


# A Caution




- ▶ “Executive Functioning Disorder” is a diagnosis used by some medical communities. Please take heed as we are using this a skill development strategy and not as a diagnostic tool!
  - ▶ While everyone can benefit from idea of “lifelong learning,” not everyone in poverty has “diminished EF capacity.”
  - ▶ Approach from a strength-based point of view.
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- ▶ To pathologize is to view or characterize something as medically or psychologically abnormal or to associate characteristics as a disease.



# Examples:

- ▶ Teenagers undergo hormonal shift and behavior are pathologized as deviant or as having a mental illness
  - ▶ African American school boys who exhibit active or highly physical learning styles are often pathologized as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
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# A Story Worth Sharing

*“Furthermore, when we engage with children who may have heard negative words that instill self-doubt, that then fuel negative or challenging behaviors, it is critical that we arm ourselves with tools and strategies to provide a counter-story. We must give, instill and demonstrate an image of strength in our children; assuring them that we see and believe in their greatness and in their potential.”*

*Gevonee Ford, NdCAD*


- Remember the same philosophy holds true for all of us including the participants and their children.

# Crittenton Women's Union (CWU)

- ▶ CWU uses EF science to inform program and policy design, including key EF elements:
  - ▶ Program access and persistence
  - ▶ Personal agency
  - ▶ Scaffolding/Rules/Tools
  - ▶ Goals/Frameworks
  - ▶ Building Client EF Strategic Decision-making
  - ▶ Building Social Skills and Networks
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CWU Mobility Mentoring is the professional practice of partnering with clients so that over time they may acquire the resources, skills, and sustained behavior changes necessary to attain and preserve their economic independence.

- ▶ Mobility Mentoring's Theory of Change is the Bridge to Self Sufficiency Scaffolding:
- ▶ The Bridge to Self-Sufficiency creates the scaffolding necessary to reach economic independence.

- ▶ Mobility Mentoring Key Design Components:
  - ▶ Individualization: no one size fits all path to economic independence
  - ▶ Horizontality: path not found in any one health or human service silo.
  - ▶ Time: no quick journey, effective interventions have continuity of support
  - ▶ Co-investment: interventions match the client's level of investment with similar program investments
  - ▶ Networking: personal and professional networks provide crucial support
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Starting Point

Mobility Mentoring™

Self-Sufficiency

FAMILY STABILITY		WELL-BEING		EDUCATION AND TRAINING	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT
Housing	Dependents	Health and Behavioral Health	Social Networks	Educational Attainment	Savings	Debts	Earnings Levels
No subsidy, housing costs less than 1/3 household take-home pay	Dependent needs met; serving as no barrier to parent/guardian school or work	Fully engaged in work, school, and/or family  Health / behavioral health issues serving as no obstacle	Advocate/ Networker; Uses own and other resources and connections to advance the mobility goals of others	Completed bachelor's degree or higher	Savings of three months' expenses or more	Current on all balances and no outstanding debt other than mortgage or educational and/or car loans	Job with earnings $\geq$ Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income $\geq$ \$61,797)
No subsidy, housing costs exceed 1/3 household take-home pay	Dependent needs serving as minimal disruption to parent/guardian school or work	Minimal disruption to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Developed Network; Consistent source of both support and leveraging connections	Completed associate's degree or postsecondary job training or certificate program	Savings of more than two months' expenses but less than three months' expenses	Current in payments and plans and paying more than minimum payments	Job with earnings of 66–99% of Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income range of \$40,573–\$61,796)
Partial subsidy (shallow): Paying \$200 or more towards rent	Dependent needs serving as intermittent disruption to parent/guardian school or work	Intermittent disruptions to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Emerging Network; Consistent source of support and occasional leveraging connections	Attending college or postsecondary job training program	Savings of at least one month and up to two months' expenses	Structured payment plans in place and meeting minimum payments	Job with earnings of between 33%–65% Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income range of \$20,598–\$40,572)
Full subsidy, permanent housing: Paying \$0 or less towards rent	Dependent needs serving as significant obstacle to parent/guardian school or work	Regular and recurring disruptions to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Limited network: Occasional source of support	Completed postsecondary remedial education classes, college preparatory program, or prerequisites for job training/readiness program	Savings of less than one month's expenses	Debts in excess of ability to pay, behind in payments	Job with earnings less than 33% Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income $\leq$ \$15,797)
A. Homeless / co-housed with family or friends B. Homeless / transitional housing Homeless / emergency shelter	Recently emergent or not yet addressed dependent needs, requiring additional attention	Severely limited engagement in work, school, and/or family due to significant health / behavioral health issues	Isolated or draining network	Attending postsecondary remedial education classes, college preparatory program, or fulfilling prerequisites for job training/readiness program  High school diploma or GED obtained No high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED)	No savings	Defaults or nonpayment on all or most loans and accounts	Unemployed

# Mobility Mentoring Values

- ▶ Strength-based approach to program design and mentoring
  - ▶ Encourage participant voice and engagement in program design and evolution
  - ▶ Support private steps families take to strengthen or improve family of independence
  - ▶ Respect the rights and dignity and appreciate the diversity and range of view, opinions and experiences
  - ▶ Utilize defined selection proves in program, eligibility criteria and distribution of reards
  - ▶ Seek to grow social capital through peer networks, mentors, and community leadership skills.
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Ramsey County Workforce Solution's My Bridge of Strength

Name:

Date:



Family Stability			Well-Being			Education	Financial and Legal		Employment
Housing	Dependent Care	Transportation	Health	Children's Behavior	Social Support	Education	Financial	Legal	Workplace Skills
I have stable and safe unsubsidized housing	I have reliable child care and back-up	I have reliable transportation and backup	No health concerns affect my employment	Behavior does not limit my employment	I have consistent and effective social support and/or a leadership role in the community	I have at least an AA degree or higher	My income is stable, I am current on my bills, I have money for saving or spending	I have no current legal issues	My strong workplace skills enhance my employability and support career advancement
I have stable and safe housing that is subsidized	I have reliable child care but no backup	I have transportation but no backup	Health concerns sometimes affect my employment	Behavior sometimes affects my employment	I have generally reliable social support that is growing	I have a high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate or a post secondary certificate	My income is stable, I am current on my bills but I don't have money for saving or spending	My legal issues are not work related and do not take work time	My workplace skills support my employability
I am living in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or am at risk of losing housing	I have child care but it is not reliable	I have transportation options but they are not reliable	Health concerns often affect my employment	Behavior often affects my employment	I have a limited social support network with few positive influences	I am attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training	My income is sometimes enough to cover my basic living expenses	My legal issues take me away from work some times	My workplace skills often interfere with my employability
My family has no housing	I have no child care		Health concerns prevent my employment	Behavior prevents my employment	I have no social support; my network is draining or destructive	I have no high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate	My income is not enough to cover my basic living expenses	I lack certain jobs, or I have lost jobs because of my legal issues.	I need to work on my workplace skills in order to obtain employment

Strengths:

\*Workplace skills include, but are not limited to, decision making, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, anger management, time management, crisis management, planning, relationship skills, prioritizing, grooming, and other capabilities that facilitate job performance.

# GOAL ACTION PLAN

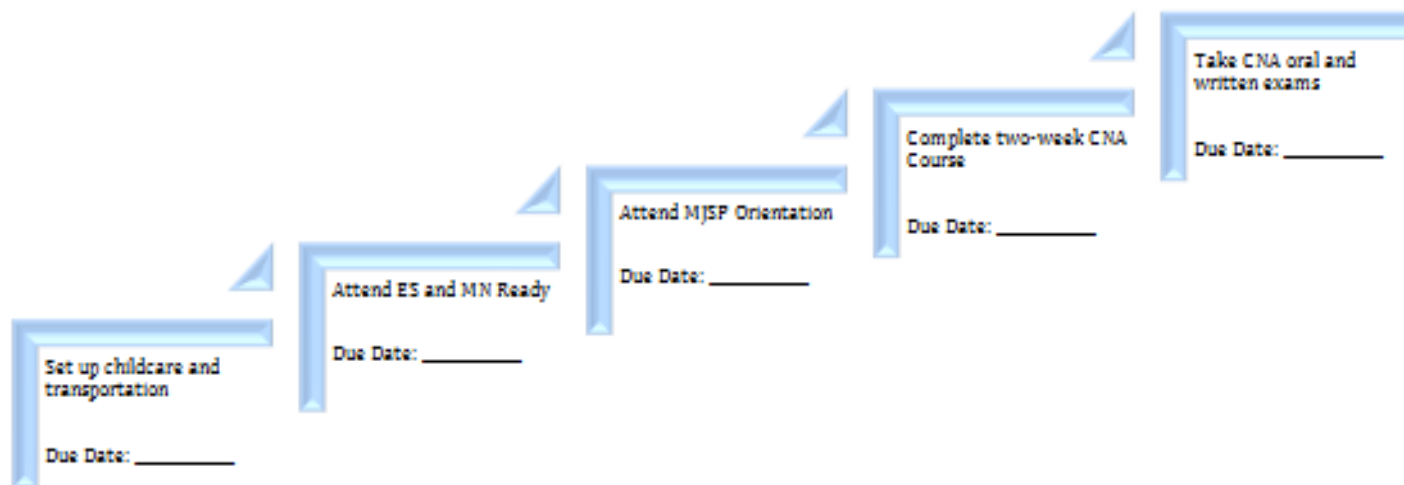
Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My Goal is: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What strengths will I use to accomplish my goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the goal and action steps against SMART criteria:  Specific  Measureable  Attainable  Relevant  Time-based


Instructions: Once you develop your goal, identify the action steps that you will need to achieve along the way. Your action steps should also meet the **SMART** criteria.




Date of next appointment: \_\_\_\_\_ Was this goal obtained or discontinued?:  YES  NO If yes, date: \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what stopped you? \_\_\_\_\_

# SMART Goals

- ▶ Specific
  - ▶ Measurable
  - ▶ Attainable
  - ▶ Relevant
  - ▶ Time-limited
- 


# Dreams

- ▶ Don't be pushed by your problems; be led by your dreams.
  - ▶ If you imagine persistence as the engine of success, then courage is its fuel.
  - ▶ All dreams have an inherent risk to them. Part of the power of finding courage is in being able to recognize your fears and do what you need to do any way.
  - ▶
  - ▶ As you move toward a dream, the dream moves toward you. Julie Cameron
  - ▶ Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off your goals.
  - ▶ Become a possibilitarian. No matter how dark things seem to be or actually are, raise your sights and see the possibilities – always see them, for they're always there. Norman Vincent Peale
  - ▶ Goals determine what you are going to be. Julius Irving
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# The Dream Keeper

(Langston Hughes Poems As Voice of Dream)

Bring me all of your dreams,  
You dreamers,  
Bring me all of your  
Heart melodies  
That I may wrap them  
In a blue cloud-cloth  
Away from the too-rough  
fingers  
Of the world.




# Goals set by someone else


- ▶ Individuals may be faced with problem situations and/or goals that others have set for them that they do not see as important. Hence, there is no internally generated motivation to activate and sustain goal-directed behavior. For this reason, and in the absence of internal motivation, it is important to externalize motivation. This means utilizing some artificial means to create an extrinsic source of motivation.
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# Goals set by the individual

- ▶ When an individual has a goal that is important to her, behavior in the service of obtaining that goal can increase the likelihood of learning and practicing goal-relevant skills. Achieving that goal may well involve what we consider to be executive functions, such as working memory, flexibility, and response inhibition, among others. To the extent that they are important to the individual, goals offer a vehicle for the acquisition and practice of executive functions.
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# Benefits of Goal Setting

- ▶ Goals serve four primary functions:
  - ▶ First, they direct behavior toward goal-relevant activities and away from goal-irrelevant activities
  - ▶ Second, they energize – high goals lead to greater effort than do low goals
  - ▶ Third, they encourage persistence
  - ▶ Finally, they motivate individuals to discover or use task-relevant knowledge or strategies.
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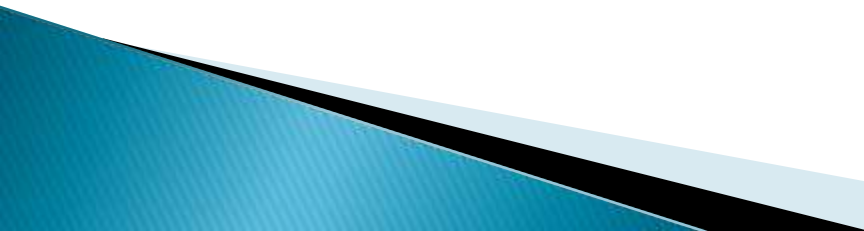
# ES Manual and Goals

“The EP must include the participant’s overall employment goal; activities and steps necessary to reach that goal.”


“The function of the EP is to identify the participant’s self-support and employment goals, breaking those goals into smaller objectives, and listing the steps the participant must take to achieve the goals in the shortest time reasonably possible.”




# A Better Reason For Goal Setting

- ▶ Building goal setting skills
  - ▶ The more we exercise our brains at goal setting, the better we become at it
  - ▶ Pausing to think about what we want before we react
  - ▶ Searching for and finding options before taking steps
  - ▶ Organizing and juggling complex tasks
  - ▶ Working to achieve goals over long timeframes
  - ▶ Goals are an important motivational component for individuals
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# Organizational Cultural Change

- ▶ Vision
  - ▶ Push and Pull: Two Routes to Enculturation:
  - ▶ Action
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# A Reminder: Executive Function Assists

- ▶ Self-Regulation skills
  - ▶ Ability to focus and sustain attention
  - ▶ Set goals
  - ▶ Make plans
  - ▶ Follow rules
  - ▶ Solve problems
  - ▶ Monitor actions
  - ▶ Defer gratification
  - ▶ Control impulses
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# Stress Related Challenges for Managing Thoughts, Organization and Learning

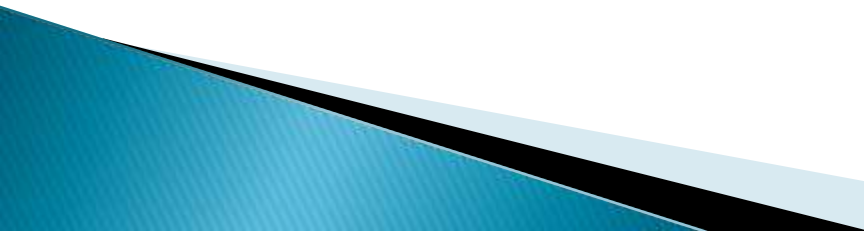
- ▶ Maintaining focus and attention; increased distractibility
- ▶ Memory retention, including general retention of information and following multi-step instructions
- ▶ Organizational skills, including keeping track of belongings or tasks
- ▶ Following plans or goals through to completion
- ▶ Thinking of logical alternatives to a particular course of action; surfacing choices or options
- ▶ Juggling competing priorities and multi-tasking
- ▶ Time management; organizing tasks to meet deadlines
- ▶ Weighing future implications of current decisions
- ▶ Taking tools or information learned in one setting and applying them in another
- ▶ Spatial awareness and spatial memory; navigating to new locations using maps or written directions; reading tables or diagrams
- ▶ Managing life changes and changes in rules or expectations

# Stress Related Challenges for Managing Behavior, Emotions, and Interpersonal Relationships


- ▶ Developing and maintaining self-confidence, self-esteem, or agency
  - ▶ Controlling impulsive behaviors and regulating risk-taking
  - ▶ Delaying gratification
  - ▶ Controlling responses to perceived threats or anger
  - ▶ Calming down after dealing with stressful events or perceived threats
  - ▶ Maintaining a course of action in the face of new stimuli; persisting in the face of worry or despair
  - ▶ Understanding the behavior and motivations of self and/or others
  - ▶ Effectively working in partnerships, teams, or groups
  - ▶ Building, navigating, and using social networks
  - ▶ Internalizing recommendations; accepting and using feedback or advice
  - ▶ Maintaining equanimity when dealing with authority
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# What can organizations do to help mitigate stress-related challenges? 1

- ▶ First – implement easy-to-use brain-science informed program design improvements
  - ▶ Environments – noise and distraction reduction, friendly photos on the walls;
  - ▶ Approaches – serve and return content delivery, non-authoritarian affect;
  - ▶ Program materials – limit tables, charts, jargon;
  - ▶ Program access – readmission, bundled services;
  - ▶ Staff training – about stress-related impacts and solutions.
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## What can organizations do to help mitigate stress-related challenges? 2

- ▶ Second, provide participants with brain-science informed tools to help with program success:
  - ▶ Personal organization strategies and tools;
  - ▶ Reminders/prompts;
  - ▶ Goals/contracts;
  - ▶ Incentives;
  - ▶ Impulse/distraction control strategies;
  - ▶ Automatic goal-attainment strategies;
  - ▶ Problem-solving, goal-setting frameworks.
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## What can organizations do to help mitigate stress-related challenges? 3

- ▶ Third, coach for permanent improvements:
  - ▶ Problem solving;
  - ▶ Surfacing and weighing problems;
  - ▶ Resistance against swamping, impulse control, and weighing current actions against future ramifications;
  - ▶ Improved social skills and the anticipation of other's point of view;
  - ▶ Leadership and organization of groups and tasks.
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# Practice

- ▶ Environment– noise and distraction reduction, friendly photos on walls
- ▶ See hand outs and make changes, what would you do based on what you see ( hand out)

# Lifelong Learning: Techniques for Front-Line Staff

Lifelong Learning skill development techniques strive for more simplified and participant goal-driven content delivery, case management, and engagement strategies.

# Techniques for Front-Line Staff

- ▶ **Reduce noise**– (literally) and other distractions in the environment such as messy desks or walls.
    - Help children stay occupied with toys/crayons so parents can concentrate.
  - ▶ **Be consistent**– plan ahead, return voicemails in a timely manner.
  - ▶ **Remember Details** – helps to build rapport, ask about their children, work, school, etc.
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# Techniques for Front-Line Staff


- ▶ Serve and return content delivery: like tennis or volley ball, the interaction between participant and counselor must be responsive, interactive and Non-Authoritarian.
  - Prepare for participant meeting – do not firmly follow your agenda, be flexible and listen to participant.

# Techniques for Front-Line Staff


- ▶ **Make program materials easy to read, relatable to the participant and limit jargon.**
  - After writing EP, go through each activity section (use highlighters).
  - Assist clients with job logs (especially first time) and other forms.
  - Accept FSS verbal documentation of activities if more convenient for participant.
  - If referred to MN Ready or other workshops—may be helpful to print calendar so they know their schedule (make add wake time, time to feed children, etc).



# Techniques for Front-Line Staff

- ▶ **Bundle services** so that it's easier for participants to gain all that they need for success. Help them with calendar and logistics planning, etc.
    - Continuous Support – Help them along (CC application process, HRF), help to be their liaison between their FW and CCW.
    - Communicate and Collaborate with other professionals they are working with (ARMHS worker, Mental health provider, Case Managers).
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# Techniques for Front-Line Staff

- ▶ **Flexible readmission to programs**– if a participant is engaged at ANY LEVEL, then work with them to help them reach their success– don't always go to sanction as your first tool.
  - ▶ **Staff training**– do you recognize the impacts of stress on your life and others? Consider ways in which your own EF Skills are compromised.
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# Written Communication with Participants

- ▶ **Take 10 minutes to review and discuss letters.**
- ▶ **Answer the questions on the following page in your groups.**
- ▶ **Be prepared to share your answers with the group.**

\*Some letters may still need required MFIP language such as *Rights and Responsibilities* and *Right to Appeal*, etc. Let's find creative ways to make communication participant-centered and not rules-centered.

# Exercise Questions

1. **Is the language understandable to the people that we serve?** (i.e. are we speaking MFIP jargon?)
  2. **Is the overall feeling from the letter approachable rather than authoritarian?**
  3. **Is there a clear and concise layout?** Are the requested action steps clear? Is there too much clutter or “noise”?
  4. **Is the letter free of assumption and judgment?** (is there “flexible readmission” to services?)
  5. **Does the letter support participant choice?** Are there options given and a sense of participant control over their situation? (“serve and return”)
  6. **Does the letter leave an overall feeling that the end goal is truly about the participant’s success?**
  7. **What other ideas do you have to make letters more effective?**
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