

# Traumatic Brain Injury

*Impact on vocational, educational,  
and social participation in adults*

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# Session Objectives

Discuss how executive dysfunction can impact one's ability to participate successfully in adult roles and relationships

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Describe the role of goal setting in the assessment and treatment process following TBI

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Identify how the relationship between impaired awareness of deficits and self-reported life satisfaction impacts community participation

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Identify the components of the “Whatever it Takes” approach to TBI rehabilitation

# Recovery from Moderate to Severe TBI

- Recovery can vary significantly among individuals necessitating a very individualized approach to care and rehabilitation
- Areas of impairment include:
  - Physical / Sensorimotor
  - Psychological / Emotional
  - Behavioral
  - Cognitive
  - Social

# Participation following TBI: The Importance of “Doing”

- Involvement in school, work, and productive activities:
  - Consistently associated with better post TBI quality of life
  - Contribute to self-esteem, and gives one a sense of control over one’s life
  - Provides structure and routine
  - Afford social opportunities and contributes to higher independent living
- VIDEO

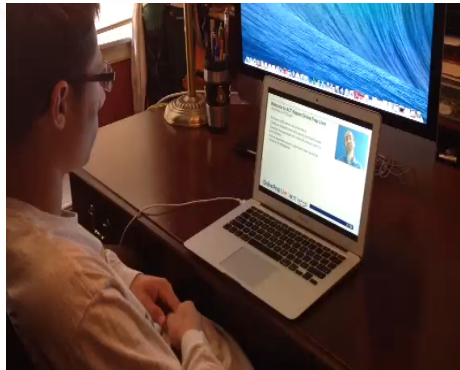
# Factors Contributing to Life Satisfaction Post-TBI

- Employment status
- Marital status / family satisfaction
- Absence of depressed mood
- Not having a pre-injury history of substance abuse
- Motor independence

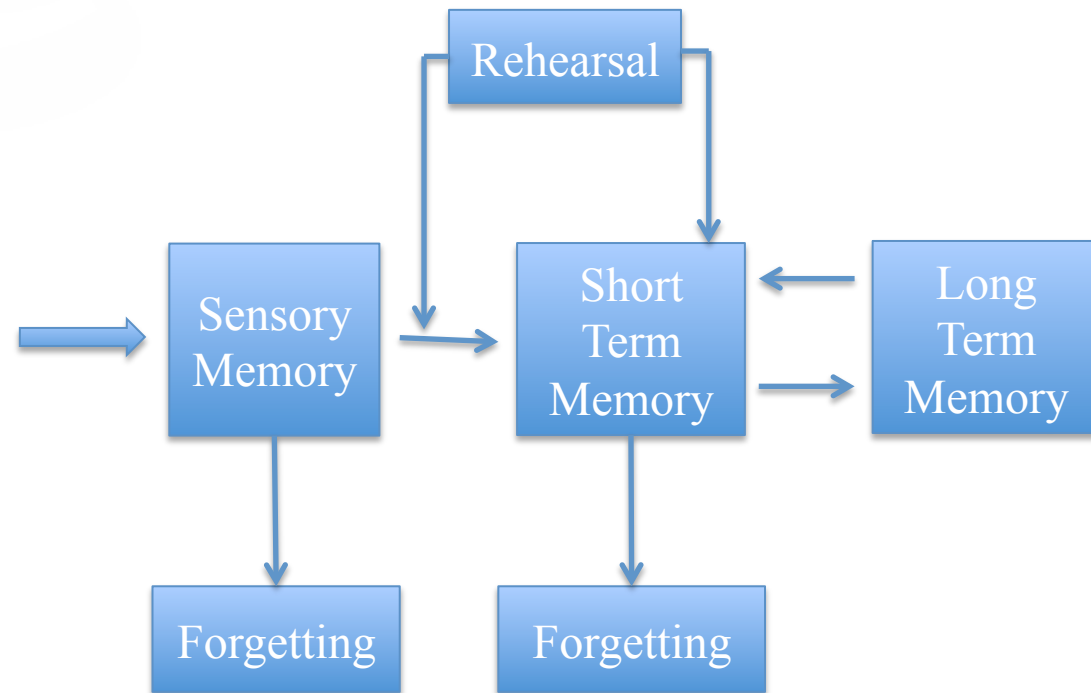
# Establishing work related baselines

- Physical Performance
- Cognitive Abilities
- Psychological Impairments
- Behavioral Issues
- Social Abilities
- Vision

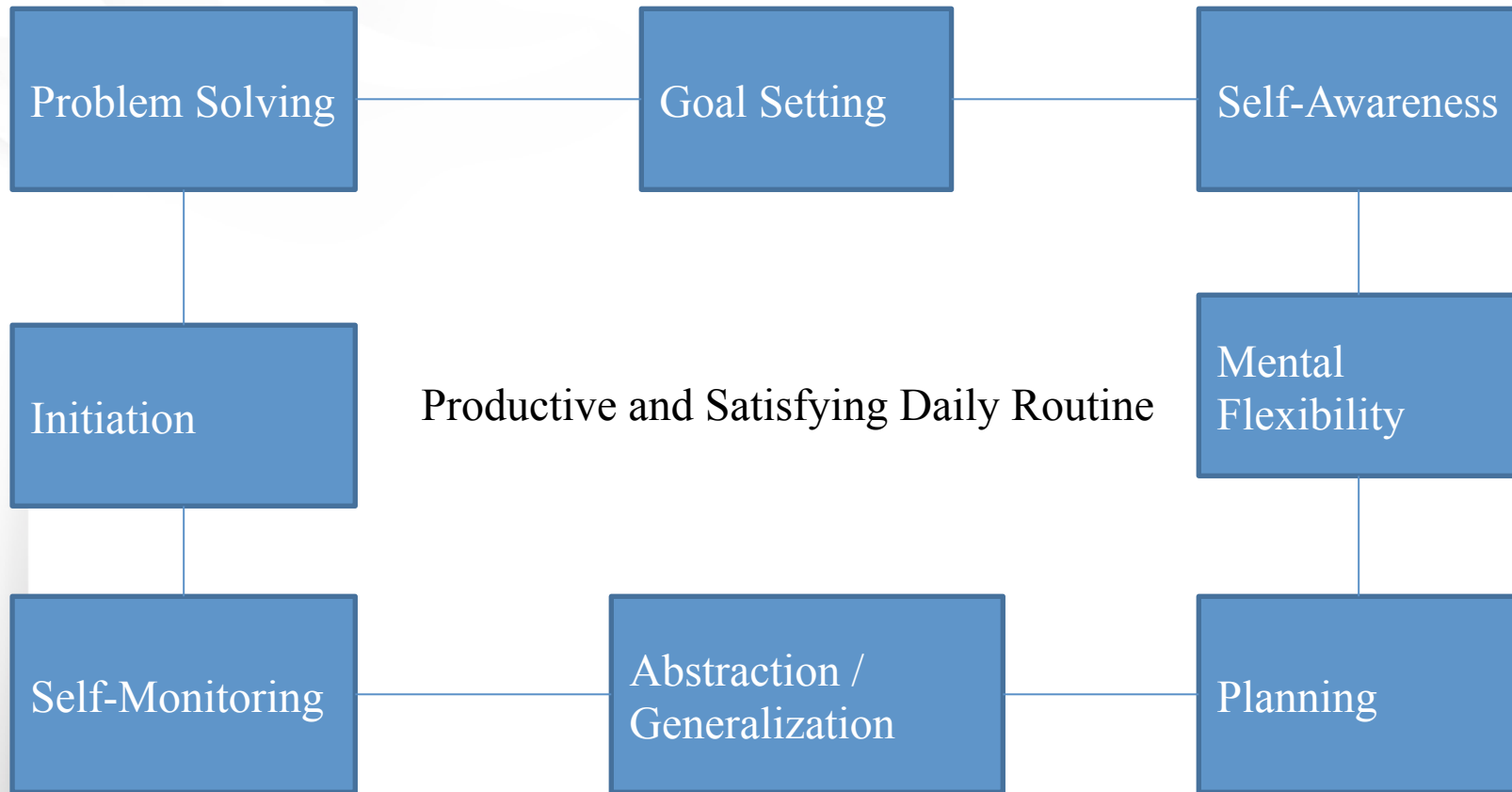
# Elements of the Learning Process



Information from the environment



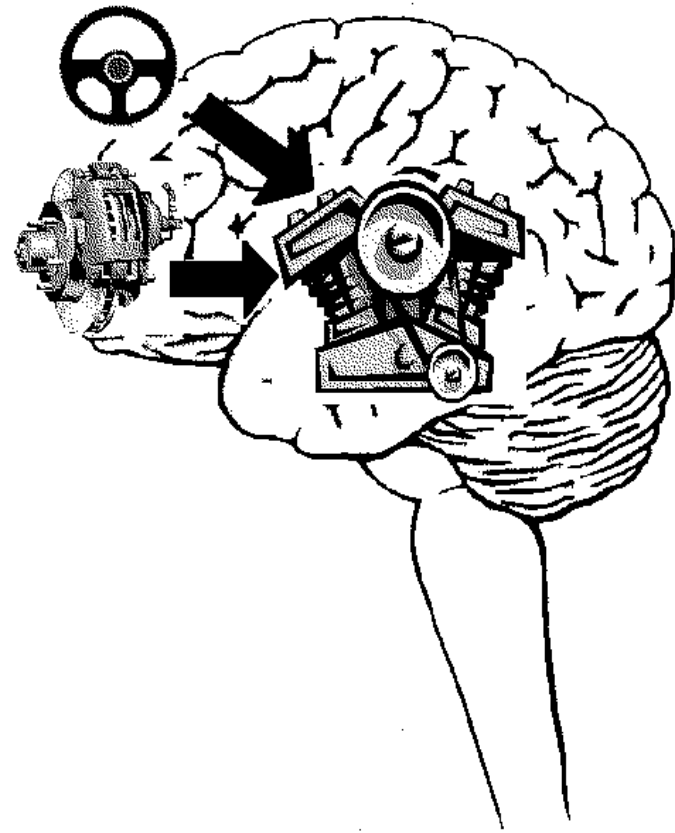
# Categories of Executive Cognitive Functions





# Relationship of Limbic System and Frontal Lobe Controls

- Damage to frontal lobes and subcortical limbic system contribute to impaired executive functions
- Profound impact on all aspects of higher level behavior and participation (home, social, vocational, leisure) – initiation, motivation, attention, learning, impulse control, conformity to social norms, and ability to anticipate consequences



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# Functional Assessment and Intervention

- Step 1: Goal Setting
- VIDEO
- Facilitates personal ownership of limitations and challenges
- Sets early foundation for message of client – therapist collaboration
- Brings meaning to the treatment interventions
- Critical aspect of motivation / compliance

# Formalizing the goal setting process

Therapists and caregivers often try to “help” without an appreciation of what a client wants and what is most important to them

- VIDEO

## Goals:

- Establishing baseline levels of goals importance, satisfaction, and performance in addition to client self-awareness
- Foundation for therapeutic relationship building - Communicates caring and empathy

# The Consequence of Impaired Self-Awareness

- At elevated risk for:
  - Making poor judgment decisions
  - Difficulty developing adequate coping skills
  - Experiencing difficulty coping with change
  - Difficulty establishing and maintaining friendships

# Managing awareness deficit

## Learning by Doing – successes and failures

- A word of caution
- While self-awareness is generally felt to be beneficial or even required for successful rehabilitation, improvements in awareness have also been linked with emotional distress.

# Learning By Doing – Physical capacity

- VIDEO

Assessment of performance establishes baseline levels of functioning, fosters self-awareness, and allows goals to be adjusted in a collaborative manner

# Learning by Doing – Baseline Assessment

**video**

**video**

# Some Additional Considerations During Recovery

- Self-esteem / self-confidence
- Environmental demands
- Environmental supports



# Impact of deficits on family / caregivers

- Marriage / intimacy
- Depression
- Social isolation
- Decreased productivity / leisure

# Suggestions on Establishing Good Rapport

1. Be unconditional
2. Be client-centered
3. Be credible
4. Be consistent
5. Be consistent in your role - Adhere to professional boundaries

# Facilitating Community Participation following TBI:

## *Whatever it Takes . . . .*

- No two individuals are alike
- Skills generalize best when taught in real environments
- Environments easier to change than people
- Community integration is holistic
- Life is a place and train venture
- Natural supports last longer than professionals
- Interventions must not do more harm than good
- Service system prevents many barriers
- Respect for individual paramount
- Needs of individuals can last a lifetime – so should resources

Willer and Corrigan, 1994

# Client Centeredness and Task Progression

- VIDEO

- VIDEO

# Treating Executive Functions: Task Progression with Feedback

# Treating Executive Functions: Task Progression and Feedback

# Treating Executive Functions: Task Progression and Feedback

# Relationship Building and the Emergence of “Self”



# Conclusions: Key Concepts in Treatment and Recovery

- Clinician / client relationship serves as a central mechanism for change
  - Collaborative approach to build clients self-efficacy and self-esteem
  - People will work hardest for people who “matter” to them
  - If relationships are always “great” during the therapy process – functional improvements may not be occurring
- Important to challenge the client
- Makes goal achievement more meaningful
  - Has a long term impact
  - Fosters self-awareness and other aspects of executive cognitive performance



Thank You

# Additional References

- \* Center for Outcomes Measurement in Brain Injury. <http://www.tbims.org/combi/index.html> - source of scales / questionnaires
- \* Doig, E. Fleming, J., Cornwell, P., & Kuipers, P. (2009). Qualitative exploration of a client-centered, goal-directed approach to community based occupational therapy for adults with traumatic brain injury. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 63(5), 559-568.
- \* Malia, K., Bewick, K., Raymond, M., and Bennet, T. (2002). Executive Functions. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
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- \* Wheeler, S., Lane, S., and McMahan, B. (2007). Community participation and life satisfaction following intensive, community based, rehabilitation using a life skills training approach. Occupational Therapy Journal of Research, 27(1), 13-22.
- \* World Health Organization (2001). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health. Geneva: WHO.