



# Using a Goal Achievement and Executive Function Framework to Strengthen Group Job Search Programs

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# Webinar Overview

- The Impetus and Vision for this Work
- Your Reflections: What Works?
- Introduction to Executive Function Skills and Goal, Plan, Do, Review and Revise (GPDRR) Framework
- Your Reflections: Building on What Works
- Preview of Tools and Resources to Embed GPDRR in Your Program
- Opportunities and Next Steps



# Why Create a New Framework for Job Search Programs?

- **History:** Modest success, even in the most effective employment programs
- **The future:** Need to invest in adults to see big improvements in long-term outcomes for kids
- **Changing labor markets:** Declining employment among individuals with high school education or less for most of the last 10 years; increased demand for skills
- **New possibilities:** New service delivery approaches that address the toll poverty takes on parents' ability to see and plan for the future; using evidence-based practices from other fields



# Why Focus on Goal Achievement?

- Grounded in science
- Compatible with key program purposes, but provides a new framework for service delivery
- Forces us to put a stake in the ground: What are we aiming for? Is it realistic?
- Provides a framework and processes for building skills that are key for success at home and work
- Creates a structure for measuring interim progress toward longer-term goals – especially useful for individuals with significant employment barriers
- Provides a framework that can guide individual, organization and community actions simultaneously



## Why Focus on Executive Function?

- Explosion in brain science has increased our knowledge of the importance of “executive function skills” (or executive skills)
- Executive skills are critical for success in school, work and life – poor executive function can lead to poor productivity and difficulty finding and keeping a job
- Executive skills are the “engine” that fuels successful goal achievement



## Our Vision

By incorporating what we know from these two bodies of research, programs nationwide will work together to...

- Strengthen the goal achievement frameworks you offer to participants, and
- Fortify the ways you support participants to set and achieve their goals





## Our Approach

- Create an explicit Goal Achievement Framework – Goal, Plan, Do, Review and Revise (GPDRR) – that human service programs can use over and over to help participants set and achieve their goals – and to give participants a tool they can use throughout their life
- Use GPDRR to support and strengthen executive function skills
- Provide tools to help programs embed GPDRR in their existing programs – in both individual and group interactions



## Reflection: Goal Achievement

What framework or approach do you currently use to help participants set and achieve their goals?

- *What do you like about it?*
- *What shows you it works?*

Take a moment alone, or with your colleagues, to jot down your thoughts.







## Insights from Research

In the next parts of this webinar, we will highlight research that we feel has very important, and practical, implications

As you listen, note what you find most useful and how these insights might help your program build on what works



# What are Executive Function Skills?

<b>Skills we use to:</b>	<b>Executive Skills</b>
<b>Set a goal</b>	Working memory, metacognition
<b>Plan how to get there</b>	Planning/prioritization, time management, organization, working memory
<b>Control our actions</b>	Task initiation, response inhibition, sustained attention, goal-directed persistence, stress tolerance, emotional control
<b>Monitor how we're doing</b>	Cognitive flexibility, metacognition, working memory



# Living in Poverty Impacts Executive Function Skills

- Toxic Stress
- Bandwidth Tax (living in conditions of chronic scarcity)
- Environmental and “life” factors
- The added complexity of life when resources are scarce



## We Can Improve Executive Function Skills

- Work on reducing things that impair executive functions such as stress, lack of connections and lack of sleep
- Find ways to reduce the demands on executive function skills (e.g., change the environment, provide tools to make the task easier --like using a cellphone app for reminders; folders for organizing documents)
- Work on explicitly building EF skills: break them into small steps, train them, challenge them and practice them *in the context in which they will be used*



# Insights on Executive Function

- What was especially interesting or useful for you here?
- What implications might it have for your program and your work, personally?

Take a moment alone, or with your colleagues, to jot down your thoughts.



# What Do We Mean by Goal Achievement?

- We use goal achievement to refer to the *process* that individuals go through to achieve an outcome that wouldn't occur without effort and specific direction



# Structured Approach to Goal Achievement: Goal, Plan, Do, Review and Revise

**Goal:** What do I want to accomplish?

**Plan:** What will it take to get there?

**Do:** How will I successfully execute the plan?

**Review:** How did I do?

**Revise:** What will I change?





# The Relationship Between Executive Skills and Goal Achievement

	<b>Executive Skills</b>
<b>Goal</b>	Metacognition, working memory
<b>Plan</b>	Planning/prioritization, time management, working memory
<b>Do</b>	Task initiation, response inhibition, time management, sustained attention, working memory, flexibility, organization, persistence, stress tolerance, emotional control
<b>Review</b>	Metacognition, working memory
<b>Revise</b>	Flexibility





## **Goal:** Something We Want to Accomplish

- Characteristics of “good” goals
  - Personally meaningful
  - Challenging but within reach
  - Well-defined
- How we set goals matters
  - Start with the future
  - Imagine what the future looks and feels like
  - Write goals down; keep them visible
  - Start small and with a short time horizon



## **Plan:** Creating a Roadmap for Change

- Three steps for developing effective plans
  - Break big goals down into small, manageable steps (backward mapping)
  - Develop specific and targeted action plans
  - Identify obstacles and strategies for responding to them **before** they occur
- Characteristics of effective plans
  - Identify action steps and resources needed to complete them
  - Written down
  - More detailed, the better: what, when, where, why, how
  - Streamlined to have as few steps as possible
  - Obstacles and responses to them written down and rehearsed: If X happens, then I will do Y



## **Do: Plan Into Action**

- Executing the plan is in the hands of the participant; requires an incredible amount of self-control
- Well-designed goal-setting and planning processes increase the chances of successful execution
  - Create positive motivation: meaningful goals; visualizing the outcome
  - Make plans feasible: small steps; detailed action plans
  - Anticipate obstacles: “If...the” plans
- Strategies for providing additional support
  - Rehearse the action plan with the participant
  - Provide reminders and help participants set up their own
  - Encourage teamwork
  - Provide opportunities to practice difficult tasks
  - Help participants come up with strategies to make unpleasant tasks less unpleasant



## Review and Revise: Stepping Back, Moving Forward

- We rarely get goals or plans right on the first try
- Opportunity to create an ongoing learning opportunity and build skills
- **Review**
  - Strengths-based: What went well?
  - Forward-looking: What didn't go as planned? What got in the way?
  - Learning: What did you learn about yourself? Well-designed goal-setting and planning processes increase the chances of successful execution
- **Revise**
  - Updated action steps
  - New plan
  - New goal



# Insights on Goal Achievement

- What was especially interesting or useful for you here?
- What implications might it have for your program and your work, personally?

Take a moment alone, or with your colleagues, to jot down your thoughts.





# **Tools and Resources to Embed GPDRR into Your Program**



# The Manual

GPDRR Guide	Activity and Resource Manual
Explanation of the GPDRR framework: Goal Plan Do Review Revise	Participant Tools  Workshops  Group and Individual Practice Activities  <i>All grounded in adult learning theory</i>



## Staff's Role

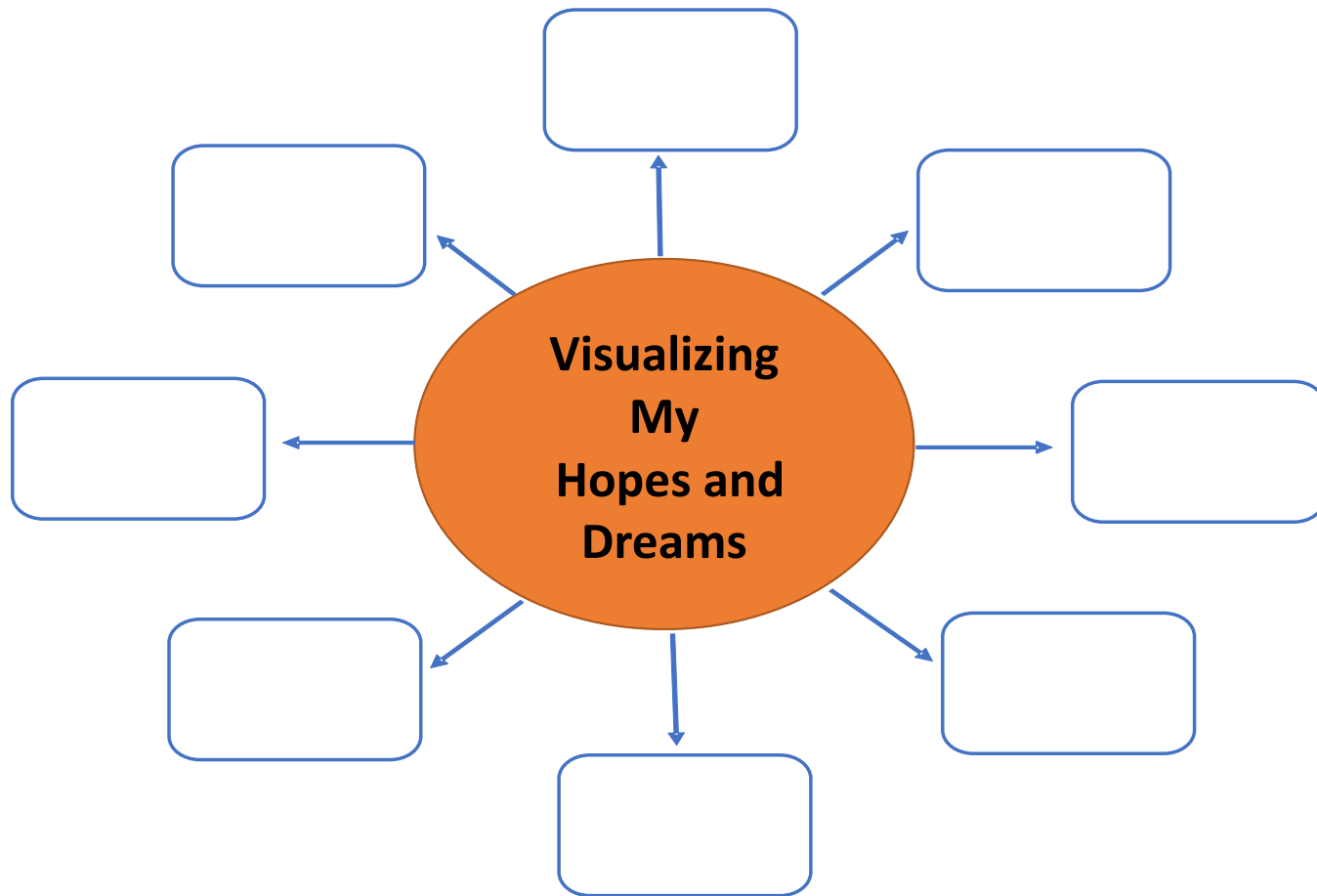
The two-part manual is designed to help staff effectively support participant's goal achievement....

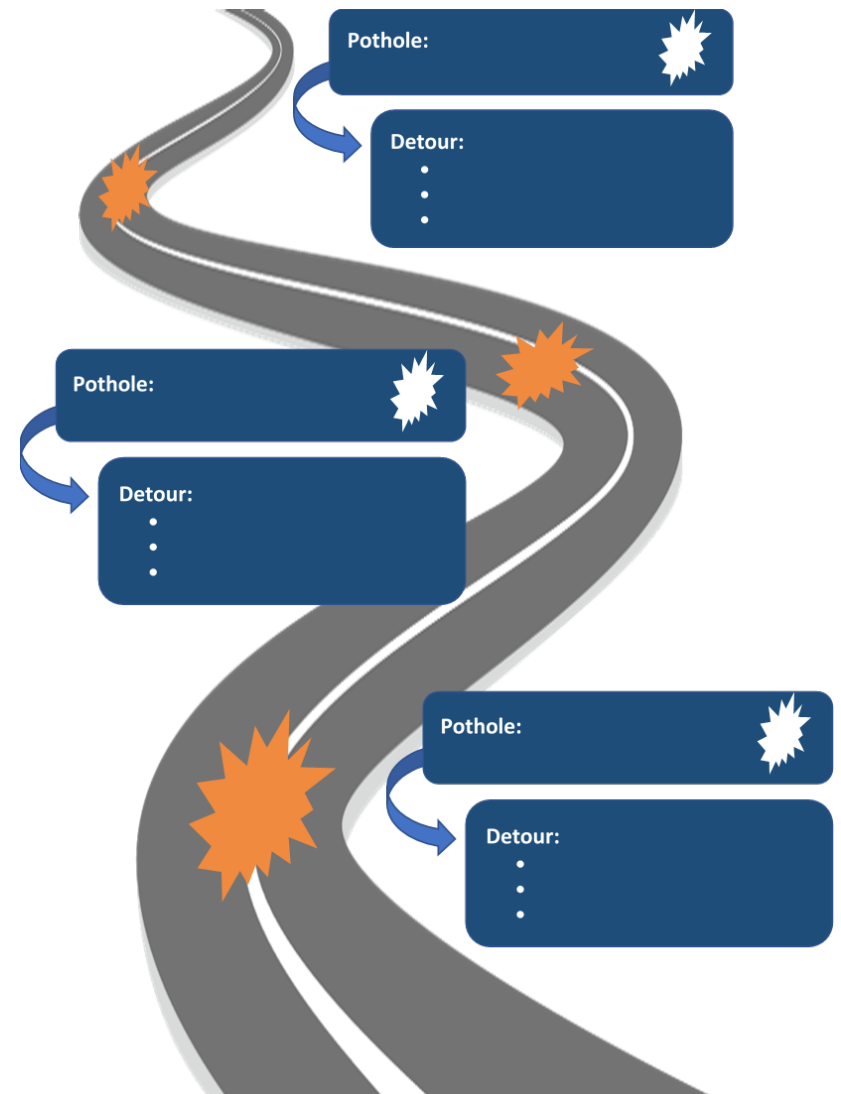
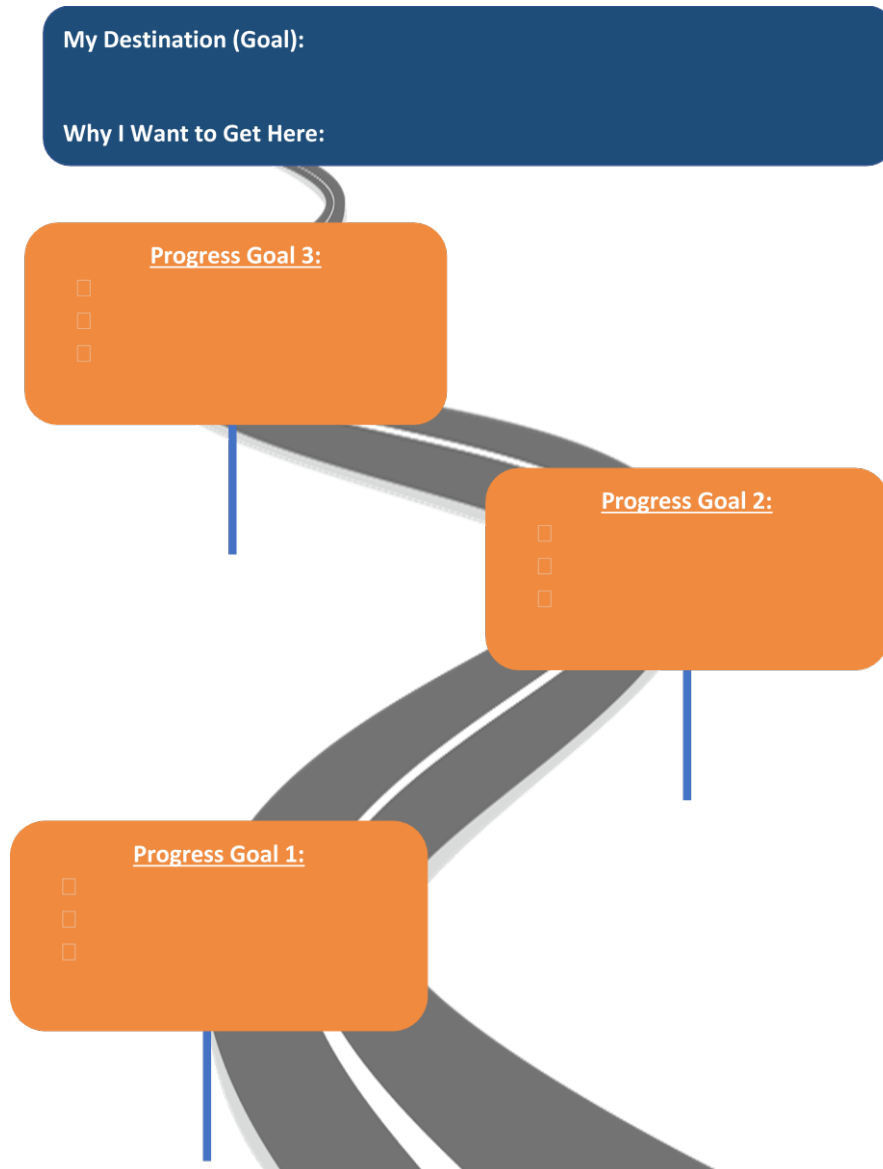
- Focus on the Future
- Mark the Path
- Ease the Way
- Guide
- Affirm and Encourage





# **Sample Tools and Activities from the GPDRR Resource Manual**







## Plan: Example of an Action Plan

Name\_\_\_\_\_My Goal\_\_\_\_\_

Action Plan Start Date\_\_\_\_\_Action Plan Review Date\_\_\_\_\_

Things I need to do	When I will do them (date and time)	Things I need to take with me	Where I will go and how I will get there

Obstacles and Solutions	
What Could Get in the Way	My Solution



# Example: An Adaptable Two-Day Workshop to Teach the GPDRR Process

WORKSHOP PART ONE	WORKSHOP PART TWO
Objectives	
<p>In part one, participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore a proven process for achieving life's goals</li><li>• Set one heartfelt and achievable goal</li><li>• Develop a plan for achieving this goal and map out specific action steps to "Do" the plan</li></ul>	<p>In part two (at least 1 day later after participants have had the opportunity to "do" their plan), participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review their experience</li><li>• Revise their goal and/or their plan</li><li>• Reflect on this goal-achievement process and make it their own</li></ul>
Agenda	
<p>30 min.   A Proven Process 15 min.   One Personal Goal 45 min.   A Plan for Getting There 30 min.   Action Steps to "Do" the Plan</p>	<p>30 min.   Review 45 min.   Revise 30 min.   Take it Away 15 min.   Closing</p>



# Example: Modeling GPDRR In Your Existing Job Search Program

## Modeling GPDRR: Resume Workshop Example

Model GPDRR both verbally and in writing so that participants can both hear and see the full goal achievement process in action.

Text in *italics* denotes a script that you can use to introduce each of the components of GPDRR and text in regular type to provide any necessary explanations.

As you read, please think of at least one part of your own job search program and how you might model GPDRR within it.

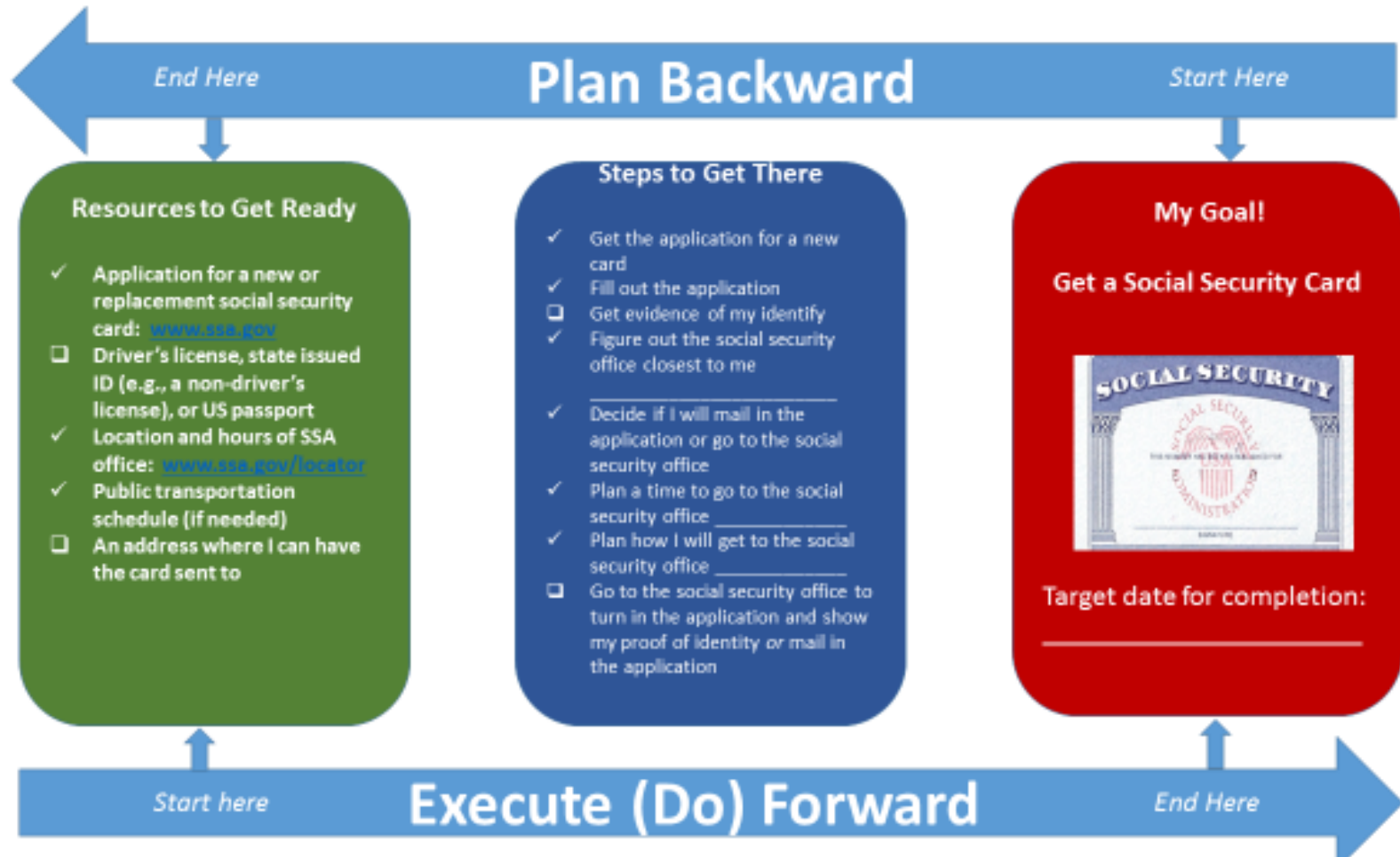
- **Resume Approaches**  
Whether you need a new resume or just want to improve an existing one, this workshop will help you highlight your best skills and qualifications to get you one step closer to the job you want!
- **Resume Approaches Workshop Pt. 1**  
Bring in an old resume or start from scratch in this introductory workshop for writing a resume that best reflects your true potential.
- **Resume Approaches Workshop Pt. 2**  
Learn how to make targeted resumes for different industries and skill sets, leaving with electronic copies of your very own resume.

### GOAL

*Welcome to the first session of a two-part workshop on Resume Approaches. Our goal is that, by the end of these two workshops, each of you will have a complete electronic, up-to-date resume.*

*You might think that is a lot to accomplish in the time we have, but I'm confident that, together, we can achieve this goal. How does this sound to you?*

## Plan: Example of Backward Mapping





## Building on What Works

Before we talk about next steps, please provide some feedback:

- *What questions did this webinar raise for you?*
- *What ideas does it give you to build on what already works in your program?*

**Please type your questions and ideas into the chat box!**





## Next Steps

We hope that everyone on this webinar will...

- Choose one thing that resonated for you from this webinar and see how you can implement it in your program
- Review the manual and provide feedback (links on the BBB website)
- Experiment with ways to strengthen/ fortify what already works in your program
- Consider joining us for a workshop and field test phase



## Opportunities

If you are interested, here are opportunities for the next phase:

- Apply for the in-person January workshop (application at [buildingbetterprograms.org](http://buildingbetterprograms.org))
- Request in-program support
- Exchange discoveries and recommendations



## For More Information:

Building Better Programs: [www.buildingbetterprograms.org](http://www.buildingbetterprograms.org)

- Executive Function Tab for Goal, Plan, Do, Review and Revise materials
- Sign up for e-mail list

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