

ADHD Symposium 2017

# ADHD Brain Hacks to Keep Your Cool

Mindy Schwartz Katz, M.S.

ADHD/Life Coach

Your Life – Plan B

**WHAT IS A BRAIN HACK?**

# LOSING YOUR COOL

## EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- ADHD is a disorder of self-regulation.
- Key component of ADHD is emotional dysregulation



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OUR TANK IS EMPTY?

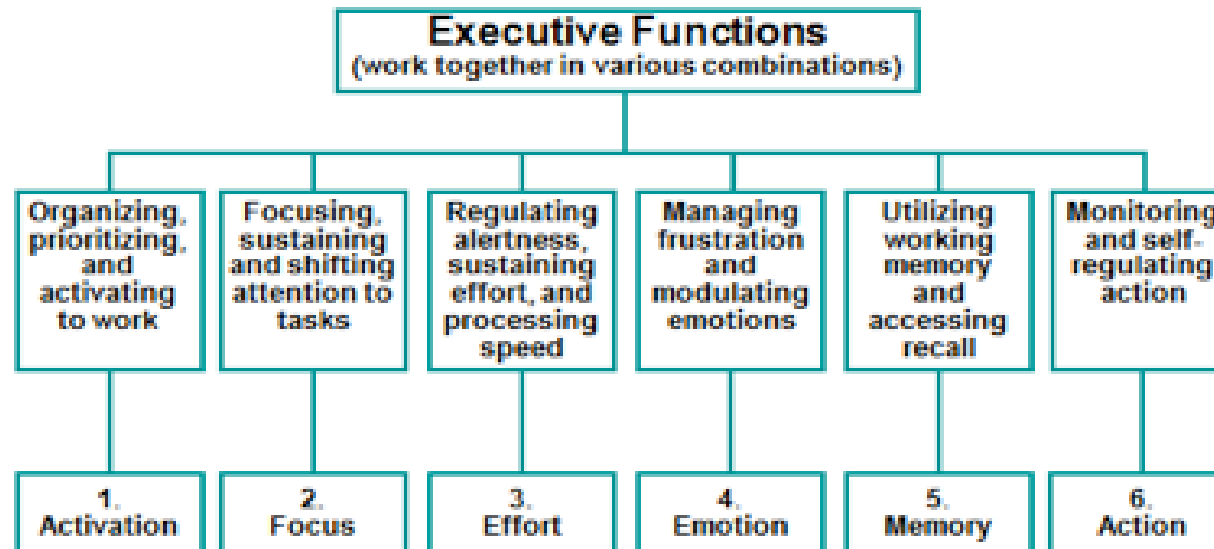
# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OUR TANK IS EMPTY?

- FALL BACK ON HABITS AND PATTERNS OF THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR
- REACT MORE QUICKLY TO LESS
- CAN'T COMMUNICATE WELL
- LESS EMPATHY



# EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

## Executive Functions Impaired in ADD/ADHD



(TE Brown (2005))

# How Does Executive Function Work?



Without the "Conductor",  
musicians don't perform well

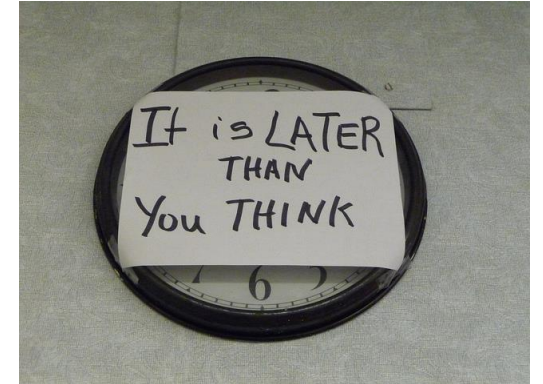


"Without some control of  
"Executive Functions"  
the ADHD brain doesn't perform well".

WHAT MAKES YOU LOSE YOUR COOL?

# TIME

- NOT ENOUGH TIME
- TOOK TOO MUCH TIME
- CAN'T ESTIMATE TIME
- LOST TRACK OF TIME
- I'LL HAVE TIME LATER





# FOOD

- TOO MUCH SUGAR
- TOO MUCH CAFFEINE
- NOT ENOUGH... OMEGAS, PROTEIN, FRUITS & VEGETABLES
- TIMING



# CHAOS

- CAN'T FIND ANYTHING
- VISUAL OVERSTIMULATION
- DUELING PRIORITIES



# DECISIONS

- WHAT DO I DO FIRST?
- WHAT DID I FORGET?
- WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT?
- WHERE DO I START?
- THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH!
- BORING, I DON'T CARE



# LACK OF SLEEP

- TOO TIRED TO SLEEP
- DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME DURING THE DAY
- I'M A NIGHT OWL
- THOUGHT TORNADO



**Me:** I'm so tired I could collapse into bed and sleep for a year.

**Me:** gets in bed

**Me:** how was earth created

**Me:** who made microwaves

**Me:** how does the internet even work

**Me:** I'm hungry

**Me:** feels bad about something I did 4 years ago

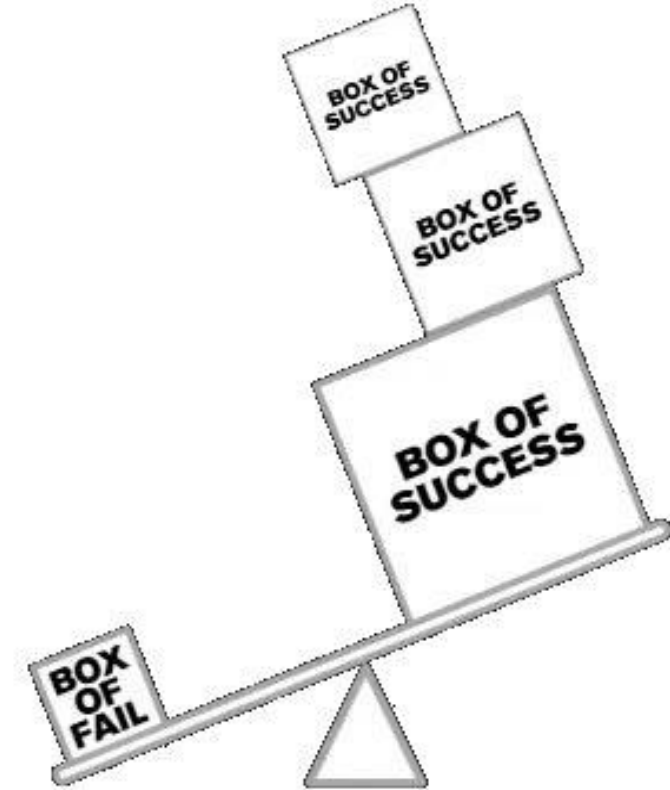
**Me:** remembers 73 unfinished tasks

**Me:** too wired to sleep.

# GREMLINS



- EVERYBODY ELSE CAN...
- THINGS NEVER WORK OUT
- EVERYONE ELSE IS AN IDIOT
- IF ONLY...
- YOU'RE JUST LAZY, STUPID, CRAZY
- IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH



# THE HACKS

# BREATHE

S = STOP (or Pause)

T = TAKE A BREATH

O = OBSERVE WITHOUT BEING JUDGMENTAL

What am I doing right now?

What am I noticing ?

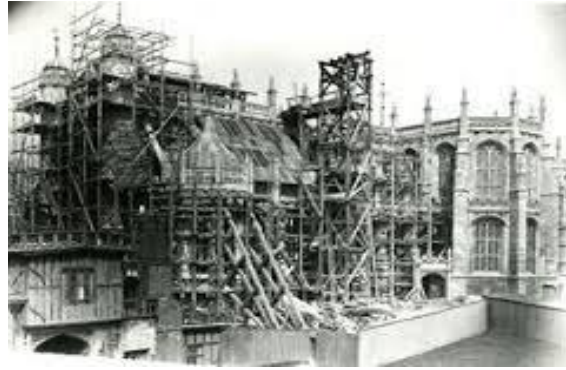
P = PROCEED Same or Change?

# ROUTINES

- MORNING
  - BRUSHING TEETH, MAKE UP, KEYS
  - MEALS/FOOD
- BEDTIME
- TRANSITIONS
  - COMING HOME



# SCAFFOLDING




- CLOCKS
- STICKY NOTES
- POINT OF PERFORMANCE
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- SCHEDULING



# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

**All or nothing thinking**



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

*If I'm not perfect I have failed*

*Either I do it right or not at all*

**Over-generalising**

*"everything is **always** rubbish"*

*"nothing good ever happens"*

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

**Labelling**



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser*

*I'm completely useless*

*They're such an idiot*

**should**

**must**

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

# POWER POSE





LAUGH



# PRACTICE MINDFULNESS



Mind Full, or Mindful?

# RESOURCES

**chadd.org** – Children and Adults with ADHD

Nationally recognized authority on Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Non-profit organization providing education, advocacy and support

**Totallyadd.com**

A complete guide to Adult ADD and ADHD (Adult Attention Deficit Disorder) And the documentary ADD & Loving It?!

**AdditudeMag.com**

Attention deficit information about ADHD symptoms, medication, treatment, diagnosis, and parenting ADD children from the experts at ADDitude magazine.

**Add.org** – ADDA, Attention Deficit Disorder Association (Adults)

Articles, personal stories, interviews with ADD professionals, book reviews, and links to other ADD-related sites that provide information which may be helpful

**HEADSPACE.COM**

# THANK YOU!!

Mindy Schwartz Katz, M.S.  
ADHD/Life Coach  
Your Life – Plan B

[WWW.YOURLIFE-PLANB.COM](http://WWW.YOURLIFE-PLANB.COM)