**Morning Session**

**DONNA:** The new buzz words are “Executive Function” and “two-generation”

We should be thinking about what is realistic for EF? Can it help us inform the work we do with adults?

*Comments during Introductions*

* **DICK:** starting where people are on the lower rungs. Getting to a meeting etc. are powerful ways to build EF
* **GILDA:** We can get people a job, but they can’t keep a job.
* **TOBY:** the public recognition piece is critical. Put research into what public recognition means.
* **DICK:** Those formerly incarcerated have issues with foundational/behavioral regulation that are off the charts. States and agencies do not recognize this. Intervention could do a lot.
* **JOHN:** Medical people talking about EF, workforce people were talking about behavioral change

*Defining and assessing EF skills*

* **DONNA:** Mainly people focus on a short list of EF skills: response inhibition, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. Dick and Peg use a longer list and he will explain why he uses the longer list
* **DICK:** What Peg and I realized early on if you are going to talk about modified behaviors, you need a broader breakdown of behaviors. There are multiple behaviors embedded in those three primary EF skills. We use a tool called Behavior rating executive function – the first clinical instrument for preschool to adults that focuses on contextual based behavioral skills. We did a factor analysis where you can discriminate these skills; you can on a factor analysis basis. We can define these as a separate set of skills so people can focus on a particular set of skills.
* People have strengths and weakness. If you are going to do a behavioral intervention, you need to define what constitutes these behaviors. Behavioral intervention needs to have definition of those behaviors. People bring strengths and weaknesses, and you ignore them at your peril.
* There are elements of these programs that are successful and these have been field tested. Superimpose EF language on these programs. We rely on that—look at what has been field tested and ask “Can we extract that element and what does it mean?” These programs have been unique to a particular context and though we can have a common language there is no one size fits all.
* A little about questionnaire: it is not normed at all. A publisher might do something with it. It’s an informal instrument. We’ll have you fill it out, identify the two or three strengths and weaknesses. As you go through it, think about the behaviors in your life that are associated with that particular skill.

*[Answering the questionnaire]*

* **JOHN:** Are there other assessments? What’s the benefit of this tool?
* **DONNA:** It’s free
* **DICK:** The other assessments are normed on populations defined as having EF problems, but are for clinical populations. Russ Barkley has one that is for clinical populations that Peg has used and liked. We thought it was important to have a non-clinical instrument out there.
* **DONNA:** I looked at some of those, like CogState and the NIH Toolbox and they are research oriented.
* **DICK:** What’s Cogstate?
* **JILL:** It’s a computer program
* **DICK:** Controversy on de-contextualized assessments. Barkley argues they shouldn’t be used. Ecological validity – How much can you take test instrument and map into real world? Some kids do well on some assessments, but do poorly in their real lives. Be careful when you use them; only use with contextual situations.
* **JOHN:** CogState is based in New Haven and they are making a bunch of money on those with concussion injuries. They wanted do some measure of assessment and map improvements but couldn’t do it.
* **DICK:** Pearson puts out CogMed, luminosity, and other things like that. They may work, but they have narrow transfer. Pearson claims that these programs transfer into real work functioning, but their data on that is wrong. Pearson making a fortune. It gives false hope for parents.
* **DONNA:** You’re not always increasing skills, sometimes you’re compensating. If we go down this path of trying to measure improvement in EF we may lose sight of the goal of getting people into sustained employment.
* **KATE:** The behaviors of the child changes based on the context. I don’t want to measure change in behavior, I want to measure outcomes
* **DICK:** Some work with addicts in Baltimore looking at population that end back on drugs for a period of time: Researchers put GPS locators on population and thought that if they could keep people out of the locations where these activities occur they could change their behavior.

[*back to questionnaire]*

* **DICK:** Question how long have you had these strengths and weaknesses?
* **EVERYONE:** All my life
* **DICK:** These skills and challenges peak in the 20s but we know they have been around before that. Skills benefit for the context of the environment.
* **GILDA:** My strengths are stress tolerance, metacognition, and flexibility. My weaknesses are organization… and working memory (thinking that has something to do with age). I have a work partner who is very detailed oriented and I’m very big picture. We work well together, but if I had to be detailed oriented, I’d be lost. It makes me think we need to be cognizant where we are placing people. Also I’m thinking the youth one would be better for my population.
* **DICK:** Interventions for adolescents, especially older adolescents may be better for this population. Can’t adopt parental stance with this population.
* **GILDA:** Many of our TANF population are very young and they may relate better to the youth one.

*[Looking at youth respondent’s graph on screen]*

* **TOBY:** I gave 60 youth in public housing the youth questionnaire. They were ages 16-24. I was able to do it because I worked in the neighborhood. We were able to administer this quickly. There was no scaffolding, it was self-administered, and there was not a lot of explanation.
* **DICK:** Youth are not straightforward with weaknesses. They tend to look good on surveys in general.
* If you look at self-regulation of affect: the results are exactly what you’d see in youth. Not good prefrontal control of emotional life, kids react on a more emotional basis, referred to as hot cognition. You say something that is mildly negative you could get a big reaction because it threatens their autonomy. If this comes across in a hierarchical context you could lose this population. Whenever we do this with kids we also do an assessment [of the youth] with parents.
* **DONNA:** You see Ramsey County’s adult, it’s very different

*[Looking at adult respondent’s graph on screen]*

* **DICK:** Now for adults in Ramsey County, the distribution is very different. Remember we are looking at skills relative to strengths. People who have strong organizational and strong time management, these people are not very flexible. If you lack foundational skills like response inhibition and emotional control, coaching every other EF skill is ineffective because those people never wait long enough to work with [a coach]. Response inhibition and emotional control needs intervention FIRST. People need a pause button.
* **MICHELLE:** Given that people tend to be very positive about themselves do you get significant others or parents to fill it out?
* **DICK:** Yes. We always have someone else fill it out.
* **DONNA:** You can get whoever knows the client best to fill it out as well

*[On screen, profile of an adult: Weaknesses TASK INITIATION, SUSTAINED ATTENTION and GOAL-DIRECTED PERSISTENCE.]*

* **DICK:** If I look at task initiation and goal persistence, which are low, that’s the profile of my son. For young people, if they are not interested in it, they will be very weak in these areas. Peg and I thought for years that the person with this profile—the person is not going to get anything done. They are the ultimate procrastinator. That’s worrisome.
* **DONNA:** Then in a workforce development situation, this person needs a lot of structure.
* **DICK:** Structure, but demand has to be short. The amount of effort to stay on task is enormous and a slight distraction will throw them off.
* **LINDSEY:** Seems like a coaching approach may be helpful for this person to guide them.
* **DICK:** you’re trying to overcome a lot of biology. But if a person has strong goal persistence and weak task initiation and sustained attention, they are big procrastinators but get things done at the last minute.
* **BRI:** Is you profile sustained over time?
* **DICK:** your profile is sustained because your environment tolerates it. For example my Executive Director says I need to do better on time management. So I made sure I’m organized on certain things I need to get my ED, but I’m not organized.

*[On screen, adult profile: Weaknesses TASK INITIATION, EMOTIONAL CONTROL, and FLEXIBILITY]*

* **DICK:** Flexibility and emotional control tend to run together as weaknesses. For example see Russ Green’s book, “[The Explosive Child](http://www.amazon.com/dp/0062270451).” People who are inflexible like predictability and get anxious when they don’t know what is going to happen next. They will create an agenda for themselves in the absence of one. And if someone comes across with another agenda, that is very emotional for them. Working with adult couple: Each individual has an agenda. I have an agenda, my wife has one. Different people’s agenda have to work with each other.
* **DONNA:** Even though we tend to think of these as populations that are homogeneous, we see that individual profiles are very different and may need individualized plans or coaching.
* **JACKIE:** What context do you think about when filling it out: Personal or Professional?
* **DICK:** I think it matters. We found when people fill out in a professional context and a personal context, there were discrepancies. When dealing with employment programs, think about work
* **JACKIE:** Are there patterns in ways that they varied?
* **DICK:** Yes. But less pattern change, more changes in individual skills. Marked changes say something about environment.
* **TERRI:** Any skills to focus on specifically for the group even though it varies by individual?
* **DICK:** Makes sense to talk about working on a common set of skills when working with a group, so sort people by weaknesses. The most important thing is to have to have a list of behaviors that are associated with the skills.
* **MICHELLE:** I’m struck with what do you (case managers) do with this; there is a mapping issue, and then there is capacity building.
* **DONNA:** That’s what we are going to get into. Think of principles to figure out what you do next.
* **DICK:** You have to have a list of individual behaviors. We create check list of behaviors that correspond to these skills. Not going to intervene at this level but at the behavioral level.

*How do Executive Function Skills Develop?*

* **DICK:** oversimplified version of EF: The prefrontal cortex is one of the last places to develop. Myelin acts as insulation, increasing the speed with which nerve impulses are transmitted. The faster the impulse, the better the skill. If you’re going to have proficiency you need efficiency. If you practice a skill over and over again you become proficient. Makes task less effortful at both behavioral and neurological level. Get myelination on areas where there was no myelination before.
* **DONNA:** Coaching in context of EF skills, but coaching is word used in different ways. What is it like for EF Skills?

*Coaching in the context of EF*

* **DICK:** we have specific notion of coaching – the coach acts as a surrogate frontal lobe who engages in the lending of this or her executive skills to coach the person in order to facilitate the learning in the Socratic Method and development of the person’s EF skills. Person decides what their goal is, long term goal, and immediate goal. Heart of what this is about: There is a relationship between your behavior now and their goal next year. Have to ignore the immediate context for this longer-term goal. Some people are so focused on the present context that it is impossible for them to see how they can reach their goal. The coach helps individuals build a moment to moment plan to deal with difficult contexts.
* Factors that impact the degree to which the adult/coach will act as a surrogate frontal lobe
  + Person’s level of social maturity
  + Person’s executive skill profile and baseline of current strengths and weaknesses
  + Presence of any education or cognitive challenges
  + Task/situation/environmental demands on the person, goodness-of-fit with person’s profile, and current environment with person’s modifications in place
* In an environment that is a bad fit for a person’s profile, you have to make sure it will work. We ask coaches not to sign on to something that is unrealistic, sets up person for failure. If they fail, it makes them less trustful in the future. Better to promise small and deliver, than promise big and fail.
* Coach’s success as a surrogate frontal lobe is directly proportional to the person’s success in regulating behavior to solve problems and achieve goals in the coach’s absence – coach has succeeded when no longer needed (or at least less needed). Don’t pull out too early and have the client feel no one can help them.
* **KATE:** We use motivational interviewing in career counseling. What’s the difference between coach and career counseling?
* **Dick:**  We see Motivational Interviewing (MI) as first step in the coaching process. If you are good at MI, you will get at something that is important for the person to work on. If the goal comes from someone else, then clients don’t buy into the goal. You can get down to a fine level of specificity of how to achieve the goal but MI is not supposed to be a long term process. MI is more like coaching. MI doesn’t incorporate EF skills; they look at it from personality perspective and we look at it from a skills perspective. Coaching is about helping people, over time, acquire skills.
* **MICHELLE:** How long and intensively do you work with a client? Agencies have large caseloads. How much time do you spend with clients?
* **Dick**: From our perspective, something is better than nothing. The smallest little difference—you don’t know what the outcomes will be over time. It has more to do with what the goal is. If your goal is employment and they’re coming in for a four week program, I don’t know how you can do that. In terms of coaching, it’s about starting where people are. Small steps they understand that moves us in the right direction.
* **MICHELLE:** Does that mean outcome measures should be small steps like showing up on time and regularly?
* **DICK:** There are lot of EF skills involved for getting to a meeting on time: Task Initiation, Planning. As long as you initially keep the demand low, you can build those kind of skills.
* **DONNA:** I think what this suggests is training people to interact with clients in a different way. You can’t accomplish the same thing in a 5 year program than you can in a 4 week work program. Only so much you can do when you have a high caseload but it’s about what you do differently.
* **TERRI:** And what are the policy objectives? How do you measure small achievements and what that means in terms of the policy?
* **MICHELLE:** if you redefine process measures to what that makes more sense.
* **DONNA:** There is a low bar of what clients have to commit to initially in the MOMS partnership, but they get the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy intervention at the same time, reducing stress and building EF skills. I expect if you do this first, then put them in four week course, you’d possibly have better participation.
* **DICK:** And they delivered an intervention in an environment that is known to the women. It relieves stress. Use the environment they know to avoid stressing people so much. In applied behavior analysis – the natural occurring environment has to be the prompt for a person learning a skill. Cognitive rehearsal phenomenon. Peer coaches are also critical.
* **KATE:** Are we measuring how many people showed up for meeting or engagement? I want make sure we are not measuring the wrong thing.
* **BOYD:** There have been some case studies that show employment outcomes aren’t great if you don’t introduce employment immediately. Class, then job readiness, doesn’t work as well. With TANF, it is mandated population most of the time. It is a different environment.
* **DICK:** The devil is in the details when I think about that. If it turns out that MOMS Partnership works then you back up 🡪 of the people who were successful when does that success show up, was there anything predictive of this level of the intervention that we can build upon?
* **DONNA:** A major complaint is that people don’t show up; that’s what different with MOMS – people show up at very high rates. Building Nebraska Families did not use EF language and was not focused on getting people employed. Yet, the increase in stable employment for individuals with the most significant employment barriers was big and significant.
* **DICK:** There is something built in the MOMS’ intervention that mimics what is in a job situation.
* **TERRI:** In the project I’m involved in public housing, there are services on-site or another environment with positive prompts. The clients’ environment prompts everything in the negative direction.
* **DICK:** The home environment has to change over a period of time so it takes on different connotations. But MOMs project did that. Do you think about Laundromat and CBT? If you can build success for individual in environment you can overcome historical failure. Sustainability depends on people in the community being a critical part of that sustainability.
* **BRI:** How do you train those peer coaches?
* **DICK:** My guess with be if you get the EF profile of those people who are the peer coaches in the MOMS project, their profiles are pretty good. You get those people who are more socially mature to be peers. Then you train them on the specificity of the task and the environment. Peers have to be aware of what is difficult for subjects.

***Motivation***

* **DICK:** Role of effort and need for motivation in promoting EF skills is critical. Effort and motivation are two concepts that are critical building blocks for understanding and addressing executive function weaknesses. Barkley recognized that if you try to exercise a weak executive skill it is effortful. The pool of the energy to do it will be depleted fast. Have to give someone an incentive to look forward to. Have to reinforce behavior immediately, especially if clients are starting at the lowest rung of the ladder.
* **DONNA:** ex: TANF bonus when getting a job. The incentive is so far away.
* **JOHN:** but in non-profit world, incentives are hard to do.
* **TERRI:** Mindset thing of the management 🡪 They say “well if they don’t want to be here…”
* **DICK:** They think if clients do this program, it will benefit them
* **JILL:** Think about from the policy prospective too. Every dollar has to be counted, so people are left to their own devices.
* **DONNA:** MOMS uses gift cards
* **KATE:** We keep investing in people who don’t need as much help and not those who need it. We keep serving people the same way. We are not opposed to incentives at all; we just don’t do cash.
* **BRI:** Reaching out to those who may not become enrolled in programs typically – program folks had to reach out 9 times to get a potential client to come in. Who would put in that effort and pay for that?
* **DICK:** No show rates are a big thing in mental health as well. If I want people to participate, I go to where people are.
* **JOHN:** I’m working on the Conditional Cash Transfer demo in New York, one of areas is workforce and this will be a randomized control trial. We talked to various sites who are having problems with engagement. I asked why aren’t we incentivizing staff 🡪 When we started incentivizing staff, engagement went up
* **DICK:** in terms of motivation, stress relief is a big incentive. The value is two-fold: 1) inherently motivating; 2) the extent you can relieve a little stress you can open up the EF skills they have (Scarcity). If you can find even small ways to do it, payoff can be great. Attainable goals because long-term goals makes them anxious.
* Short term, frequent and immediate incentives. Ask people what they want.
* Praise for effort, not for success. If you only praise successful completion, their sustaining a task drops off.
* Independence & autonomous decision making. Biggest drive is to be in control of your own fate (ex: adolescents – stay out of my business).
* Having opinions valued. Part of process is we respect what the client does. What you’re trying to do is to build their capacity to help them make good judgments
* Deciding/negotiating what support they will need and having it available.
* **TERRI:** as we talk about the lowest rung of ladder, can it be trying to get 8 hours of sleep. My folks are so tapped out when I talk to them
* **DICK:** tough intervention. When you think about what’s got to change in their environment. When they are tapped out think about what you can do to help them in that state; What is the cheapest, quickest intervention I know could work?
* **DICK:** *Role of effort*: Using EF, especially those that are weak, requires significant effort.
* Results in rapid energy depletion and susceptibility to context-dependent behavior
* Fatigue and stress weaken EF
* Incentives can play an important role building and sustaining motivation and effort. Incentives need to be meaningful to the individual, scaled to the expectation and used consistently to be effective.
* **DICK:** *Task Demands to match the person’s capacity for effortful work*: modify the relationship between the task and the incentive. Many clients can’t see past the task. Reduce the task demand and make it look effortless. When do the task several times it decreases the task demand. Now if you increase task modestly, you can increase skills on a task (called shaping and fading). Develop the brain resources to commit to the task. If you can’t decrease task demand then have to increase the incentive, but the skill has to at least be in the repertoire. *[looking at pictures that reduces task demand or increases incentive]*
* **DICK:** *Provide the minimum support necessary for the person to be successful*: Don’t over provide support but enough they see light at the end of the tunnel
* If too much support is provided, the person won’t become independent. If too little support is provided, the person won’t be successful.
* **DICK:** *Provide supports and supervision long enough for some success*: A general rule of thumb is that it usually takes longer for a person to master a task or skill than people think it should
* The desired end point: the person can perform the task independently w/o reminders. If the end point has not been reached, then some support and supervision will be required.
* **DICK:** *Interventions that facilitate restoration of effort for EF skills use*
  + Physical exercise – is restorative
  + Relaxing, meditation for a few minutes after EF skills exertion
  + Visualizing the good outcomes/rewards as a result of successful execution
  + Periodic, small extrinsic rewards throughout the EF skills task
  + Self-efficacy statements prior to and during task
  + Short practice of tasks requiring EF skills daily if possible.
* **DICK:** *Importance of contexts and tasks*
  + Transfer/generalization of EF.
  + Narrow vs. wide transfer, near vs. far generalization.
  + Not all EF training tasks are created equal.
  + Train in the contexts that you want the person to improve in (community/job).

**Afternoon Session**

* **DONNA:** Any questions from this morning.
* **MICHELLE:** What about group coaching?
* **DICK:** It makes sense financially. You breakdown people by sub-groups. But you have to keep in mind the person who is struggling the most. The coach has to understand what that person can tolerate and keep up with. A second piece is that people have to be comfortable talking about strengths and weaknesses in the group. Participants can ask the group for solutions, and there can be a fair amount of discussion. Finally, have to have an outcome you’re trying to get here by the end of the coaching session. Everyone comes out with a personal plan. If you have peer coaches or people willing to help other people, you can make good use of that resource. They hear it a lot better from peers.
* **BOYD:** do you have people in groups where people are also receiving individual coaching?
* **DICK:** No, but some people may get some individual time with the coach.
* **DICK:** *Key strategies for managing executive skills*: In terms of a temporal sequence, intervene at level of environment always comes first. Program has to make the environment a little more accommodating for the client in the short-term. That’s the immediate goal if the program is going to do this; know what you’re signing on to.
* **TERRI:** Can you give us an example?
* **DICK:** High school kids who don’t talk: We used a variety of accommodations to reach kids in their environment. Tweak environment; a teacher is an environmental variable. If the kid doesn’t like the teacher, then change the teacher.
* Strategies for modifying environment:
  + Change the physical or social environment;
  + Modify tasks you expect to perform;
  + Change the ways adults interact with the person (approach as a partnership between coach and “player”)
* You don’t want them to feel that what they bring to the situation isn’t good enough. Empathy is important
* Environmental modifications: Any changes we make that are external to the person.
* **DONNA:** We think we don’t have a lot of control, but for programs that do placements or subsidized jobs, there is control to integrate these principles.
* **LOUISA:** Example of disruptive kids in school and the color-coded target – not discussing incidences of bad behavior until in calmer space (both the student and administrator are on green on the target); they found kids are self-correcting
* **DICK:** *Steps to teaching executive skills*:
  + Identify if people do have EF weaknesses, if they are so stressed that can’t use this is not for them; only those who have a general weakness.
  + Identify the specific problem behaviors and situations that reflect the weak executive skills. Intervention starts at a specific behavior.
  + Get a baseline of current performance in those situations
  + Set a short-term goal (if your coaching the coachee will be too ambitious. Get them to scale down)
  + Depending on the skill set of the person, decide how the skill will be introduced (ex: verbal explanation, video or live model, task analysis with prompt, etc.) demonstrate for the person if needed and have the child model. Coachee/client should decide the solution
  + When introducing the skill in the target situation, review the specific behaviors expected and the fade this review to the person. Prompts for behaviors that fade overtime (ex: kid suspended from school bus.)
  + Turn the steps into pictures of a list to use for review and evaluation.
  + Practice at regular, frequent intervals but keep practice sessions brief
    - If person is being prompted to perform each step, gradually fade the prompt and let natural stimulus prompts take over (working memory)
  + Observe the person while s/he performs each step, praising effort and providing evaluation feedback to help improve performance. Have person evaluate their effort and performance
    - Praise when person make progress on each step and when the procedure is completed as a whole
    - Metacognition is really just self-evaluation
  + Evaluate the program’s success
  + Fade supervision
* **BRI:** Do you know when to fade or do you do it by gut feeling?
* **DICK:** Don’t do anything by gut feeling. Example of kid suspended from the bus: Told kid what to do, then asked kid what he needed to do, then after successful ride on bus, backed away. Determine if client is successful in the step in the prompt. Take close measures to determine if the individual picks up the slack the coach leaves before fading out.

*Group discussion*

Time management – the capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

* Behaviors that show time management is weak:
  + Miss deadlines
  + Not showing up – not always what it seems: I would rather *not* walk into a place than show up late, so I don’t show up at all
  + Late for meetings
  + Poor estimation of how long tasks will take and things around the tasks will take
    - **KATE:** Question about different cultural norms around time
    - **DICK:** Answer - have to teach in the context of environment. What will that world tolerate? That’s the bottom line.
    - Example of cultural accommodation, but we stereotypically think about cultural behaviors is a way that may not be true.
* Some of this is determining where the problem starts. Is it really a time management issue or is it an organizational issue?
* Crittenton Women’s Union’s bridge can help with determining where problem starts
* Thinking about the implications for other people
* Teaching strategy – never assume that people know what’s expected. Make sure people know expectations in behavioral terms
* **KATE:** There are families that come, but come a little late each time
* **DICK:** If there is something that’s a recurring problem, but the person cannot address, then this is not a reasonable demand.
* **BOYD:** some of these issues are not EF issues but are issues of living in poverty (ex: public transportation is late). We have different expectations on these families than we have for ourselves. They have to be on time to meetings. Don’t want to confuse poverty issues with EF skill deficits.
* **DICK:** We are never going to move off square one if we don’t have some expectation. But have to be respectful of how far to move this first step.
* **JOHN:** STRIVE’s tough love works for some people
* **DICK:** if you kick people off a program, percentage of them will not recover and this will have considerable repercussions. Tough love is not a panacea for everyone. If people show that you are moving even in a small step in the right direction people, you got them.
* **DONNA:** The tough love approach is not good for some people because they don’t have the skills to succeed. The problem is that we don’t have good skills for telling who can and can’t succeed.
* **JILL:** I think that’s what we have now in TANF programs - sanctions
* **KATE:** With African American and Native American community, have to be careful to not patronize or look through a white cultural lens.
* **DONNA:** What does it take to make it in the work world? If a person is always late, it’s not about kicking them out of the program, it’s about addressing that EF skill or the logistical issues (case manager)
* **TERRI:** Deciphering out what the issue is: is it an EF deficit or a logistical problem? Then the programs are setting un-realistic expectations for the clients’ environment. Programs should have graduated expectations
* **LOUISA:** people need to feel valued and the programs need to provide something with value
* **TERRI:** ROCA, a program that uses transitional employment, goes above and beyond to keep clients in the program and engaged. Has graduated responsibilities for clients
* **GILDA:** At our program, it is required you have a job from day 1. We would have assumed originally that the person was lazy or not trying hard enough if they couldn’t find a job or were performing poorly on the job. But EF allows us to think there may be another issue.
* **DONNA:** I’m glad Dick doesn’t come from a poverty perspective. Because it shows everyone has these skill deficits – and strengths. Need to think about in our programs’ stages. People who aren’t quite ready but you do something to get them ready.
* **DICK:** Think about differential interventions because people come in on different levels. And tailor expectations of clients. That’s exactly what we’re talking about—lowest rung on the ladder, graduated. Need to tailor interventions.
* **TOBY:** Is the goal that everyone becomes a worker? I think we are in for trouble if we think if everyone can become a worker.
* **DONNA:** The question is if we are at 50% of participants working, can we eventually get to 60% in programs? If we can get to 60%, then we ask ourselves how do we build on that?
* **MICHELLE:** What I like about this approach is not that there is a yes/no answer but what are your strengths? But TANF managers have constraints. You are talking about scaling people up. I think triaging is important.
* **DICK:** Prediction is control. If you can start to demonstrate that your rates are different based on different interventions, then you get people’s attention
* **JOHN:** To respond to Toby, my goal is anyone who wants to become a worker can become one. But Dick what you are talking about is improved frontline practice. We don’t know how to use evidence-based practice. And evidence-based practice could get implemented in several different ways.
* **DICK:** Steve Dawson, at PHI is an example. They skimmed the cream, lost 90% of those initially interested. Model fidelity is everything. If you demonstrate at pilot level that a program has worked, you cannot water it down.
* **LOUISA:** I don’t agree with that. If you have core, non-negotiable elements and do with mindful intent and planning, I think you can have model flexibility and still have an effective program. That’s where system level comes into play. System establishes a plan to implement with fidelity. You need system support.
* **DICK:** There needs to be some guardian of the standard. It has to come from the top. That’s what professional certification organizations do.
* **LOUISA:** And on-going monitoring.
* **BOYD:** There are few evidence-based practices in workforce. Individual placement and support (IPS), has a fidelity upkeep component, so does I-BEST. But IPS, which is out of mental health field, puts the onus on the practitioners to track implementation.
* **LOUISA:** I-BEST in Washington State: There is variation among the different community colleges. But those who are going through with the model are having a lot of success at different schools
* **DONNA:** I think what you want is a different level of analysis is to take I-Best apart and figure out what is working so it’s most successful elements can be replicated.
* **LOUISA:** That’s what is happening already. Institutions are taking certain pieces that work for their program but keeping core elements of in place.
* **TERRI:** Challenged by what’ the right assessment for different individuals. I like what Michelle said, about triage and getting the right intervention to the right person. This particular tool is very subjective.
* **DICK:** You are your own control on that group. Score range is low because you are hard on yourself versus score ranges that are high.
* **TERRI:** Can you use other supplemental objective measures?
* **DICK:** Sure. School records or if this person ever held a job. You could create a set of markers or benchmarks to measure where people are challenged.
* **KATE:** What are the scientific markers for identifying the right intervention?
* **DICK:** There must be pieces of data that exist in people’s files or profiles. Complex analyses on historical data that come up with predictors.
* **JILL:** Not so easy in TANF. Some outcomes aren’t even measured
* **BOYD:** And there is a transitory population in TANF
* **MICHELLE:** Create groups around specific skill set, an intentional placement.
* **DICK:** Get people in and do a mini pilot intervention. Intervention evaluations are completely inaccurate for the person who shows up in front of you. Enormous amounts of money go down the drain with so many people not being successful
* **DONNA:** Are we starting too big? Instead of four week program, maybe a 2-day intervention. Lighter touch initially?
* **TOBY:** Let them succeed up rather than fail down.
* **TERRI:** so often we use a one size fits all approach. Which one of the EF skills relate to job search versus job retention?

*Breakout session: Behaviors and Strategies for change*

**DICK:** Working memory according to Barkley - capacity for hindsight and foresight. Think about experience and on the basis of that past experience modify your behavior for a future experience (ex: walking into a new grocery store by using cues).

**Working memory Group**

* **KATE:** First issue is still understanding working memory. Difficult to think about coaching steps to follow.
  + We identified bringing in completed paperwork on-time as the task.
  + Strategies: Complete paper work in office. Get people to identify experience in life where they were good in working memory and remembered to turn paper work in on-time. Incentivize efforts and praise for success.
* **DICK:** have to make sure we are not talking about task initiation. Task looks daunting for people who have an issue with task initiation. We don’t talk about task completion, just getting started. Pick an assigned time to do it. But if the issue is they don’t understand the paperwork, we do it for them. Offloading – use environment to make task easier. Ex: putting paper in same place each time.
* **DONNA:** Another example of working memory in workforce?
* **JACKIE:** I got confused about what was working memory and what was something else. Had to think back to Adele Diamond’s presentation when she talks about working memory for kids. Like when they get to class they take off book-bag first, then put away lunch, then sit down, etc.
* **DICK:** Need to practice routines constantly to make them second nature and to know what to do in a new environment. There are tasks you’re assigned to do, but can’t remember to do it. You can creates checklists for self. Primary ways it shows up for people: Employers say, we’ve gone over this, they know what they’re supposed to be doing.
* **TERRI:** So is working memory when you are in a job interview and the employer asks them to think back to a time when…or the steps in how to fix a copier…?
* **DICK:** yes both of those. If you have to search, make pathway to search for answer very direct.
* **TERRI:** One of the tools just seems like practice
* **DICK:** For all of this. To generalize to something else, you’re asking people to use past experience and tweak it.

**Planning and prioritization Group**

* **TERRI:** Talking about challenges: Inability to chunk something out. Clients can be overwhelmed by scale of a task or don’t foresee the size of task and take on more than doable. They are distracted by constant crises. We struggled with goal behavior.
  + Specified behavior: getting kids to school on time.
  + Environmental supports: alarms and check lists. Hard to even come up with an example, but once we did, it flowed
* **DICK:** The planning is the roadmap. All the steps along the way.
* **TERRI:** talked about how to layout the road map and what would be the alternative options when something goes wrong.
* **DICK:** My wife breaks down the elements of how to learn how to swim for her students and asks them questions about each element. Planning and prioritization incorporates many EF skills
* **BOYD:** just the process of developing goals helps them with their planning and their prioritization

Organization Group

* **BRI:** 
  + Specified behavior: can’t get to work on time because client is disorganized.
  + Environment supports: putting keys on a hook, have a dry-erase board with a check list. Coach can help by sending a text in the morning. If clients don’t have phones, then visualize what they would do. Engage with client to give them options and have client identify problems and solution.
* **RUTHIE:** What made this exercise hard is starting with the category instead of the behavior
* **BOYD:** Do you see a cluster of skills that are typically deficient at the same time
* **DICK:** Not necessarily, but if you ask enough questions you can drill down which skill is actually the issue.
* **TERRI:** are there specific skills that we should focus on? Hierarchy of skills
* **DICK:** Response inhibition is one but also the combination of task initiation, sustained attention, and goal directed persistence as deficits is a major red flag that the person will be drawn off task
* Certain skills are associated with certain jobs – need to consider the match.

*End of day discussion and questions*

* **TERRI:** is there a goal for the Center for this EF workgroup?
* **DONNA:** The goal is to figure out how we can apply EF principles to workforce programs. How can we take the knowledge that is out there and apply it in the contexts in which we work.
* **KATE:** What’s the long-term vision?
* **DONNA:** What will it take to develop EF-informed workforce programs? What is required for successful execution? Should we identify a group of test sites where we could figure out what an EF-informed intervention would look like?
* **TERRI:** Tomorrow, I would love to be able to build connections between CBT, EF, trauma informed, and behavior economics
* **BOYD:** Add to that list disability. A lot of what you are talking about is in vocational rehabilitation
* **LOUISA:** Workforce doesn’t know voc rehab
* **BRI:** Are there different outcomes for voc rehab?
* **BOYD:** A lot of things they do not do right like transitional employment, sheltered workshops, etc. But it does a lot of things right like individualized attention and plans and structured environments etc.