THRIVE EMERGE

WHAT NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS WANT

1. **Understanding and Acceptance**: Many students with High-functioning autism emphasize the importance of being understood and accepted by teachers, peers, and school staff. They desire educators who are knowledgeable about High-functioning autism and who demonstrate empathy, patience, and acceptance of their unique traits and differences.

2. **Supportive Learning Environment**: Students with High-functioning autism value a supportive and inclusive learning environment where they feel safe, respected, and valued. They appreciate teachers who create a positive classroom atmosphere, provide clear expectations, and offer opportunities for success and growth.

3. **Clear Communication**: Students with High-functioning autism emphasize the importance of clear and effective communication in the classroom. They prefer teachers who use straightforward language, provide explicit instructions, and offer visual supports to aid comprehension.

4. **Individualized Support and Accommodations**: Many students with High-functioning autism express the need for individualized support and accommodations to help them succeed academically and socially. They appreciate educators who recognize their strengths and challenges, and who tailor instruction, assignments, and assessments to meet their specific needs.

5. **Social Skills Development**: Students with High-functioning autism often desire support and instruction in developing social skills and navigating social interactions. They value opportunities for social skills training, peer mentoring, and group activities that promote socialization and friendship-building.

6. **Emotional Regulation Support**: Students with High-functioning autism may struggle with emotional regulation and managing stress and anxiety. They appreciate teachers who offer support and strategies for coping with emotions, reducing stress, and managing sensory sensitivities in the classroom.

7. **Respect for Differences**: Students with High-functioning autism emphasize the importance of respect for neurodiversity and acceptance of their differences. They desire an educational system that celebrates diversity, promotes inclusion, and values the contributions of individuals with High-functioning autism and other neurodevelopmental differences.

8. **Opportunities for Self-Advocacy**: Many students with High-functioning autism express a desire for opportunities to advocate for themselves and their needs within the educational system. They value educators who empower them to self-advocate, participate in decision-making, and advocate for accommodations and support services.

THRIVE EMERGE

ADHD/ EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION:
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO NOT GETTING YOUR WORK DONE

HOME SCENARIO

Your kid is not getting started on an independent study assignment. This has been going on for several days. Sometimes they seem unable to settle down and plan out their work and get started. Other times they seem exhausted and with no energy to do anything.

When you offer them "extra time" to complete the assignment, they still can't get the work done. You want to allow them to work as independently as possible, but this approach doesn't seem to be producing the necessary outcomes.

WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

1. Given what you have learned about autism and ADHD, what factors do you think might be contributing to this student's struggles?
2. What do you think is the first most important step in engaging this student in their academics?
3. What are some strategies that might help this student make better progress?
4. List 3 approaches that you would like to try to deal with executive function issues that show up in the Homework Café.

Factors Contributing to Not Getting Work Done

- Can't structure time, tasks
- Too many distractions – people, options
- Poor initiation > procrastination
- Can't recall details of assignment
- Can't find needed papers
- Assignment boring > do something fun
- Can't sit still to do work
- Too much peopling, schooling and sensory all day
- Revving their engine all day long
- Too much masking/ too much faking
- Struggle to keep emotionally even
- Poor sleep/ Hungry/ Sick
- Stress at home
- Conflict with friends
- Anxiety/ Rumination/ intrusive thoughts
- Depressed
- Stoned/ hungover
- Video all night
- Time of year– e.g., 2 weeks before Thanksgiving

BUILDING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

1. **Structure/ Routine/ Consistency**: Consistency and predictability are the best ways to manage executive dysfunction issues such as getting meds or turning things in on time.
    a. Create a schedule or timetable for tasks and stick to it as much as possible.
    b. Set specific times for activities such as waking up, meals, work/study periods, and leisure activities.
    c. Incorporate regular breaks and allowing flexibility within the routine
    d. Create visual cues, reminder systems or organizational tools, such as using planners, calendars, or smartphone apps,
    e. Organize physical spaces to minimize distractions.

2. **Check-ins**: Regular check-ins with oneself or others are essential for monitoring progress, addressing challenges, and adjusting strategies as needed.
    a. Set up daily reflections, weekly meetings with a mentor or coach, or periodic assessments of goals.
    b. Honestly evaluate one's performance, identify areas for improvement, celebrate successes, and seek feedback or support when necessary.

3. **Body Doubling**: Body doubling involves working alongside another person, either physically or virtually, to increase focus and productivity. This technique can be especially helpful for individuals who struggle with staying on task or avoiding distractions. Choose a partner who respects boundaries, maintains a supportive demeanor, and shares similar goals or work habits.

4. **Goals – Concrete, Small, Doable, Deliverable within Specific Time Frame**:
    a. Break larger goals into smaller, manageable tasks that can be tackled incrementally.
    b. Each task should be clearly defined and have a measurable outcome to allow evaluation of success.
    c. Regularly review and adjust goals based on evolving priorities or circumstances to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

5. **Education and Support**: Offer education and support to the student about their ADHD and executive function difficulties. Help them understand the importance of their medication and staying organized with paperwork.

6. **Collaboration with Teachers**: Work collaboratively with the student's teachers to ensure they understand the student's needs and can provide appropriate support in the classroom.