



CAREER CONNECTED  
LEARNING PHL

Positioning Philadelphia's Youth for Career Success

# Supporting Executive Functioning Skills | October 31, 2024



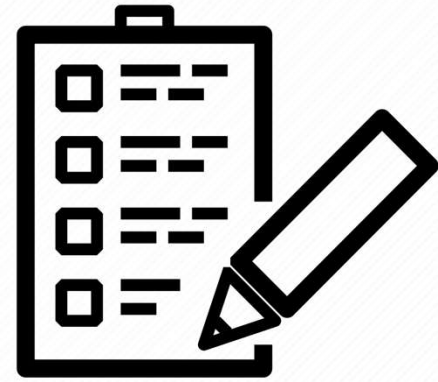
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# Objectives

- Define Executive Functioning (EF) and explain its significance in career development
- Explore three key EF skills and its application in programming
- Apply practical strategies for integrating EF development into programs
- Utilize tools to support EF growth for youth in C2L-PHL programming and in their personal lives



# Foundations Inc. Your Capacity Building Partner



## Build Capacity

Capacity Building and Support



## Strengthen Skills

Professional Learning



## Elevate Techniques

Resources

# Why Executive Functioning Skills Matter for Youth Success

Did you know that youth with strong executive function skills are more likely to thrive in internships, careers and in their personal lives

*-Frontiers in Psychology*



# Let Us Know

What do you think are the top challenges youth face when trying to manage tasks in both school and work environments?

# What is Executive Functioning?

Higher-order cognitive skills that include **working memory, cognitive flexibility,** and **inhibitory control**

These skills help regulate thought processes, behaviors, and emotions, allowing individuals to organize, plan, and achieve goals efficiently.



# What is Executive Functioning?

All youth have the opportunity to develop these skills during:

The  
school  
day

C2L-PHL  
programs

# Key EF Skills Needed for Workplace Success



Working  
memory

Cognitive  
flexibility



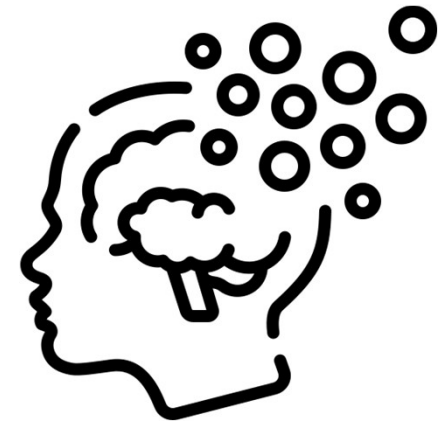
Inhibitory  
control



# Key EF Skills: Working Memory

Retain and use information over short periods of time:

- Recalling steps or sequences
- Track multiple instructions



# Key EF Skills: Cognitive Flexibility

Switch between tasks or adapt to changes:

- Recalling steps or sequences
- Track multiple instructions



# Key EF Skills: Inhibitory Control

Focus on relevant tasks

- Resist impulsive behaviors
- Meeting deadlines
- Maintaining decorum



# Key EF Skills Needed for Workplace Success



## Working Memory

- Following multi-step instructions in a project
- Remembering ongoing tasks and customer/client needs



## Cognitive Flexibility

- Adapting to challenges in group projects
- Re-prioritizing with challenging deadlines



## Inhibitory Control

- Resisting distractions during youth PD sessions
- Staying on tasks amidst temptations

# What are some challenges for youth struggling with EF skills?



- Weak working memory
- Limited cognitive flexibility
- Poor inhibitory control

# Supporting Working Memory

- Breaking projects, activities, assignments into manageable steps
- Provide opportunities for summarizing and reflection
- Use digital reminders, priority lists, post-meeting recaps



# Supporting Cognitive Flexibility

- Role-switching activities
- Scenario-based problem-solving
- Mentor feedback on adaptability, allowing solution autonomy



# Supporting Inhibitory Control

- Mindfulness to refocus expectations
- Pomodoro technique to incorporate breaks
- Revisit daily priorities
- Accountability check-ins



# Relationship between EF skills and Well-being



1

Self-management skills

2

Self-regulation

3

Positive mindset

4

Life satisfaction

# Relationship between EF Skills and Well-being

## **Self-management Skills**

enables youth to

- Plan, prioritize, complete tasks on time
- Reduce stress
- Increase sense of accomplishment and control

## **Self-regulation Skills**

enables youth to

- Manage impulses, emotions and behaviors
- Improve decision-making and relationships
- Emotional stability

# Relationship between EF and Well-being

## **Positive mindset**

enables youth to

- Adapt to change and view challenges from different perspectives
- Stay open to possibilities
- Recover from failure

## **Life Satisfaction**

- Enhancing self-management, self-regulation, and adaptability
- Maintain healthy relationships

# Benefits for Providers in C2L-PHL Programs



Workplace  
productivity



Better task  
completion



Feeling  
competent at  
work



Improved  
overall  
performance

# Which EF Skills Are Being Used?

Working  
memory



Cognitive  
flexibility



Inhibitory  
control



Identify which EF skills are being used in the scenario.

# Scenario 1

A youth is working a summer job. Their supervisor gives them a list of 10 tasks to complete by the end of the day, ranging from organizing supplies to setting up an afternoon event. The supervisor explains each task only once, without providing a written checklist or notes.

Working  
memory

Cognitive  
flexibility

Inhibitory  
control

## Scenario 2

A teen in a program is leading a group project to organize a small community event. Midway through the project, they are informed that the budget has been cut, meaning they can no longer afford the planned materials or venue. They must now come up with a new plan under tighter constraints, which may include finding a cheaper venue or scaling down the event.

Working  
memory

Cognitive  
flexibility

Inhibitory  
control

## Scenario 3

A participant is working on a group assignment due at the end of the session. However, they are repeatedly distracted by their phone, chatting with friends, and finding it difficult to stay focused. The deadline is approaching, and their teammates are depending on them to finish their part of the project.

Working  
memory

Cognitive  
flexibility

Inhibitory  
control

# Supporting the Development of EF Skills

- Create checklists and tools to help manage tasks
- Structure C2L-PHL schedules and tasks to meet deadlines
- Train youth to adapt to changes in tasks or roles through practice



# Supporting the Development of EF Skills at Work

Use strategies to regulate emotions



## Mindfulness Exercises

You don't need to spend a long time on mindfulness for it to be effective. All you need is just 5 - 10 minutes. Teaching mindful activities provides students with life long skills.

### Mindful Breathing

Students can stand or sit for this activity and be instructed to put their hands on their bellies, then close their eyes or look down at their hands to limit distractions.

- Guide students in taking three slow deep breaths in and out to see if they can feel their hands being moved.
- You can count '1.2.3' for each breath in and '1,2,3' for each breath out, pausing slightly at the end of each exhale.
- Encourage students to think about how the breath feels, answering the following questions silently, in their minds:
  - What is moving your hands? Is it the air filling your lungs?
  - Can you feel the air moving in through your nose?
  - Can you feel it moving out through your nose?
  - Does the air feel a little colder on the way in and warmer on the way out?
  - Can you hear your breath?
  - What does it sound like?

# Supporting the Development of EF Skills at Work

Give strategies to overcome procrastination

Focused Work  
25 minutes

Break  
5  
mins

4 Pomodoros

Long  
Break

# Which EF Skills should be Supported?

Imagine you are supervising a group of youth in a STEM program. One of the youth is struggling to balance a research assignment with a new task given by their supervisor—building a presentation for an upcoming meeting. They feel overwhelmed and are procrastinating on both tasks, unsure of where to start.

# Supporting EF Skills



# Practical Applications for Developing EF Skills

- Embed EF skills into work-related tasks
- Use games and activities targeting specific EF skills
- Provide opportunities for real-world applications
- Create and post routines to support structure and consistency
- Use technology designed to enhance EF skills

# Practical Applications for Developing EF Skills

- Incorporate mindfulness and stress management
- Develop accountability systems
- Use real world simulations and ongoing feedback

# Supporting Structure and Consistency

Strategies to improve attention and focus in your program.

Mentorship programs



Mindfulness

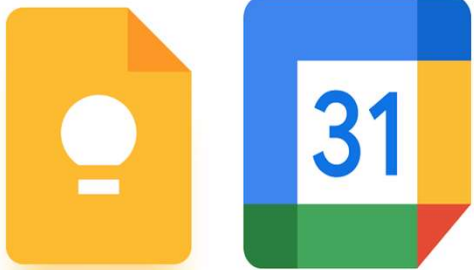


Peer coaching and leadership opportunities



# Supporting Structure and Consistency

## Working memory



Google Keep and  
Google Calendar



# Supporting EF Skills



## Time Management and Prioritization

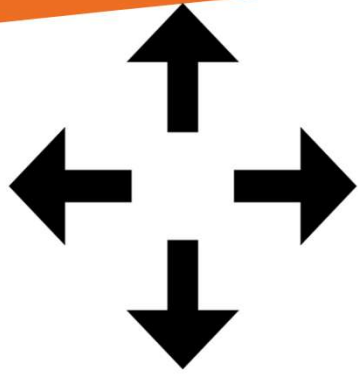
How do you think strong time management and prioritization skills help youth in C2L-PHL programs?

# Supporting Structure and Consistency

## Cognitive Flexibility Tool



# Supporting EF Skills



## Cognitive Flexibility

How would this skill help youth in your program adapt when tasks or priorities change?

# Supporting Structure and Consistency

## Inhibitory control



# Supporting EF Skills



## Inhibitory Control

How do you think staying focused, avoiding distractions, managing stress and maintaining professionalism, help youth successfully complete tasks and handle challenging situations?

# Supporting Employers in Implementation

- Providing structure and clear expectations
- Embedding EF skills development in work tasks
- Implementing ongoing support
- Encouraging problem-solving practices



# Keeping TABBs

T  
A  
B  
B

Takeaway  
Action  
Barriers  
Benefits



# Resources Review

Register for the next PD Opportunity by visiting the Virtual PD Events page

The screenshot shows the C2L Resource Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the C2L logo and the text 'CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING PHL'. Below this is a search bar and a large banner with the C2L logo and the text 'RESOURCE Library'. A sidebar on the left contains a 'Resource Library' menu with options: Home, Virtual PD Events, Tools and Templates, Guides, Podcasts and Media, Self-paced Learning (with a sub-menu 'Explore'), and JEVs Technical Assistance (with a sub-menu 'Help Desk'). A blue banner below the sidebar contains the text 'REMINDER: JEVs Office Hours are Monday - Friday 12 - 6pm'. The main content area features a grid of images showing bookshelves and a person reading. To the right of the images is a section titled 'Explore.Learn.Thrive.' with the following text: 'Welcome to C2L - PHL Resource Library! Here's how to make the most of your journey: Self-Paced Learning: Start with the Learning Modules tab to get onboard with C2L-PHL continuum and high-quality programming. Afterwards, you'll be ready to engage with our community through forums and discussions. Register for upcoming PD on our Virtual PD Events page. Connect with the youth workforce ecosystem to hear insights on the latest trends and best practices through our Podcasts and Media page. Discover Resources: Dive into a wealth of knowledge curated for your success. Check out our Tools and Templates page for a comprehensive collection of resources you can use to enrich your youth workforce programming. Looking for something more? Check out our Explore tab to find external resources.'

# Next Training Dates

Supporting Older Youth

**November 7, 2024**

at 10 am

Data Collection and Tools

**November 14, 2024**

at 10am

# Questions?

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