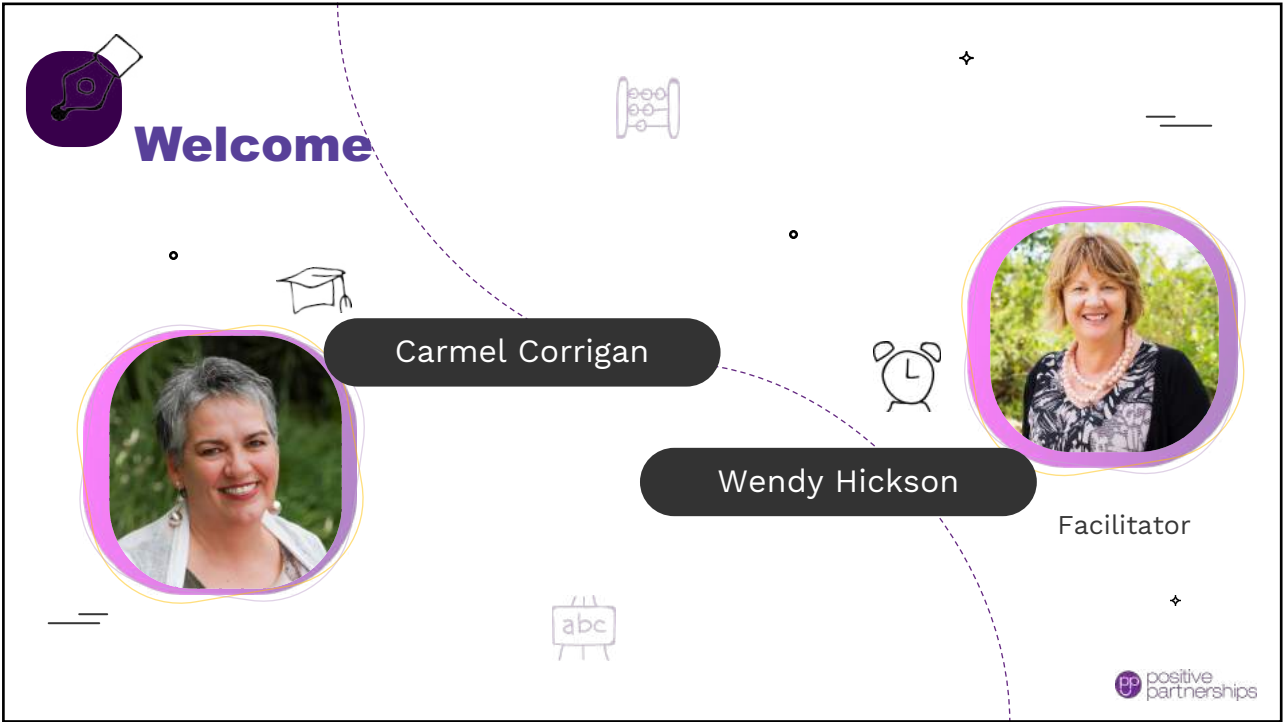




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## Learning intentions



To explore executive functioning skills and the implications for home and school



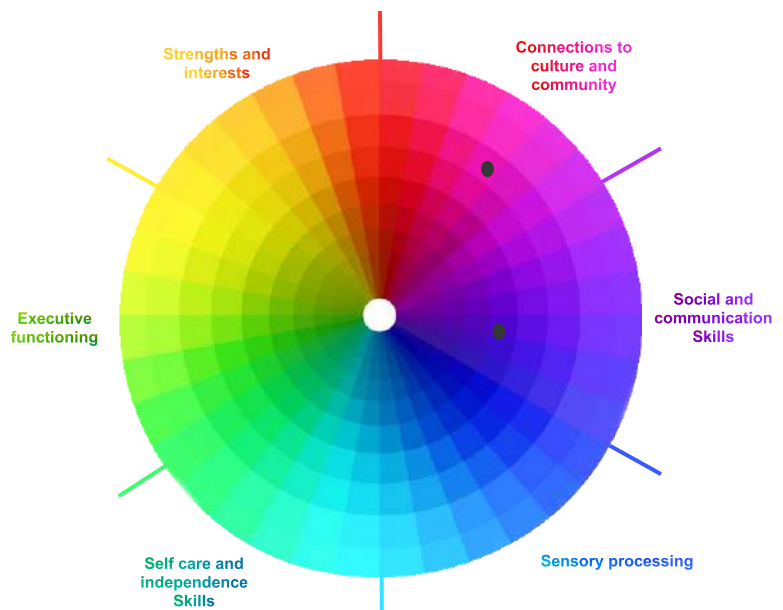
Consider practical strategies to support the development of executive functioning skills

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## Diversity of autism

The **outside** of the circle indicates the individual may need less support in that area

The **middle** of the circle indicates the individual may need more support in that area



Adapted from Rebecca Burgess (2019) Understanding the spectrum – a comic strip explanation. <https://the-art-of-autism.com/understanding-the-spectrum-a-comic-strip-explanation/nation>

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**What  
executive  
functioning  
skills support  
you daily?**



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## **Executive functioning and you**



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## What is executive functioning?



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## Executive Functions



Planning



Organisation



Time  
management



Working  
memory



Thinking  
about our  
own thinking



Response  
inhibition &  
emotional control



Flexibility



Attention



Task  
initiation



Persistence

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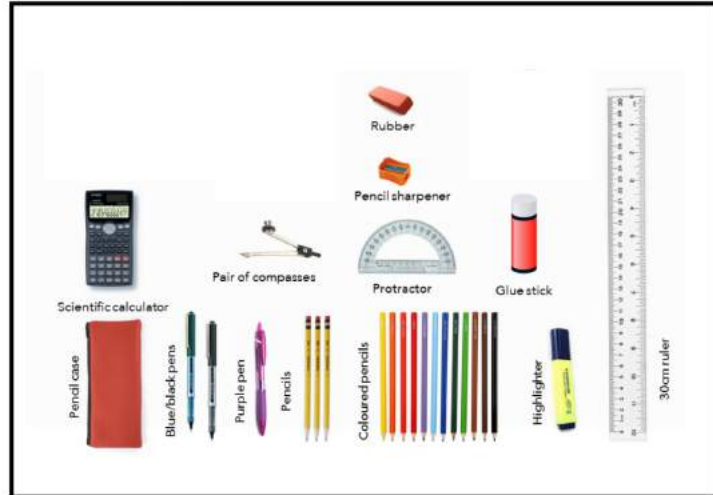
## Planning

- Planning how to complete a task
- understanding what finished looks like

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## Organisation

- organising thoughts
- equipment
- time
- work space



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## Working memory

Remembering information whilst working on other tasks.

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## Meta-cognition

Thinking about one's thinking

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## Emotional regulation

Managing emotions

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## Cognitive flexibility

Being able to change plans and adapt to a new situation

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## Attention

Paying attention to a task, even if we are bored, tired, or it is not our interest area

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## Task initiation

- The ability to start a task
- Waiting until the last minute to start

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## Persistence

The ability to keep going to finish a task and re-visiting the task if necessary



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students on the autism spectrum

## Activities identified as challenging

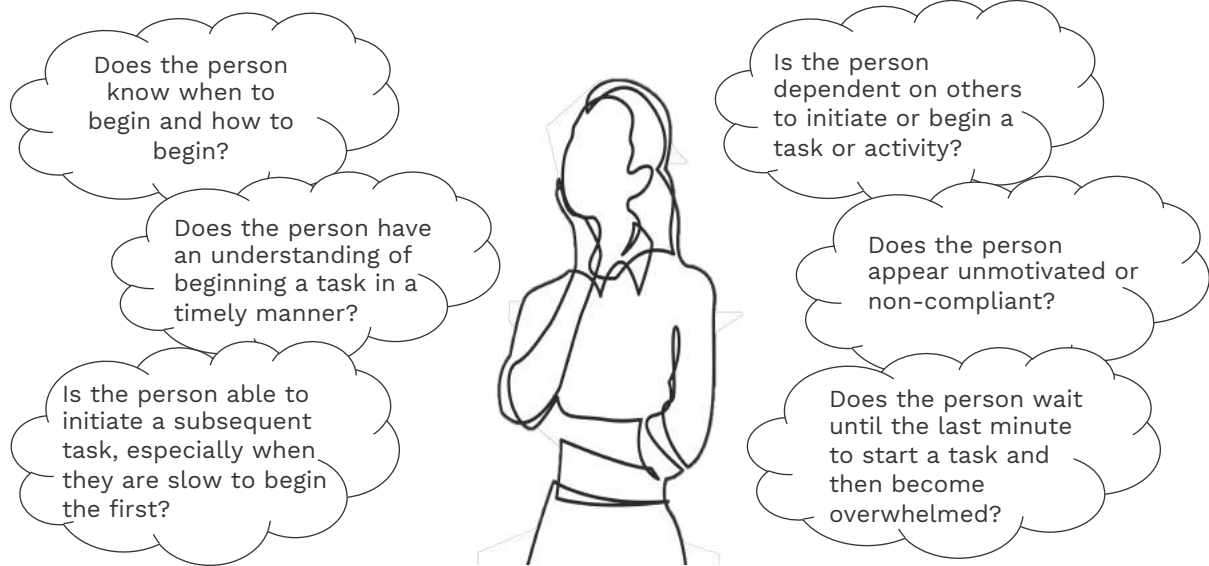
- planning for assignments
- working as part of a group
- handwriting and being neat
- coping with change
- coping with bullying or teasing
- staying calm when the classroom is very noisy
- the speed at which handwriting needs to be completed
- copying information from the board
- doing homework
- staying calm when other kids annoyed them

Saggers et al, 2015

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## Let's look at the skill of task initiation



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## Executive functioning in action



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## **Executive functions and learning styles**



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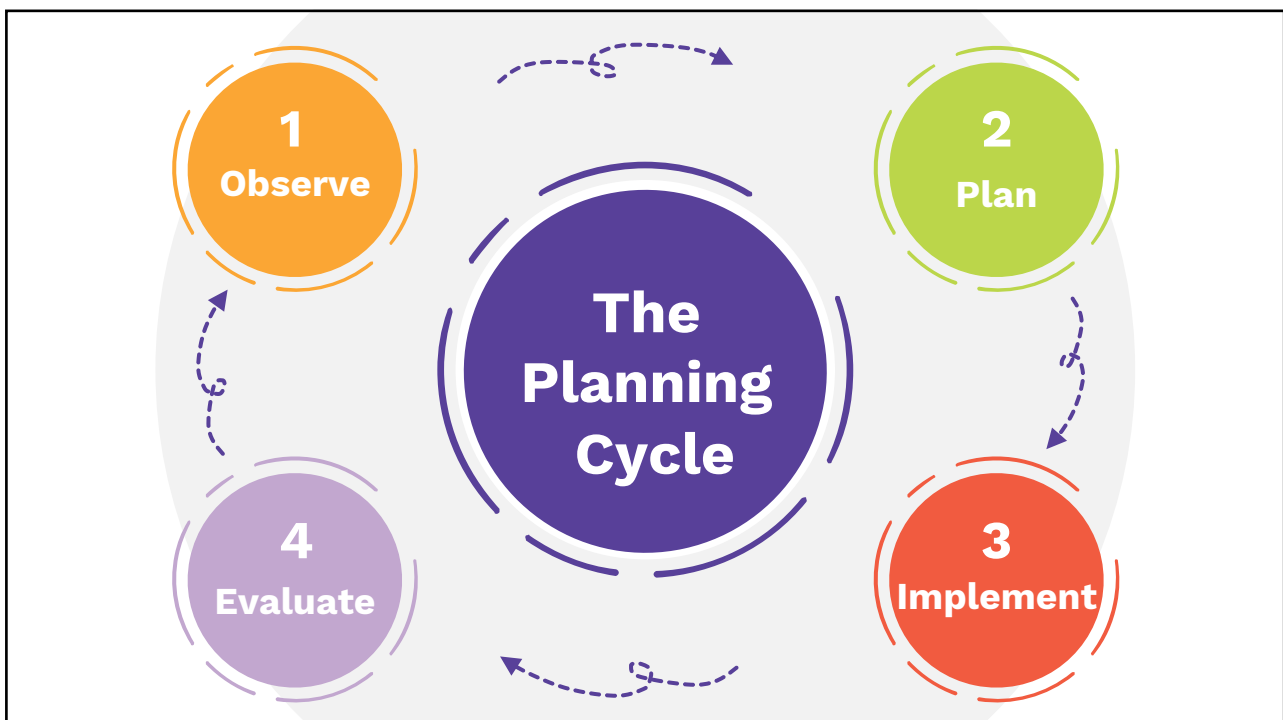
## **Benefits of student voice**



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1

Observe

# Use the Planning Tool




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Executive Functioning Tool

Executive functioning skills e.g.	Observations and examples. What can you see or hear the child doing?	What are the helpful and unhelpful impacts on the child and others?	What strategies & adjustments might help the child?
Planning & organising			
Memory			
Noticing & remembering			

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## Executive Functioning Tool

Executive functioning skills e.g.	Observations and examples. What can you see or hear the child doing?	What are the helpful and unhelpful impacts on the child and others?	
<b>Planning &amp; organising</b> 	Josh forgot his backpack	He did not have the clothes he needed for sport and became stressed	
<b>Memory</b> 	Josh had trouble starting a task because he was not able to remember what the teacher had said	He became frustrated and overwhelmed as he could not start the required task	
<b>Noticing &amp; remembering</b>	Talks too loud in the hall and misses the instructions to leave	He becomes isolated from his peers and unsure of what to do next and has trouble regulating his emotions	

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## Identify a strategy



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## Strategies to support executive functioning

being able to use technology to support their educational needs in a variety of ways (e.g. to type or help with school work)

being able to take a break and having time away from others

being reminded of pending changes

getting copies of things teachers wrote on the board

using special interests to do projects

help with organising themselves

receiving rewards for jobs well done

a quiet space to do assessment

1:1 help from an adult

Saggers et al, 2015

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## Executive Functioning Tool

Executive functioning skills e.g.	Observations and examples. What can you see or hear the child doing?	What are the helpful and unhelpful impacts on the child and others?	What strategies & adjustments might help the child?
<b>Planning &amp; organising</b>	Josh forgot his backpack	He did not have the clothes he needed for sport and became stressed	Have a checklist showing what Josh needs to have with him before he leaves home
<b>Memory</b>	Josh had trouble starting a task because he was not able to remember what the teacher had said	He became frustrated and overwhelmed as he could not start the required task	Have the teacher repeat the instructions to Josh and allow processing time
<b>Noticing &amp; remembering</b>	Talks too loud in the hall and misses the instructions to leave	He becomes isolated from his peers and unsure of what to do next and has trouble regulating his emotions	Have visual reminders displayed regarding level of noise expectations

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### Implement a new strategy

Consider:

- Who needs to be informed and taught how to use the strategy?
- What materials do we need?
- What environments do the materials need to be available in?
- Does your young person need to be taught something?
- Trial and observe their response.

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## 4 Evaluate

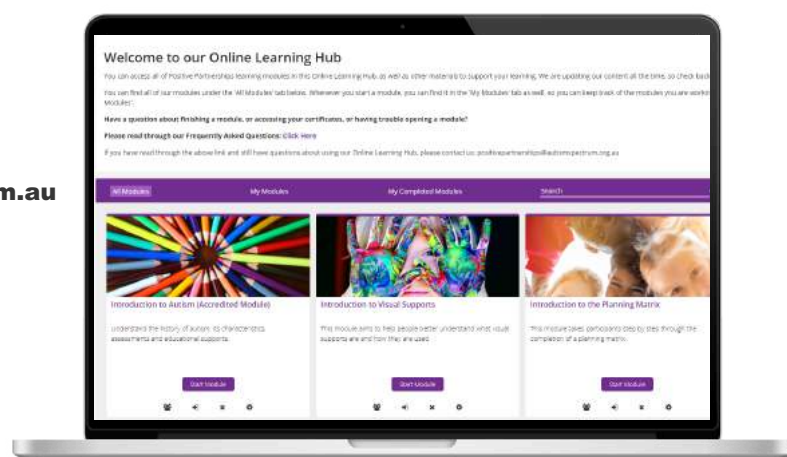
# Evaluate a strategy

- What is the purpose of the strategy?
- Is the strategy working for your young person?
- Is the strategy appropriate for the environment?
- Is the strategy being safely implemented and not causing stress, anxiety or discomfort?
- Is the strategy easy to use?
- Is the strategy negatively impacting the young person's learning or the learning of those around them?

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## Some other resources

[www.autismtraining.com.au](http://www.autismtraining.com.au)



positive  
partnerships

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