

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Executive function (EF) processes are essential for successfully navigating nearly all of our daily activities, allowing us to regulate and direct our behavior toward goals, break out of habits, make decisions and evaluate risks, plan for the future, prioritize and sequence our actions, and cope with novel situations. EF deficits are present in a wide range of mental health disorders, contributing to deficits in everyday activities, academic/occupational and social functioning. In this presentation, you will learn about EF processes and how they are important for daily life, how and why EF deficits are associated with mental health disorders, and best practices for assessing EF. We will then discuss the latest evidence on interventions for EF deficits, considering limitation of EF training approaches and promising approaches based on using compensatory strategies to improve functioning in individuals with impaired EF.

Target Audience

Psychologists
Therapists

Social Workers
Psychiatrists

Counselors
Nurses

Course level: Intermediate

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Describe different types of executive function processes and how they are important in daily life
2. Explain how executive function impairments are related to different types of mental health disorders
3. Describe the pros and cons of different methods of evaluating executive function
4. Identify the efficacy of executive function training interventions
5. Identify approaches to improving daily life functioning in individuals with executive function impairments

Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

Outline

Begin 1 PM ET

What is executive function (EF) and why is it important?

Components of EF

EF in everyday life

EF impairments associated with mental health disorders

Evidence for transdiagnostic EF impairments

Models for understanding EF impairments in psychopathology

Break 2:30-2:45 PM ET

Assessing EF

Tasks vs. questionnaires

Considering validity and reliability

Available options for clinical use

Treatment implications

Evidence for and against efficacy of EF training

Promising compensatory approaches

Thinking about the EF demands of your treatment approaches

End 4:15 PM ET

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The Presenter

Hannah Snyder is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Brandeis University. She received her PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Colorado Boulder, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in developmental psychopathology at the University of Denver. Her research focuses on executive function and the role it plays in the development of psychopathology, especially depression and anxiety, in adolescence and emerging adulthood. In addition, she collaborates with the university counseling center, helping clinicians use data for evidence-based assessment and developing programs for at-risk students. She has published numerous peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters, serves on several editorial boards, teaches, and trains PhD, MA and undergraduate students in her lab.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Laura Davie, LICSW, Tina Jenkins, Psy.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2028.

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