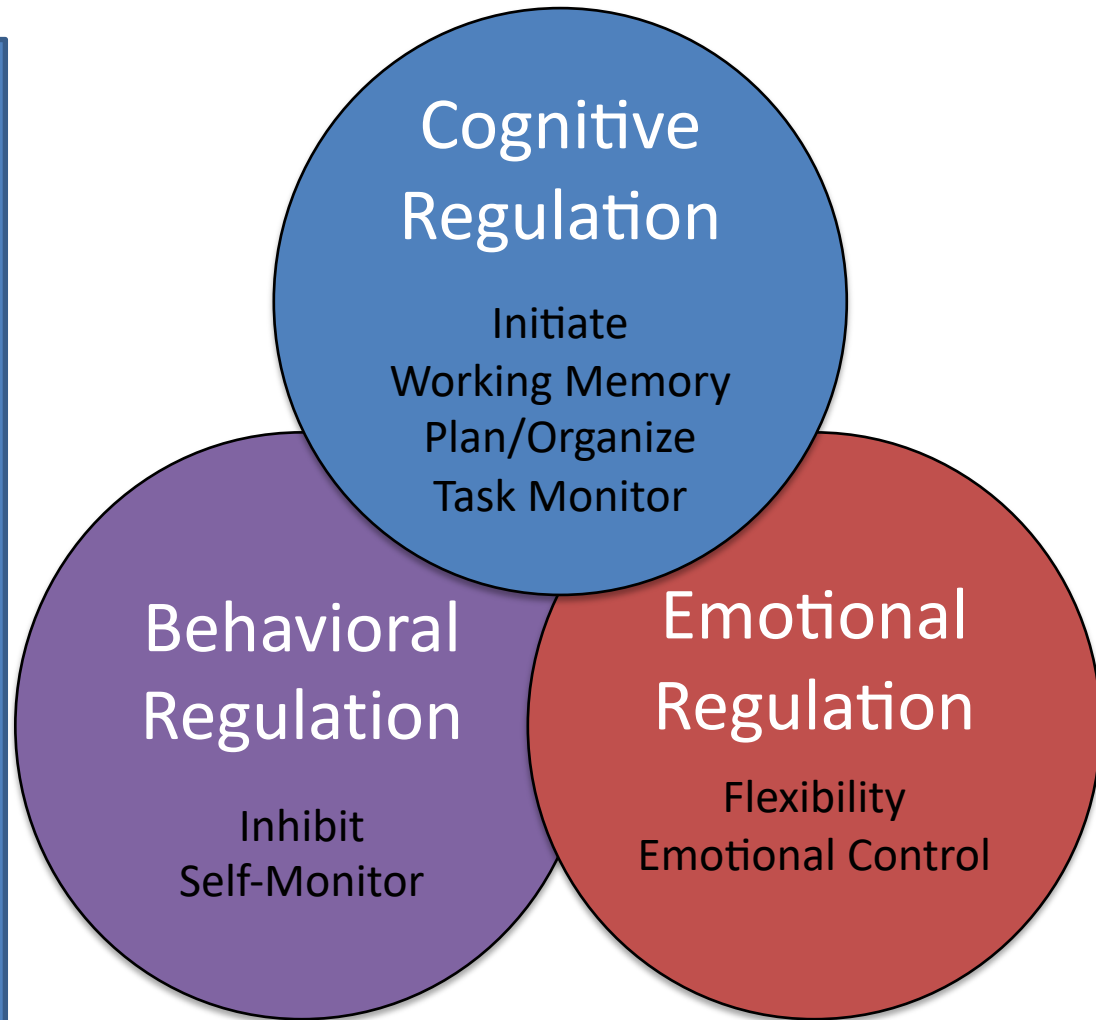
- Accept feedback, different opinions, ideas
- Transition
- Handle frustration
- Start something they don't want to do
- Stop meltdowns
- Stop doing something even they have been told to stop
- Avoid shutting down when something is challenging
- Stop correcting people
- Let other kids take the lead when playing

“The Unity and Diversity of Executive Functions”

Planning/Organization

- Knowing how to accomplish a goal
- Prioritizing
- Identifying main idea and organizing thinking
- Can't see the forest for the trees

(Ozonoff, 1991; Hughes, 1994; Kenworthy, 2005; Hill, 2004; Kenworthy et al, 2009)



What do organization/integration deficits look like?

Can't, or Won't?

- Disorganized language
- Literal language
- Asks for lots of structure in new situations
- Gets stuck on details- doesn't let go of small mistake/inconsistency
- Dominates discussions without knowing it
- Behaves worse in unstructured groups
- Doesn't set goals
- Trouble learning from mistakes
- Poor written expression, Doesn't get good ideas onto paper
- Draw meaning from a reading assignment
- Know what to study for on a test

GOAL: Increase your understanding of executive functions and how to enhance them

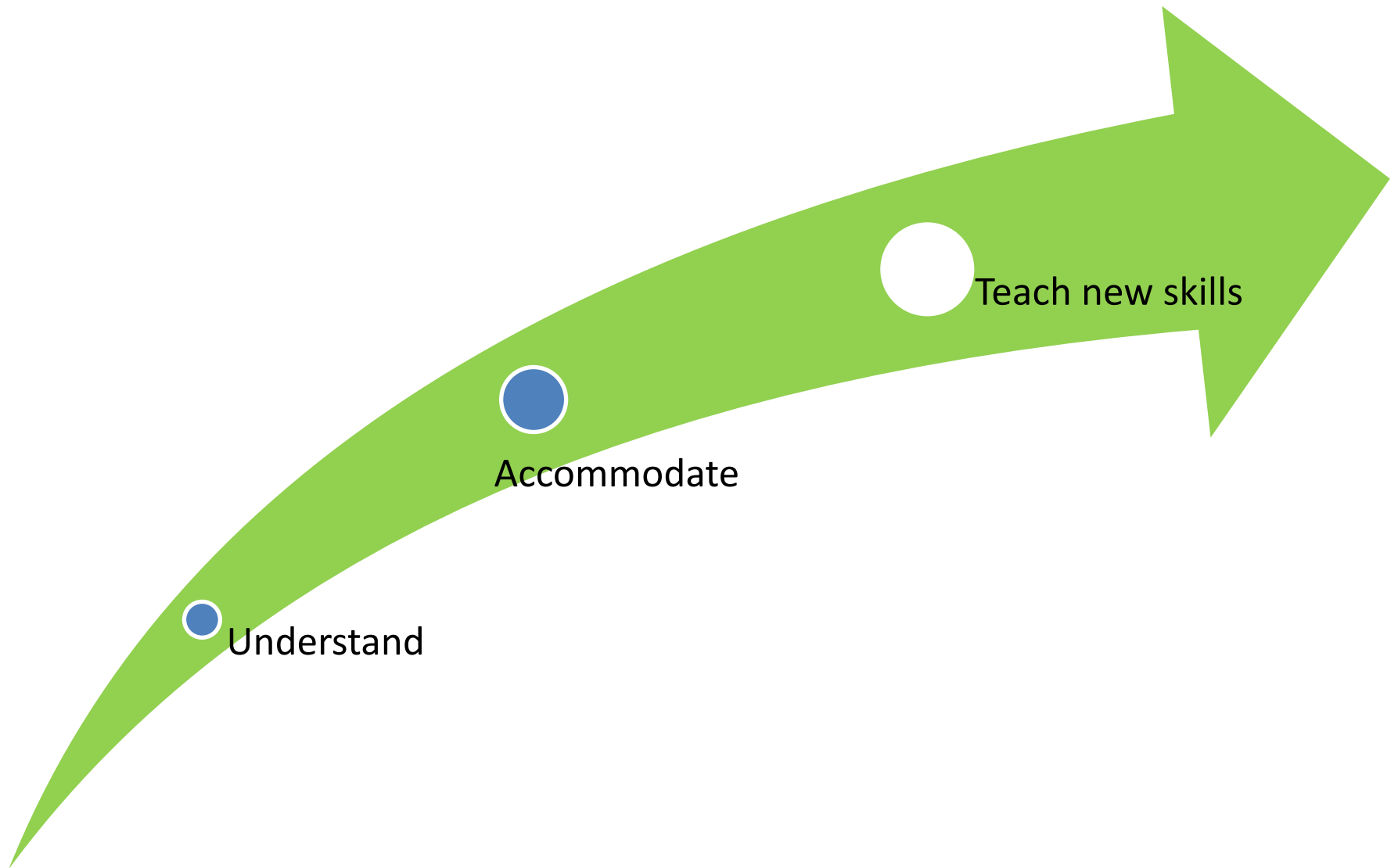
WHY: Executive Functions are necessary and teachable



PLAN:

1. **Understand:** Can't vs Won't
2. **Accommodate:** 6 tools





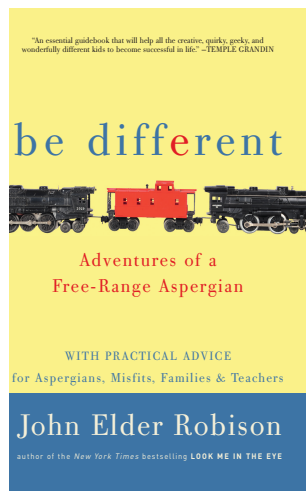
Accommodate, then Remediate

Neurodiversity is a civil right



Overwhelmed people can't learn

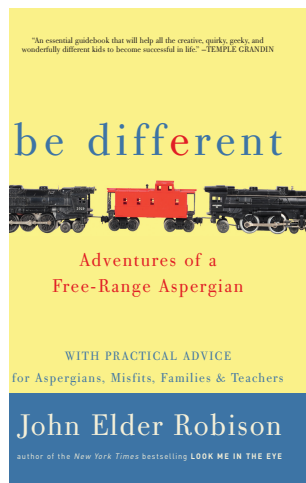
1. Can't vs Won't
2. Predictability and structure
3. Make Big Picture Explicit
4. Talk Less, Write More
5. Keep it Positive
6. Avoid Overload



Accommodate, then Remediate



2. Predictability and structure



Inflexibility Risks and Accommodations



Inflexibility Risks

Difficulty with
violation of
expectations

Schedules
Routines
Predict change
Flexible adult



Accommodations

Inflexibility Risks and Accommodations

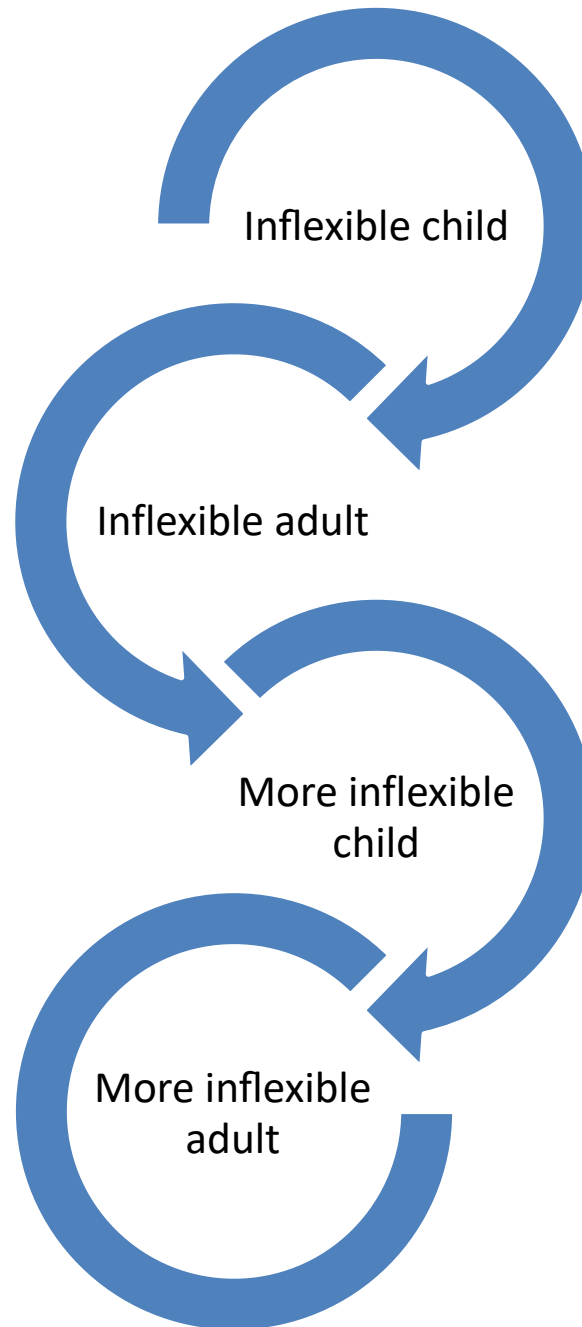


Inflexibility Risks

Overwhelming
intense
feelings

Breaks
Downtime
Flexible, safe
adult

Accommodations



Inflexibility Strengths

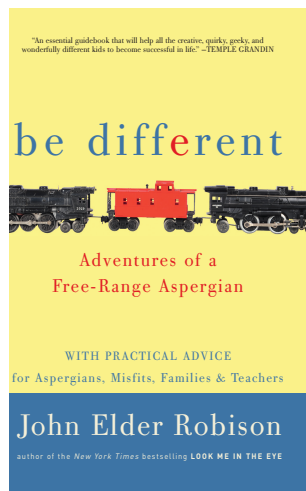
- Deep datasets, expertise in areas of interest
- Persistence
- Reliability
- Loyalty
- Inflexibility is adaptive: It limits unexpected, overloading events
- Respect routines that don't interfere



Accommodate, then Remediate



3. Make Big Picture Explicit



Disorganization Risks and Accommodations

Disorganization Risks

Lack of generalization

"My daughter can peel a potato but she can't peel a sweet potato because they are not the same thing. She just knows the solution to a specific problem and that's all she knows."

Put new info in familiar context
Explicitly review inferences, nuances
Teach in the setting where the skill is expected

Accommodations

Disorganization Risks and Accommodations

Disorganization Risks

Don't show what they know

"My student has truly encyclopedic knowledge, but I never see it in his work."

Study guides
Closed format tests
Writing rubrics
Structure

Accommodations

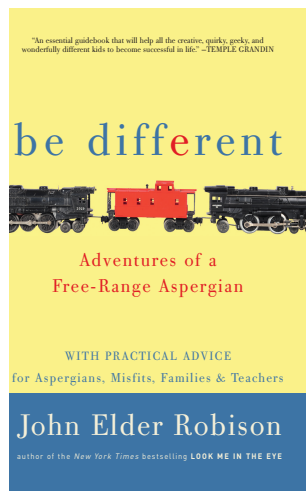
Detail Processor Strengths

- Patience for details
- Respect, follow, use rules
- Good with recipes, checklists and routines
- Powerful computer related thinking
- Classification strengths
- Attention to detail—Sherlock Holmes
- Mastery of detailed datasets
- Large Vocabulary

Accommodate, then Remediate



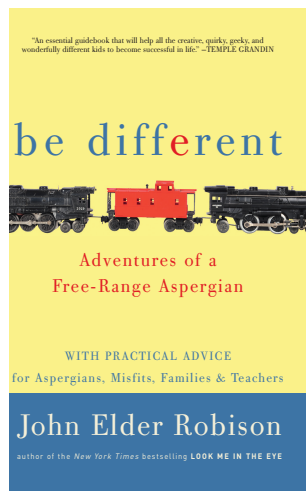
4. Talk Less, Write More



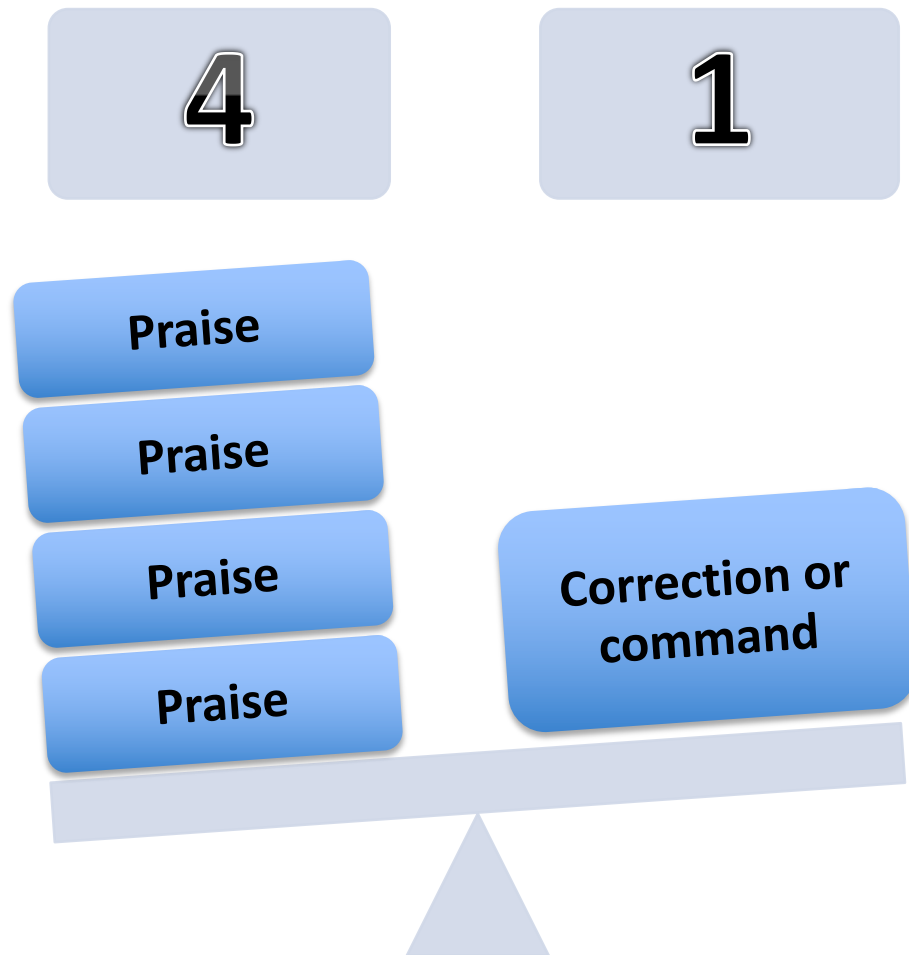
Accommodate, then Remediate



5. Keep it Positive



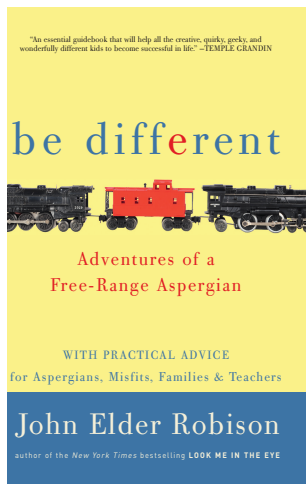
Keep it Positive



Accommodate, then Remediate



6. Avoid Overload



The Power of a Safe Person

Russell Lehmann & David Apkarian @ STORYCORPS



GOAL: Increase your understanding of executive functions and how to enhance them

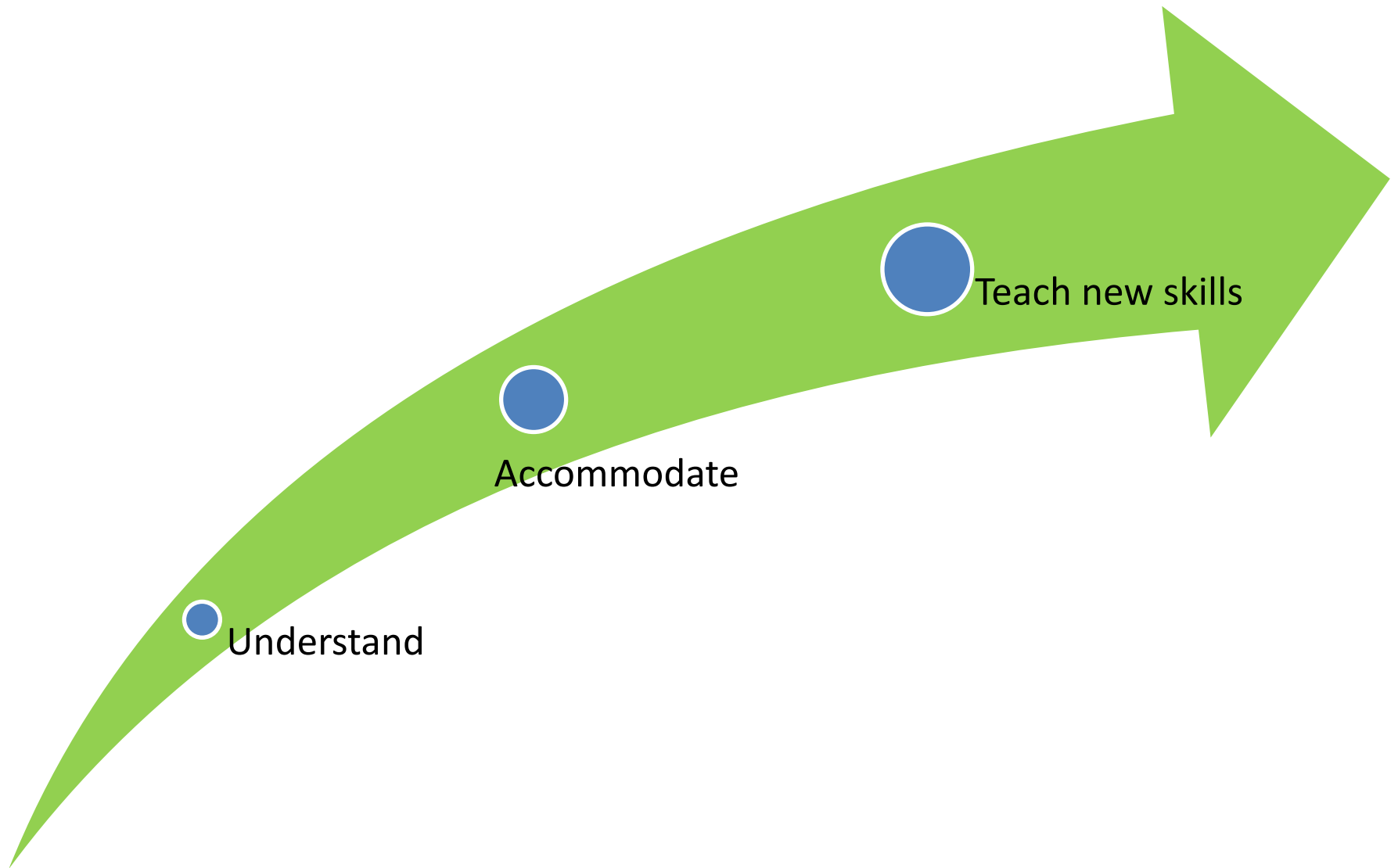
WHY: Executive Functions are fragile, necessary and teachable



PLAN:

1. **Understand:** Can't vs Won't
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Understand



Accommodate

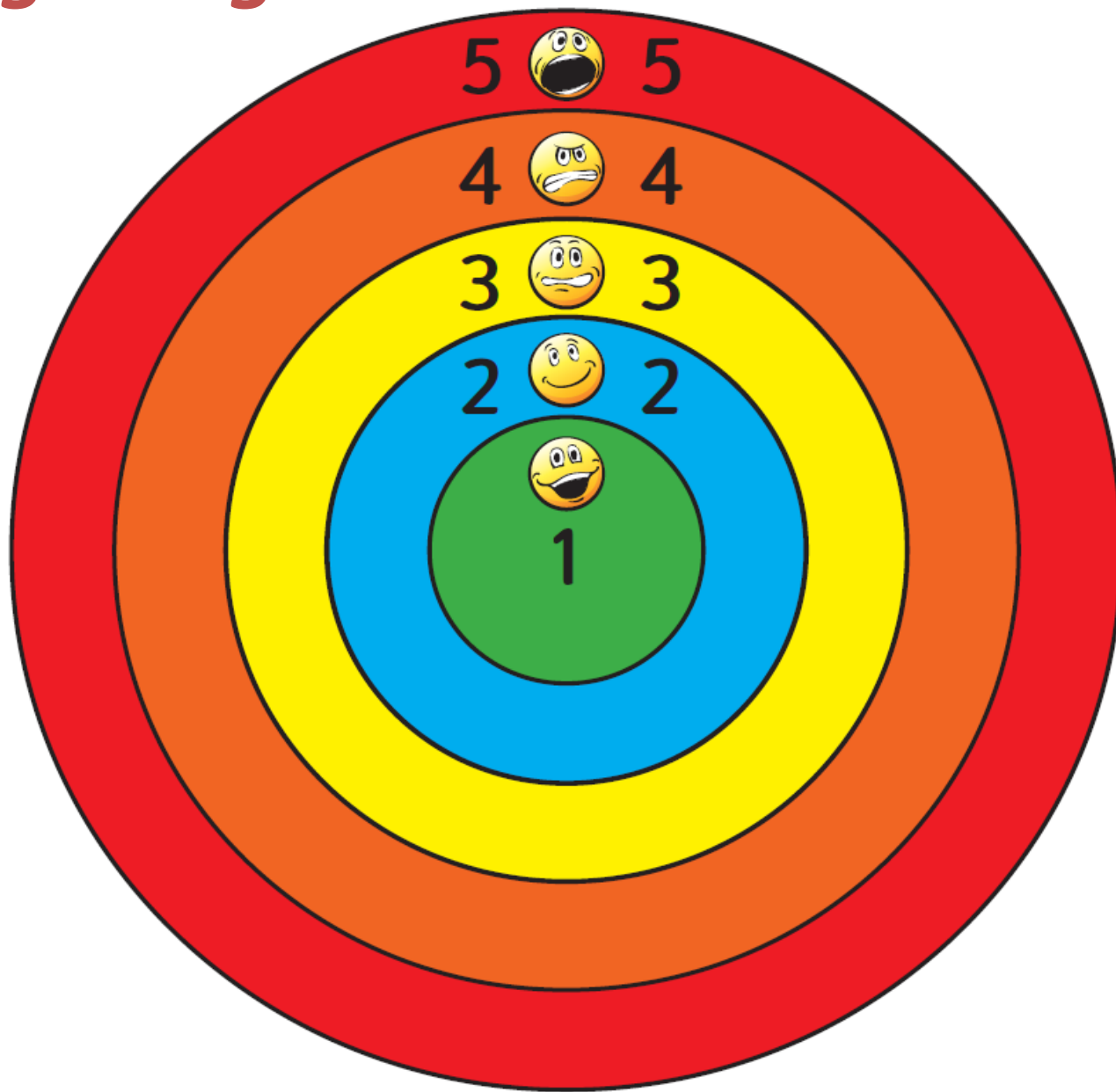


Teach new skills

Learning Executive Function During covid:



Feelings Target



Self-Regulatory Scripts

- ✓ Avoid too much talking
- ✓ Refer to the big picture
- ✓ Build an alliance
- ✓ Need to be practiced to automaticity



Self regulatory Scripts = Shared, Automatic Vocabulary

Flexible

- Great job being flexible

Unstuck

- I'm getting stuck on ____, how can I get unstuck?

Compromise

- Let's compromise so we both get some of what we want

Plan A/Plan B

- What is our plan?
- What is our Plan B?

Big Deal/Little Deal

- How can we make this big deal into a little deal?

Goal-Why-Plan-Do-Check

Teacher Goal:

To go to bus

Brady's Goal:

To keep playing
kickball

Compromise:

- Play for 20 minutes
- Play the next morning

Plan:

☐

1. If Brady finishes check-out before 3:00 he will get 20 minutes of kickball

☐

2. If my bus gets called before 20 minutes I will take the rest of my time the next morning

☐☐

Do: Have we done all the steps to accomplish the goal?

Check: How did it go?

Modeling GWPDC

Plan

- *"Let's make a plan!"*
- *"I need a plan."*
- *"Let's make a Plan B/Plan C, etc."*
- *"Are you working on your plan?"*
- *"Do you have a plan?"*
- *"You are terrific at making plans!"*

Check

- *"How did it go?"*
- *"Okay, now I will check to see if I followed my plan."*
- *"Did your plan take more or less time than you predicted?"*
- *"You did such a terrific job trying out your plan, did it work?"*



Sample Flexibility IEP Goals for "Jamal"



- Given training in and visual reminders of, self regulatory scripts (such as "deal/little deal", "choice/no choice", ("plan A/plan B" and "handling the unexpected") Jamal will manage unexpected events and violations of routine without disrupting classroom activities.
- With fading adult supports, Jamal will use a structured recipe or routine for generating new ideas, or brainstorming to respond successfully to open ended assignments.
- When faced with changes and/or transitions in activities or environments, Jamal will initiate the new activity after only two (one, three) reminders (or within 2, 4, 5 minutes).
- Given concrete training, visual supports and fading adult cuing, Jamal will correctly label flexible and stuck behaviors in himself.
- Given training, practice, visual supports and fading adult cuing in the use of specific coping strategies, Jamal will identify and use a coping strategy when he indicates that he is stuck or upset.

Unstuck Materials



Parent/Teacher book on using Unstuck vocabulary, accommodations & IEP goals, Brookes Publishing Inc.



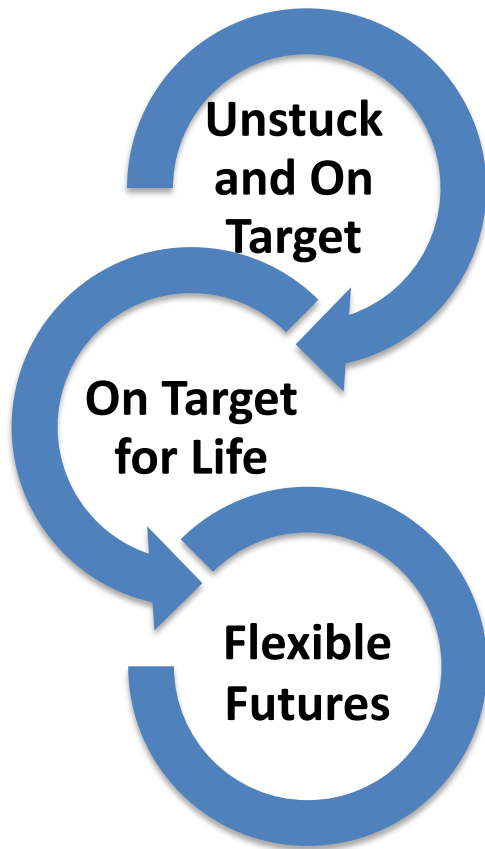
Curriculum kit for 21 small group lessons, Brookes Publishing Inc.



On-line parent training modules

<http://www.unstuckontarget.com/>

Unstuck and On Target Executive Function Curricula



Elementary School: Fun games/experiments to learn to be flexible with body and mind, set goals, make plans

Middle School: Plan fun group activities to build flexibility, goal setting and planning skills in context of collaborative projects

High School: Personal goals, self advocacy, neurodiversity, college readiness

Common Vocabulary

Flexible
Goal
PlanA/PlanB
Compromise
Stuck on a
Detail
Power Plan
Big Picture
Flexible-
Feelings

Thank You!

- Teachers and staff:
 - The Ivymount School
 - Fairfax County Public Schools
 - Arlington Public Schools
- Students and their families
- Funders:
 - Organization for Autism Research
 - NIMH
 - PCORI

The Unstuck Research and Development Team



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