



## PREPARING FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS A MANAGER / SUPERVISOR

Redesigning employment and related human service programs using an executive function lens requires approaching service delivery differently. Often, the most difficult change is shifting from a compliance-oriented approach where program participants are told what they must do to a participant-driven approach where services are oriented towards helping participants identify and achieve goals that are meaningful to them. The shift away from compliance requires staff to act as coaches or facilitators rather than as compliance officers. Doing this work well requires that program administrators and staff recognize the toll poverty, racism and other forms of oppression takes on adults' executive function and self-regulation skills.

Key steps organizations can take to create an environment that supports the shift to an executive function-informed approach to service delivery include the following:

### Organizational Issues

- Create a welcoming and calm environment.
- Streamline and simplify processes.
- Clarify how staff will describe the program to participants.
- Clarify staff expectations, especially if enforcing work requirements is a part of their responsibilities.
- Identify and address policies and/or procedures that conflict with a goal achievement approach.
- Train staff to be coaches or facilitators, not compliance officers.
- Provide ongoing support to staff as they work to build supportive relationships that activate participant motivation and commitment to change.

### Program Design Issues

- Create high and realistic expectations for program participants.
- Identify strategies for modifying participant tasks to reduce the demand on individuals' executive function skills.
- Put processes in place to address issues that impair executive functions such as stress, lack of connections and lack of exercise.
- Create routines within the program that help individuals to set goals and prioritize how to deploy their attentional resources to achieve them.
- Design programs to provide opportunities for participants to practice using their executive function skills in real-life situations.
- Reduce the toll poverty takes on individuals' executive function skills by reducing the amount of scarcity in families' lives by providing income support, transportation, childcare, and housing assistance to help families meet their basic needs.
- Address structural racism and oppression by creating environments that support, rather than hinder, individuals' pursuit of their personal goals.

*For additional information, see “Poverty Interrupted” by ideas42 or the Appendix of “Using Brain Science to Design Pathways Out of Poverty” by EMPATH.*

