Unlocking the Secrets of Motivation in ADHD

RRV CHADD - February 2023
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The information contained herein is for informational purposes only and is *not* intended to replace care and treatment by a qualified professional practitioner. Consult with your care provider before starting or making any changes in your management of ADD/ADHD.

Motivation…or the lack thereof

- What are we talking about here?
- What are *your* hot button issues…
- No "miracle" answer.
- The Science & The Tools

The Science of Motivation

Will Power vs. Dysfunction of the Mind?

- Old School of Thought = Behavior Problems & Not Listening
- New Knowledge = Developmental Impairment of the Brain's Management System

Executive Functions

- **Executive Function Typical Development**
- **EF related to Motivation and Task Completion**
  - Will you do it? ***Motivation/ Activation***
  - How will you do it? ***Planning/ Organizing***
  - When? ***Timing/ Remembering***
- **So – How does the brain determine "motivation"…that is …**
  - what to attend to
  - what to ignore
  - what to do now, or not?
- The Chemistry of motivation is modulated by complex processes resulting from amygdala integration of personal emotion-laden memories embedded in perceptions and various cognitive networks
- **Amygdala = The Google Search Engine of the Brain**

In ADHD:

- Aspects of brain's EF don't come online in the usual time frame.
- EF aspects don't work consistently.

  - Inadequate release and/or reloading of transmitter chemicals in network junctions

  - Connectivity between brain regions is impaired

- And so – the circuits are incomplete, messages don't always get through or continue, like a faulty wiring system
- …EXCEPT for "messages" with priority interests, or fear of imminent unpleasantness
- Because in THOSE situations, you get an increase in the release of Neurotransmitters – which produces *ACTIVATION*

Situational Variability of Symptoms in ADHD:

- It takes more energy for the ADHD brain to do those things that aren't stimulating.
- Executive Function Reservoir Tank
- **So, motivation can be one of the neurobiological challenges for people with ADHD!**
- This is NOT an excuse . But it IS an explanation

Tilt the Odds in One's Favor!

- **How to "Start"-** ***The right attitude, approach & environment***

  - ✓ **Start by cultivating Realistic Hope**
  - ✓ **Start with domains where individuals are well motivated**
  - ✓ **Plant seeds of realistic individualized dreams**
  - ✓ **Fertilize with encouragement of strengths**
  - ✓ **Utilize finely tuned medications and necessary external support to produce success**
  - ✓ **Strategize**
  - ✓ **Help Process setbacks and disappointments**
  - ✓ **Remind…."at this time"**
  - ✓ **Success builds on Success!!**

- **Specific Strategies: Six tips to Cultivating Motivation**

  1. Reduce the load on EF
  2. Fire up the Dopamine!
  3. Limit the Pain or Anxiety
  4. Keep it on the Mind
  5. Misery loves company
  6. Seize the Momentum

1. **Reduce the load on Executive Function**

   - Establish **Habits**, routines

     - makes it mindless
     - takes "willpower" out of the equation
     - establishes automaticity

2. **Fire up the Dopamine!**
   - Link boring/challenging tasks with **REWARDS**
   - **Anchor unfavorable action with something pleasurable (dopamine reward)**
   - **Use "when/then"**
   - **Teach to reward self**

3. **Build in Novelty**
   - Make it a game. (beat the clock)
   - Change it up (location, timing, environment)
   - Variety, variety, variety.

4. **Limit the Pain or Anxiety**

   - Break BIG task into a LITTLE one & keep it short

     - 10 minutes
     - Take breaks
     - Set aside time blocks for mundane tasks
     - Establish deadlines & endpoints
     - Avoid overload!!
     - Give them a boost (assist with the start)

5. **Keep it on the Mind**
   - Use Visual & Tactile Cues where it matters

     - in the coffee grounds?
     - in the fridge?
     - star/sticker charts/ tokens
     - post reminders, positive thought triggers & cues
     - use the technology!!

6. **Misery loves company!**
   - **Pair Presence / Shadow Buddy**
   - **PROXIMITY HELPS!**
     - work with someone else
     - be in the vicinity
7. **Seize the Momentum**
   - Keep on keeping on, if they/you have a head of steam!

In Summary:

- CONTEXT SHIFTS EMOTIONS
- EMOTIONS SHIFT MOTIVATION
- MOTIVATION TRIGGERS “IGNITION”
- IGNITION = ACTIVATION (initiating & sustaining action)

Take Away - Pick a Strategy you are willing to try with you or your child’s motivational challenge.

- Questions, Suggestions, Group Discussion

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Next Month - March RRV CHADD: **Effective Behavior Management Strategies for ADHD**

03/13/2022

7:00 to 8:30 PM