

UNSTUCK AND ON TARGET: IMPROVING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION, ON-TASK, AND FLEXIBLE BEHAVIOR

By: Lauren Kenworthy, PhD

This presentation is for professionals and parents who work with children with autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other disorders linked to executive dysfunction. Executive function (EF) problems are common in children and can cause academic, social, and adaptive problems. Attendees will be introduced to tools they can use today that help them identify when a child is having trouble with EF so that they can better distinguish a "can't" from a "won't" and therefore intervene more effectively. Unstuck and On Target will be reviewed, which is a cognitive-behavioral school- and home-based intervention program targeting flexibility, goal-setting, and planning. Finally, there will be a report on the results of our recent randomized, controlled trials of Unstuck and On Target that found improvements in classroom behaviors, such as: following directions, transitioning easily, and engaging socially. Throughout the presentation, examples and outcome data will also be provided from our middle school executive function intervention, which is an upward extension of Unstuck and On Target.

The primary objectives of this presentation include:

1. Recognize executive functioning weaknesses in children, distinguish among different executive functioning skills, and learn to identify specific profiles of executive function, based on the BRIEF2.
2. Apply specific techniques to support improvement in executive functioning at home, in treatment, or at school.
3. Learn specific scripts or vocabulary and when to use them to increase executive function skills.
4. Summarize the research results examining the effectiveness of an EF intervention.