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Executive Functioning 101

with Casey Anley

[Richard]:

Okay. Hey, hi everybody and welcome to another Skill Sessions and whilst everybody is flooding in I'll tell you a little bit about Skill Sessions and what it is. You've just joined so welcome. Welcome to everybody and yeah, so another Skill Session.

Skill Sessions is an event series hosted by CareScribe. It is designed to share knowledge about areas of neurodiversity and disability and help to build and foster an inclusive community where these sorts of topics can be discussed and each event is based on a different topic. In today's topic and today's speaker is Casey Anley, an educational psychologist and director of training at Connections in Mind.

Very happy to have Casey here with us today covering a really interesting topic which is executive functioning or executive functioning 101. So lovely to see so many of you here. As you already are doing please say hello in the chat. Let us know where you're coming from and what your background is. Be fantastic to get the chat going fantastic. Everybody's joining that's brilliant.

And a reminder to change your chat settings to all otherwise, it's you just sending it to panelists and we love to hear from you. But share it with everybody of you if you feel like you can and yet we encourage you to post throughout. So please do get involved. We often have a really engaging vibrant chat going which is always wonderful at these events.

So I mentioned CareScribe that's who we are. CareScribe run these events. Let me tell you a little bit about CareScribe if you don't already know. So my name is Rich. I'm one of the founders and directors of CareScribe. And for those of you who haven't heard of us before, CareScribe is an assistive technology company based in Sunny Bristol. Myself and the other two co-founders Chris and Tom are neurodivergent as are many of our team. And as a company, we spend every day working to support disabled, neurodivergent individuals, to work and study more independently.



And we do that by building technology and software tools. If you haven't heard of them before, are Caption.Ed and TalkType. What are they I hear you ask. Caption.ed is a piece of software that supports captioning and note-taking and is going to help people to better comprehend and retain some of the huge amounts of information that are thrown at us every day now in our busy lives. Of course, that's of tremendous value to a wide range of disabilities, the neurodivergent profiles for example for those who are deaf or have hearing loss.

You may find it difficult to maybe comprehend what's being said to those like me who are dyslexic have ADHD or ASD who maybe have similar difficulties or find it hard to focus and retain information or even those with maybe a motor impairment who maybe find it hard to or difficult to get their thoughts down in a timely manner. So Caption.Ed is there to really take the pain out of that process and to make more sense of the noise and be able to comprehend exactly what's being said and retain as much of it as possible. Our other software is called TalkType, which is a dictation tool.

So it helps people to convert their thoughts into text something that a wide range of people find very challenging for a wide range of reasons myself very much included in that. So if you want to find out any more about our assistive technology or CareScribe, please feel free to pop something in the chat or in the feedback at the end and we can set you up with a demo and also there's lots more information about the business and our products online as well at our website. So please check that out. But do let us know if you want us to reach out and set up a demo. Okeydoke, more people still joining fantastic.

So bit of housekeeping and captions captions are available throughout the session. So please turn them on yourself within Zoom if you need them. And also if you find the chat distracting for any reason then you can turn off notifications and you can hide the chat preview. So if you click on the chat and then select hide chat previews that will just stop that for you. So it's less distracting. If you find that difficult keep the chat going if you want to engage with that. It's fantastic to see so many of you joining and engaging on these calls.

There's also the Q and A function which we do use so if you've got questions for me, or you got questions for Casey and then please pop your questions in there will have some dedicated time at the end to go through those questions. And if you see somebody's asked a question that you think oh, I really want that answer then do what vote it because we'll try and make sure we go through the questions and we make sure we get to those priority ones. They've been up voted and no wrong questions safe place to learn and you'll be glad to know this session is recorded So if you miss anything, don't worry, you're going to get an email from us tomorrow and it's going to be on LinkedIn as well. So you can go back and you can revisit the session with the transcript with Casey's slide decks and the recording and resources that we talked about in the webinar.

Well, that's my bit and so welcome done and my the last thing I need to do is welcome at Casey and who's joining goes as I said from Connections in mind. She's a real expert on this topic and she's going to be talking to us about executive functioning. So Casey I'm going to hand over to you now and yeah, I'll be back on at the end.

[Casey]:

Awesome. Thank you so much, Rich and just so lovely to be here with all of you today. And thanks so much for the opportunity to talk to you about executive functioning. I absolutely buzz about this topic. So you see I've got ADHD and I'm going to hyper focus into this webinar. And so if you do have any any questions or anything in the chat, please do pop them into that Q and A. I don't always keep an eye on the chat as I say I told you hyper focus there, so then hopefully one of the team can just assist there and just pop it into the Q and A where you are going to do you there to ourselves I'm going to go ahead and just upload my slide deck.

Okie dokes. So really excited to get started I've got a lot to tell you today and I'm hoping we're going to be able to squish everything into this forty-odd minute presentation. But as Rich said we will be sharing the recording tomorrow and there's a handout which I'm going to ask one of the team to pop into the chat you welcome to go and take a look at the the handouts and we've got lots of different links and goodies. I'll be talking about that today.

So executive functioning or 10 And what is it and how does it affect us? So let's get going. Right if you've never used Menti before it is amazing and it's a way that we can really engage with you as the audience. So go ahead and grab your phone. You can open up your QR reader or your camera scan that code and you can actually follow along then on your phone and we're going to ask a couple questions and you can actually vote so it's a really nice interactive bit, I really enjoyed the interaction and it just really helps me engage even more in the presentation.

So you can also open up a browser on your computer. You can just go to menti.com. It's going to ask you for a code and I wonder if I can quickly just copy paste that code into the chats just popped it in there as well. It's actually a very nice nifty a very nice nifty direct link. So let me see if I can drop it. There we got so that direct link takes you exactly then straight to that voting thing. So we're going to go ahead and get started just a little bit from my side. The team is going to be dropping in that handout. It does have some clickable links. So you're welcome to take a look at that later.

I will be referring to a couple things in the presentation today, but what we're going to be diving into our what our executive functions we are very big about the Neuroscience behind Executive functions and their link let's neurodiverse traits. We also going to have a look at an introduction to approaches to identify and help build those stronger executive functioning skills.

All right. So why are you here today? All right, so you're welcome to join us there on the voting either through scanning your QR code or just clicking on that directly Link in the chat.

So amazing. This is why I love the software that we really can get a snapshot of why we are here today. Alright, so I can see the majority of us. They are for my students. I'm going to be talking a little bit about my background in the next slide, but I come from an education background initially. So this is really exciting for me. I've also been worked as

Rich indicated. I am educational psychologists used to do a lot of Assessments so I can tell you for my clients there as well for myself amazing. And we're going to be talking about ah-ha moments when we suddenly connect with executive functions. I'm so amazing that you are here for my children. Awesome general interest. Welcome welcome and we've got some other there as well. Fantastic. Thank you. This really gives me a nice read of the room for the presentation. There was some okay, so I'm going to get test kick started here with another bit of our Interactive piece here describe yourself in three words.

So it's really a group a group effort in this presentation here. So you're going to see what we're going to be doing here. Totally Anonymous this so if you describe yourself in three words, it's going to create a really lovely word cloud, which we're going to be talking to and I must let you know that the bigger the words it means that more than one person has indicated so Look at that. We've got kind warm and curious busy. Yep. I hear that. I hear that. It's all these beautiful words that are coming up here to describe ourselves. I'm reading their empathetic is also really big friendly funny compassionate neurodiverse energetic or some considerates as I can see a whole bunch of wonderful interested creative and it's so lovely to be able to see you know how people see themselves because sometimes our perception of ourselves is influenced by Society.

We're going to be having a look at how that actually influences our identity then as well. So thank you so much for sharing. It's really wonderful to see how many responses were. In the really really awesome okeydoke. So a little bit about me. So I'm going to start kind of right from the beginning because it kind of explains how I ended up in Connections in mind. So you may hear from my accent. I am South African I grew up in a very small town right on the Western Cape right at the bottom of South Africa, and I went to a very small school called Oakhill and the tag line of Oak Hill was the joy of learning and I think I was so lucky and fortunate to have that experience of having learning. That was fun. It was individualize. It was a small school and it was really interesting. That was my first experience of learning then I went and studied at Stellenbosch University.

I did my pgce and so I am a qualified teacher. I did my masters in educational psychology and it was there. We have started to realize hang one. This is not a general view of Education. A lot of people have not had this happy. Joyful experience of learning my brother had significant challenges then with some of what we can have a look at now as ADHD traits most definitely a totally undiagnosed and it was I think looking through that lens and seeing some of the struggles seeing some of my friends struggles there as well. That's I it was really interesting for me to see how other people were experiencing education. It was only rarely when I was doing my University.

So when I was doing my honours and Masters in educational psychology, I was then doing some tutoring on the side and a lot of my clients were starting to experience all I notice they were experiencing this, you know, the typical challenges that we know no of ADHD and even in my training educational psychology we didn't Really learn a lot about what it looks like to support, you know people who are neurodivergent it only it really took me when I started lecturing I lectured psychology for a little while and there I could see I started my executive functioning coaching.

A lot of my clients were saying I'm feeling overwhelmed. I'm starting to feel really, you know, anxious as the workload increases. I'm really finding that the anxiety is starting to get in my way. And as soon as I started hearing these keywords overwhelming anxiety time management challenges working memory, which will be chatting about today. As soon as I started to hear that and then I read more and learn more there. Was this ah-ha or light bulb moment for me and I thought hang on a moment. I can identify with this and if you can identify with this truck this in the chat if this was your experience of having that aha moments with hang on a minute, there's anxiety pieces. There's this overwhelmed This time management some of these challenges are really starting to trip me up and then I went for my diagnosis and blow me down. I-i've got ADHD and it was so bizarre that I was supporting all these people didn't really pick it up and it makes so much sense to me.

And I know now that I'm in this work and then I discovered Connections in mind and it's just been such a wonderful Journey because I think I it's a small small organization where all neurodivergent and it's Just felt such a welcoming space. I'm going to be talking a little bit about yeah, just about what we do at the end of this presentation as well.

So that's just me in a real nutshell. So when I speak about this repeated crisis, I notice that in school my anxiety definitely followed me to University. Then it followed me into the workplace and every single job that I've had there's been the sense of overwhelm is being a lot of anxiety and I just thought you know, there must be something more behind this and yes that my diagnosis of ADHD is definitely helped me to understand that but I think it was really doing this work having this. Aha moment meeting other people who have gone down this journey then as well. I've learned strategies to manage my anxiety. We're going to be talking about those in a bit, but I just absolutely am so passionate about working with people to understand their brains better and their brain States.

So one of my light bulb moments I was working within a school and appearance recommended that I read this book the smart but scattered Series so doctors Peg Dawson and Richard choir amazing amazing authors. They've got an entire series which I'll be talking about later. They do not sponsor the work that we do but we are just so passionate about what they do. This is really like the guidebook of executive functioning and I love that title. Just the title alone. Effectively smart but scattered and so many of my clients so many of my students I could just see that this was this touched on and reflected so many of them. So I think once I discovered Peg Dawson coincidentally are fond of Connections in mind also, this was her light bulb moments. And so we nerd out a lot on Peg Dawson's work there. So if you read nothing else on Executive functioning this series, there's a children a teens. And University students and an adult version. Alright, so not a small Mission. We want to change the world and we really want to be able to help people to understand themselves better.

We are all about supporting people to overcome their challenges and there are a lot of different ways that we do that so let's just dive in I'd love to get a bit of a reading of the room. It really helps me then to pitch how And present the the information on Executive functioning. So do go ahead and scan that QR code and you're welcome to open up a browser. If you like. I'm going to quickly drop that code into the chat then again, if you

would like to just open up an internet browser and follow along there so I can see we middle of the road at the moment.

So we've got about Midway knowledge, so it's not so maybe there Are some people who've never heard of executive functions and amazing. I love experiencing those are moments with you. But we also have some people then who are more on their expert side. So we're going to nerd out completely on that today. So fantastic amazing. I can see where around the halfway mark. So awesome that really helps me. Thank you so that I can really think about how to pitch this. I'm going to give you the core the basic as well as then dip into some some interesting science and the Neuroscience behind what we do.

Alright. So what's our executive function? So if we think about our brain the little bit right behind our forehead here is what we call the prefrontal cortex. And that's the cognitive processes which reside in the prefrontal cortex of the brain. So these are responsible for the effective timely execution of tasks. So these are the executive functions Execution of tasks and really important the regulation of our emotions and behaviour. So how do we know about them interestingly enough scientists have only really discovered that executive functions are cognitive processes and not character flaws not character flaws in the last 20 years since they started using MRI scanners.

So that we could actually peer into the brain and see what was happening in the brain. So a lot of people and myself included Was a lot of negative talk that I would have with myself. I'm just going to be anxious like this all the time. It's just hard wired into my brain. I'm lazy. I can't you know, when I feel like I'm procrastinating, I can't get stuck into something this you know, I'll tell myself. I'm lazy and I have to catch that now and really reinforced my strengths when that happens to me so we know there's a lot of science that tell us then that it is. Processes that are happening in that prefrontal cortex, which can either help us to really function optimally or can hinder some of the processes that we have. So who is affected everyone has a unique executive functioning footprint. We all have some things that we really strong at and some things that we already that are real challenges for us.

So for me, I'm going to be talking about the different executive functions, but I can tell you that. Working memory the ability to hold things in mind that is the most difficult thing for me. So if I have to remember a set of directions, if you tell me what down the road turn left turn right there is a post office and then a tree you lost me at walk down the road. I really struggled to hold different processes in mind. So that's working memory. And that is something that I struggle with. It's one of my challenges but I can be pretty good at time management. So that's one of my strengths. So everyone as I said has a difference executive functioning fingerprints or Footprints.

So on page one of your handouts, I'm going to ask the team if they wouldn't mind just popping that into the chat there again, I believe it will also be in your email tomorrow as well. And there is actually a survey that you can take so it's for adults as well as parents if you'd like to figure out and learn a little bit more about your your own footprint or your children's footprint, it gives a really nice reporter you can start to learn what your own footprint of the looks like as well.

Alright. So what does this mean for our lives these things really do impacts our day-to-day lives. So it's those meeting deadlines. It's prioritizing work to be completed when I feel overwhelmed and anxious. I really struggle to actually prioritize and think about all the different things that I have to do and to write to-do lists. Those are really challenges for me and I have to I've had to learn a lot of strategies over the years to support. With this executive functioning. So we're going to be talking about that in a minute regulating emotions. How do I when I start to feel flustered? How do I start to bring myself back like that inhibit responses? So to not blurt out at an inappropriate time to organize belongings and here's the important thing organizing our thoughts on paper if anyone can resonate with us, let us know in the chat there.

I don't know about you but it made a whole lot of sense in my head, but sometimes getting it down on paper can be super tricky. So there's that holding information in our head these that working memory piece. Keeping time. So time blindness is a real thing not only in ADHD, but also, you know part of that executive functioning process. There is that time management. That's and the thinking flexibly as well. I'm going to be talking about that a little bit and the research behind that as well.

So again, let's get a bit of a reading of the room. So which of these challenges do you struggle with? So again, you are going to scan that QR code and we're going to start to have a look at the ones that are popping up here. So right so I can see one person is voted here. We've got regulated emotions. Prioritizing work to be completed. Oh, yes, and I've got some fellow it working memory challenges. I've got some people who also experienced that look at that 32.

So if you have just joined us you more than welcome to scan that QR code and you can hop onto the voting platform here and join us so that we can really learn a little bit about what our audience how out Our audience are responding as I love this look at that 54. We've got 54 votes there for percentage. Should I say of the votes holding information? I had regulating emotions or I feel you. I can resonate with that prioritizing work to be completed book.

That's a real struggle for me inhibiting responses. Look at that organizing thoughts on paper, right fantastic, and thank you so much for Sharing sometimes it can be the first time that we really thought about this put it down, you know, put it out there into the world, even though this in and is anonymous it can be quite something just to take stock of where our executive functions are at this time. So thank you so much for voting really love you to get a snapshot yet of our audience.

We're going to dig a little bit deeper there. So what emotions did you feel the last time you struggled with holding information in mind time management organizing your thoughts and paper Okay. So we've got some some words popping up in our in our word cloud and it always catches me a little bit in my throat here because these words I can feel the emotion coming And again, the bigger the words come up. It means that more and more of you are sharing these look how big those frustration pieces me over. overwhelm the embarrassment absolutely There's that anxious Point coming up again disappointed

guilty. Inadequate again. I can really feel the emotions Behind These. Thank you so much for sharing them. An amazingly good 145 responses here you are going to put as many as you like in here again can be really powerful just to say these are too loud. Wow, look at these a lot of frustration and a lot of overwhelmed and a lot of anxiety and embarrassments. Thank you so much for sharing there.

In the interest of time I am going to move on but there is some space there in your handouts as well just to carry on with this reflection here. So now we digging even deeper. So what is that the roots of these emotions what is coming up for you? There? We do. You think these things come from? That shame that frustration that embarrassments that overwhelm.

Look at these things coming up. They being difference feelings of failure comparison self-doubts. Yes, the childhood trauma. We're going to be touching on that today Society. I think our society definitely favours those neurotypical type of traits will there's near-perfect executive functions being able to be on time all the time. I'll be able to regulate our emotions. So I think they can be a lot of discrimination against us when we do feel these very normal things. Oh, I feel this one not being able to see a task as easy. It has to be complicated. It's almost like we have to prove our worth by working hard in a task that maybe it can be super easy for other people and lots of trauma coming up expectations this fitting in with norms, feeling inadequate in comparison to my peers, poor teachers. Yes, put a teacher being misunderstood struggle between big picture and the details. Yes, I can get I can get stuck into the details and I can struggle with that big picture as well. And I'm really seeing the roots of these emotions that failure pieces a lot of expectations and I wonder Society parents teachers and a lot of difference a lot of difference. Thank you so much for sharing your I think it's really really powerful that we can have a look at this as I say, these are completely Anonymous really. I feel really touched and honoured that you have shared these with us today.

Okay, so let's dig into things here. So they are three core brain function. So we like to have a look at these then as separate to our executive functioning skills. So we've got that cognitive flexibility the ability to be able to pause and to reflect and think about other people's perspectives. So to be able to change our stance in a perspective on different things inhibitory controls to stop and to think about things. Before we respond and that working memory part is holding things in mind so multiple instructions multiple levels and steps and being able to hold all those different parts interestingly. There's a very interesting connection with working memory and maths and it's only now in my later life in my you know, after I finish school that I have recognized that perhaps one of my struggles with maths was also this working memory challenge, which is Yeah, the more I research at the more I do see that there can be a connection there.

So we've got those three brain processes and we've got those eleven executive functioning skills. So we spoke about could the cognitive flexibility the working memory and the inhibitory control part, but then we have a look at that planning and prioritizing what comes first when we've got so much on our plates goal-directed persistence keep going so that we Going towards our goal even when it gets difficult, even when we get distracted organization being able to organize not only our belongings ourself in space

and time, but also our thoughts down on paper holding our attention with that sustained attention managing time. So that also brings in that time blindness that can be just a difficulty with tracking time. The metacognition piece is really important that self-awareness. How aware Where are we of these different executive functioning both strengths and challenges that you have and that's where the question is really helpful. You'll find that on page 1 of that handout that I've shared their that the team has shared also got that emotional regulation piece and then being able to start a task where comes our lovely procrastination piece there.

All right. So where does the show up Goodness Me? Does it show up in our education? It's Not blurting out. So, you know being able to raise our hand like those those youngsters they are right at the top of the list there. It is being able to reflect and have you know build on our strong metacognition to be able to get our thoughts out on paper to have sustained attention when we are learning different things again to be able to maybe study to get our thoughts on paper and exams take all of these different skills and the same really goes there. In for work, if we think about all the different processes that need to happen there for us to really be successful in work. It's being able to work with other people work towards our goals have really strong time management skills be able to plan and prioritize and may be able to sustain our tension regulate our emotions. All of these parts really demand strong executive functions.

So if we have a look at a little bit of the So we are really big fan of Russell Barkley's work. So he is a professor at South Carolina in Charleston and he read he speaks about ADHD as being a self-regulation Deficit Disorder so difficulty with regulating ourselves and this is the part that really interest me. It's also an executive functioning deficit disorder because when you start to think about it all of those symptoms then of ADHD you can actually start to see their connections there with our executive functions.

So Russell Barkley then talks about to deal with the problems that ADHD creates. We also need to understand that it involves executive functioning deficits and strengths and that such deficits can be compensated for by two things modifying the environments and that's where the support comes in as well as making other accommodations to buttress. And facilitate the individuals use of their own self control. So really it is about providing people and providing ourselves with some of those accommodations the support that we really need to not only support our executive function skills, but also to build on them as well.

So dyslexia interesting links there. We've got Horowitz-Kraus to a synopsis there Horowitz-Kraus talk about any executive based reading intervention. So we've got that speed of processing the working memory the visual attention that can improve reading ability in both children and adults with dyslexia. So there's been a move now to start to bring in more executive functioning support into dyslexia. So they also talked about the role of executive functioning in Reading may have future implications for Diagnosing dyslexia and improving intervention therapies. So we get so excited when you see that the researchers demonstrating what we already know is that executive functions are behind a lot of what we are seeing in our clients and our students.

So I'll drop this this will be part of the slides then I'm not going to go through all of you so you can access them in the email tomorrow, but you'll see there's lots of different sand Research into this kind of work and a lot of it is talking about the working memory the sustained attention the response inhibition and that emotional regulation piece as part of Dyslexia ADHD autism spectrum disorder as well. I hope I'm pronouncing this right Demetriou and his team his research in 2019 who says that empirical studies suggest a broad impairments and executive functions, although there is significant. inter-individual variability which means that people will experience executive function challenges differently. So you might find that you will have extremely strong attention to detail that sustained attention, but some people might find that the time management piece is really lacking. So we find in Bett a lot that interesting connection there with our ASD. So again some really interesting research That's coming out here.

This is even more recent where we can see these results support the executive dysfunction hypothesis of ADHD supporting that the poor frontal parietal recruitment may underlie some of the difficulties that they experience. So that means that our ability to bring our prefrontal cortex or our executive functions online that can be what can contribute to some of the challenges that we are experiencing. Then with our with autism so they are really interesting connections then with our neurodivergent rates. So we see a lot of the cognitive flexibility within our autistic traits. We see that inhibitory control a lot about ADHD traits, but we also seeing that working memory part that comes through really strongly than with are dyslexic trait.

So the really good thing about this is we could all change our brains. There's a lot of Sciences and science that comes out of UCL. There's dr. Filippelli the talks about 60 iterations of something for it to become a habit. So 60 times we do something that it's starting to start to become more natural. So if we were to use let's say a phone reminder on our phone to go and get up and go for that run. Let's say after 60 times. It's starting to get into our conscious. So that we get up and we think actually I'm going to go for a run before our phone even starts to give us that reminder.

So the research again we can actually strengthen those neuro-pathways so that the signal to the brain can get there so much quicker. So really really interesting when we look at the neuroplasticity. We've got some wonderful neuroplasticity. There's a lovely video in that handout that you can see exactly what is happening in the brain there. So we'd like to talk about our brain and our brain States. So there you can see we've got that prefrontal cortex at the front and right in the middle of our brain. We've got the amygdala. So we like to think of our prefrontal cortex as our air traffic control and that's where we really have to think before we act our amygdala is that threat detector and that helps us to act before we think or it often. Encourage us encourages us to act before we think so.

This is a really nifty thing you can go and have a look at Dan Siegel's work on the internet really really interesting work. So he talks about the hand model and I encourage you to do it alongside me. If you hold up your fists like this. Here's your prefrontal cortex right up at the top where your knuckles are. And your amygdala is your thumb. So let's go ahead and close our fingers over our thumb. So what's happening here? We've got our brain and we going along and let's say there is a threat there's a threat that happens. What happens is

we literally flip our lid which means that it's really difficult for our executive functions to help us to regulate our emotions. There's the threat detector and it's telling us something's going on here and we are responding with an emotional response. Did you know that it takes 20 minutes for our nervous system to relax so that we can close that lid back over our amygdala and we can start to think with our rational part of our brain and the interesting thing with us is we really need to be in a regulated calm state for us to be able to use all of our important executive functioning skills. So we did talk about that in the handout. You've got the image. You're welcome to share this as far as you like.

So trauma is a very interesting link there. Where we are starting to see from brain scans there are children who have chronic trauma that the amygdala they emotional processing part of the brain actually gets bigger as they develop. So it means that they haven't been able to develop these executive functioning skills because they spend so much time in this dysregulated space and we can see with adults then as well when we are totally dysregulated a lot of the time. It's very difficult for us to engage those 11 executive functioning skills. Our brain is offline. Our prefrontal cortex is offline. So when you talk about our well-being and our executive functioning skills, we have a look at eight different parts of that. So there we've got safety how safe are you feeling in yourself and in your body and in your environment, what is your exercise like and I know for me? If I don't exercise often, I can become very disrelated. What is your connection like for yourself? And with others now fun and Joy are interesting things fun is the activities that you do Joy is the sense of joy that you get that happiness feeling that comes about calm and how regulated are you feeling sleep? What is your sleep? Like, we know that there's a lot of connection there with with our sleep and without your neurodivergent conditions there as well and food. I don't know about you, but I often forget to eat at the end of the day. I suddenly think why am I so cranky? Why am I finding it difficult to regulate my emotions? It was that pot there as well interesting connections there. Dr. Brennan Brown speaks a lot about safety connection and belonging that are so fundamental fundamental to our belonging and she talks about the Opposites of belonging as fitting in and is That interesting because when you first read this, you think no fitting in that we feel like we fit it but actually fitting is an action that is required of us to survive in situation.

So let's think of our children at school belonging is the institution's responsibility to help us to belong to give us the support that we need to belong so that our students don't have access for all they have to do all of the work. Work and have this mask up all of the time so that we can feel like we are a part of something so I am going to skip this just in the interest of time because I can see we've got some lovely Q and A's coming up here. I can see we've got a couple questions there.

So what can be done and I did promise you that I was going to show you a strategy. This is one of my favourite strategies for planning and prioritizing. So this is just one of the things that we have a look at when we support our own clients that we teach in our coach training which I'll talk about in a moment. So that sense. I was have a look at the three checklist when we working on planning and prioritizing overwhelm. Is there a sense of overwhelm I can't even start my work with my clients if they feeling overwhelmed because remember it takes 20 minutes to get our brain back online. Our prefrontal concert cortex back online so that we can think with our rational brain. So I do a lot of regulation activities

with my clients first. They I have a look is there perfectionism is there people-pleasing going on and I like to spend some time investigating that first then if I find okay, right. Let's get to the Crux of the matter if there's too much on or it's unclear. We don't really know about deadlines or how to start now we can get working.

All right. I always have a stack of paper plates in my office and I often just This image with my clients as well. And I asked them what is on your plate and literally they just brainstorm we brainstorm together. I can awesome guiding questions and we put everything on this paper plate for so what is on your paper plate? You can see often people have this. Oh moment of oh my goodness. Okay. All right. I can see there's a lot going on. But now we're going to construct a plan. This is my favourite thing to do and there lots of Technology apps and things that you can use this is basically the formal name is a kanban board.

I'll go ahead and quickly drop that into the chapter. That is a right that a kanban board sub just pop that spelling there into the chat. So a kanban board. I like to call it a to do, doing, done board because that's what it does on the tin. So what we do then is we take all of our things on our plate. We write them on sticky. It's a we shut them onto The To Do List we may even find as we writing on them. How important are these. Can we maybe delegate some of these do they need to go on our to-do list can we edit them at this point? Then you can see this person is actually use different colour sticky notes to highlight.

What is work or study? What are some of the maybe the personal things maybe the personal goals so you can see we just throw everything on the to do part. Then here's the check you are only allowed to put over two of those sticky notes into your second column because we all have the tendency to try and do too much at one time that if you can focus on getting those things done first, then you move them over to the done pot. And only then can you move something over back from your to do into the doing and I love that the end of the day I can actually see all of the things that I've been able to achieve. He's in my done column, that to me is so important and really really helpful. Not only for my self-esteem my confidence, but I can also have a look at one of my strategies are working.

Well, I did promise that I would give you a snapshot of those different books that I spoke about in the beginning the smart but scattered series, you can see we've got a child one and adults one and a team when as well. So you will find your own. The functioning profile on page 1 of your handout, you'll see this one for adults and for parents at Connections in mind. We always work with connect collaborate and support and there's lots of different ways that you do that. So we have five different types of services and you are going to see all of these links in that handout you welcome to also I'm hoping the team can put my email address into your email tomorrow. You're welcome to throw an email over to us.

So just very briefly. I know we are running out of time there weren't to reserve some space for your Q and A questions there. We've got one to one coaching. So if you would like us to talk through some different processes and how we can actually support with one-to-one coaching. We match you with coaches who have experience with your particular context, you'll see that you can actually book a free session that you can chat to our team and see What's one-to-one coaching is all about I heard the coach training. It's my absolute

passion. So we actually coach and train people to be executive functioning coaches connector Club.

We've got a community support. I am so passionate about this as well where we have support groups. We've got strategy groups and people get together like-minded people all with executive functioning challenges and strengths that they want to connect with other people. We've got tons of resources there as well. And so you can will pop out a link there. It is also in your handout. We also do schools and workplace training as well as it you can then there's actually a function. I'm sure you you've done team you've done some work. I know with access to work. Did you know that you can actually get some access to work some government funding to get the support of a PA or a support worker? So if you go onto our website you'll be able to see all All the details with that there as well.

Alright, so just the last thing from me is I like to just point out that executive functioning work and supporting people is necessary for some but actually it's good for everyone. It supports everyone. You know, that that you might come across that that's me. That's my story. I tried to be a bang on time here so that we do have a little bit of time there for a Q and A's.

[Richard]:

Amazing Casey. Thank you so much. That was yeah brilliant and yeah, incredibly engaging So, yeah, thank you so much. And as you can see in the chat everybody is mirroring and echoing what I'm saying, they're so and we've got some questions and as I mentioned before if you've got questions if you can pop them in the Q and A section, and that's what I'm going to be looking at in the time. We've got to go through some questions. There's all there's usually quite a few questions. As we don't get too and we haven't got to question. What will tend to do is afterwards. We will either write or record some answers and then we'll share them with all the other content. So don't worry if your question doesn't get answered and it will be even if it's not in this hour and please upvote questions as well. So that's what I'm going to do. Now. I'm going to go through and try and do the go through the questions that have been on voted so case if you're happy, I'm going to ask you a couple questions.

So the first one is how much to hormones impact executive functioning so thinking about perimenopause and Adolescence?

[Casey]:

Oh, absolutely. We've done a couple of webinars on this actually. So we have one of our team is a neuropsychologist and she spoken specifically then from the brain and the impact of hormones absolutely through perimenopause menopause menopause post menopause is definitely a connection. So if anyone's interested, you're welcome to email us at info@connectionsind.co.uk and I can definitely share some more information. I'll pop that into the chat there as well.

[Richard]:

Fantastic. Thank you. And I'm going to ad lib from a question. I read earlier and which was and someone had mentioned that they had struggled with their executive functioning

having moved whole moved location to the UK and and how much yeah, so the environment can impact executive functioning. I thought that those two questions work quite nicely together.

[Casey]:

What a great one. I especially love that but environment when I think is so important and when we start to think about just the building blocks of that when we move when we are environment changes when we're in an unfamiliar situation often that can affect things like our safety how safe we feel just within ourselves and in our environment our connection our belonging it can be a stressful time. So it affects our sense of calm. So I think absolutely are executive functions can go offline and we can feel I can feel particularly emotionally disregulated from that experience. So absolutely I think this is definitely the role of environment. There is absolutely a challenge there as well.

[Richard]:

Amazing thank you very much. And so there's a question here. And so I'm speaking from one of our attendees. So I experienced significant intra-individual variation from day-to-day hour-to-hour. How would you recommend explaining this to managers and work colleagues and family and without feeling inadequate or shameful

[Casey]:

Oh my gosh. What a great. What a great question. So we actually run intro to executive functioning webinars similar to this one but specifically for workplace workplace inclusion as well. We've got quite a few blogs and things on our website. If you wouldn't mind popping me and email you welcome to get the directly to me at casey@connectionsInMind. I'm more than happy to send you some links there. We've also got some very short intro to Executive functioning talks that you can share with your managers, you know with your family as well. I think the more that we can talk about this the more that we can support our managers to understand support our family to understand not only what is happening in our brain. But also what it is that we need to be able to flourish and feel safe and like we belong with super super importance.

[Richard]:

Thank you very much Casey. And another great question here, which is a deficit in executive functioning function always connected with another condition like ADHD. Dyslexia autism, or is it a separate diagnosis or condition itself?

[Casey]:

Oh such a great question. I think you know, I really resonates it works with what Russell Barkley spoke about is ADHD as being an executive function deficit disorder because I think what we're finding is we've got these executive functioning skills where people may find either these strengths or these challenges and I know for me my ADHD diagnosis, I can identify with quite a few of those eleven executive function challenges. So I would say that whether there's ASD there's dyslexia, there's dyspraxia. There's ADHD. I think that our executive functions fall below that that you you know, they're definitely can be things that make our everyday experience of a ADHD. Dyslexia. Dyspraxia heightened and what I love about working with executive functioning. So when we do our coaching, I find a really

powerful that we are able to support everyone in the work that we do not only people with a diagnosis. And definitely neurodivergent or neurotypical. So I find it really helpful to be able to support everyone in that sense.

[Richard]:

Amazing. That's really helpful. Fantastic questions. Everyone. Keep them. Keep them coming. He's a yeah, brilliant and question here from for Robbie. And what would be a good business case to get employers organisations to focus on Executive function and supporting their neurodiverse employees.

[Casey]:

Such a great question as I say, we do have a webinar that we run at various stages of the year. We've also got a recording of when that we recently did as well neurodiversity newer inclusivity neuro belonging as well in the workplace so I can also shoot that over to the team. You're welcome to either email me email our team info@connectionsind.com and we can shoot some of those links over to use what we've got recordings of those. I think our next live one is only going to be in a couple months, but absolutely we talked about how do you actually start to introduce this to our bosses to you know to our colleagues as well so that we can get the support that we need absolutely and I get so excited on our coach training that we have at the moment. I've got four HR managers who are learning more about executive functioning are learning more about how to support people in the workplace. We've even had a senior leadership teams come and do our training as well so that they can not only understand neurodiversity. But also then how to support and create an inclusive culture and that's really important so I can definitely send through some of those links. We've also got a couple really interesting blog posts. So please as I say you more than welcome to email us at info@connectionsind.com. You can even ask for it to be forwarded to me and then I can respond to those questions there.

[Richard]:

Absolutely. Yeah, I think whenever we talk about kind of, you know, trying to try to build business cases and speak to bosses and Business Leaders around a building a business cases for notes of neuro inclusion. Really. I kind of always think of it as kind of a sales process and really thinking about the drivers for that organization and what is that organization trying to achieve because the good thing about new inclusion is it's so flexible the things that can bring to all organization of so broad from you know staff wellbeing, reduced attrition, improved Innovation, improved productivity. You know, it's such a it's such a valuable resource that you're tapping into it can really speak to any pain point that your business is trying to address which is yes. It's just about on trip for me. It's just about understanding what those pain points in that organization are and then building up business case for that look and we've got lots and lots of questions coming in but I think we are going to have to wrap up there.

We absolutely will answer all the remaining questions after the event. But thank you so much to everybody for kind of coming along and thank you, a massive thank you to Casey who has yeah, given us an amazing talk and lots and lots to think about and for sharing a handout and you know, we've recorded the webinar, so that is going to be shared with you afterwards as well as all the resources.

So, thank you so much Casey for and thank you to everybody who's participated, you know, this has been a very sort of inclusive and sort of talk where we know using menti. So that's been fantastic. So thank you everybody for participating and for all your questions and we do provide CPD certificates. So as you leave there will be a survey link if you can fill that out and we'll send a CPD certificate and after that to you those survey links are really useful we put on these events every month for free and we want to make sure that we are you know getting feedback improving them getting requests for future topics speaker suggestions. So takes a couple of seconds. But if you can do that super super helpful, as I said, this session is recorded, you'll get an email with today's recording and a transcript in the next day or so, and it also pop onto LinkedIn as well.

And these are monthly webinars. So our next webinar is Thursday the [4th July] it is and a lot of you are already signed up for it. See so and if you're not signed up yet, then yeah, we'll send a link so you can sign up sign up. It is Danielle Cudjoe-Michalski who's going to be our presenter and she's the founder of thinking light coach and she's also a tedx speaker and she's going to be talking to us about how to create neuro inclusive culture sharing lessons from her journey in the corporate world. So following on really nicely from today's webinar. So look out for an invite in the email tomorrow.

Finally last thing to mention is this is the last webinar that I'm going to be hosting and I've absolutely loved hosting these webinars since July when we started and watching the community grow, but next month. I'm going to be an attendee. And Claire Who Behind the Scenes has been doing a huge amount of organizing and getting this this all up and running and building this community. She's going to be stepping up and posting it and she's going to do a much better job than me, too. So, yeah, so I just wanted to say thank you to everybody who's joined been joining, built this community, participated. I've Loved hosting it. I'm sure I'll host future ones and but Claire's going to be your host for next month where we hopefully see all of you again, and we will yeah. We'll say bye for now and see you next month.