

The ADHD Brain

Intersection Model of ADHD



Connecting this to the ADHD brain look at the street above as the Pre Frontal Cortex and the struggle of the ADHD brain to regulate thoughts and feelings that “approach the intersection” or PFC to help in organizing the information.

Pre Frontal Cortex and the ADHD brain (the intersection)

- Behaviours, judgement, emotions and attention all run through this intersection (these are the cars above)
- The ADHD brain will react to whatever is in his focus at that moment- the fastest car or strongest message
- For the ADHD brain the PFC is unregulated- there is no stop signs or traffic lights
- This means there is no way to control what messages (cars) get through first

This leads to be easily distracted because a certain message like a teacher asking what you did this weekend, first leads you to thinking about what you did and then extends to think about a certain part of your weekend. The teacher and rest of the class moves on and the ADHD brain is stuck in the extended thoughts of the weekend, missing the next messages (school work).

ADHD Brain and Focus

- This unregulated intersection helps explain why our mind wanders
- ADHD brains get a thought and then it gets cut off by another thought. The weaker message gets lost.

When we send our child upstairs to get something, as they go they see a toy they left on the stairs. When they pick it up they continued to go upstairs and arrive in their room. Once

there they start to play with the toy, totally forgetting what they were sent upstairs for.

ADHD Brain and Emotional Regulation

- Emotions run through the intersection of the PFC cause mood changes
- Impulsive emotions come out of nowhere
- This is typically connected to the quick reaction to an event that just occurred
- It becomes dominate in their focus at that moment

ADHD Brain and Behaviour

- The ADHD brain looks for quick gratification instead of a sustaining (long term) reward.
- This is not an effective strategy- rush through task, making errors- leading to negative feedback from people around them.
- A negative mindset takes the lead where the ADHD brain focuses on the negative in situations and when approaching things in the world around them.
- This can lead to a fixed mindset where we stop trying because we do not see a positive outcome and do not want to take that risk.

Mindfulness

- We need to model mindfulness so our child can practice the skill and add it to their everyday routine.
- Start with your senses: a mindful walk, mindful tasting, mindful hearing.
- Use the 5 senses mindful grounding activity- 5 things I can see, 4 things I can touch, 3 things I can hear, 2 things smell, 1 thing you can taste.
- This does not to be sitting meditations there are lots of movement, and short 1-2 minute mindfulness practices that can be done every day.

Growth Mindset

- Help your ADHD brain to reframe their negative thoughts. When a child reports I played terrible today. Ask them to think of at least one thing they did well. Focus on the positive.
- When your ADHD brain is struggling with something or not willing to try a new task. Help them find their YET. When you hear "I can't do this math!" discuss with them where they have had success in math and that they just have not mastered this new math concept. Add YET to their comment "I can't do this math YET!". It changes the approach of the activity and the perspective to try again.

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