

The Critical Role of Executive Skills in Goal Setting and Attainment

NAWRS Plenary Session

July 30, 2019

Richard Guare, Mark Fauth

Ultimate Goal: Self-Sufficiency

“the quality or state of being able to provide everything you need, especially food, without the [significant] help of other people or countries”

- Cambridge Dictionary

- **TANF** is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency.
- **SNAP** provides nutrition benefits to needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.

ESCential Outcome Questions for Coaching Programs

- Does the active phase of the coaching program facilitate the development of participant skills that lead to self-sufficiency?
- Do self-sufficiency behaviors increase? Does this correlate to a decrease in coaching needs?
- Does the participant evidence sustained self-sufficiency once the coaching program has ended?

Separate Experiences



Dick Guare, Ph.D., BCBA Clinical/Neuropsychology;
Peg Dawson, Ed.D., Clinical Psychology/Learning Disorders;
Colin Guare, MS, BCBA Applied Behavior Analysis.



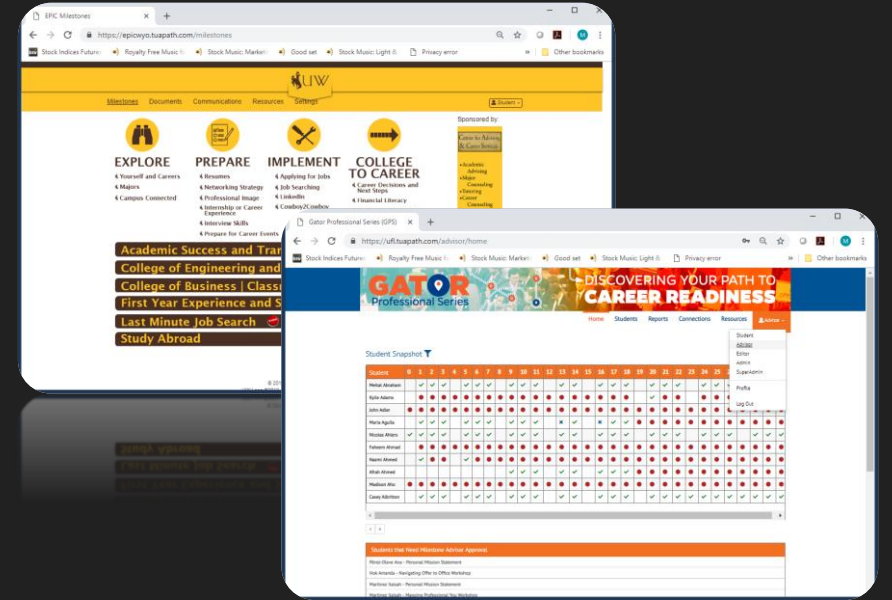
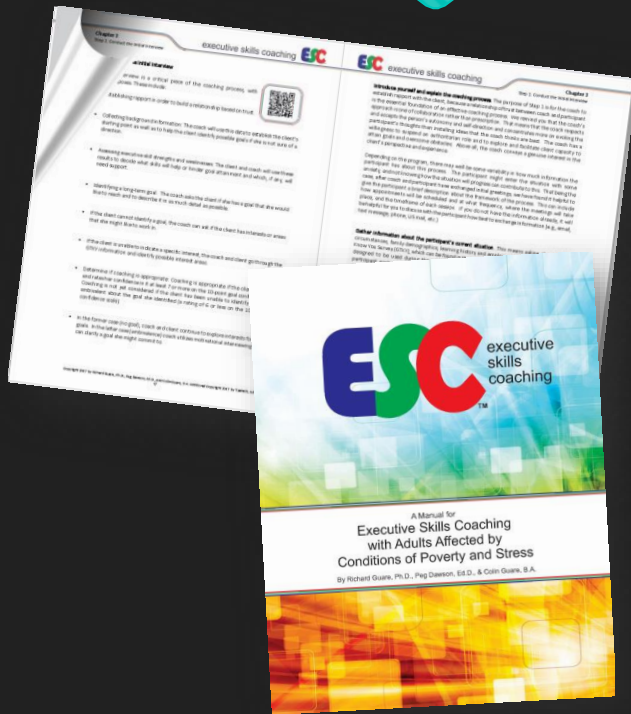
Software Solutions Company

- 9 books published on Executive Skills and on Coaching.
- 30 years clinical experience in Executive Skill development; 20+ years in Coach training
- Consultants to government programs, foundations and non-profit agencies

- Universities
- Work in Government Programs
- Work in Non-Profit Organizations

Using similar methods

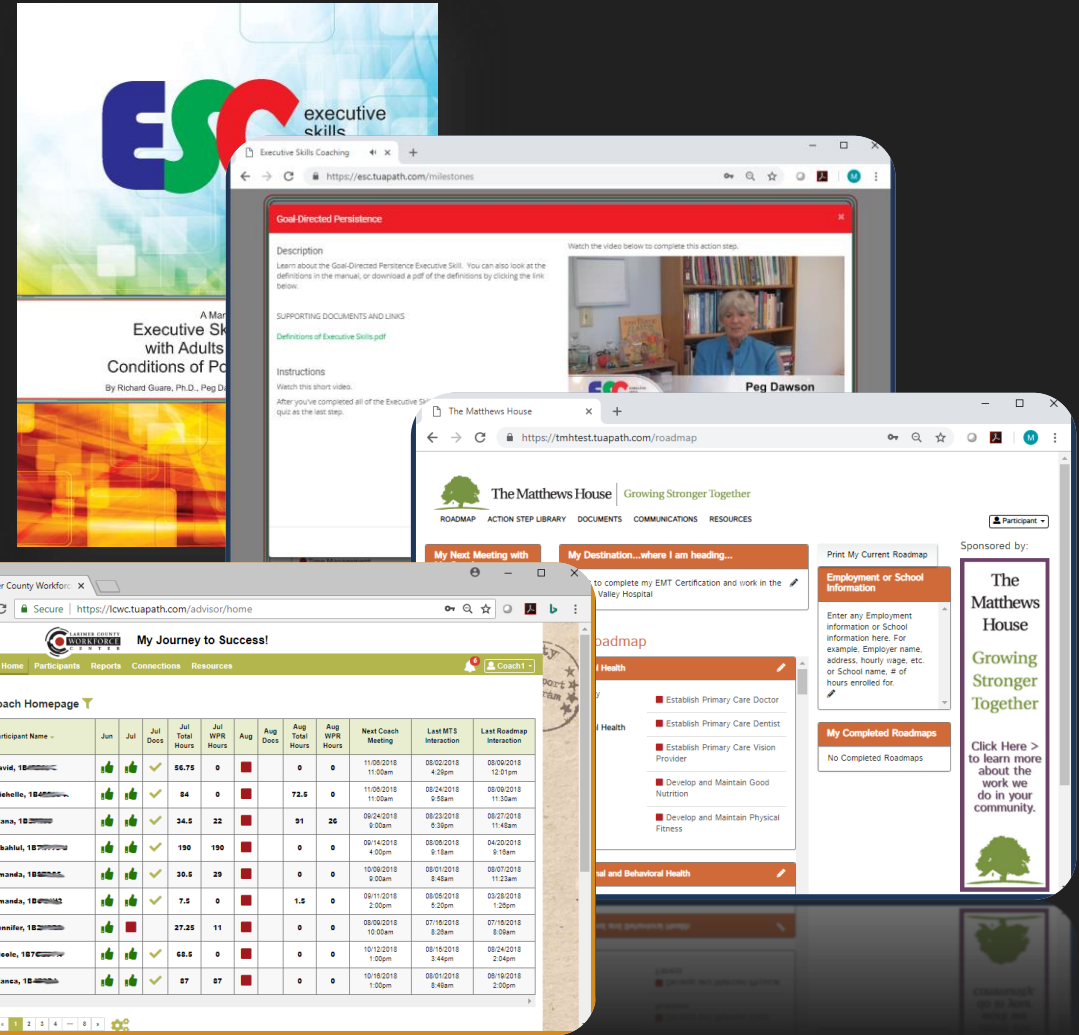
- Executive Skills
- Goal-Oriented
- Behavioral Nudges
- Client-Focused
 - Providing tools for the coach
 - Giving the power to the participant



Came to a similar conclusion

There is a need for a unified solution that combines:

- Coaching Model
- Implementation Method
- Environmental Modification



The logo for 'Essentials' features the word 'essentials' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'e' and 's' are white and set against a black square background, while the remaining letters are black on a white background. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the bottom right of the word.

essentialsTM

A Unified Coaching Model, Method and Platform

Richard Guare, Ph.D.

R. Mark Fauth

Part 1: Introduction

Components and Core Principles of the ESCententials Model

Components of the Model

- Foundation of neuroscience, cognitive-behavioral psychology and information science
- Recognizes the critical role of executive skills in goal setting and attainment through self-regulation of behavior
- Promotes self-sufficiency and sustainability once coaching ends

Components of the Model

- Deliberate Implementation that recognizes the stress of change for staff and participants
- Online - Real-time – Interactive - Participant Driven system
- Two way facing platform that both Coach and Participants utilize and train on.

Participant Benefits

- Self-control and self-knowledge
- Remote, real time access
- Template for goal setting, planning, goal attainment
- Executive Skill enhancement strategies
- Ongoing, real-world practice

Core Principles of the Model

- **Participant self-determination** is essential for success
- **Executive Skills** play a critical role in self-regulation of behavior and hence in self-determination, goal attainment and self-sufficiency
- Participants set goals to improve their lives. **Motivation** is necessary for the effortful work of goal-directed persistence and goal attainment.
- **Goals** will sustain motivation *if* they are a **good fit** for the participant's skills, interests and life circumstances.

ECSential: Participant Self-Determination

- **Autonomy:** People need to feel in control of their own behaviors and goals.
- **Competence:** People need to gain mastery of tasks and learn or enhance different skills.
- **Connection or Relatedness:** People need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to other people.

Ryan, R. M. & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory*. New York, NY: Guilford.

What are Executive Skills?

“Those self-directed actions needed to choose goals and create, perform and sustain actions toward those goals - more simply, self-regulation to attain goals.”

(Adapted from Barkley, 2012)

What are Executive Skills?

Enable us to

- Plan
- Focus attention
- Remember instructions
- Manage task demands

What are Executive Skills?

Enable us to

- Provide good care for children
- Find and keep jobs
- Manage a household
- Become productive members of community.

What are Executive Skills?

Like an air traffic control system, our brain needs these skills to minimize distractions, control impulses, prioritize actions, set and achieve goals

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011)

What are Executive Skills?

Executive skills play a central role in participant self-determination. They are the skills needed to achieve goals.

Goal Attainment

Goals are a source of motivation *if*:

- They are chosen by the participant and are relevant to the context of her/his life.
- The goals are a good fit for them in terms of their executive skills, abilities and experience.
- The resources and strategies needed to meet these goals are available or can be obtained.

Goal Attainment

A goal is seen as attainable to the degree that it is a “**good fit**” for the person. What determines fit? Three major factors:

1. Executive skills (my strengths/challenges)
2. Preferences and abilities she/he has or is capable of getting through education, training or experience (my desires/skills)
3. The availability of support (my access to resources, help)

Part 2: Establishing Goals

Assessment and Intervention Strategies and Tools to Establish Participant Goals

ESCential Components

- Participant Self-Determination
- Initial Participant Goals and Prerequisites
- Current Executive Skills, Interests, Experience, Abilities
- Goodness-of-Fit

ESCential: Coach Role in Participant Self-Determination

Working with clients in a way that:

- Is *collaborative* rather than prescriptive
- Honors the person's autonomy
- Evokes rather than “installs”

ESCential: Coach Role in Participant Self-Determination

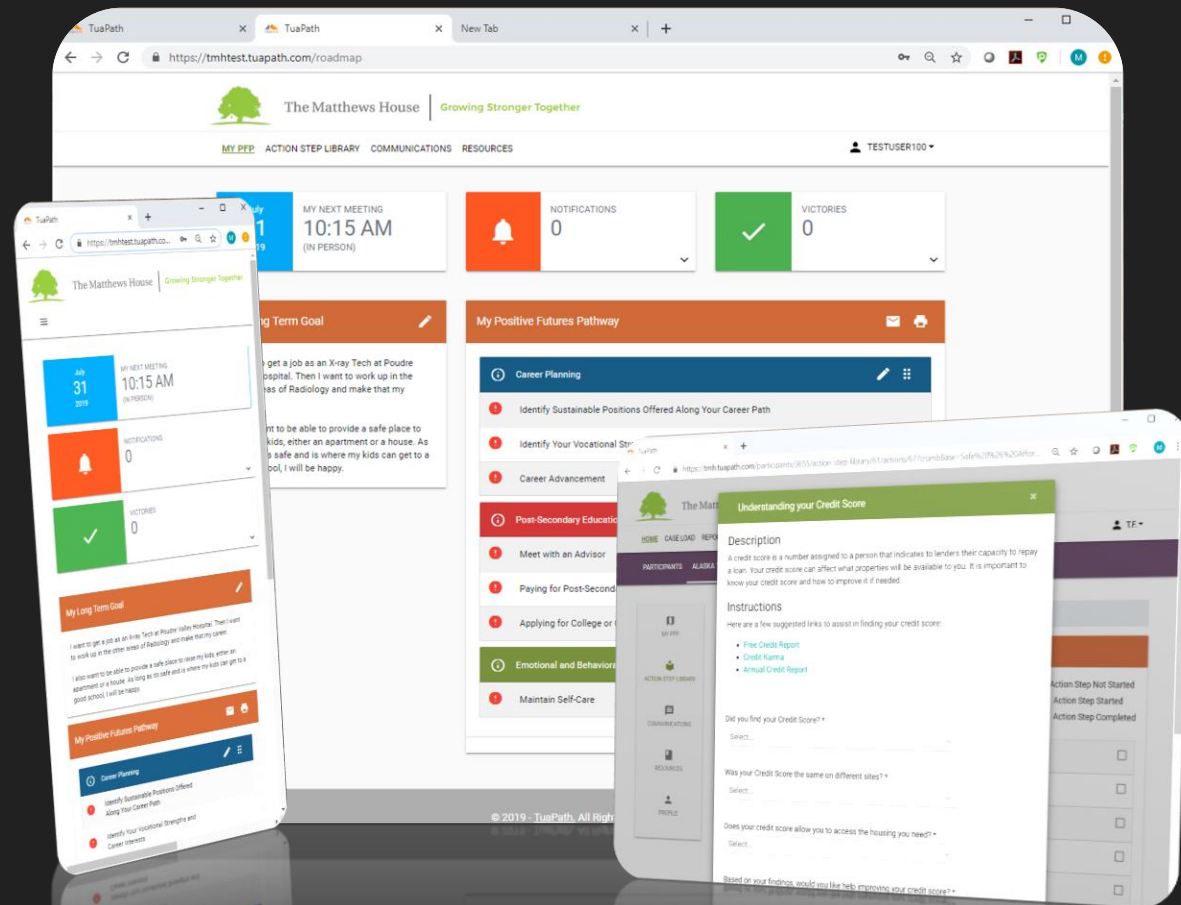
Working with clients in a way that:

- Suspends authoritarian role
- Explores client capacity rather than incapacity
- Demonstrates a genuine interest in the client's experience and perspective

ESCential: Participant Self-Determination

Autonomy becomes established when the participant is provided a means in which they can:

- Voice their own goals
- Plan their action steps
- Work on their goals and action steps
- Review with their coach
- Repeat Simulation



ESCentral: Initial and Repeated Assessments

Getting to Know You - Part 1: Some Basics

Getting to Know You - Part 1

Our coaches want to do the best they can for all of our participants. In order to be able to focus on your goals and on your success, it's important to know more about who you are.

This is the list of 4 short questionnaires that will help your coach. Please answer all of the questions here and then move on to Getting to Know You - Part 2: Education.

Instructions

Answer the questions here and then hit the Submit button. Then, do the next 3 steps in the Getting to Know You Goal.

If you can do this before the meeting with your coach, it will help them make sure that the meeting can focus on the decision you would like to go.

1. Tell me about yourself -- what are your interests? How do you spend your free time?

2. Which of these areas is most important to you right now?

Executive Skills Coaching ESC

"Getting to Know You":
The initial coaching meeting between staff and participant

Questions

1. Tell me about yourself -- what are your interests? What attracted you to the program? (Pick one)

- Employment & Career Management
- Education & Training
- Financial Management
- Family & Personal Well-Being

2. What are you thinking about doing over the next 3-4 years? (see comment)

3. What skills and talents do you have that you think you are good at? (Check all that apply)

4. Tell me about your strongest personal qualities. Which of these do you consider yourself good at?

Executive Skills Profile - Part 2

Executive Skills Profile Part 2

Section D

I listen before I draw conclusions.

I strongly disagree

I disagree

Tend to disagree

Tend to agree

I agree

I strongly agree

I think before I speak.

I strongly disagree

I disagree

Tend to disagree

Tend to agree

I agree

I strongly agree

I get all the facts before I take action.

I strongly disagree

I disagree

Tend to disagree

Click Submit to finish this part.

Recommended Action Step

Add this Action Step to your path

Executive Skill	Item	Score on Item	Total Score on Section
A. Response Inhibition	1	6	18
	2	6	
	3	6	
B. Working Memory	4	4	15
	5	6	
	6	5	
C. Emotional Control	7	5	16
	8	5	
	9	6	
D. Task Initiation	10	5	14
	11	5	
	12	4	
E. Sustained Attention	13	5	15
	14	5	
	15	5	
F. Planning/Prioritization	16	4	13
	17	4	
	18	5	
G. Organization	19	4	15
	20	6	
	21	5	
H. Time Management	22	4	14
	23	4	
	24	5	
I. Flexibility	25	4	13
	26	4	
	27	5	
J. Metacognition	28	4	13
	29	4	
	30	5	

Your Executive Skill Strengths (Three highest scores)

Response Inhibition

Emotional Control

Sustained Attention

Your Executive Skill Challenges (Three lowest scores)

Stress Tolerance

Planning/Prioritization

Metacognition

A Snapshot of My Journey

My Name: _____ Date: _____

My Coach: _____

1) Where do you feel you and your family currently are in these Life Areas?

Life Area	Family Stability	Well-Being	Financial & Legal	Education & Training	Job Search & Employment
Housing	My home is safe and secure.	My health is good.	My income is enough to cover my expenses.	I have the skills and training I need for my job.	I have a job that interests me and pays well.
Transportation	I have a reliable way to get to work.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Personal Well-Being	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Social Support	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Financial Health	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Legal	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Education/Training Skills	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Job Search/ Career Exploration	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.
Employment	I have a good support system.	I feel good about my life.	I have a budget and I stick to it.	I have the education I need for my job.	I have a job that gives me a chance to grow.

2) What is your current, overall stress level right now? (1 = not at all stressed, 5 = VERY stressed)

3) What is going on in your life that you want your coach to know about?

4) Is there something specific you want to talk about during this meeting?

5) Do we need to update any of your information? (Example: address, phone #, email, employment, etc.)

The Relationship of Executive Skills To Goals:

Goodness of Fit

executive skills coaching **ESC**

GOODNESS-OF-FIT PROFILE, PART I

Client's Long Term Goal Is: _____

Is there a good match between this goal and the

Dimension
Activity preferences (e.g., leisure preferences)
Prior experience related to the goal
Prior training relevant to the goal
Client's executive skills profile

What does the career require that the client

executive skills coaching **ESC**

GOODNESS-OF-FIT PROFILE, PART II

Client's Long Term Goal Is: _____

What are potential obstacles that might prevent the client from reaching her goal?

Potential obstacle	Yes/No
Insufficient supports (e.g., items from Prerequisites Checklist)	
Learning challenges	
Criminal history	
Drug/alcohol record	
Mental health issues	
Physical limitations requiring accommodations	
Other (specify):	

Given the goal the client has selected, would any of the above items checked off "Yes" "be deal-breakers?"

ESCential: Goodness of Fit

- The executive skills required to attain particular goals depend on the goals that the person has chosen and the environment where those skills will be employed.
- If a person has strengths in the executive skills most required to meet the goal in the target environment, there is a “good fit” with the goal.

ESCential: Goodness of Fit

- On the other hand, if the person has challenges in the executive skills required to attain the goal, there is a mismatch, and the challenged executive skills may be an obstacle to goal attainment.

ESCential: Goodness of Fit

- Reaching one's goal is more likely if there is a reasonably “good fit” between the person's goal and their executive skills profile.
- If there is a mismatch, the viability of the goal, and hence the person's motivation, can be at risk.

ESCential: Goodness of Fit

Example of Goodness of Fit in Employment

- Working in customer service requires response inhibition, emotional control and, perhaps, stress tolerance.
- Data entry, records management, and similar jobs require sustained attention and good working memory.

Executive Skills – Factors Impacting Development and Current Status

We **all** have a pattern of strengths and challenges.
Factors affecting Executive Skills:

- Developmental History
- Poverty/Scarcity (Mullainathan & Shafir)
- Stress/Fatigue
- Trauma – Physical/Psychological
- Mental Health Challenges

Executive Skills – Remedies for Challenges or Mismatches

1. Environmental Modifications

Task; Physical/Social Environment; Assistance (Technology, People)

2. Skill Enhancement

Implementation Intentions w/Mental Contrasting; Cognitive Simulation through planning

3. Incentives

ESCential: A Strength – Based Approach

- Successful practice of executive skills in one aspect of a person's life will strengthen these skills in other areas.
- Happens even though these skills are not directly practiced in another area.
- Practice with **small goals** with **short time horizons** is effective for building these skills and confidence for larger, longer-term goals.
- Coach role facilitates this transfer process.

ESCential: Environmental Modifications

Key Principle:

Modify the environment to reduce demand on the executive skill

- Look for ways to modify the task.
- Look for ways to get technology or others to help.
- Look for ways to modify the physical or social environment.

ESCential: Environmental Modifications

Why Begin with Environmental Modifications?

- ↓ stress on the executive skills of participants and coaches already compromised by stress
- ↑ enhance cognitive bandwidth which is necessary for utilization and growth of executive skills
- To provide the time and practice opportunities necessary for executive skill enhancement

Why Do We Begin with Environmental Modifications?

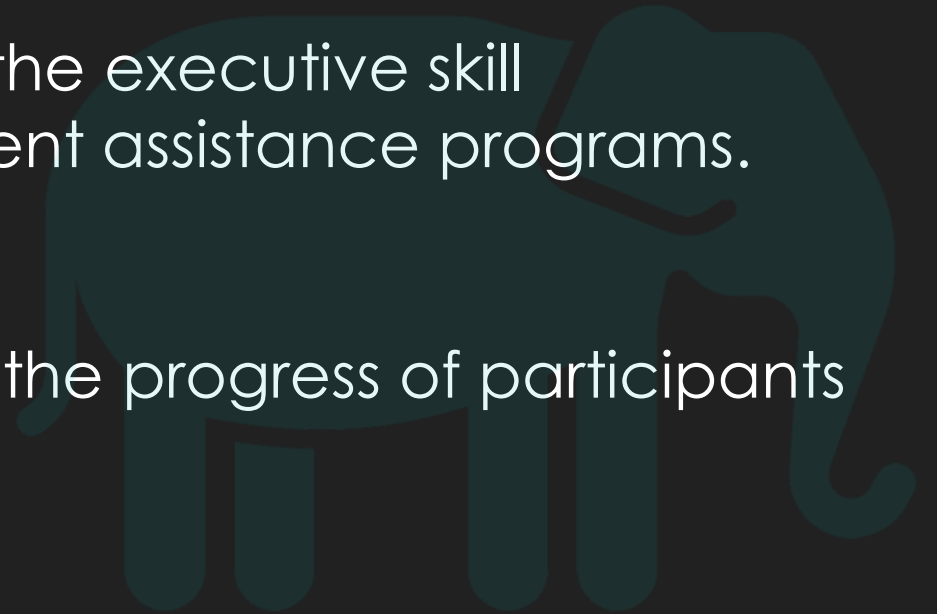
An Invisible Elephant in the Room



An Invisible Elephant in the Room

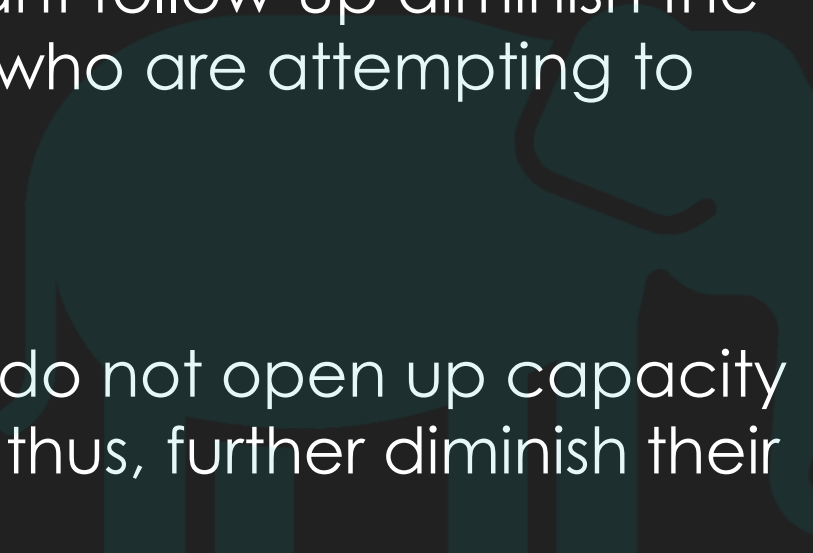
The “Visible Issue”

- Conditions of Poverty and Stress diminish the executive skill functioning of adults who enter government assistance programs.
- Diminished Executive Functioning hinders the progress of participants to go from striving to thriving.



An Invisible Elephant in the Room

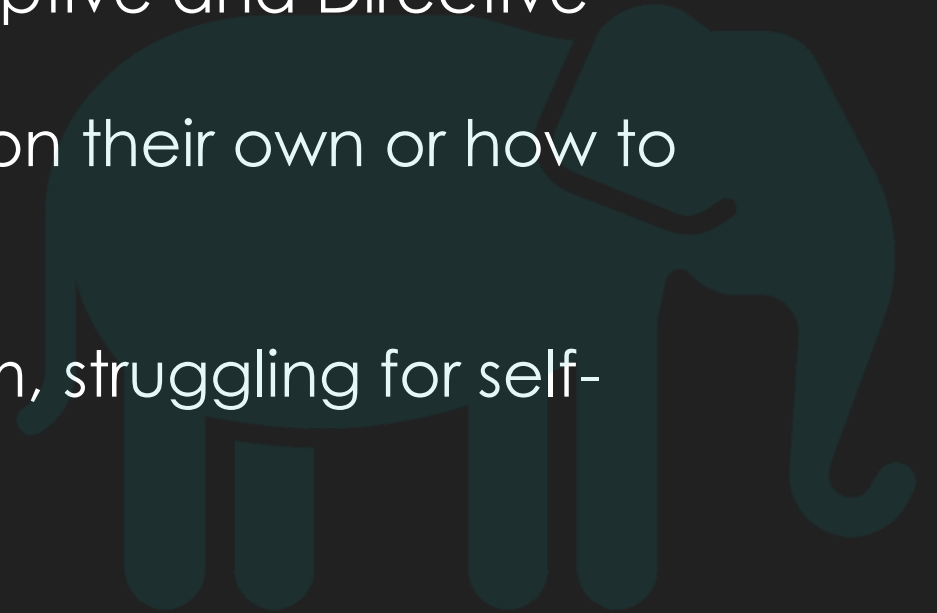
The “Invisible Issue”

- High case-loads, paperwork and participant follow-up diminish the executive skill functioning of the coaches who are attempting to assist participants.
 - Adding new tools, models or process that do not open up capacity for the coach will just add new stress, and thus, further diminish their executive skills.
- 

An Invisible Elephant in the Room

The Typical Result

- Caseworker “coaching” becomes Prescriptive and Directive
- Participants don’t learn how to set goals on their own or how to address Executive Skill challenges
- Participants cycle in and out of the system, struggling for self-sufficiency
- Caseworker staff burn-out



An Invisible Elephant in the Room

The Lessons Learned

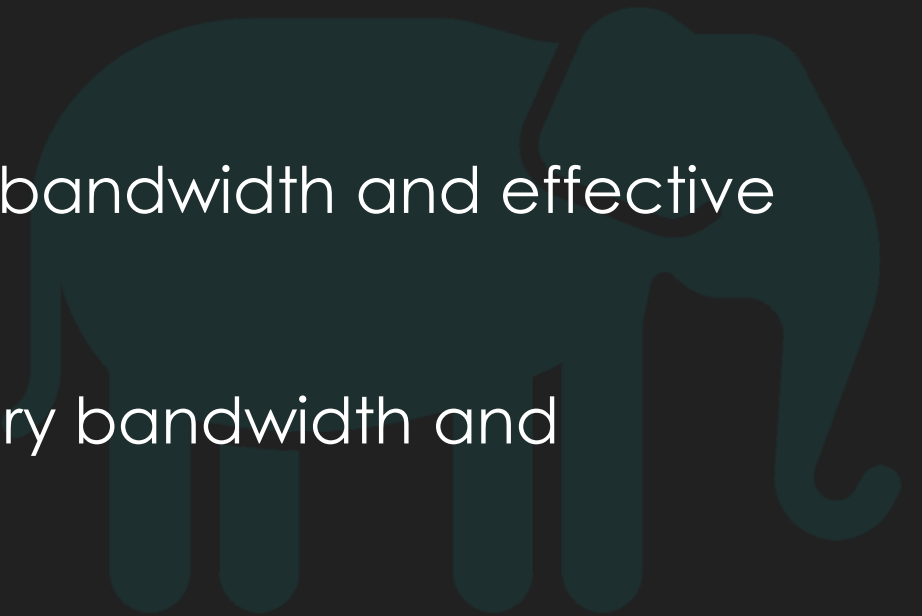
Not addressing the coaches' executive skills and needs:

- Adds additional stress to coaches.
- Additional stress flows from the Coach to the Participant adding additional stress to someone already stressed.
- Has a negative effect on the adoption rate among coaches and participants.

An Invisible Elephant in the Room

Effective implementation of any new model or process requires recognition of impact on executive functions of coaches and participants.

- Coaches must be provided necessary bandwidth and effective tools.
- Participants must be provided necessary bandwidth and effective tools.
- It must be done in that order.



Addressing the Elephant



What is the biggest stress point in the Coach's day/process?

Can something be done about it?

Addressing the Elephant

Larimer County Works Program (TANF)

The screenshot displays the 'My Journey to Success' interface on the TuaPath platform. The desktop view shows a calendar for February 2019 with the following hours logged per day:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
	3	6	4	3.5
	2	4		1
	4			2
	2	2		2

Summary statistics:

- Total Hours: 75.5
- WPR Hours: 72

The mobile view shows the same calendar with a different layout, including a 'MONTH' selector and a 'Log Notes' button.

Addressing the Elephant

Larimer County Works
Program (TANF)

- It was a win for Coach and Participant adoption.
- It has increased on-time submittal
- It is increased the amount of “good data” and has improved the accuracy of data
- It has decreased time needed by coach for instruction and compliance.



Addressing the Elephant

The Matthews House



TuaPath

https://tmh.tuapath.com/participants/169/communications

The Matthews House | Growing Stronger Together

HOME CASE LOAD REPORTS

PARTICIPANTS DEVIN BARTH X

MY PFP

Record of Contacts

Date of Contact Type of Contact

ROC Report

Name Devin Barth Email devin@thematthewshouse.org

Phone

Transition Facilitator Name TF 1 Transition Facilitator Phone

Professional Contact Transition Facilitator Email coach1@tuapath.com

Professional Contact Phone

Start Date January 1, 2018 End Date September 30, 2018

Date of Contact	People Present	Details	F2F	Phone	Email	Text	Cancellation	Other
4/18/2018	Devin Barth - TF Jesse Shaffer - Youth Emily & Breanna - CSU OT Students	Devin and the students picked up Jesse for their final meeting. The girls worked with Jesse to identify final steps to implement plan of increasing participation at parkour gym and completed reassessment. Jesse and the girls appeared to have good rapport and had a successful final meeting. Devin then drove Jesse home and will plan to meet with him the following week.	1.5	0	0	0	0	0
4/18/2018	Lexy Saucedo - Youth Devin Barth - TF	Devin checked in with Lexy 3 times this month (4/11, 4/13, 4/17) to ensure that Lexy's meetings with the OT mentors have been going well. Lexy reported that she is enjoying the meetings with the girls and that they are addressing anxiety, socialization, and mental health. Lexy and Devin discussed taxes and planned for their next meeting.	0	1	0	0	0	0
4/18/2018	Danae Gonzales - Youth Kendra Schmetterling - Youth (DG sister) Devin Barth - TF	Devin picked up Danae for lunch. Devin, Danae, and Kendra ate at Wendy's and took a trip to Barnes and Noble to shop for poetry and a calendar. Danae and Kendra shopped around the store and met back up with Devin. During the car ride, Danae expressed her frustrations that her foster mom isn't as excited for her regarding college. Danae appeared frustrated about her current living situation and Devin encouraged her to maintain a positive perspective as she is able to have a stable housing environment for now. Devin dropped the girls back off at school and plans to see them this weekend for Kendra's adoption party.	1.75	0	0	0	0	0
4/16/2018	Celeste Chavez - Youth Devin Barth - TF	Devin picked up Celeste to complete paperwork for restraining order, finish taxes, and discuss school options. Celeste completed restraining order against ex-boyfriend to ensure safety and peace of mind as he has been popping up at her house and causing problems. Celeste and Devin completed taxes together. Devin and Celeste began FAFSA for school, but were unable to complete it at this time. Devin drove Celeste to the courthouse to file restraining order and then dropped her off at home. Celeste reported that work and living environment are both going well. Celeste still sees her mom at work, but does not interact or cause drama between them.	2.5	0	0	0	0	0

Record of Contact

Date of Contact Type of Contact

April 18, 2018 12:30 PM F2F Meeting

Topic Duration

Other 1.75

Contact By

Devin Barth

People Present

Danae Gonzales - Youth
Kendra Schmetterling - Youth (DG sister)
Devin Barth - TF

Details

Devin picked up Danae for lunch. Devin, Danae, and Kendra ate at Wendy's and took a trip to Barnes and Noble to shop for poetry and a calendar. Danae and Kendra shopped around the store and met with Devin. During the car ride, Danae expressed her frustrations that her foster mom isn't as excited for her regarding college. Danae appeared frustrated about her current living situation and Devin encouraged her to maintain a positive perspective as she is able to have a stable housing environment for now. Devin dropped the girls back off at school and plans to see them this weekend for Kendra's adoption party.

Addressing the Elephant

The Matthews House

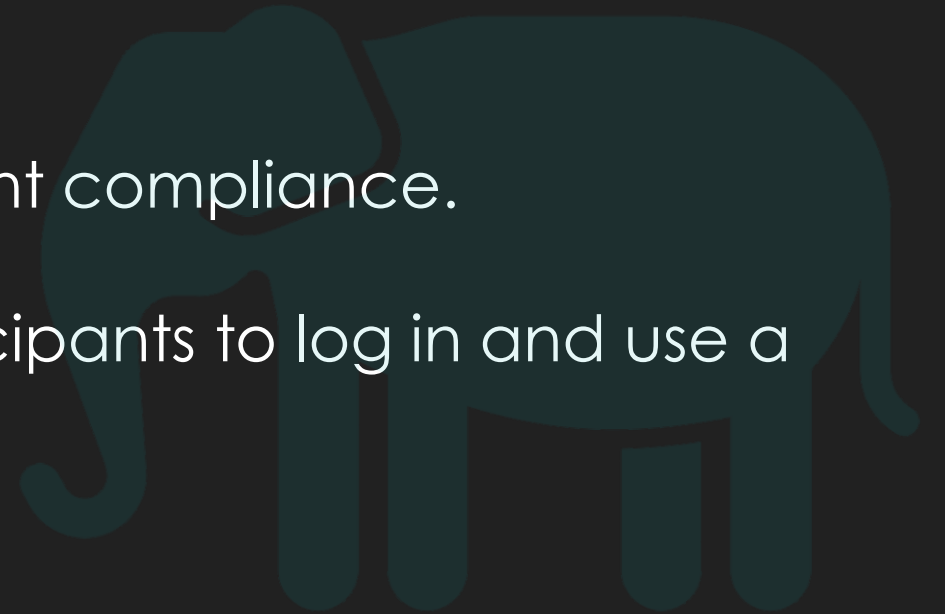


- It was a win for Coach and for Billing
- It is increased the amount of “good data”
- It has decreased time needed by managers to collect and report
- It opened up capacity among coaches to implement their new coaching model

Addressing the Elephant

By addressing the significant stress point:

- It has increased Coach bandwidth.
- It has increased Coach and Participant compliance.
- It has incentivized Coaches and Participants to log in and use a new system.



Addressing the Elephant

By addressing the significant stress point:

- It has identified other ways to de-stress the coach-client flow.



Addressing Executive Skills

Examples Programs

Addressing Executive Skills

MDRC's My Goals Project – Baltimore & Houston

- Workforce program for recipients of federal housing subsidies who are not employed
- Goals: Support recipients to find work, build careers, advance to greater self-sufficiency
- A non-directive approach to assess participants' interests, strengths, experiences and executive skill as basis for goal setting
- A randomized, control study using the ESCententials Coaching Model

Addressing Executive Skills

Annie E. Casey
Foundation's
Pilot Project-
Executive Skills
Coaching

- New Moms, a job-training, housing, and family-support program in Chicago
- Teen Parent Connection (TPC), a support network for pregnant or parenting teens in state custody in the metropolitan Atlanta area
- Women's Resource Center, a program offering various career and educational services to single mothers in Grand Rapids, Michigan who are involved in the criminal justice system

Addressing Executive Skills

Annie E. Casey
Foundation's
Pilot Project-
Executive Skills
Coaching

- Most diverse group of programs that had ever tested the ESC Model
- Coaches: ESC helped them to approach their practice more systematically and to clarify their role
- Believed it empowered participants in a way that traditional case management does not

*From MDRC's Center for Applied Behavioral Science
White Paper on the AECF Pilot Programs*

Addressing Executive Skills

Annie E. Casey Foundation's Pilot Project- Executive Skills Coaching

- New Moms: Adopted ESC Model after the Pilot with AECF funding
- Also implemented in Bright Endeavors, the social enterprise component of New Moms.
- Currently being implemented in parenting component of New Moms, training participants to work on the development of executive skills with their children.

Programs Incorporating ES Components or the ESC Model

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities – Building Better Programs
- Ramsey County, Minnesota – Lifelong Learning Initiative
- Prosperity Agenda – Family Centered Coaching Tool Kit
- Public Strategies
- MDRC *My Goals Program*
- New Moms
- The Matthews House

Questions?

Richard Guare, Ph.D.

R. Mark Fauth



A Unified Coaching Model, Method and Platform