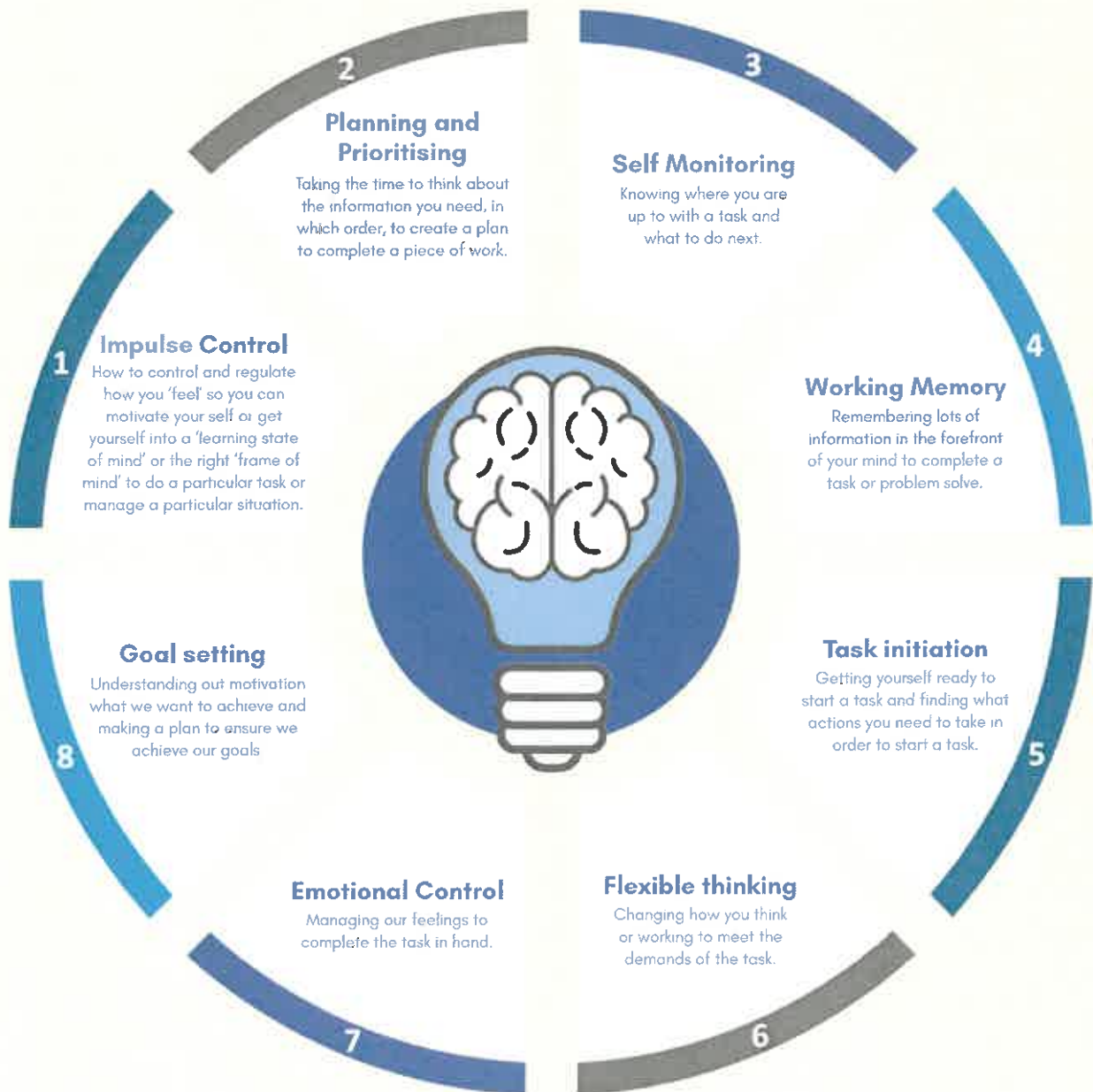


Now that we have explored the three main characteristics of ADHD, inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, did you know there are two more?

1. Executive Functioning



Did you recognise any of these executive functions? Do you find any of these functions difficult in school? Let's find out, by taking this simple executive functioning self-assessment.

Read each statement and tick "yes" or "no"

Yes

No

1. Emotional control

I find it difficult to motivate myself about certain tasks

I get annoyed easily

I often get embarrassed with myself because I overreact

I sometimes get so excited I forget what I am supposed to be doing

I am more motivated to do things if I like the people involved

2. Planning and prioritising

I often start a task without thinking what comes next

I often work through tasks without an overall plan

I often don't know where to start

I often forget the "big picture" of a piece of work and get sidetracked with smaller details

I am disorganised and my work space at home and school is messy

3. Self monitoring

I am often surprised by the marks I get in school work

I don't know which level I am on in the courses I am studying

I rarely review my school work

I make frequent mistakes in my work through not checking what I have done

I am always late, I lose track of time and don't know what to say when my teacher asks, "Where are you up to?"

4. Working memory

I often forget which part I am up to when doing extended projects

I get confused when there is too much information to take in

I forget important information if I don't write it down

I need to create mind maps and posters to help remember information

I don't follow instructions sometimes because I have forgotten what they are

Yes No

5. Task initiation

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I often feel anxious at the start of a project | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often begin to work before realising that I have forgotten something important | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often leave tasks until the last minute | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often avoid tasks I am not confident about | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't always think about what resources I will need to start a task | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Flexible thinking

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I often feel anxious if I am asked to work in a different way | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I sometimes find it difficult when everyone has different opinions or ideas | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find it difficult moving from one task to another | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find it difficult when I have made a plan and have to change it | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I sometimes find it difficult to change my mind about something | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. Impulse control

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am easily distracted | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I interrupt people or shout out answers in class | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often act without thinking | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often don't think about consequences | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I forget to think how other people may be feeling | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

8. Goal setting

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I don't set myself goals because I think I won't achieve them | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I often forget the overall goal because I get distracted | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I change my mind so much that sometimes I don't know what I want | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I sometimes set myself a goal but don't create a plan to achieve it | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I give up too easily | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Managing ADHD is about playing to your natural strengths and abilities.

Everyone is good at some things and everyone struggles with other things. Making mistakes is an important part of learning! Sometimes we can all be discouraged and fed up when we keep making the same mistakes – so we need to learn how we overcome the difficulties we might have in a smarter way.

Developing strategies and finding clever tools like assistive technology to help you overcome those tasks and parts of daily life that ADHD can make more challenging.

Emotional regulation is a key executive functioning skill, so how we do control how we feel?

5 top tips for helping manage your feelings

1. Maintain good physical health – get plenty of sleep, eat a nutritious diet, avoid a diet with too many carbohydrates and get some exercise every day.
2. Talk about how you feel with an older trusted adult – school counsellor, parent, teacher who can help you understand yourself and help you stay focused on what you want to achieve.
3. Develop daily habits of self care, for example, practice stress reduction strategies that make you feel well, for example, five minutes of slow deep breathing four times a day – you can do this on the school bus, walking, even during class. Other strategies include, mindfulness, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation or a hobby that has a calming effect on you. Learn to spot the signs in yourself when you are feeling stressed, tired or overwhelmed and act on them. Understand your triggers, what makes you feel anxious or angry? Think about ways to distract yourself or extract yourself from difficult situations. This will enable you to become resilient, stay calm and cope in general.
4. Devise a daily and weekly routine and stick to it. Having structure in your life can reduce a lot of anxiety when trying to juggle conflicting demands on your time.
5. Relationships impact on our feelings and help us to stay connected with others. Make time to socialise and nurture your key friendships, including family members. Be creative in finding ways to spend quality time together. Appreciate all the people in your life and tell them so.

As you move into secondary school or college, there are more demands made upon you as a student with more teachers and subjects. These demands include being able to organise your work and plan your time successfully.

9 ways that you can support your planning, organisation and memory

1. Ask for help

Instead of leaving work undone and missing deadlines, let your parents/ carers and teachers know exactly where you are up to. It can be difficult, at times, to ask for help from teachers. It may be worth talking this through with your parents/ carers and rehearsing the first few lines of the conversation. Also, imagine a close friend was having difficulties with their work in school. What would you say to them? What advice would you offer and apply your advice to yourself.

2. Use the evening before to get ready

When you wake up in the morning and maybe still feel tired and have to shower, have breakfast and leave the house in time to catch a bus or train, it is not always the best time to organise yourself for the day ahead. Preparing yourself during the evening before will help you to start the day feeling less stressed and anxious as well. Create an evening routine, including time for homework, sorting out school uniform and packing your school bag. Write your routine down as a check list and hang on your bedroom wall to check each evening. Do the same in the morning for a final check before you leave. Hang this near to the door.

Example of a morning checklist

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shower | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homework due in that day |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glasses/ contact lenses | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equipment for each lesson, including books and stationery |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School uniform | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pen |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Breakfast | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wallet/ purse |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make lunch | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keys |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pack bag | |

3. Set reminders

Use your phone or PC to set reminders of homework to be done, equipment to pack in your school bag and set another timer 15 minutes before you leave the house in the morning as a final reminder.

4. Create your own office or workspace

Find a space at home that suits you. Remember to avoid as much distraction as you can.

Try to avoid the following if you can:

- ✓ Near windows or close curtains/ blinds before you start working.
- ✓ Near to a heater.
- ✓ Away from a television or other computers/ screens or ensure they are switched off before you start working.
- ✓ If you share a bedroom with a brother or sister, negotiate quiet times for school work or use headphones to reduce noise.
- ✓ Leave your phone in another room before you start working.

Ideas for a clutter-free workspace

- ✓ Use boxes or drawers to store stationary and schoolbooks etc so that your work surface can be clear at all times.
- ✓ Label folders clearly and use different colour labels for each subject.
- ✓ Alphabetise books, folders if they are on shelves.
- ✓ Create an admin folder for everything that doesn't belong in a specific subject folder.
- ✓ Schedule time once a week to tidy and sort your home office or workspace.
- ✓ Tidy up the workspace after each evening so you start again the next day with a clear space.

Make sure that you know where you can find everything quickly. Constantly searching for resources or equipment can take time and can lead you to becoming distracted.

5. Set realistic goals for yourself

One of the main reasons for people not achieving goals is that they aren't set properly in the first place – they may be too much, take too long to achieve, or are too generalised. Setting realistic goals is a starting point and comes with many advantages.

Top tips include:

1. Clarity – it is important to establish goals that are meaningful and clear to you.
2. Motivation – having a choice of goals should increase the motivation for you to succeed. Any goal should include the ability to monitor your progress as you work towards it.
3. Start with small, achievable goals for example – saving money for a game. This can help you to work up to bigger and longer-term goals, such as an application for college or a job.
4. Look for opportunities to reward and reflect when tasks are completed. This will help you to stay positive and motivated.

6. Record what you must remember throughout the school day

Writing down information that we need to remember as soon as it happens can help us to reduce stress and to plan and prioritise successfully. Use one list not several. This can be done either using a small notebook that you carry with you constantly or through exploring Apps on the App Store.

Remember to include:

- ✓ Dates or times when pieces of work have to be completed or handed in.
- ✓ Sections for school, extracurricular activities and other important information, for example, upcoming birthdays or social events.
- ✓ Try checkboxes or writing "finished" next to tasks that you have done.
- ✓ A Notes section so you can add extra information to a task as you go along.
- ✓ Decide upon a top three each day. The top three are those tasks that need to be done as soon as possible. Prioritising as you go along will help you to get started each day.

7. Keep a reading log

Secondary school will involve much more reading every day than in Primary School. This reading can be in several different subjects each day and will include subject specific vocabulary that is important to remember. It can help to use a reading log to remember the range of texts that have been read, and where you are up to when you return to reading. Use the sentence starters below as a guide and answer each one in short sentences whenever a piece of reading has been completed.

This will help with your memory:

1. This connects to my life because...
2. I wonder...
3. This made me think about...
4. I didn't understand... because...
5. I really liked... because...
6. The top three pieces of information that I have read are...