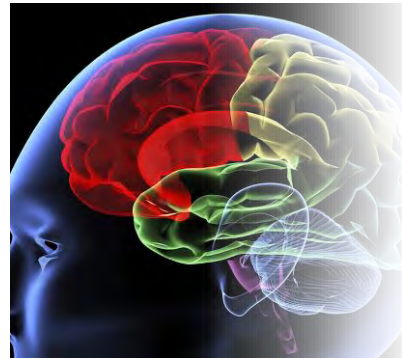


Help!
My Child is
Struggling
in School!

Dr. Caroline Buzanko
caroline@korupsychology.ca
drcarolinebuzanko.com

1



What is a
learning
disability?

2

What is a learning disability?

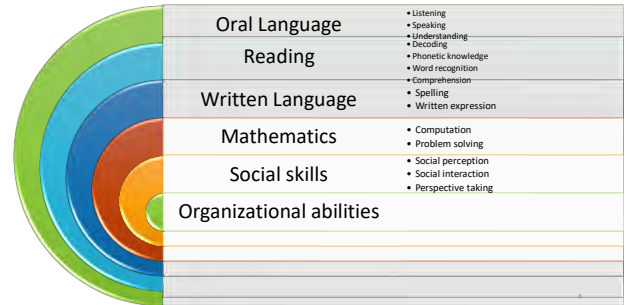
- Affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding, or use of verbal or non-verbal information
- Impairments to one or more processes related to
 - Perceiving
 - Thinking
 - Remembering
 - Learning



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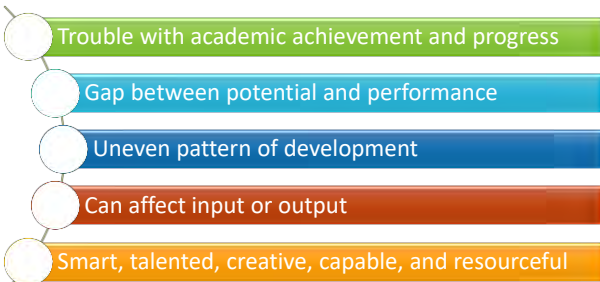
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What is a learning disability?



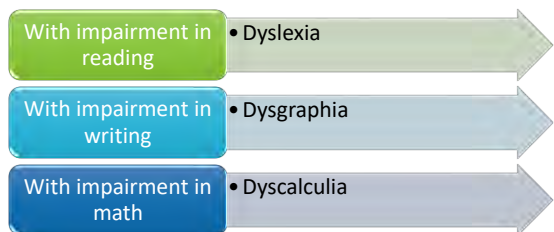
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What is a learning disability?



5

Specific Learning Disability



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Implications

- Self-concept as a learner
- Motivation, Discouraged
- Development
- Academic achievement
- Self-esteem, shame, inadequacy
- Depression, anxiety, helplessness
- Drop-out, unemployment

7



- General Signs
- Developmental delays
 - Poor grades despite significant effort
 - Step-by-step support
 - Can't remember what they hear or read
 - Cannot remember problem solving steps
 - Cannot generalize skills from one task to another
 - Forget skills or facts over time
 - Language difficulties
 - Frustrated with learning tasks
 - Low self-esteem
 - Poor attention

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- General Signs
- Trouble following directions
 - Poor reading, writing, math
 - Poor coordination
 - Difficulty sequencing
 - Sensory difficulties
 - Inconsistent performance
 - Inappropriate responses to situations
 - Hard to discipline
 - Trouble with change
 - Mixes up left and right
 - Immature speech
 - Trouble communicating with others



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Signs

Internalizing Behaviours

- Quiet
- Withdrawn
- Embarrassed by attention
- Boredom
- Carelessness
- Disinterest or reluctance to go to school
- Inattention
- Disorganization
- Slow to respond
- Headaches, stomach aches

Externalizing Behaviours

- Attention seeking
- Annoy others
- Impulsive blurting out
- Breaking rules
- Behaviour problems/delinquency
- Aggression
- Clowning around
- Drawn to other underachievers
- Defiance, hostility, or excessive emotional reactions to academics

10

Preschool	Elementary	Middle/Junior High	High School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing speaking skills at normal age • Pronouncing simple words • Recognizing letters and words • Learning numbers, rhymes or songs • Concentrating on tasks • Following rules and directions • Using fine/gross motor skills to do physical tasks • Learning numbers or the alphabet • Rhyming words • Remembering colours • Learning nursery songs • Chronic ear infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting letters and sounds • Sounding out words • Differentiating rhyming words • Reading, spelling, or writing accurately • Distinguishing right from left, reversing letters or numbers • Recognizing letters • Using correct math symbols • Remembering # or facts • Learning new skills • Memorizing poems or answers • Understanding the concept of time • Hand-to-eye coordination, being unable to gauge the distance or speed, thus leading to accidents • Fine motor skills like tying shoes • Keeping track of belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling similar words (sea/see), prefixes/suffixes • Reading aloud, spelling, writing assignments, solving word problems in maths • Avoid academic tasks/homework • Handwriting • Memorizing or recalling facts • Understanding body language and facial expressions • Showing appropriate emotional reactions in a learning environment • Reading comprehension • Organizing, managing time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling words accurately • Summarizing, paraphrasing, answering application problems or questions in tests • Poor memory • Adjusting to new surroundings • Understanding abstract concepts • Focusing consistently • Reading fluency and comprehension • Organizing and expanding ideas in written expression • Remembering and retrieving detailed information • Comprehending more complex information

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Reading LD



- Reading fluently
- Understanding what they read
- Remembering what they read
- Inferring from text
- Spelling

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- Subtypes**
- Dysphonetic – trouble sounding out words phonologically
 - Surface – trouble visualizing words
 - Mixed – phonological and visual/spatial difficulties
 - Deep – affects reading comprehension



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Writing LD

- Slow and labour-intensive handwriting
- Handwriting that's hard to read
- Difficulty putting thoughts into writing
- Written text that's poorly organized or hard to understand
- Trouble with spelling, grammar and punctuation



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Dysgraphia

- Verbally fluent
 - Impaired handwriting
 - Avoidance
 - Emotional distress
- Orthographic coding in working memory impaired
- Letter reversals, inversions, & transpositions



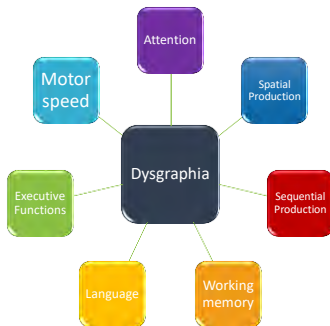
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Signs of dysgraphia

- Awkward pencil grip
- Poor fine-motor coordination
- Unusual position of the wrist or paper
- Tires quickly when writing, hand hurts
- Poorly formed or inconsistently formed letters
- Poor spatial planning on paper
- Spells well on spelling tests but not in actual usage
- Lack of punctuation and capitalization
- Mixture of lower case and capital letters in sentences
- Fails to finish words
- Omits words
- Difficulty following spelling and grammar rules
- Poor sequence/organization of words in sentence
- Minimal productivity despite oral ability to explain ideas
- Avoids writing



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Subtypes

- Graphomotor**
 - Motor execution
- Dyslexic phonetic**
 - Dysphonetic: Inability to spell by sound
 - Surface: Inability to visualize the word
 - Mixed
- Executive**
 - Difficulties with grammatical construction
 - Poor production

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Math LD

- Understanding how numbers work and relate to each other
- Calculating math problems
- Memorizing basic calculations
- Using math symbols
- Understanding word problems
- Organizing and recording information while solving a math problem



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Dyscalculia

Subtypes

- **Verbal Dyscalculia**
 - Difficulties automatically retrieving math facts
 - Language development & verbal retrieval abilities
- **Procedural Dyscalculia**
 - Trouble processing and encoding numeric information and executing arithmetic procedures
 - Anxiety and working memory
- **Semantic**
 - Trouble with symbolic representations of numbers, as well as non-symbolic representations of math
 - Executive functions and visual-spatial skills



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Understanding Cognitive Processes

<p>Fluid Reasoning Difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorizing and drawing conclusions • Guided practice • Concrete and specific feedback • Cooperative learning opportunities • Graphic organizers • Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiration 	<p>Verbal Reasoning Difficulties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of exposure to words • Work on listening skills • Morphology • Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TechMatrix • Power Up! apps
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21



Early intervention!

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Supporting Reading Development

- Opportunities and repetition
- Positive attitudes
- Spice it up
- Build vocabulary
- Confidence as a reader
- Important for all areas of life



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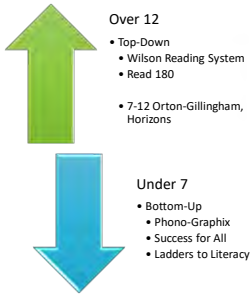
Supporting Reading Development

- Highly trained teachers
- Frequent intervention
- Auditory pruning

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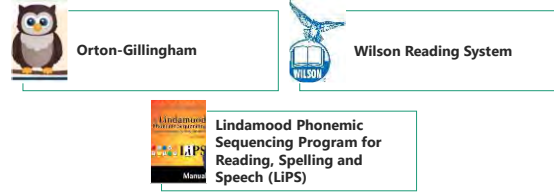
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Dysphonetic Dyslexia



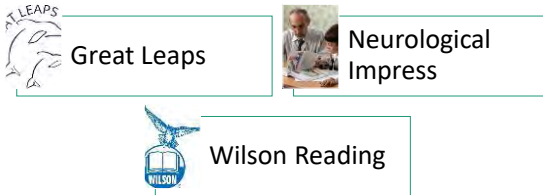
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Multisensory



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Surface Dyslexia



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Mixed Dyslexia



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Reading Comprehension

Directional questions	Read out loud	Outline stories
Visualize	Active readers	Start & Stop
Reread stories with a partner	Make connections	Ask questions
Look for signs of importance	Synthesize	

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Assistive Technology for Reading

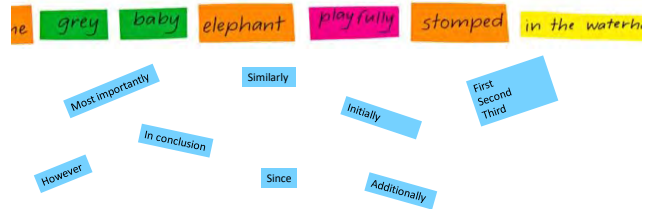
- E-reading software
 - Blio
 - Kurzweil 3000
 - Read & Write Gold
- E-reading iPad apps
 - Voice Dream Reader
 - Read2Go
 - iReadWrite
- Videos

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What to do: Spatial Production

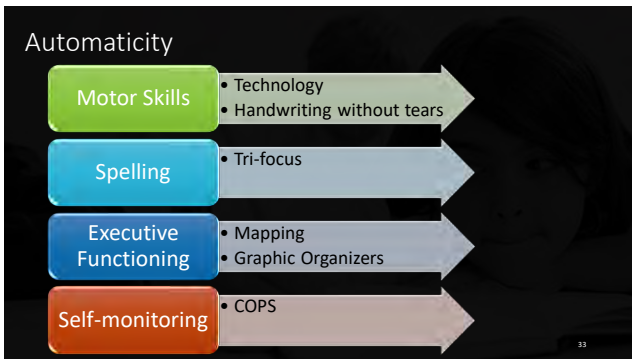
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What to do: Sequential Production



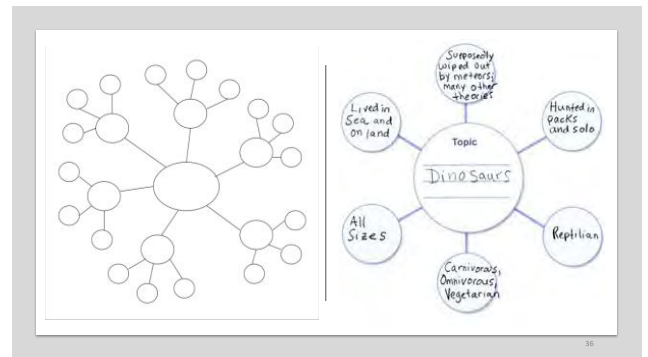
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Writing a Process

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	Narrative Writing	Organization & Focus	Sentence Structure Word Choice	Mechanics
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a thoroughly developed plot; includes topic and other characters and conflict. Provides appropriate strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense, narrative action). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Demonstrates a clear understanding of purpose and audience. Establishes a consistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the effective use of transitions. Includes a clearly presented central idea with relevant facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses varied, variety in length and tone; those consistent with content. Uses appropriate sentence structures. Considers if any interrelated concepts are addressed. Uses a variety of sentence structures. Includes a clear and meaningful purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains few errors in the mechanics of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors do not detract from the reader's understanding of the writing.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a adequately developed plot; includes topic and other characters and conflict. Provides appropriate strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense, narrative action). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses all parts of the writing task. Demonstrates a general understanding of purpose and audience. Establishes a mostly consistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, including the effective use of transitions. Includes a central idea with mostly relevant facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses varied, variety in length and tone; those consistent with content. Uses appropriate sentence structures. Considers if any interrelated concepts are addressed. Includes a clear and meaningful purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains some errors in the mechanics of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may detract from the reader's understanding of the writing.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an minimally developed plot; includes topic and other characters and conflict. Attempts to use strategies but with limited effectiveness (e.g., dialogue, suspense, narrative action). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses only parts of the writing task. Demonstrates little understanding of purpose and audience. Establishes an inconsistent point of view, focus, and organizational structure, which may include ineffective or unrelated details that do not support the topic. Includes a central idea with limited facts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses varied, variety in length and tone; those consistent with content. Uses appropriate sentence structures. Considers if any interrelated concepts are addressed. Includes a clear and meaningful purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains several errors in the mechanics of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors may detract from the reader's understanding of the writing.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks a meaningful plot line. Fails to use strategies (e.g., dialogue, suspense, narrative action). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses only one part of the writing task. Demonstrates no understanding of purpose and audience. Lacks a point of view, focus, organizational structure, and transitions that are repeated. Lacks a central idea, but may contain interrelated concepts, details, and/or explanations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains an overall and fragmented. Consistent meaning. Word choice is vague. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains many errors in the mechanics of the English language (grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). These errors detract from the reader's understanding of the writing.

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Inspirations

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Accommodations

- Reduced workload**
Time
- Technology**
Word prediction
Graphic organizers
Speech recognition
Videos
AudINote
SmartPen
- Pencil grip & posture**
- Oral or graphic assignments vs. essay**
Fill in the blanks
Other means?

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Math

Travel games

- How far you are going and how long it will take.
- Number search
- License plate scramble
- Have kids navigate your trips

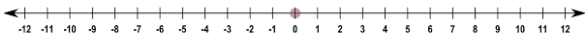


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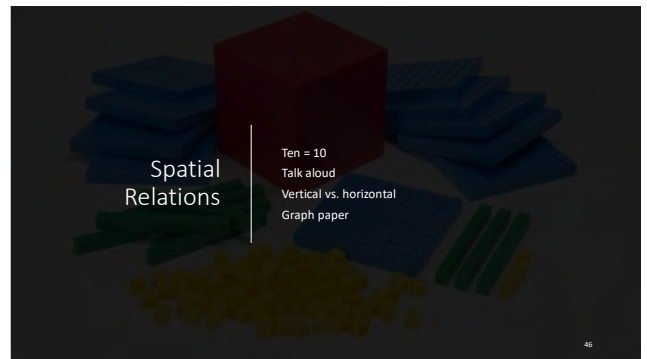


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Graphic representations



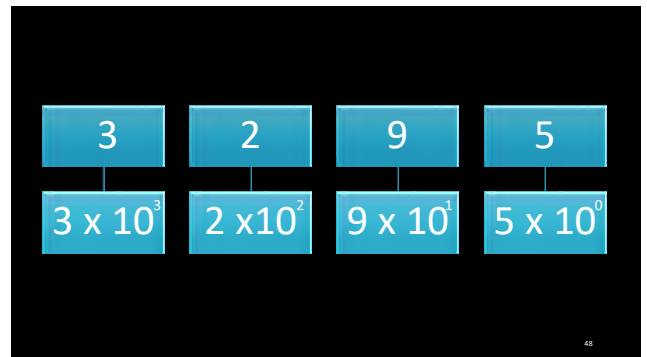
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Keys to success

- ✓ Positive attitude for math
- ✓ Positive role model for math
- ✓ Talk about math in everyday life
- ✓ Demonstrate their understanding in lots of ways
- ✓ Encourage for effort
- ✓ Mistakes are great learning opportunities
- ✓ Practice different ways to problem solve

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Math

- Games!
- Math programs
 - Lindamood Bell "On Cloud Nine"
 - Fraction Face-off
 - Dreambox Learning
 - Math is fun
 - Math Crunch
 - Coolmath
 - Math in Focus
 - Hooda Math

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Math

- <https://www.24game.com/>

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Accommodations & Interventions

- Working memory difficulties
 - Number line
 - Calculator
 - No mental math
 - Mnemonics
 - No timed tests
 - No pop quizzes
 - Number sense games

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Accommodations & Interventions

Verbal dyscalculia

- Base 10 counting
- Reinforce math vocabulary

Procedural dyscalculia

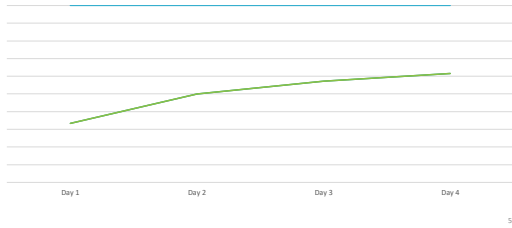
- Colour code operations
- Talk aloud for regrouping
- Graph paper
- Manipulatives
- Skip counting for multiplication
- Patterns and relationships

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Accommodations & Interventions

- Semantic Dyscalculia
 - Patterns
 - Multiple approaches
 - Build math sentences
 - Identify right vs. wrong answers
 - Make math relevant!

What to do with a Discouraged Learner



55

Strengths



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Still Struggling?
Get Help!

57

Building Independence

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Get Meta

- What do you need to do?
- How will you get started?
- What strategies will you use?
- Where will you work?
- When will you start?
- How long will it take?
- How will you know if your plan is not working?
- What will you do if your plan is not working?



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Get Meta

- What was your goal?
- Where did you start?
- How did you get started?
- How did you do that?
 - Have them talk through how they do it as they do
- What strategies did you use?
 - How did they help?
- How long did it take?
- What did you notice?
- What was helpful? Unhelpful?
 - How do you know it was helpful?
- What strategies will you use next time?



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Self-reflections

- I will highlight all the words I don't know
- I will move places so I am not distracted
- I will start at the top and work across the row
- I will do the easy ones first
- I will look through my concept book
- I will remind myself I have done this before.

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Homework/Chore Plan

I will do my task at this time:

- Before school
- Right after school
- At 4:30 after snack
- After dinner
- Other _____

I will be successful by:

- Putting my phone away in the cabinet
- Keeping all electronics turned off
- Staying out of my room until it is done
- Asking mom for help if my brother bugs me

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Remembering tasks

- What gets in the way of remembering things you need to do?
- What makes it hard to remember?
- What helps you remember
- What are things you can do to help you remember?

Staying Focused

- What makes it hard to stay focused? What makes it easier?
- What are some distractors? What happens when a distraction comes up?
- What things are easier to focus on?
- Where is it easier to stay focused? Harder?

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Getting Started

- What makes it hard to get started?
- What is helpful?
- What things are easy to get started on?
 - What makes them easy?
 - Where were you?
 - What time of day was it?
 - Who else was with you?
 - Type of task
 - How alert were you? How were you feeling?
 - How did you manage distractions?
 - What did you do to get started?
- What can you say to coach yourself?

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Difficulty scale



What is easy that makes it 9 (and not 10)? What can I already do?

What can I do to bring this down to 7 or 8?

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Want to scale



What do you like that makes it 3 (and not 1)?

What can I do to bring this up to 4? 7 or 8?

66

66

Mindset	How did you feel before you started?
	What were you saying to yourself
	How did you feel as you worked?
	What did you say to yourself as you worked?
	How did you feel after the activity?
	What did you say to yourself after the activity?

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Before	What does this remind you of that you have done before?
	What experiences do you have that will help you here?
	What part do you think will be the hardest? What can you do when you get there to keep going?
During	What part is going good?
	What parts are helping you learn?
	What makes this part hard for you? What do you need to help? More information? Practice? Other ideas?
	What did you do before that you can do again to help you now?
After	How did you grow as a learner?
	Did you learn something new?
	Did you learn something new about how you learn?
	How can you use this experience in the future when things get hard?

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