

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS (Research has identified a number of specific executive functions, which include the following):

1. **ABSTRACT THINKING:** Being able to understand non-literal language (e.g., sarcasm, jokes, and metaphors) and non-verbal communication (e.g., the way we get our message across apart from the words we use, tone of voice, body language, facial gestures, etc.).
2. **EMOTIONAL CONTROL:** The ability to control escalating emotions in order to complete a task and keep emotions to a level that is appropriate.
3. **INHIBITION:** The ability to “contain” the desire to do something in order to stay on task until it is finished (e.g., staying focused long enough to complete a task, thinking through problem solving, staying on a topic and avoiding going off on tangents when telling a story, etc.).
4. **INITIATING:** Getting started on a task (e.g., knowing where to start and what to do next, writing tasks, etc.).
5. **MULTITASKING:** The ability to carry out more than one cognitive process at a time (e.g., being able to perform a task while talking).
6. **PLANNING AND ORGANIZING:** The ability to plan and organize time, information and procedures efficiently (e.g., carrying out instructions accurately, completing tasks on time and correctly, etc.).
7. **SELF-MONITORING:** Being mindful, recognizing when a change is needed, and noticing when an error occurs (e.g., staying on a topic when talking, noticing changes of topics in groups, answering questions accurately, noticing when you have made a mistake, being relatively accurate in your judgment of your own and others’ behaviour).
8. **SHIFTING FOCUS:** The ability to shift attention if something changes (e.g., being able to change how something is being done when asked, being able to see multiple possible solutions to a problem, etc.).
9. **WORKING MEMORY:** The ability to hold onto information in order to process it (e.g., being able to identify the main point, take all information into account, tell a cohesive story in a logical sequence, reading comprehension, and following instructions).

SOCIAL AWARENESS:

1. evaluating human voices
2. assigning the emotional value of different stimuli (e.g., deciding when something is disgusting)
3. attaching an incoming signal with an emotional value
4. deciding whether a social signal really matters
5. deciphering prosody, the additional tones and ways that people add layers of meaning to their spoken words
6. generating an initial emotional response to social stimuli (e.g., Should someone’s tone really impact me as much as it does? What does someone’s look really mean, and am I overreacting?)
7. generating reactions in response to different situations
8. helping control basic visual information

9. helping us notice where someone else is looking
10. selecting which of the myriad incoming social signals are the most important
11. allowing us to observe other human bodies
12. allowing us to know when incoming social signals are rewarding
13. helping us to not just listen to what people say, but HOW it is said
14. observing minute details of facial expression and body language
15. perceiving important social cues
16. regulating strong human emotions

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS:

1. Emotional self-awareness: “When my body gives me physical signals that something is wrong, do I pay attention to it and sense what’s going on?”
2. Empathy: “Do I really listen to people when they talk about their issues, or do I just try to give them a solution? Do people tend to confide in me?”
3. Impulse control: “Do I respond to people before they finish telling me something?”
4. Interpersonal relationships: “Do I enjoy socializing with people, or does it feel like work?”
5. Self-actualization: “Am I doing the things in life that I really feel passionate about IN MULTIPLE DOMAINS rather than in one narrow range of interest (i.e., spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, financially, vocationally)?”