

# **Understanding Executive Functioning Through The Lens of Poverty**

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# AGENDA

- Concept of Executive Functioning/Brain Power
- Interaction of Brain Power and Poverty
- 3 Areas of Executive Functioning and Their Impact on Poverty
- “Take Away” Strategy

# EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING

- Frontal Lobe of the Brain
- Part of the brain that makes us “grown ups”
- Pulls together and makes sense of information and experiences from all parts of the brain
- Part of the brain most influenced by outside stressors
- Includes our ability to plan, behave appropriately to a setting, display good judgment

# Good Executive Functioning

Is Essential to Successfully Navigate  
the Systems designed to Assist  
People Living in Poverty

# How to Be in 2 Places at One Time

**It's a trick even if you have a car!!**

# Poverty and Brain Power Seem to be Intertwined

- The Systems are complex and demanding
- Therefore they require significant brain power or executive functioning

*Conversely*

- “ Living on a tight budget zaps brain power for other things” Eldar Shafir PhD, Princeton, 2013
- Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

# Executive Functioning and Poverty

Planning: “Thinking Backwards”

Lost power last night? Now problem , call and let them know you will be late. Oops – no phone !!

# Executive Functioning and Poverty

Impulse Control and Inhibition:

Controlling Urges

Suppressing Behavior

Forgiveness is a funny thing.....



# Executive Functioning and Poverty

Good Judgment :

Past Experiences

Current Information

Priorities

What does “dressing up” really mean??

# Take Always

- Not Intuitive Learners
- Explicit Teaching
- Chunking Information

**“Think Aloud” Strategy**

# In Summary

Inefficient Thinking does not cause Poverty

Poverty does not cause Inefficient Thinking

BUT

In order to help, we must understand  
their Interaction

# Thank you!

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