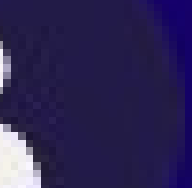


# Executive Functions

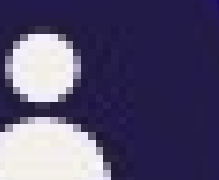
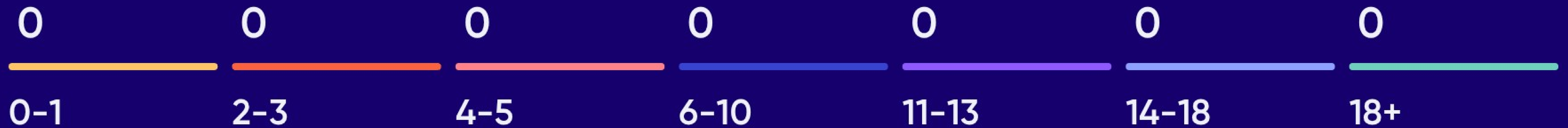
in the Early Years



# Our presentation is interactive

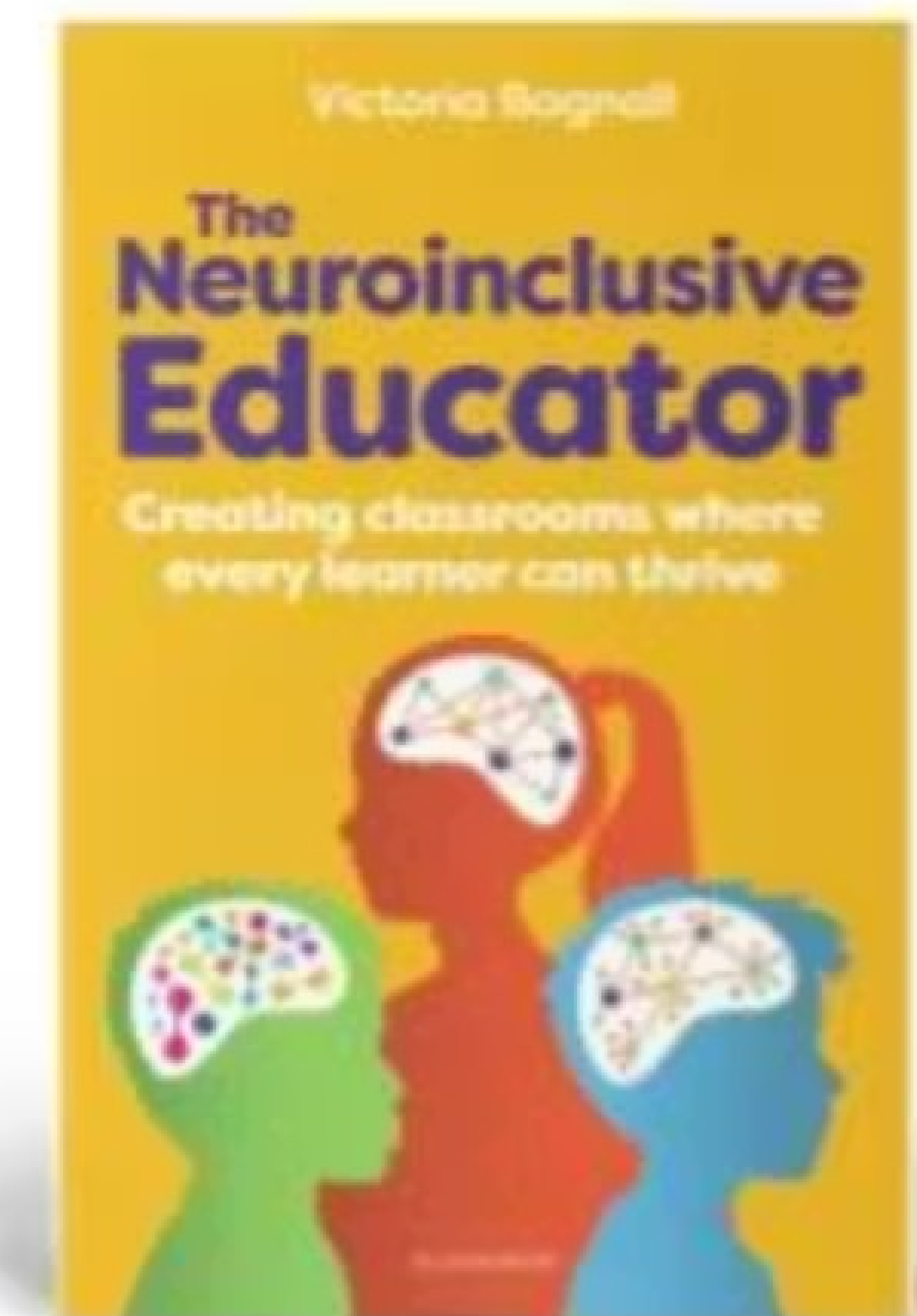


# What age group do you work with?





# Victoria Bagnall - Introduction



# Our Services



1:1  
Coaching



Coach  
Training



Resources



Schools &  
Workplace



Support  
worker/PA





# My light bulb moment





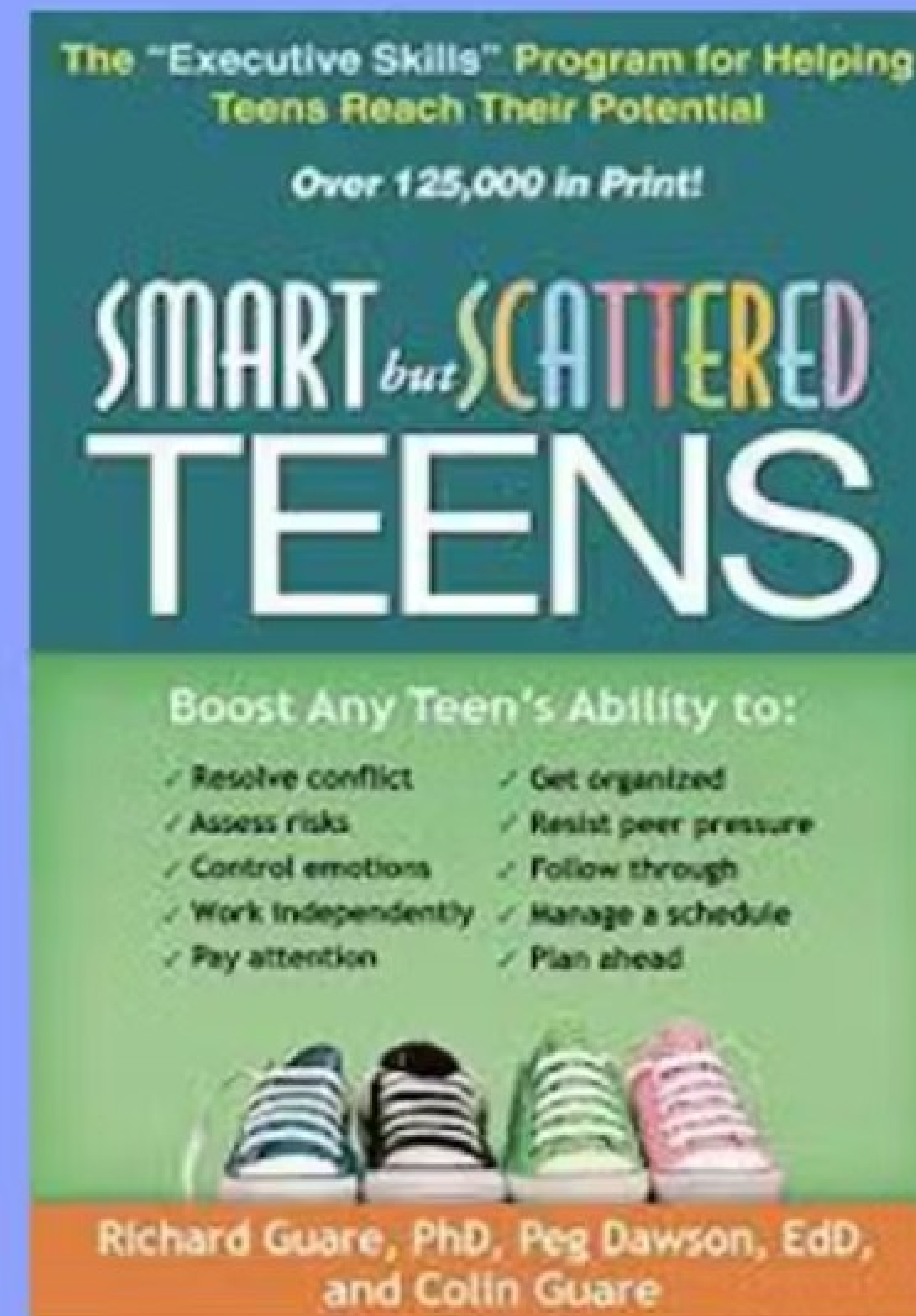
# Repeated Crisis







# My light bulb moment



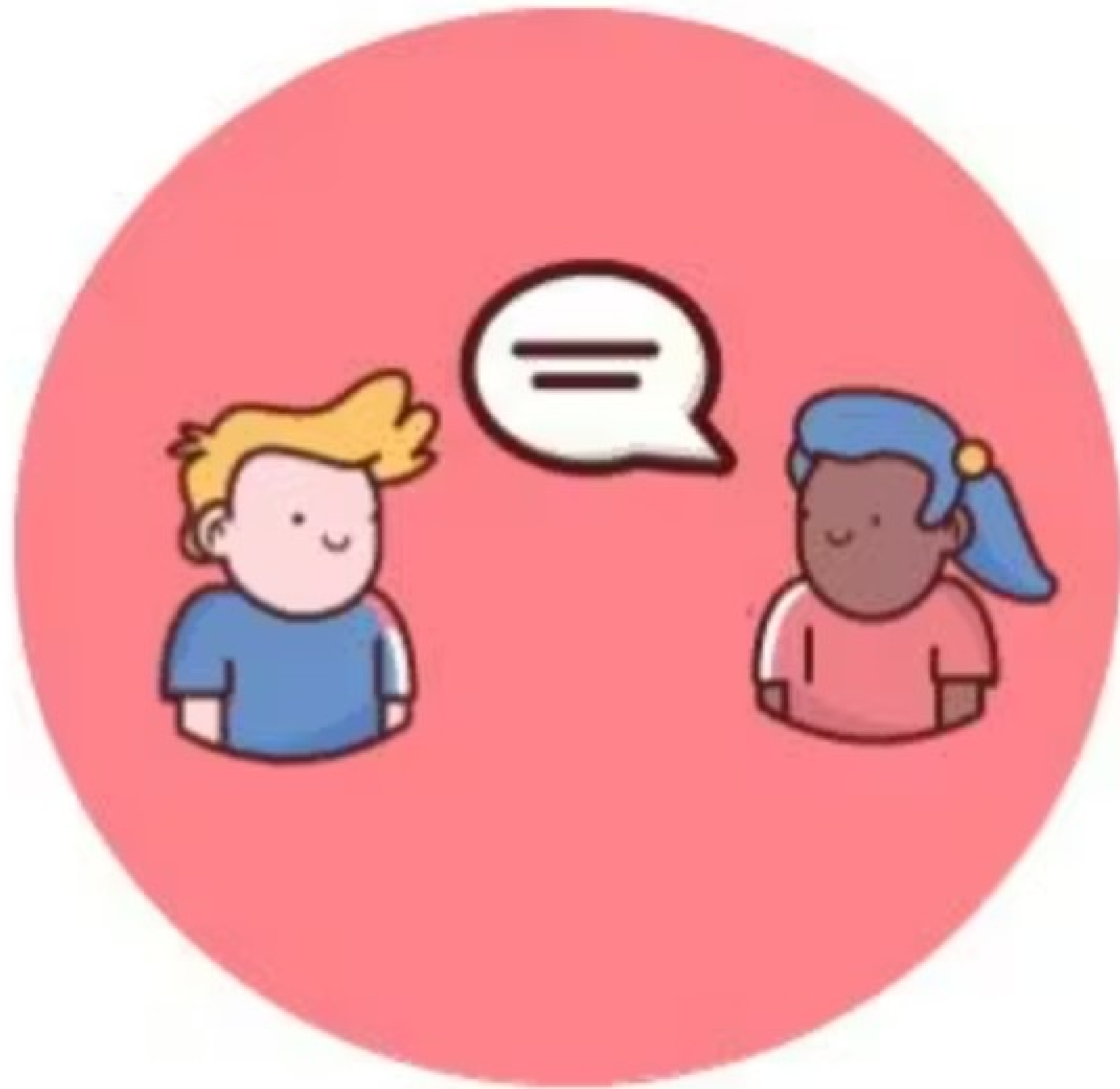




Our mission to  
change the  
world!



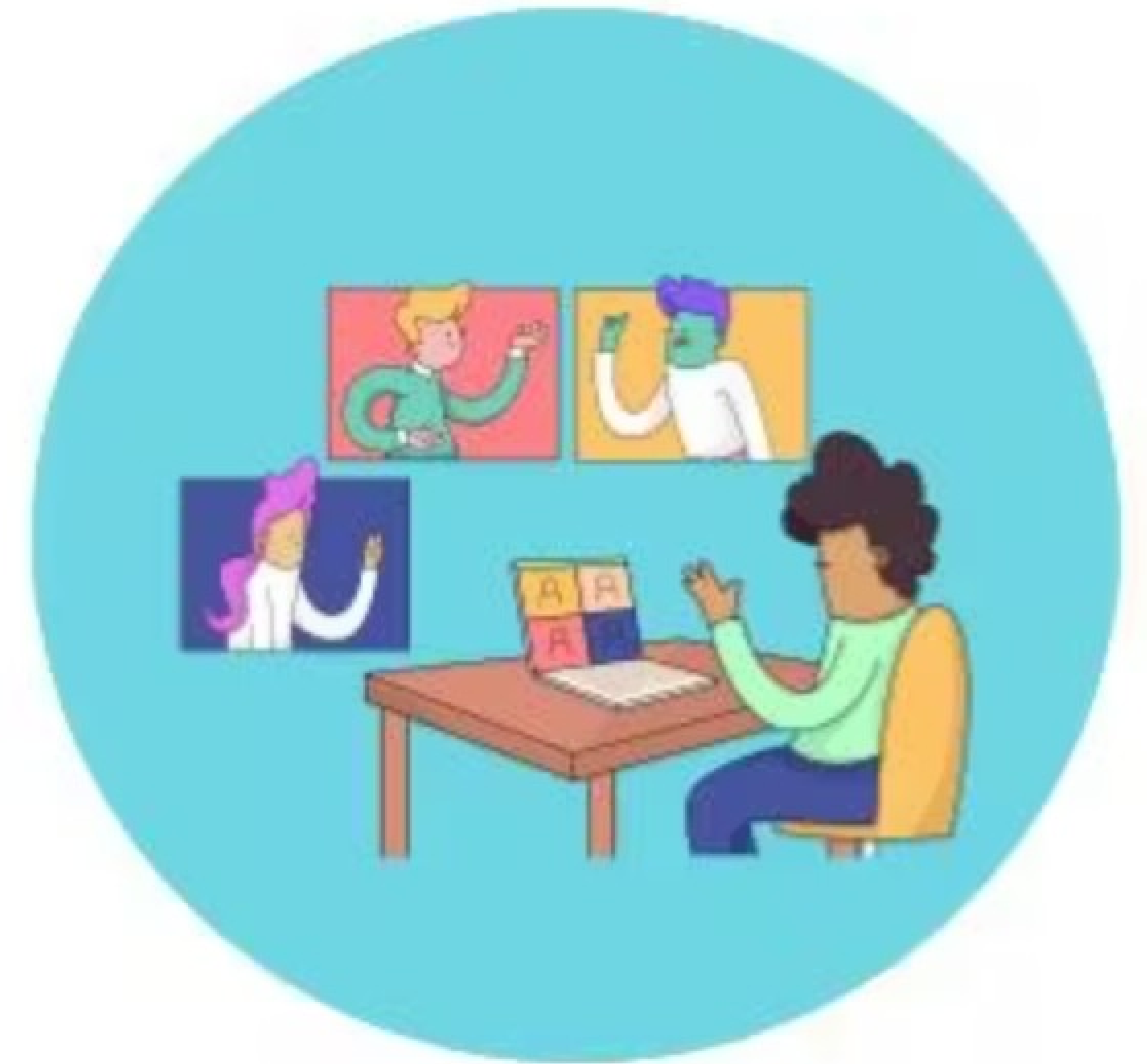
# Our Services



1:1 Coaching  
& PA Support



Training &  
Resources

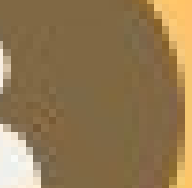
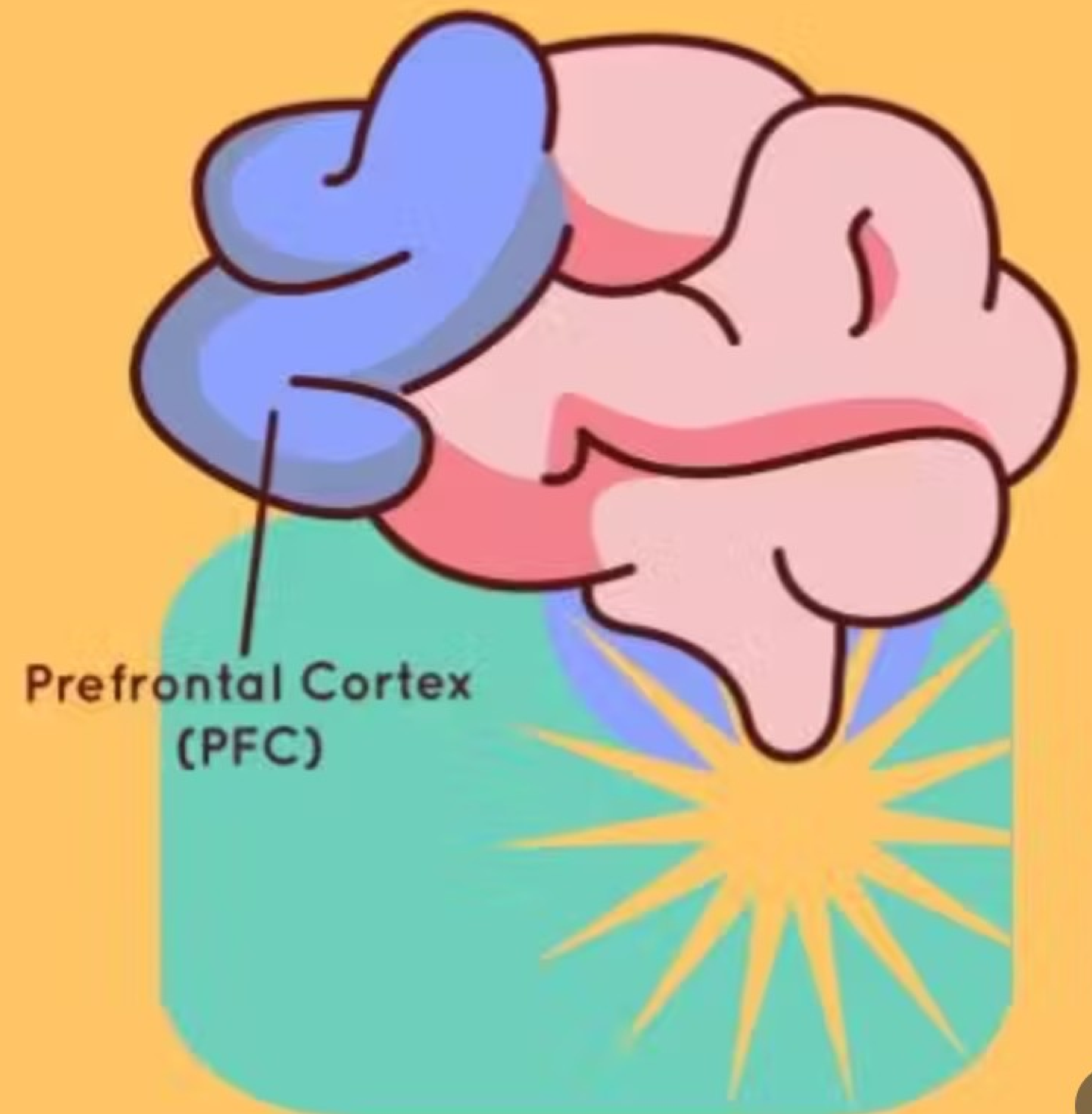


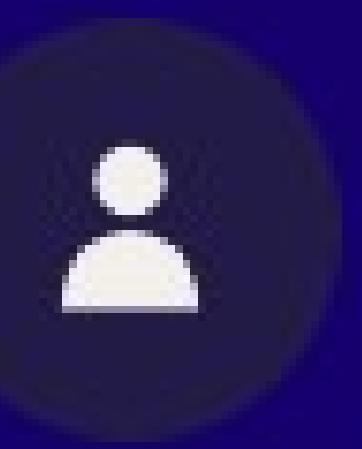
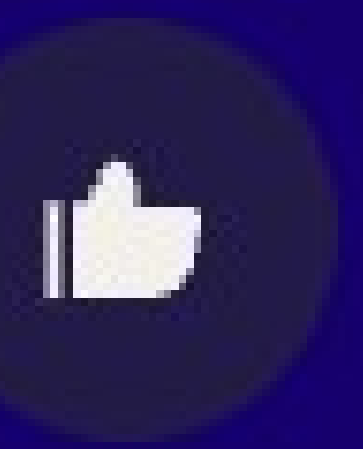
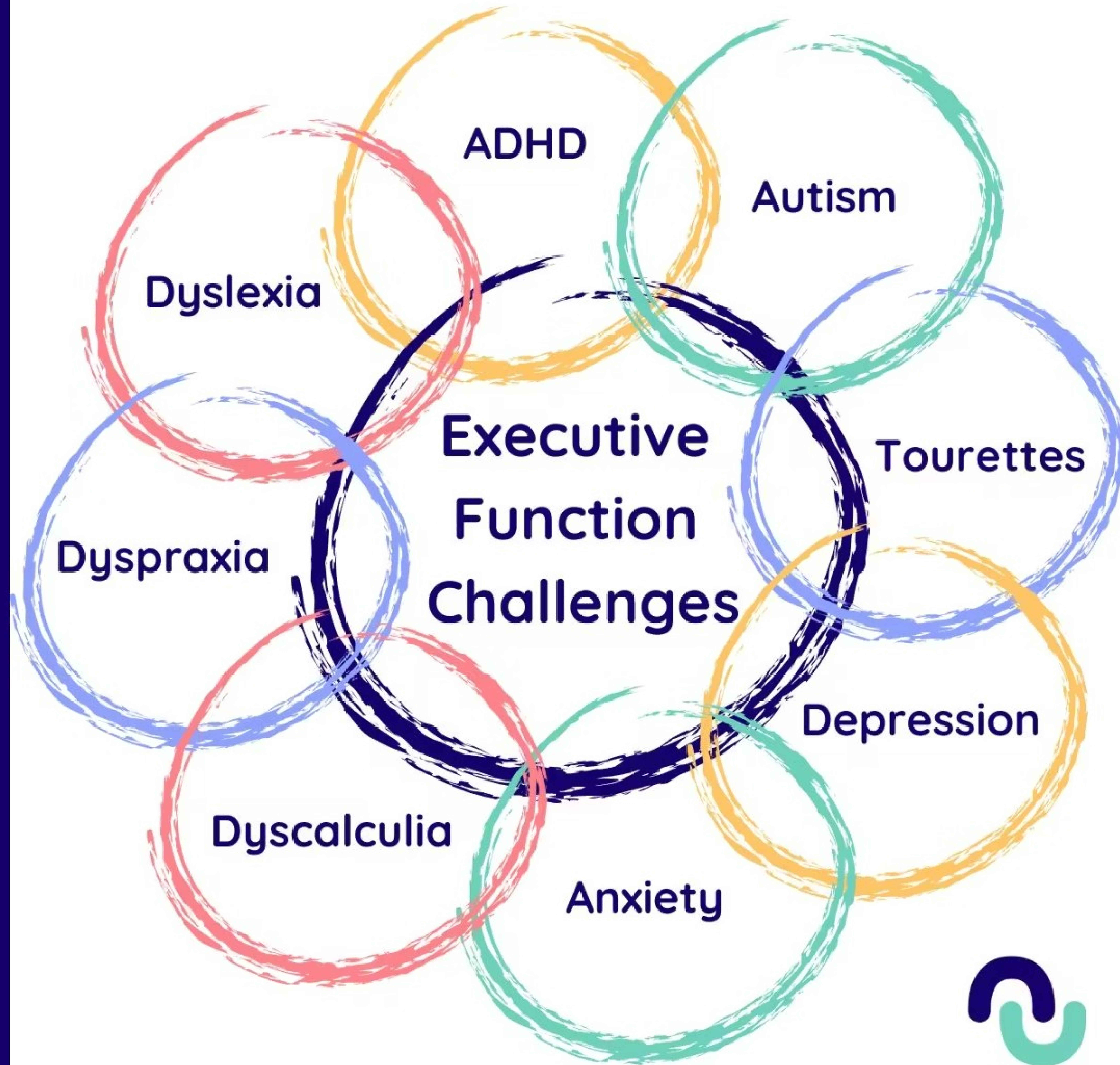
Community  
Support





# Executive Function







# Your knowledge of executive functions.

Rate your knowledge



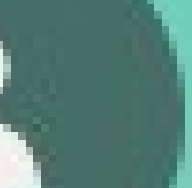
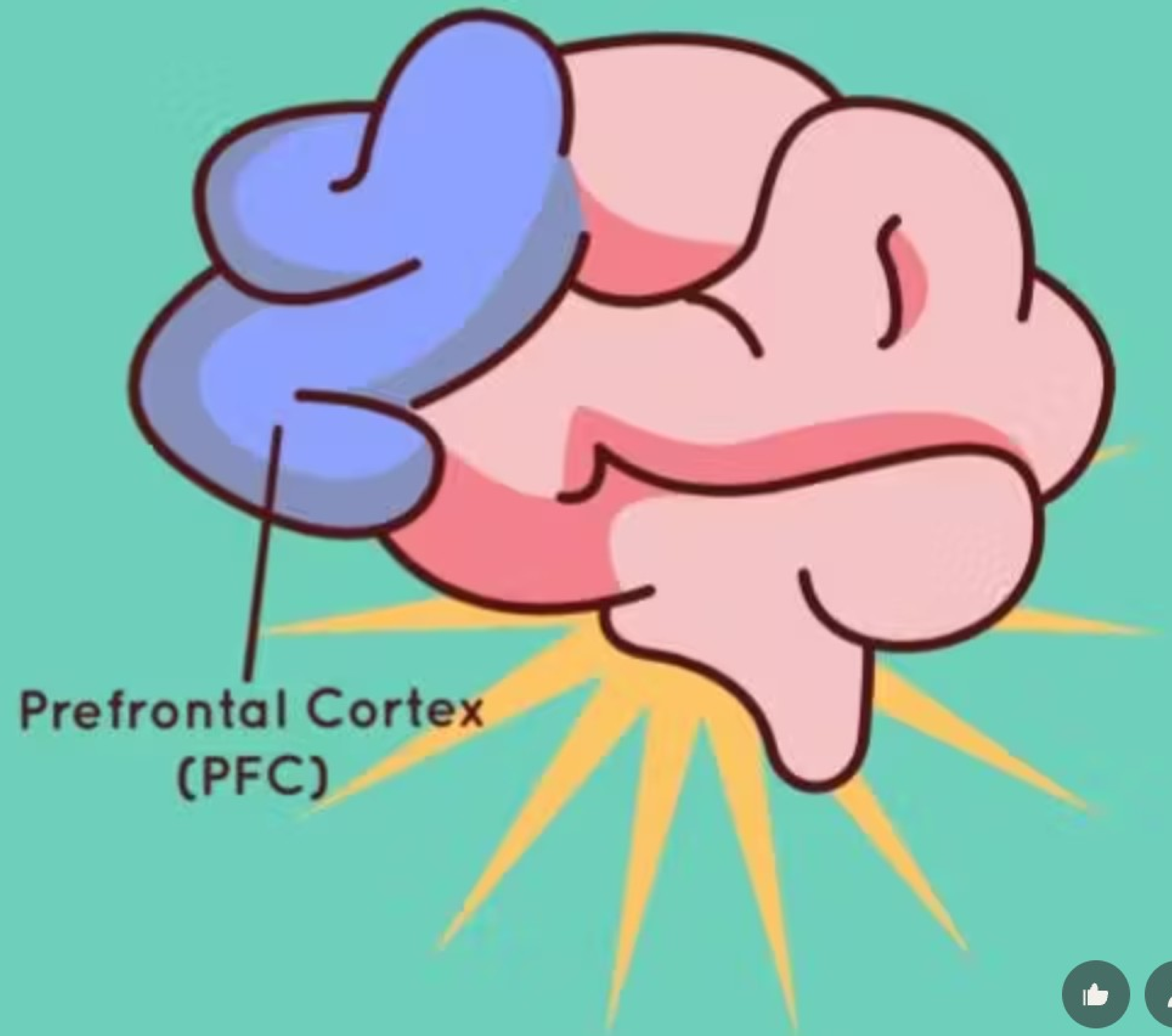
Never heard of EFs

Expert



# What are executive functions?

Cognitive processes associated with the prefrontal cortex of the brain.

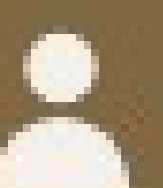






# How does this impact me?

They are responsible for the effective, timely execution of tasks and regulation of emotions and behaviour.





## 3 Brain Processes & 11 skills





# School Readiness

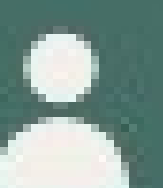
School readiness expectation	Underlying executive function skills
Can sit and listen	Sustained attention, inhibitory control
Can follow instructions	Working memory, task initiation
Can manage emotions	Metacognition, emotional regulation, inhibitory control
Can manage transitions	Cognitive flexibility, task initiation, emotional regulation
Can work independently	Task initiation, sustained attention, planning
Can interact appropriately with peers	Metacognition, cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control, emotional regulation





**Children's executive function skills in the early years predict later academic success more strongly than IQ or socioeconomic status.**

— Moffitt et al., longitudinal findings from the Dunedin Study

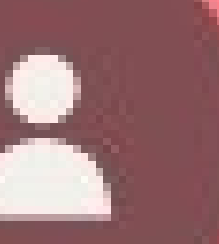
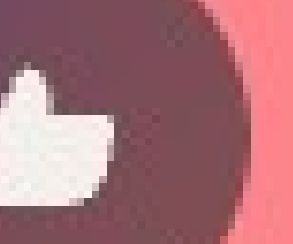




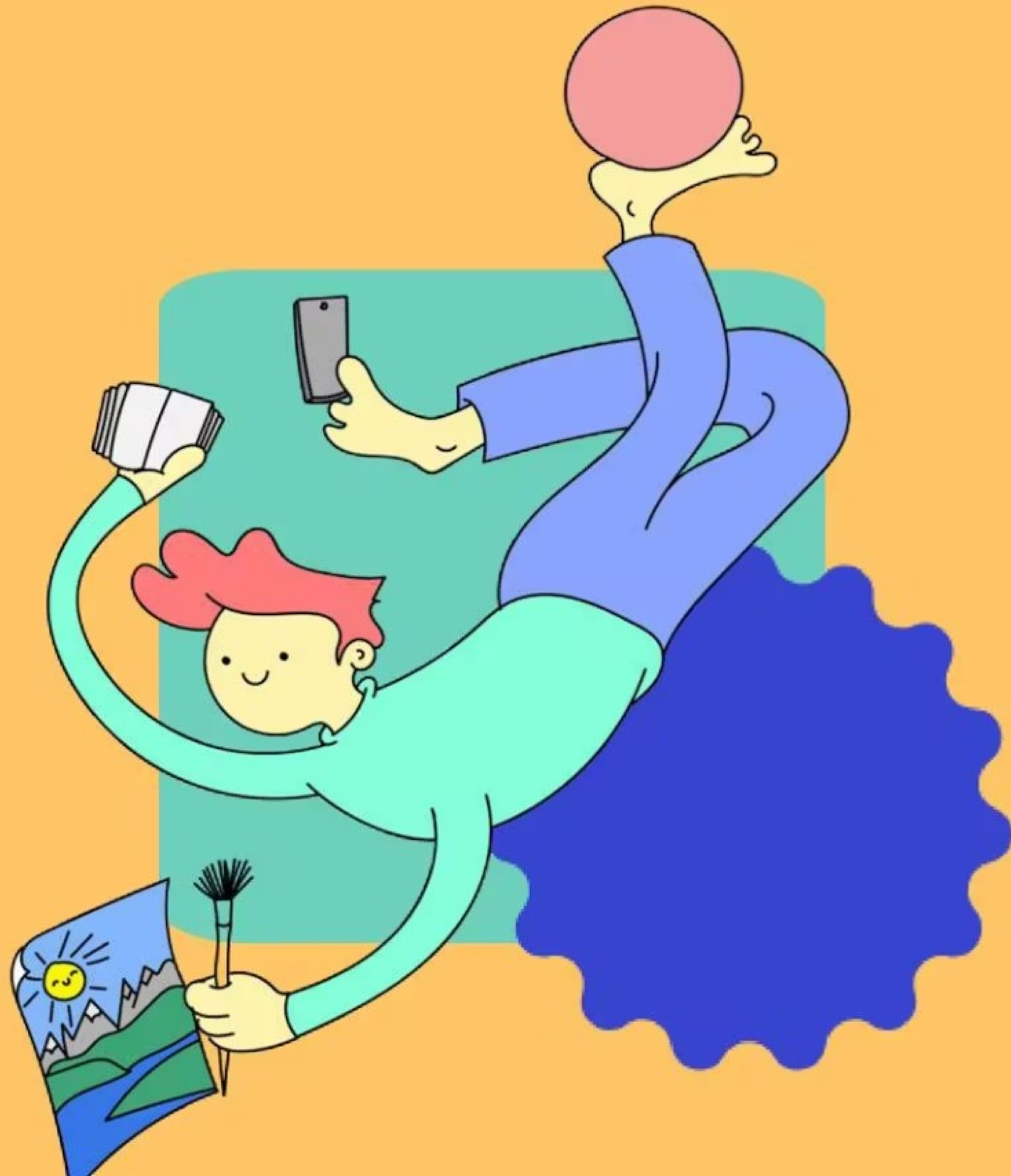


# Who is affected?

Everyone has a  
unique executive  
function fingerprint.

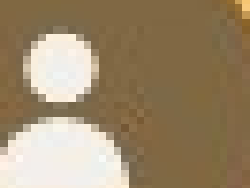


# What does this mean for our lives?



EFs impact day to day life, our ability to:

- Meet deadlines
- Prioritise work to be completed
- Regulate emotions
- Inhibit responses
- Organise belongings
- Organise thoughts on paper
- Hold information in our heads
- Keep time
- Think flexibly

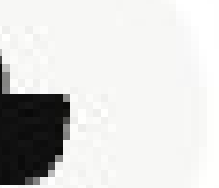




# Which of these do you find hard?



- ☐ Meet deadlines
- ☐ Prioritise work to be completed
- ☐ Regulate emotions
- ☐ Inhibit responses
- ☐ Organise belongings
- ☐ Organise thoughts on paper
- ☐ Hold information in our heads
- ☐ Keep time
- ☐ Think flexibly



What is the root cause of these feelings?

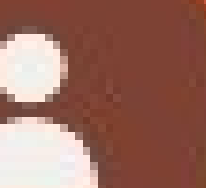




What emotion(s) did you feel last time you struggled?

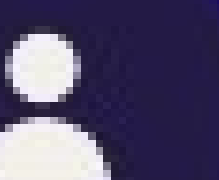


Society disables  
and shames  
neurodivergent  
people through  
unconscious bias.





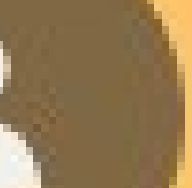
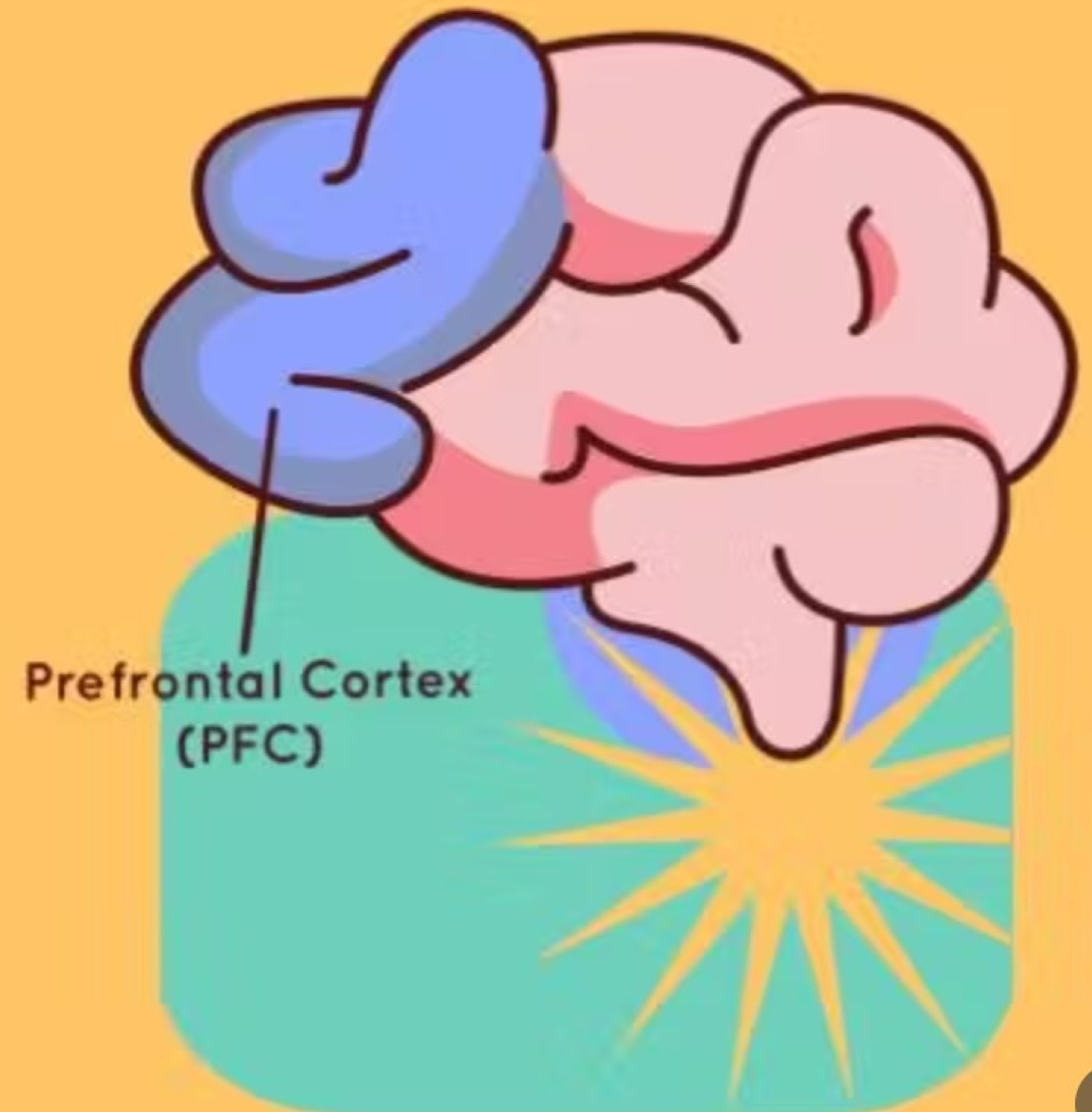
People struggling  
with their executive  
functions need  
compassion not  
shame.





# Summary

- Executive functions are brain process in prefrontal cortex.
- They help us get things done.
- Everyone has executive function skills strength & challenges
- There are 11 executive function skills.
- Society judges and shames people's EF skills challenges



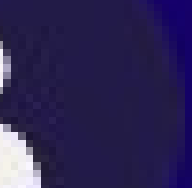




# The Mechanics of Executive Function



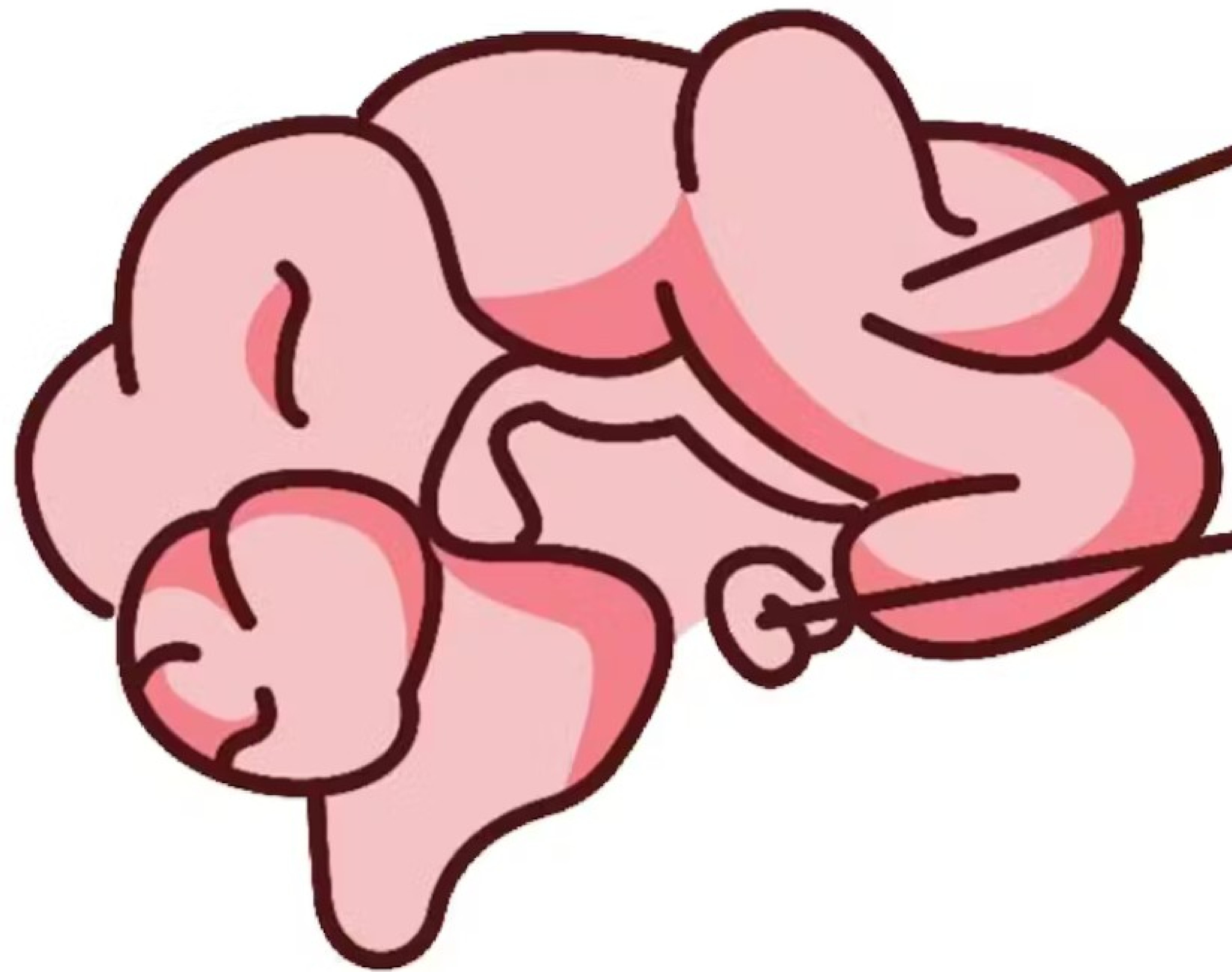
# What is the primary function of our brains?







# Our Brain & Brain States



Prefrontal Cortex

(Air-traffic Control)  
Think before we act.

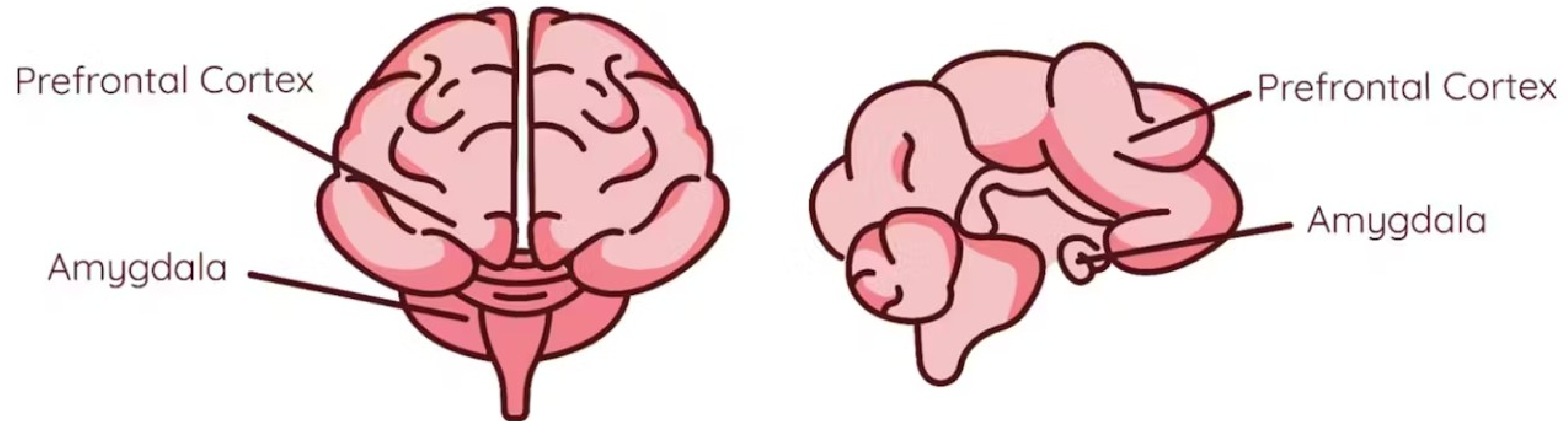
Amygdala

(Threat detector)  
Act before we think.





# Dan Siegel's handy brain anatomy model





# All the Fs



Fight



Flight



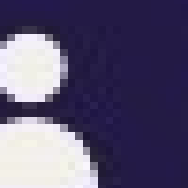
Freeze



Fawn



Flop





# When do they develop?

Working memory,  
cognitive flexibility,  
response inhibition



Emotional control,  
sustained attention,  
flexibility



Task initiation,  
planning/prioritisation,  
organisation,



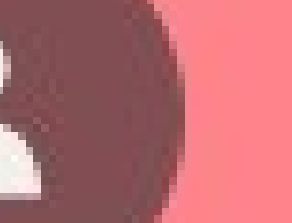
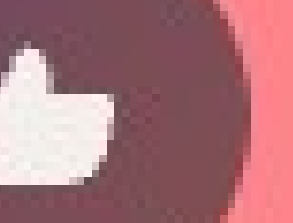
Time management, goal-  
directed persistence,  
metacognition







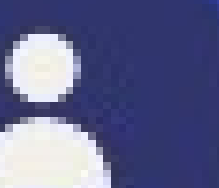
# Case Studies



# Case Study - James



- Response inhibition & flexibility challenges
- Eva takes the toy James is playing
- James feels it's unfair and snatches it back
- Eva does not want to give it up
- James loses control of his behaviour
- James hits Eva (even though he knows he shouldn't)







# Case Study - Sarah

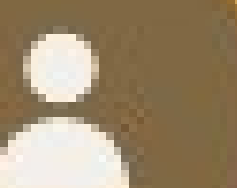
- Emotional Regulation and Flexibility Challenges.
- Sarah wanted the blue cup but was given a green one.
- She sinks to the floor in a dysregulated state.
- Adults don't give her what she wants for fear of reinforcing this behaviour.



# Case Study - Nita



- Emotional Regulation, Response Inhibition, and Flexibility challenges.
- Finds drop offs hard.
- Clings on to mum's leg.
- Seems to settle well after mum has left.
- Happy and engaged at nursery and is making good progress.



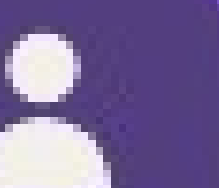




# Case Study - Leon



- Sustained attention, goal directed persistence and response inhibition.
- School had positive reinforcement policy
- Leon starts school trying really hard.
- He never gets star of the week.
- He feels misunderstood and othered
- He stops trying
- His behaviour deteriorates
- His nervous system adapts to seek connection through “acting out”







# Introducing our EF Animals







Eve-owl-uate



Penny Planner



Ollie the  
Organiser



Memorising  
Marvin



Stop Spot



Focused Freddie



See it through  
Sam



The get-going  
gang



Keep Calm  
Crock



Ad-aptable



Tick-tock Timmy

# Stop Spot

Says:

Use S.T.O.P before you go  
And you'll regulate like a pro!

Hi I'm Stop Spot and if there's one thing you need to know about me it is that I'm fearless! This is great when I'm running a race or jumping to the rescue. However, doing ordinary tasks has proved difficult. My legs move so fast that my brain struggles to catch up and this has often led me into trouble. Do you ever dive straight in without thinking? I did it all the time. Once, I thought I saw a giant sand pit and I ran towards it as fast as I could only to discover that it was wet cement. I had already dived in head first and got stuck. Now, I use my head in a different way - to think my way through a problem before I jump in head first!





# Response Inhibition

The ability to stop, think and evaluate before you act



Stop Spot

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Count to 3 before  
I answer

Raise my hand and  
not call out

**S.T.O.P**  
Slow down  
Take a breath  
Obstacles - What could go  
wrong?  
Plan and put it altogether



## Tick Tock Timmy

Says:

Stick to a time limit and set the pace:

You don't have to be the first to finish - it's not a race!

I like to sing! It's my absolute favourite thing to do! But I can't stay in tune and the other animals on the farm would complain about the noise. One morning I crowed my favourite song so loudly that it woke up the whole farmyard. Everyone was grumpy until later that day they realised that they had got everything done that they needed to do and had time to spare. From then on, I was encouraged to sing every morning to wake everyone up early to get on with their day.



# Time Management

The ability to move appropriately from one situation to another and the capacity to estimate and use time effectively



## Tick-tock Timmy

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Use a timer

Create a schedule

Estimate and time  
how long a task  
will take

# Ollie the Organiser

Says:

Keep clutter and rubbish apart from your treasure  
Finding a place for each item will fill you with  
pleasure

Keep things in their place,  
Everything has its own space.

I love shiny things and I love collecting shiny things! But my collection started to get out of control. I couldn't even find my toothbrush. I realised I needed a system to organise my collection so that I could find what I was looking for. Now I have a place for everything- those places are even labelled. I have separate boxes for shiny metal, plastic, and glass. How could you organise your things to make them easier to find?





# Organisation

The ability to design and maintain systems for tracking information and materials



Ollie the  
Organiser

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Keep things where  
they belong

Create spaces to  
keep things

Limit the amount of  
materials on a work desk



## Memorising Marvin

Says:

It's wise to mix new information with what you already know,  
Write yourself a list and you're good to go.

I may look small, but my memory is mighty! I have to remember so many different things. Repetition helps me to remember what to do and when. I go over it again and again. Dodging and diving. When I used to go out to gather nectar, I'd go out without a plan. I would fly from flower to flower. One day I realised I had been flying around in circles, going to the same two flowers again and again all day long. Now, I memorise my route and practise it so that I can go further and further without visiting the same flower twice and I get more pollen too!



# Working Memory

The ability to hold information and past experience/learning in mind whilst performing tasks



## Memorising Marvin

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Use a checklist

Make a plan

Repeat instructions  
to myself

Play memory games

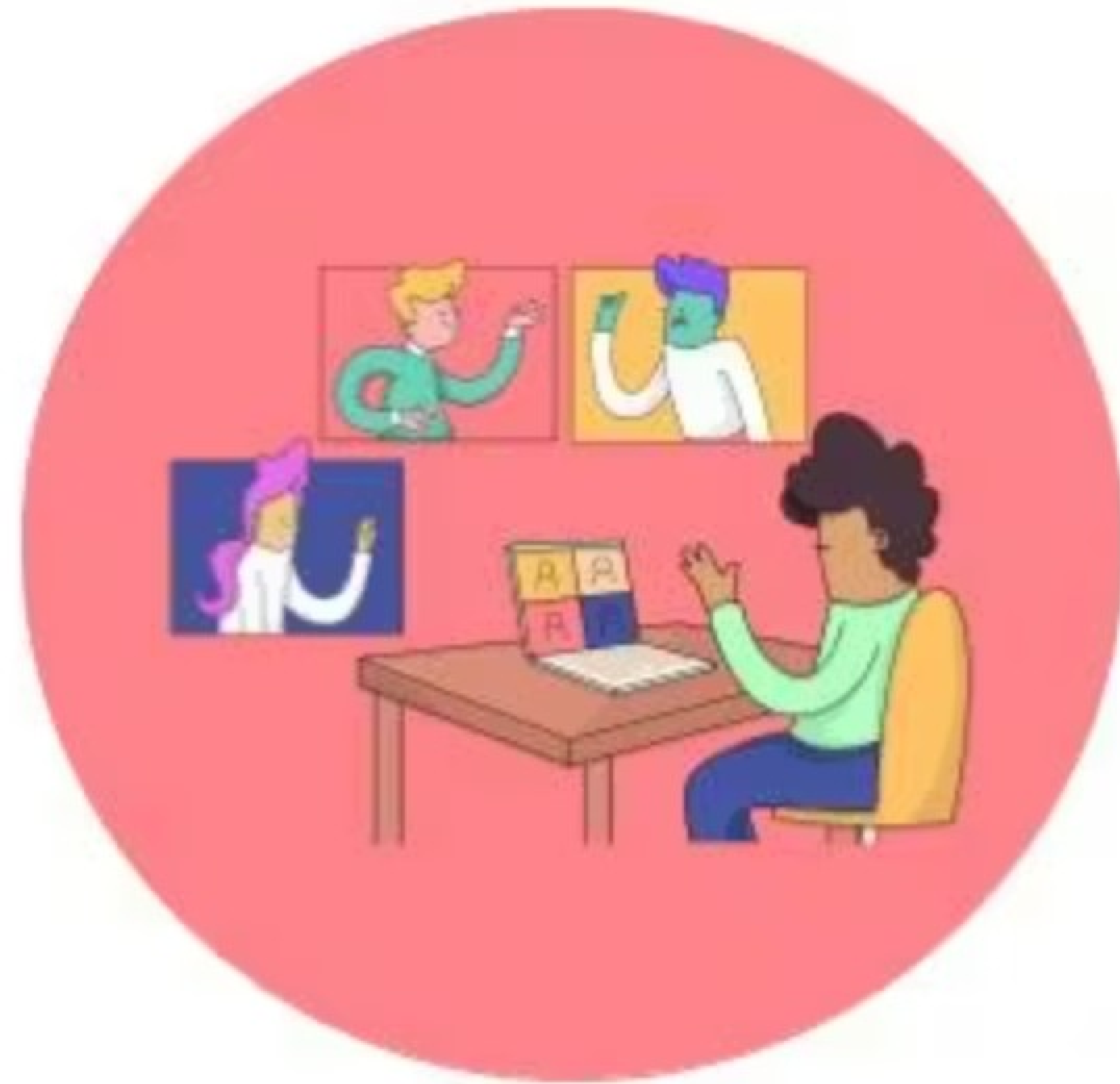
# Purchase our character cards







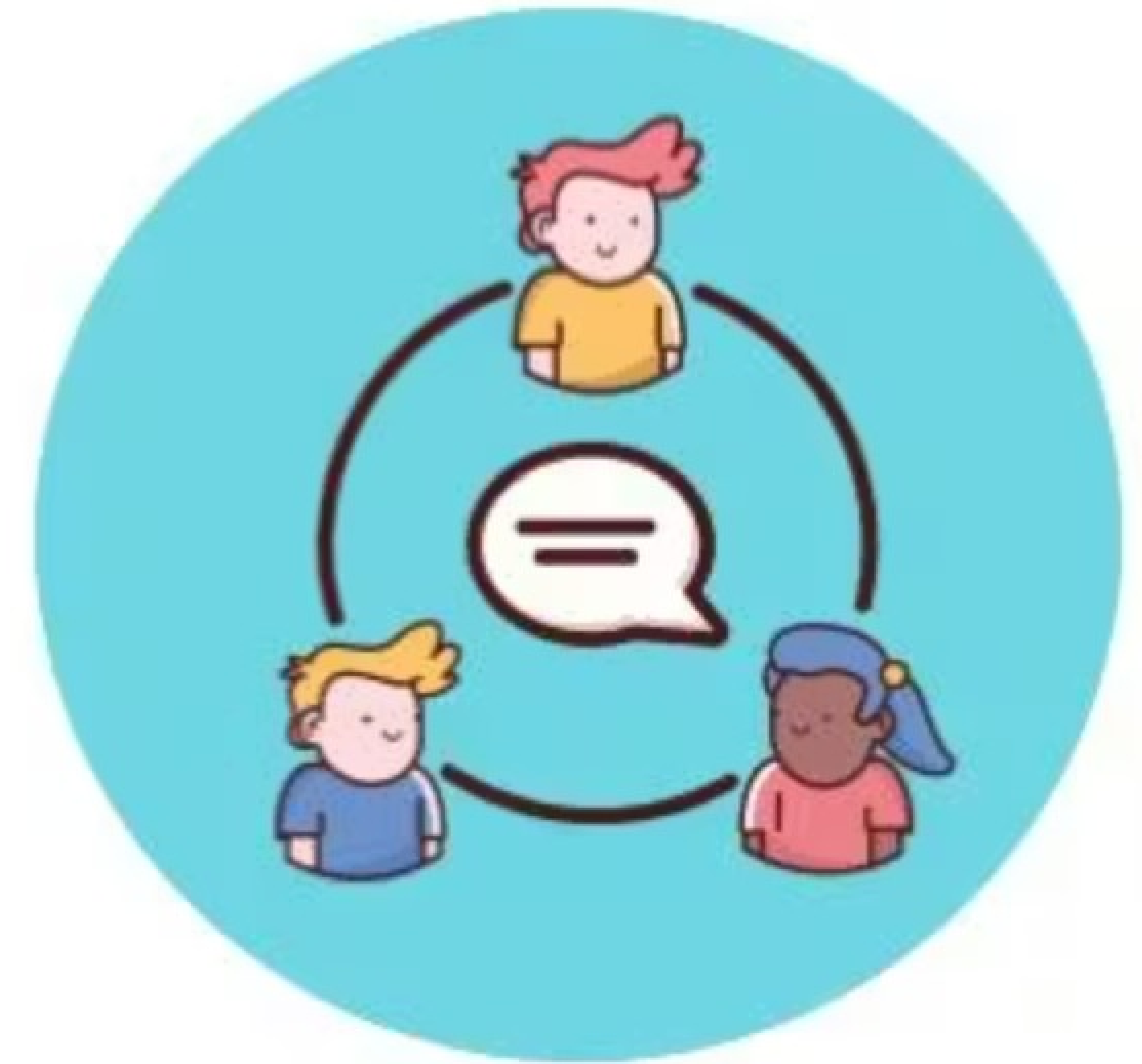
# Further Training



Executive  
Function Coach  
Training



Neurodiversity  
Training and  
Talks



Neuro-inclusive  
classroom practice





# Neuro-inclusive Classroom Practice

## 5 Professional Standards



- Supporting self-reflection and awareness
- Skillful use of empathy for co-regulation
- Application of executive function skills terminology
- Working alongside learners to create bespoke strategies
- Supporting habit development over the longer term





# EF Coaching for Schools

## Accreditation Overview

22 standards covering:

- Coaching skills
- Neuroscience & EFs
- Effective use of contact time
- Growth mindset & goals
- Flexibility & adaptability
- Relationships with stakeholders
- Reflective practice, development
- Use of technology to support practice
- Boundaries, client protection and safeguarding





# 4 Levels Of Accreditation





Become a  
certified  
executive  
function  
coach



0 questions  
0 upvotes

