



Sanity School

Workbook & Journal

Participant Name:

Intentions for the Program & Vision for the Future:

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Lesson 1: Parenting Complex Kids with a Coach Approach	4
Lesson 2: Activating the Brain	11
Lesson 3: Parenting Positively	18
Lesson 4: Shifting Expectations	23
Lesson 5: Using Systems & Structures	29
Lesson 6: Putting your Oxygen Mask on First	36
Next Steps.....	42

Introduction

There was a time, long ago, when children were expected to be seen and not heard, and parents were rarely inconvenienced by their respectful, well-behaved children.

There was a time, in a more recent history, when parents lived vicariously through their children, and children were expected to live up to their parents' expectations, fulfilling their dreams for future success.

All of those parents, and all of those children, were living in a fairy-tale. Reality tells a much different story.

Regardless of the times, raising kids is complicated - for both parents and their children. But in the modern civilized world of the 21st century, many parents are facing much deeper complications than parents of previous times.

First, we know enough about learning and the brain that diagnoses of a wide range of medical, neurological and learning challenges are at record highs. ADHD, Asperger's, Autism, Anxiety are all familiar household words - and that's just the beginning of the alphabet!

In addition, advances in technology and communication have imposed a speed and volume of information on us that is difficult for the most well-adapted adult to manage. **The expectations on children in this technological era are extraordinary.** They are asked to process information younger, and at a more rapid speed and volume, than ever before in history.

As a result, while education levels and expectations are higher than ever before, the developmental delays of complex medical conditions create choppy waters that are difficult for both parents and kids to navigate.

Enter: The Coach Approach to Parenting Complex Kids. It's not a panacea for modern society. But it IS something that parents can learn and use to ease the strains and stresses of modern living, enhancing success and fulfillment for themselves, their kids, and family life.

Lesson 1: Parenting Complex Kids with a Coach Approach

The coach-approach to parenting complex kids is more than a methodology. It's a way of being in relationship with the people in our lives that is positive, compassionate, constructive - and fosters deep connection and independence.

For complex kids, a coach-approach involves knowing and accepting them with a surprising amount of detail. We have to actually understand their brains -- in terms of their perspective on the world, and their capacity for a full range of executive functions.

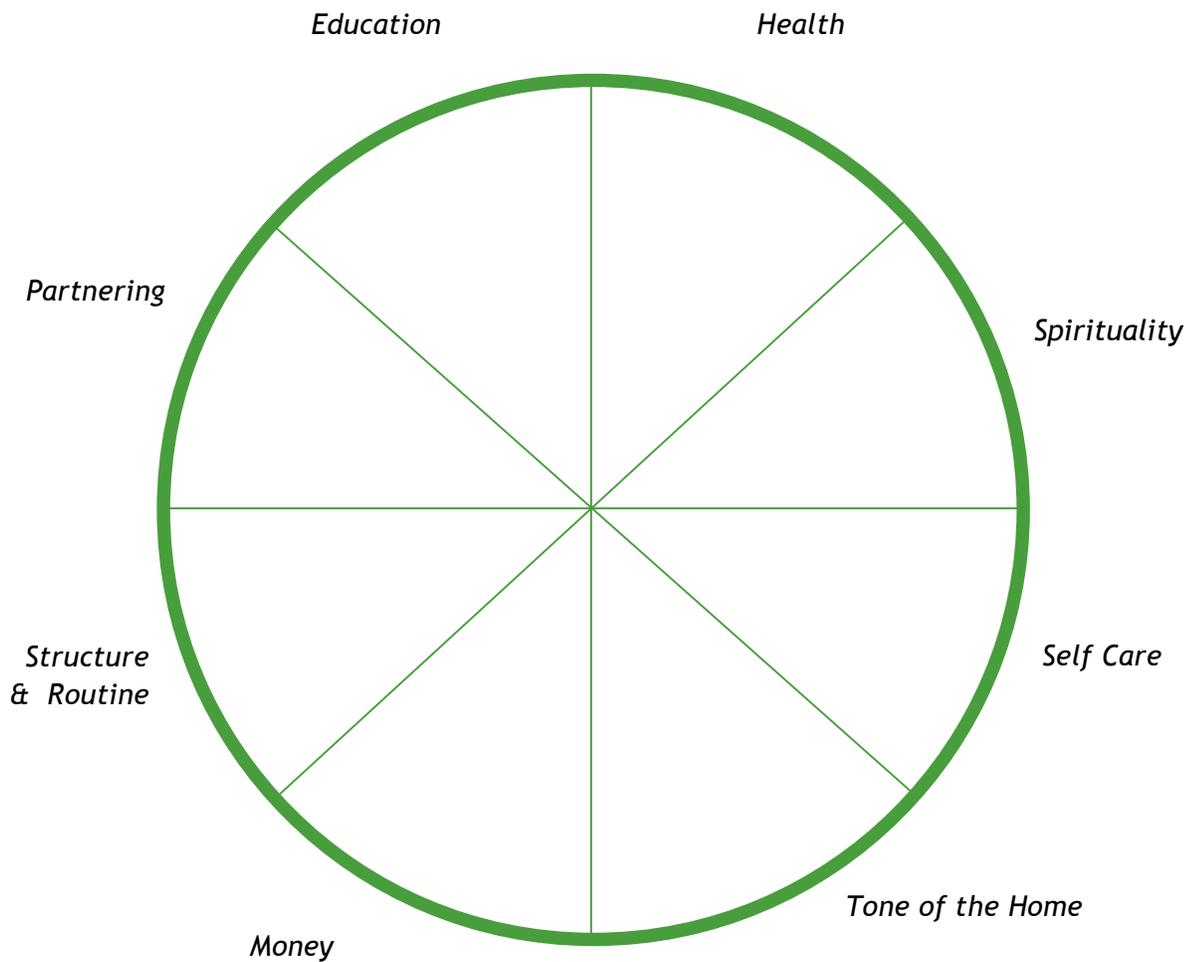
We consider the topics we're going to cover in this lesson some of the "core competencies" of the coach-approach to parenting. They include:

- The parent's role in management
- Strength-based approach
- Prevention vs. management
- Parenting from inspiration
- Taking a marathon view
- Letting go of ...
- Critical skills for success:
 - Using Curiosity
 - Not taking things personally
 - Avoiding judgment

Parenting Wheel of Life

Before you start trying to "improve" things in your house, or your relationship with your kids or your spouse, it makes sense to get a clear picture of where you are now. The wheel of life is a "slice of life" exercise that will change every time you do it, but is a terrific way to get a big-picture read on how you are feeling about all aspects of parenting life.

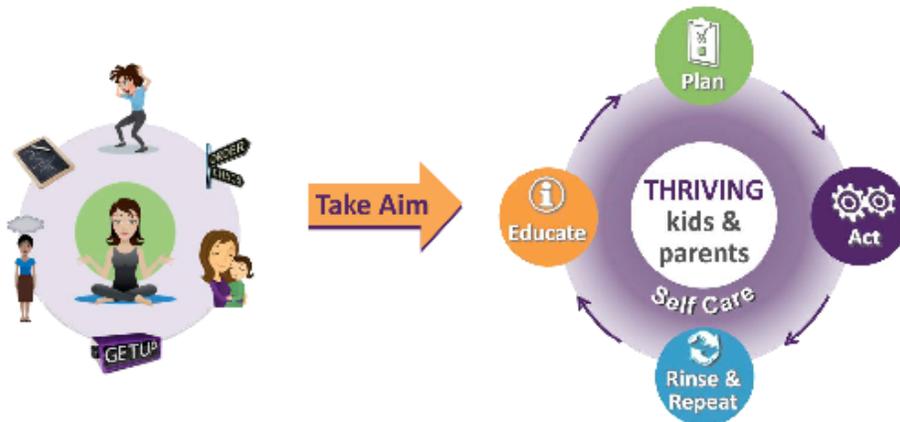
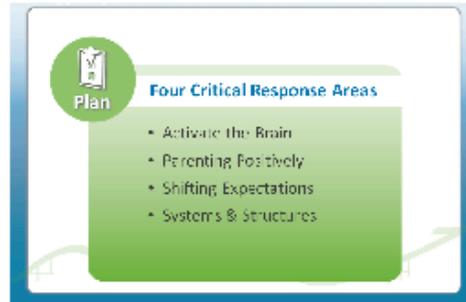
Parenting Wheel of Home Life



For each area, rank your satisfaction on a scale of 0-10.

Then, identify three areas where you would like to focus your attention most (Take Aim) during this program.

ImpactADHD's Parenting Action Model



2013 ImpactADHD™ all rights reserved

The 6-Step Parenting Action Model

At the core of our coach-approach is the ImpactADHD Parenting Action Model. It offers a clear and direct structure for you to address the challenges in your home - one success at a time.

Step 1 - Take AIM: focus on the challenge or specific area you want to change. The more specific the better.

Step 2 - Education: Identify & Assess what is currently going on. Learn about your topic and assess your particular circumstances so that you can see how that challenge shows up in YOUR family. You'll figure out what you need to know, what you want to teach your kids, or identify areas for further exploration.

Step 3 - Plan: Decide what your options are for improving the situation, and then Establish a Plan based on the 4 Critical Response Areas for Managing ADHD:

- Activate the Brain
- Shift Expectations
- Parent Positively
- Use Systems & Structures

Step 4 - Act: Once you've decided what actions might help improve the situation, commit to Action for real and lasting change!

Step 5 - Wash, Rinse and Repeat: Sometimes, you have to rinse and repeat - try it more than once, or tweak it a bit - to get the results you're looking for.

In this step, you may also decide to move on to another challenge area, although we encourage you to take them on one at a time so that you can see the successes and learn from them before jumping into the next area.

Step 6 - Self Care: The entire model takes place in the context of SELF CARE - a critically important part of everything we do as parents, and equally as important to model for our children!

- What is a realistic action step for me to take?

- How can I set myself up for success with this action?

Lesson 1: Journal

Lesson 2: Activating the Brain Critical Response Area

How do we activate the brain, and what's so important about it, anyway? A lot of the issues we parents find challenging about our kids are influenced by what is happening in the body, chemically and hormonally. What's going on in our kids' brains influences ALL of their thoughts and behaviors. So if we pay attention to how the brain functions, we can improve their responsiveness in many areas of their lives, including optimizing brain function, regulating moods, and counter-acting neuro-biological challenges.

The truth is, there are many ways to engage the brain and improve brain function. It's not as simple as medication, though that is a common solution for many families. That is why we approach "brain activation" as an overall strategy, with or without prescription medication.

Some of the topics that we're going to cover in this class include:

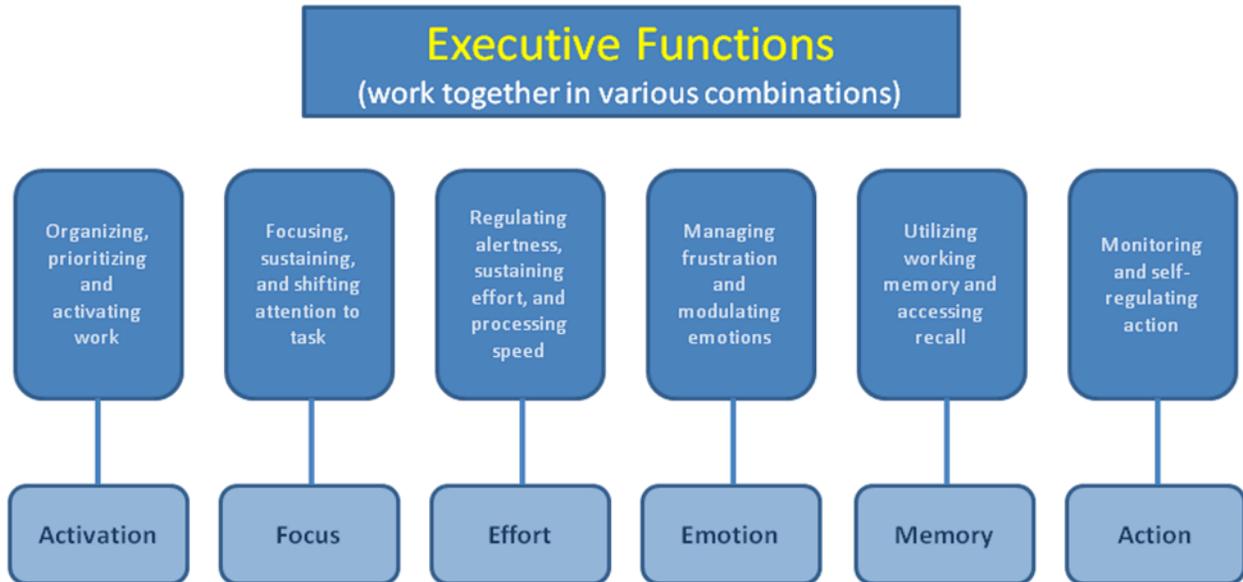
- It starts with the brain
- Different ways to activate the brain
- Motivation and the "just get it done" button
- Naughty vs. neurological
- Managing triggers (HALT)

UNDERSTANDING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Executive Function (EF) is an **umbrella term for the skills involved with organization and self-management**. The executive functions of the brain enable a person to decide to do something, and then follow through to completion. Residing in the frontal lobe of the brain, they are responsible for organizing and directing nearly every voluntary **Thought, Feeling, or Action**.

Dr. Thomas Brown, Yale University professor and author of Smart but Stuck, provides a framework for EF that is useful for consciously activating the brain.

Brown identifies 6 aspects of behavior that a person with ADHD could have difficulty managing, and his framework applies to a wide range of challenges in addition to ADHD. People may be challenged in only 1 area, or in all 6!



Source: TE Brown (2008) Executive Functions: Describing six aspects of a Complex Syndrome, Attention Magazine

SIX AREAS OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Activation: Organizing, Prioritizing, and Initiating Activity

Looks Like: difficulty getting started, procrastination, knowing what needs to be done but can't get off the mark, difficulty prioritizing and sequencing, failure in time management, getting things done at the last minute. Usually appears to the untrained eye as "lazy."

Focus: Focusing, Sustaining and Shifting Attention to Tasks

Looks like: easily "bored," requires "genuine interest" in something in order to sustain focus, distractible, difficulty determining what is important to pay attention to; also, "hyper focus," locking in with intense diligence, as in video games, unable to move off of task (NOTE: this can be a strength and a challenge area).

Effort: Alertness, Sustaining Effort, Processing Speed

Looks like: People get very tired (can hardly keep eyes open) when they must sit and be quiet, trouble maintaining alertness, need steady stimulation or feedback (physical, or mental) in order to stay alert; slow processing speed, take a long time to read and/or write. Alternatively, with hyperactivity; they have hard time slowing down enough to assure quality work, and trouble regulating the body's engine.

Emotion: Managing Frustration and Modulating Emotions

Looks like: Emotion shows up in two general areas: 1) low threshold for frustration (short fuse), and 2) difficulty regulating emotions (oversensitive, "inappropriate" responses, easily "taken over" by emotions).

Memory: Using Working Memory and Accessing Recall

Looks like: Trouble "holding" one bit of information active while working on another. Common academic example is in complex math problems (remembering one number while doing another computation) or emotionality (stuck on an upset and forget feelings of love and connection). It's also what happens when a child is sent out to get socks, gets distracted by the toys on the floor, and returns without socks. ("What did I come in here for?")

Action: Monitoring and Self-Regulating Action

Looks like: Hyperactivity and impulsivity, or when to act versus when to inhibit action. Assessing and determining when to tell a joke, confront a friend (or parent or spouse), speak in class or in a conversation. Distractibility and working memory challenges often make people more "random" than others, and impulsivity can cause frequent interruption.

In Class Exercise: Trigger Management

1. List several of your key triggers (things that set you off and make you feel angry, upset or afraid).

2. What are the underlying thoughts and feelings behind the triggers? (I'm a bad mom, he'll never make it, he's a bad kid, etc.)

3. What is a more supportive thought you are willing to consider? What else might also be true? (Something you can tell yourself, that you'll really believe, to help you avoid or manage when triggered.)

Lesson 2: Journal

Lesson 3: Parenting Positively

Critical Response Area

Parenting Positively is really about keeping focused on your self, your child, and your **relationship** with each other. Your kids need your support, guidance, and encouragement. They need to know that you're there for them, and that you are going to be there for them, even when things aren't going exactly the way you want.

To parent from a positive perspective, ask yourself, "what does my child need right now?" and let that guide you. Remember, you're in this for the long haul, and that may mean letting some things slide in the interest of helping your kids see their strengths and feel supported. Sometimes the details of what homework didn't get turned in, or what chore didn't get done, needs to take a back seat to helping your child feel confident, or connected, or loved.

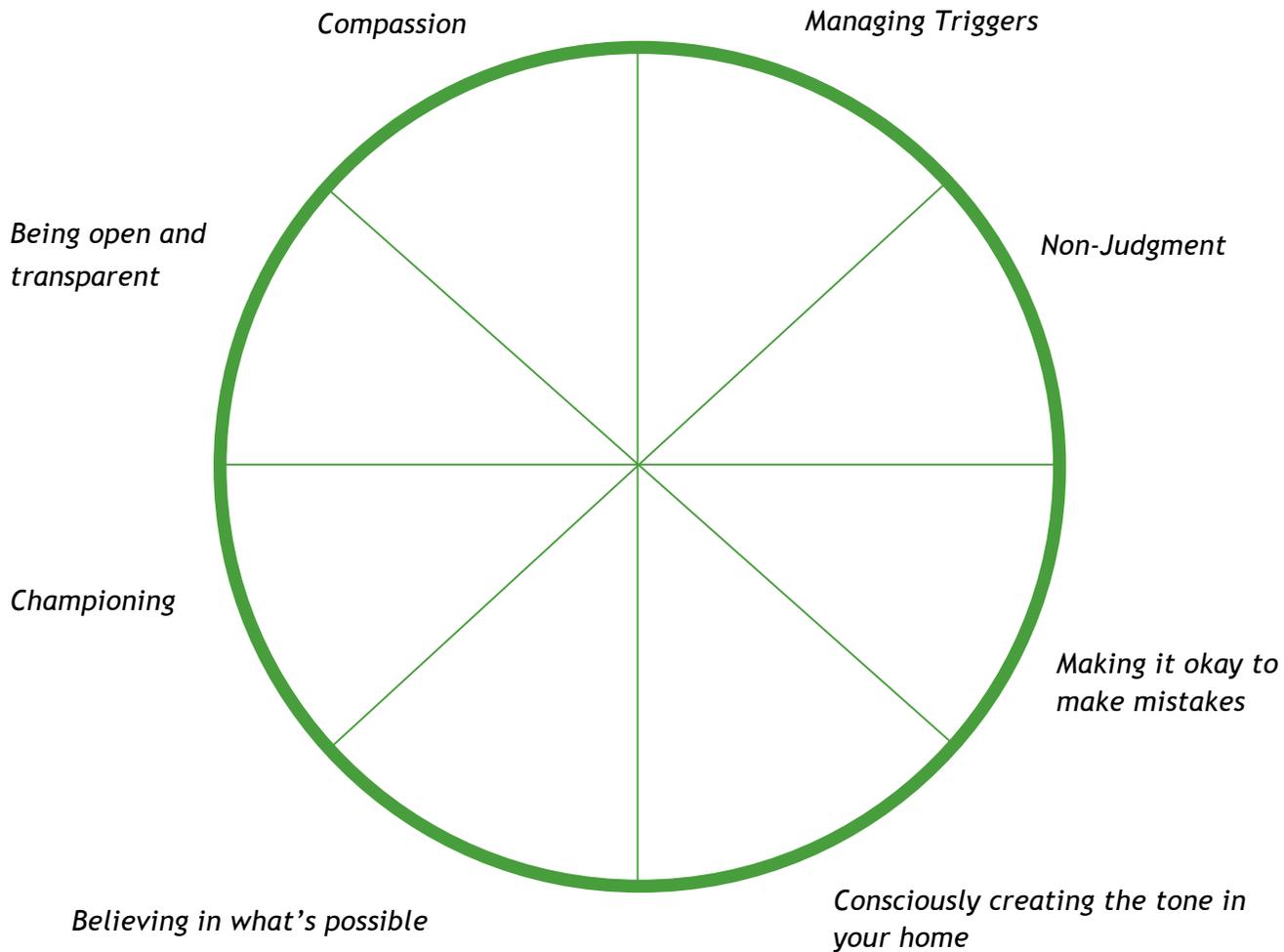
But parenting positively can be difficult. Human nature wants to give in to the drama - and so we tend to respond to our child's lack of control with our own lack of control. Negativity is toxic and breeds negativity; the power of positive thinking allows us to see other possibilities.

Positivity is a perspective that paves the way for us to see better outcomes. But as frustrated parents we may not always FEEL positive. Sometimes, to parent positively, you start by "faking it 'til you make it."

Some of the core competencies we're going to cover in this lesson include:

- Taking a strength-based approach
- Celebrating successes (and finding solutions in the successes)
- Consciously creating the tone in your home
- Compassion
- Non-judgment
- Making it okay to make mistakes
- Believing in what's possible
- Championing
- Being open and transparent

Parenting Positively Wheel of Life



For each area, rank your satisfaction on a scale of 0-10.
Then identify the area where you would most like to Take Aim this week.

- What is a realistic action step for me to take?

- How can I set myself up for success with this action?

Lesson 3: Journal

Lesson 4: Shifting Expectations **Critical Response Area**

“The greatest gift you can give yourself, and your kids with complex needs, is to accept that their challenges are just bumps on life’s journey that require course- correction. They’re not a barrier, but call for careful navigation.” ETK

When we get stuck with ideas about how something “Should Be” -- a child’s behavior, or worrying about appearances -- then managing complex issues can feel particularly hard. Of course, we parents are human, so naturally we have pre-conceived notions. Our challenge is to shift our expectations from what we thought it “Should Be” like, to accept and establish expectations appropriate to current circumstances.

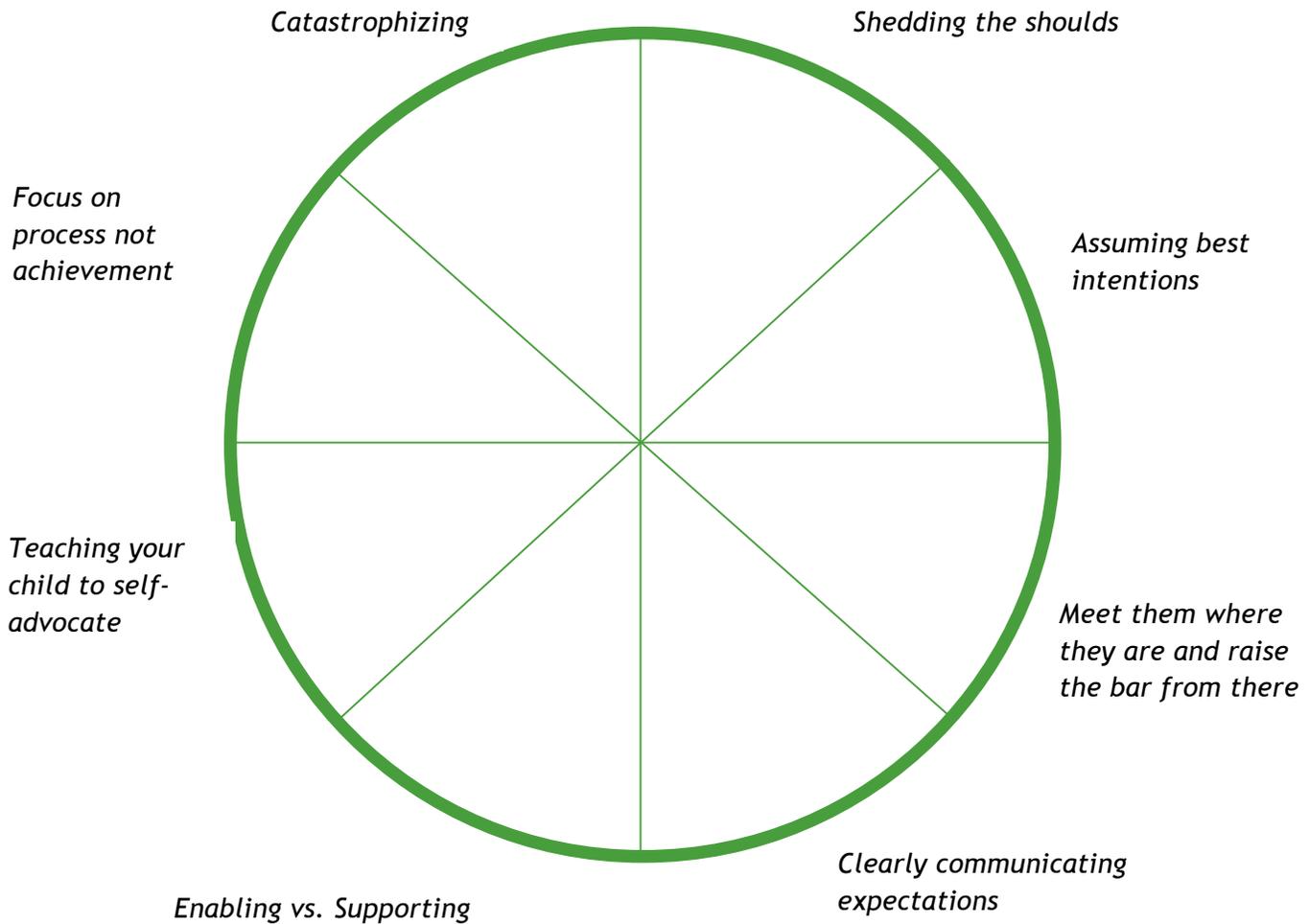
Shifting Expectations is NOT to be confused with settling for “less,” or “lowering” your expectations for your kids. It’s about setting goals that are within reach for your child, encouraging gradual growth towards greater successes in the future.

We call this taking a “disability” perspective, modifying expectations to appropriately match your child’s development. Our kids are about 3-5 years behind their same-age peers in some aspects of their development. So you want to set expectations that will realistically allow your children to be successful, instead of focusing on what you think they “Should Be” able to fulfill, only to set them up for failure. This is a critical path to help your child reach an adulthood of independence and fulfillment.

Some of the core competencies we’re going to cover in this lesson include:

- Catastrophizing
- Shedding the shoulds
- Assuming best intentions
- Meet them where they are and raise the bar from there
- Clearly communicating expectations
- Enabling vs. supporting
- Teaching your child to self-advocate
- Focus on the process, not the achievement

Shifting Expectations Wheel of Life



For each area, rank your satisfaction on a scale of 0-10.

Then, identify the area where you would most like to Take Aim this week.

Lesson 4: Journal

Lesson 5: Using Systems & Structures Critical Response Area

Systems or structures should be used in the CONTEXT of the other critical response areas for action, and not by themselves. In other words, you don't START with a system, but rather you create a system after looking at Positive Parenting, Setting Realistic Expectations and/or Activating the Brain.

Systems & structure are valuable tools to help the ADHD brain compensate for challenges with Executive Function. There are two areas in particular:

- 1) **Activation** - knowing what to do and doing it (a big part of behavior management)
- 2) **Working Memory** - keeping multiple items in your head in order to use them.

Creating structure is a simple and direct way to support these challenges. Whether it's a to-do list, a routine, a reminder system, or even a more complex token reward system, systems and structures allow people with ADHD to routinize behaviors, thus relying less on memory or the need to activate.

When you set up a system or a structure, however, there are a few considerations that will increase your probability for success:

Get buy in!! A system can be amazing and effective, but if your kid doesn't want it, or won't use it, it doesn't matter. This means working with your kids to develop systems that make sense for them, or having them work with you to come up with the plan. If you want your kids to use systems and structures, it must make sense for them, not just you.

Make it easy (for everyone): A system must be easy enough for you to manage, and for your child to do successfully. Consistency is a key feature to making any system successful, but if it's too hard to monitor, then... You know what happens ;-)

Allow for Flexibility: Consistency is critical, but being flexible (at least a little) within the structure is also important. Learning when to stand firm, and when to let things go, is an art to finesse over time.

Focus on the Process: Whenever you start using a new system, it helps to hold your child accountable to using the system, itself, rather than to the end result. For example, it might be more important that a child study 15 minutes a day for a week, than get an A on the test. Getting into routines takes time, and you want to **reward the effort of using the system in the first place.**

MOTIVATION

Any structure you put in place is only as good as the Motivation to actually use it, for you or your child.

Finding motivation for anything and everything that “needs to get done” is critical for people with ADHD. It’s not just something nice. Without motivation, the ADD brain lacks the “just get it done” button required to activate and complete a task.

There are five things that motivate the ADHD brain (though NOT everyone with ADHD is motivated by all of them):

- Novelty
- Competition
- Urgency
- Interest
- Humor

When you identify ways to motivate your kids, it really works. For example, we one of our family’s entire routine changed when they started waking up their 3rd grade son with tickling. It wouldn’t work for all kids, but this kid NEEDED the FUN (humor), the arousal energy (urgency), and the connection with his dad (interest) in the morning.

So, **accept that they need motivation to take action.** Learn spelling words or math facts while bouncing a basketball; set a timer to see how many spelling words a kid can write before the timer goes off; put a gummy bear at the end of each page of a text book (our teenagers prefer it at the end of each paragraph). Make a game out of ... **ANYthing!** Sometimes, you might even let them do something fun BEFORE the homework, like read the comics and then get started. If it helps them get started, you’ll find it might even motivate you!

In Class Exercise: How to Make Systems Work

Take a few minutes to “Fail Forward” by learning from the mistakes of a system that you tried but didn’t work as well as you might have liked.

1. Take Aim:

- Choose a system you tried that did NOT work.

2. Education:

- What do you notice, now, when you get curious about the situation?
- What Executive Function challenges were at play?

3. Planning:

- Did you consider activating the brain, parenting positively or setting realistic expectations before you created and started using the system?
- Was the system simple and flexible?
- Did you involve your child in the process before you started?

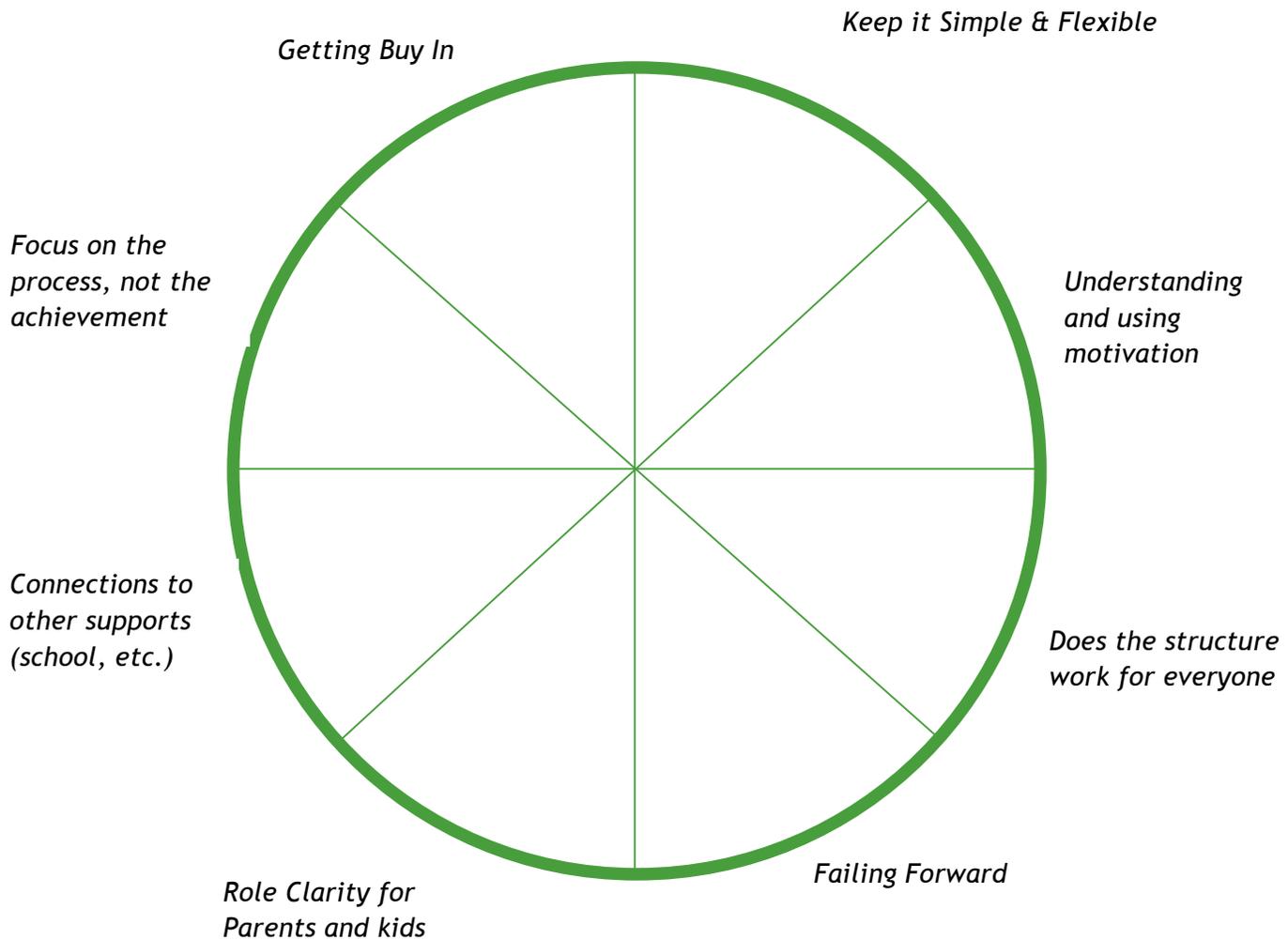
4. Action:

- Knowing what you know now, what changes would you make before you try it again?

5. Rinse & Repeat:

- If you were to try this again, how would you set up yourself and your child for greater success?
- How and when would you evaluate how it’s working?

Systems & Structures Wheel of Life



For each area, rank your satisfaction on a scale of 0-10.

Then, identify the area where you would most like to Take Aim this week.

- What is a realistic action step for me to take?

- How can I set myself up for success with this action?

Lesson 5: Journal

Lesson 6: Putting your Oxygen Mask on First (Self Care +)

At ImpactADHD.com our first member home page asked, “what do you need today?” That’s a great question, one we parents don’t consider often. We are typically much more focused on the needs of those around us than our own.

What if it was important we get your needs met first - at least a few of them? In doing so, you’d likely be better able to focus on the needs of others. It’s like putting your own oxygen mask on first, on an airplane, so that you can assist others in need.

This is also important for modeling positive self-management for your kids. They tend to be experiential learners, so if they see you taking care of yourself, they are more likely to follow suit than if you tell them to take care of themselves. If you think about it, learning to consciously take care of themselves is actually a high priority for kids with any kind of life-long issues that require management, so modeling becomes all the more important.

Some of the core competencies we’re going to cover in this lesson include:

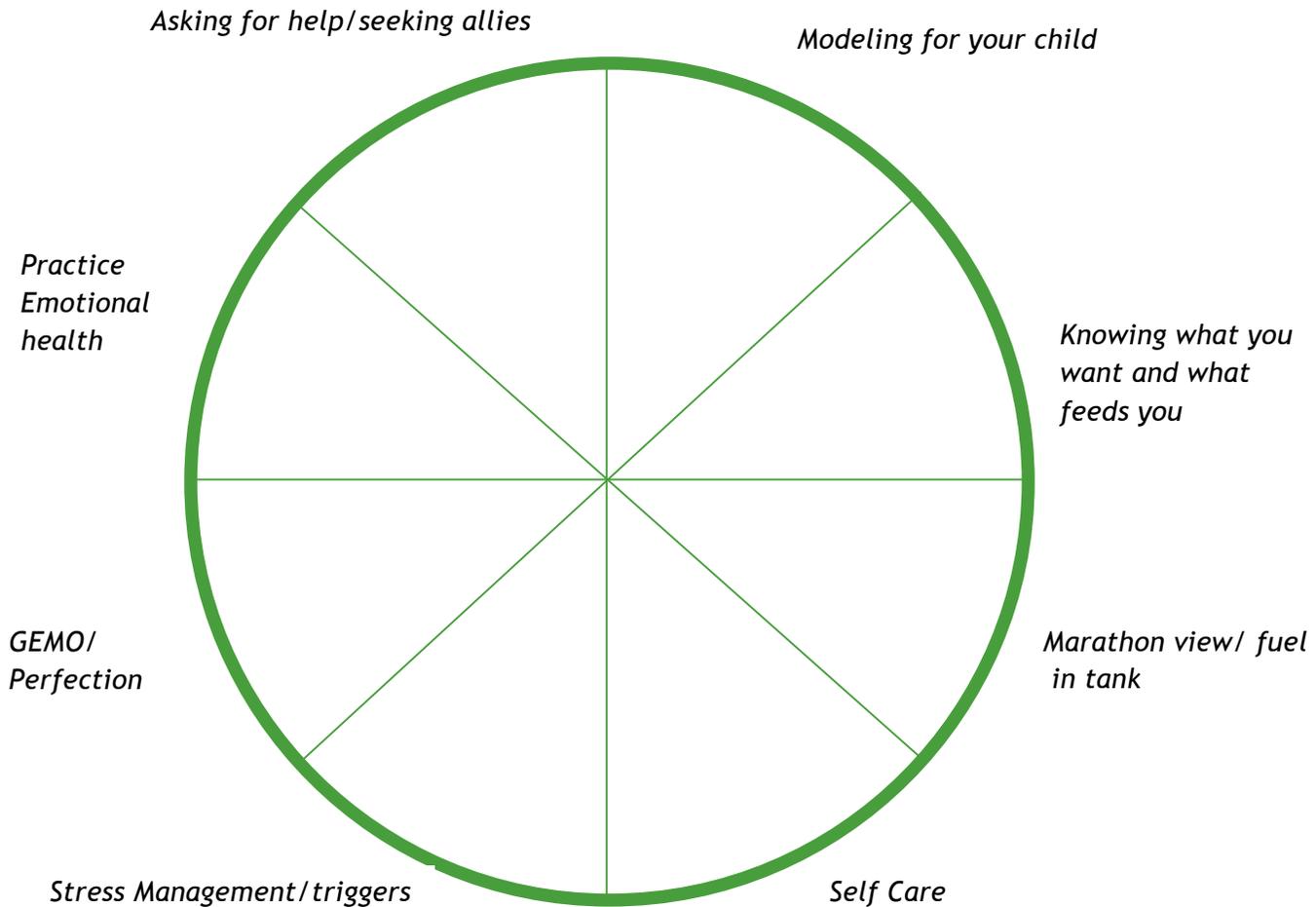
- Asking for help/seeking allies
- Modeling for your child
- Knowing what you want and what feeds you
- Marathon view/ keeping your fuel tank full
- Self Care
- Stress management/triggers
- Managing perfectionism (GEMO: Good Enough Move On)
- Practicing emotional health

In Class Exercise: Putting Your Oxygen Mask on First

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to capture some thoughts in response to this question:

What does it Mean to YOU to Put your Oxygen Mask On First?

Putting your Oxygen Mask on First Wheel of Life



For each area, rank your satisfaction on a scale of 0-10.

Then, identify the area where you would most like to Take Aim this week.

Lesson 6: Journal

Conclusion: Next Steps for Continued Sanity

Well, you did it! By now, you should be ready to receive your official “Certificate of Sanity.” Once you’ve completed all of the classes and exercises in this course, please email TheTeam@ImpactADHD.com and let us know you’ve completed the coursework. Remember, you’re on the Honor System here! 😊

Once we hear from you, we’ll send you what may well be the BEST certificate or diploma you’ve ever received. Because the truth is that **the work you’ve done to gain this certificate is important for every member of your family.** With all of the schooling and training you have had in your lifetime, it’s probably a fair bet to say that nothing matters to you more than your kids.

Bravo for sticking with this commitment to you, and to your family. Parent training has been proven to be one of the most effective non-medical “interventions” for complex kids, and if you’ve gotten this far, then in all likelihood you’ve made great strides in creating more effective management systems for your kids, and fostering increased peace and joy in your home.

So, what’s next for you? Does the learning stop here? Or are you ready to get some support to put all of this information into action?

Keep your eyes open for emails from us telling you about some of the ways that ImpactADHD programs can continue to help you move your family forward, and let us know what sounds like it fits the bill for you.

If you know you want to continue with this interactive learning, PLEASE let us know. Email TheTeam@ImpactADHD.com and arrange a private consultation with one of us. Or go ahead and schedule a Sanity Session at SanitySession.com.

We are excited to continue to support you with coaching, training and community. Together, we can do so much more for all of our families.

Thanks for your trust, your enthusiasm, your vulnerability and your commitment - to yourselves and your families. It’s truly an honor to serve our extraordinary community of parents!

With love,

Elaine & Diane