An Occupational Therapy Informed Approach toward Enhancing Skill Development, Routine, and Performance
What we will cover today..

a) What are factors within ourselves and in our environment that we utilize to make a change?

b) What are challenges some EASA young people share in maintaining and developing skills?

c) What are ways we can help shape performance patterns (habits, routines, rituals) to support skills?

d) How do we put this into practice?
Internal Processes & Characteristics
- Levels of consciousness
- Cognitive Abilities
- Emotion
- Metacognition
- Motivation
- Memory

External Influences
- Interruptions
- Goals
- Practice Format
- Task Characteristics

Skilled Performance
Common cognitive Symptoms with Schizophrenia

• Reduced ability to focus one’s attention
• Reduced ability to use recently acquired memories or working memory
• Reduced ability to use facts for appropriate decision making

Study:
Approximately 70% of the patients had experienced cognitive decline in relation to self (a decline of 10 points or greater in IQ, approximately 40% a difference of 20 points)
Negative symptoms of Schizophrenia

**Study:** Of 7,500 patients 41% showed two or more negative symptoms

Most frequently recorded:
- **31% poor motivation**
- 27% blunted or flattened mood
- 26% poor eye contact
- 24% emotional withdrawal

**Another study:**
Looked at Effort-Cost Calculations-biggest difference than controls with elevated negative symptoms.

**Motivation** difficulties may be associated with abnormalities in estimating the “cost” of effortful behavior...may impact volition
Body and Brain’s Instincts

• Inner wisdom- neurologically designed to stop you or protect you from a perceived threat, something that is different, uncertain....

• Brain thinks why did you hesitate..
• A defense to stop and evaluate before the next decision
• Helps us not act impulsively or unsafely
• Opportunity to understand the emotions attached and assess
• Offers a moment to choose a new path

Magnifying moment..
Assessment => Action/Non-action

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Hesitation

• **Definition:**
  the act of pausing before doing something, unsure of next step or what one should do

• **Considered meta-cognition** (beyond cognition)
  “thinking about thinking” and learning how you learn best or becoming "aware of one's awareness"
  I’m feeling, thinking, wondering, seeing, noticing

**Things that make you go hmmm…..**
Concern with EASA young people

• Trying to decipher real threat versus not real at times

• Sensory changes may activate the central nervous system, the world may be experienced a little differently – feels new

• Positive, negative and cognitive changes impact perspective which impacts behavior and performance areas

• Multiple factors can lead to a general feeling of “not safe”
Adolescence

- More concerned with how they appear to others
- Peer relationships continue to become more important
- Increased examining of inner experiences in relation to others
- Adjusting to changing body
- Increased drive for independence
- Mixed ideas on ways they’ll fit into society, experimentation
- Increased capacity to set future goals, more abstract thought
- Lots of learning in interpretation of social cues and emotions
Locus of Control

Article: Locus of Control: Relation to Schizophrenia, to recovery, and to depression and psychosis. A 15 year longitudinal study.

- Internal: Outcomes are from ability and effort, motivation inward for achievement ...better recovery
- External: Outcomes from chance/luck, task difficulty, less control over fate, influenced by others

Shift toward greater external LOC during a psychotic episode, with depression, anxiety, varies with symptoms and life events

\[ \text{Ext. LOC} + \text{self-efficacy} = \text{stress} \]

Can rebuild step by step!

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Some emotions or thoughts that might happen during hesitation

Overwhelmed
Uncertainty
Self-doubt
Lack of confidence
Worry or fear of making the wrong decision
Anxiety/Stress
Endless debating of what to do
Tired

====> A new plan on when you’ll do it...tomorrow?
Getting things done-weee!!
Activation Energy: minimum energy needed to make a reaction happen is greater than what it takes to keep going

Potential energy (energy building in relation to other objects)

--->

Kinetic energy (movement, product)
Learning process of a new skill or change

First phase: New and cognitively demanding
Second phase: No longer just cognition, but pieces start to become automatic
Third phase: Automatic processing like “muscle memory”

(Anderson, 1982)
Plan for it

• Build understanding of how and why our brain stops us
• Create steps and find the right supports to move out of hesitation through exploring this knowledge
• Make connections to what you’re learning now to what you already know
• Create small wins around something you already do to gain momentum
• Focus on **Act** not **Think** will **increase locus of control** through proving step by step that you created change for yourself
• Choose action over non-action > 50%

New Pathways – New Experiences-New Skills- New confidence
Habits and Routine

• Habits are the invisible architecture of our daily life, we repeat about 40% of our behavior almost daily, so if we change our habits, we change our lives

(Rubin, 2015)

Habit starts as a choice/decision that becomes automatic (brain saving effort)
Routine: Set of habits in a particular order
Goal: make choices again for areas we want to change =new pattern
The Habit Loop Model

- **Cue**: a trigger that tells your brain to go into automatic mode
- **Routine**: physical, mental, emotional
- **Reward**: determines the worth and value of the routine
- **Craving**: anticipates the reward, neurological

*Rewards* satisfy the cravings...will need to explore to identify the true craving

Change the **Routine** to alter the **Reward**

(Duhigg, 2012)

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Starts with a Cue

Cue’s tend to fall into 5 categories: (hard to identify there’s so much information)

1. Location
2. Time
3. Emotional State
4. Other People
5. Immediately preceding action

Create a Plan for the Cue ....find new Rewards to satisfy the Craving = Behavior
(Duhigg, 2012)
What would be some routines or habits you have at home, community, or work and what might the cue be?...

Let’s practice!!!
What helps make this change?

- Joining groups/communities for a larger base of support
- "Keystone habits" — one habit change leads to others... (sleep, exercise)
- Feeling of autonomy in the decision
- Coincide with other big changes (new dog)
- Create a log for ideas that pop up throughout the day
- A routine makes it easier to take action on specific habits you want to change, brings security and shape
Creating Routine

• Divide the day into quadrants with goals to meet by each time block
• Make a map of have to do and want to do
• Break a task down into smaller steps, write it out, identify and give self rewards
  - Break it down to the first step only and repeat
  - Talk to your self about the first step while you’re doing it
• Build in movement to activate your brain
• Create an accountability system for self or with others
• Create a memory diary book
  - Check lists, notes/appointments for the next day, times to set alarms for the next day, setup alarm cue to look at diary
Routine continued..

• Setup appointments for yourself to do certain tasks or to keep track of the day
• Write down key words/phrases and post it
• Create visual aids: draw a picture, take a picture, use gestures
  -30% of your brains neurons dedicated to visual input
• Create an acronym for the next time you do something:
  SWAG: ...Shoes, Water, And Go!...Shoes, Water and Go!

• Incorporate Anchors
Anchors

= Cues setup during our day that remind us to do something we want to do routinely without having to remember to do it

• *What are some examples you might have?*
Anchor Ideas

Setup “bookends” at the start and end of each day to create a feeling of predictability.

Address basic needs first: then cluster activity around them...sleep, eat, and movement.

Auditory Anchors- alarm signals next activity

- Alarm location-next to activity (i.e. medication) (medication next to walking shoes)- and so on...

Identify patterns around locations in your home for tasks or conversations for best flow.
“What I am looking for is not out there. It is in me.”

( Helen Keller )
Questions?

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