

Executive Skills for Emotions, Cognitions, Behaviors, and Relationships

Some executive skills help you modulate and regulate your feelings. These functions could be broken down into smaller skills but basically they fall into a couple general categories.

- ✦ *Reaction Inhibition*: Being able to think before you act. This includes being able to resist the urge to say or do something long enough to give yourself the time to evaluate a situation and how your behavior might impact it.
- ✦ *Stress Tolerance*: Being able to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands. This includes being able to tolerate strong feelings and varying levels of emotional distress.

Other executive abilities help you modulate and regulate your thoughts.

- ✦ *Planning / Prioritization*: Being able to map out how to reach your goals or complete a task. It includes being able to make decisions about what to focus on and what's not so important.
- ✦ *Organization*: Being able to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.
- ✦ *Sustained Attention*: Being able to maintain your attention despite distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.
- ✦ *Time Management*: Being able to estimate how long various tasks will take, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines.
- ✦ *Task Initiation*: Being able to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient and timely fashion.
- ✦ *Working Memory*: Being able to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It includes being able to draw on past learning or experience and apply that to a current task.
- ✦ *Flexibility*: Being able to revise plans and adapt to changed circumstances.

There is also an executive skill that help you moderate and regulate behaviors.

- ✦ *Goal-Directed Persistence*: Being able to stick to a goal and not give up, despite distractions, competing interests, or other challenges.

Finally, there are a couple executive skills that help you moderate and regulate your relationships with others and with yourself.

- ✦ *Meta-Cognition*: Being able to think about your own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Young children can't do this very well because their brains simply haven't grown enough to have this ability. This goes beyond monitoring or observing and includes analyzing your own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.
- ✦ *Self-Awareness*: Being able to monitor yourself in real time. This skill involves having one part of your mind that is observing other parts of your mind that are generating and experiencing feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.