Slide 1

Tips and Strategies for Educators to Help an Unmotivated Kid

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Slide 2

Goals of Webinar

Where does academic motivation come from?

How does ADHD interfere with academic motivation?

What can educators do to build self-motivation in students with ADHD?

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Slide 3

Student Motivation and Learning

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Kevin

- 14 years old, 8th grade, loves video games
- Making a mix of Bs, Cs, and Ds due to missing and low-quality work
- Diagnosis of ADHD, takes ADHD medication
- Rarely studies, sometimes reads over study guides the day before a test
- Mostly tells parents he did his homework at school, teachers say he rushes through
- Parents want him to advocate for himself more with teachers. He says nothing can help him, school's just not my thing.
- Says school is boring and that he is learning nothing useful.
- Wants to run a YouTube channel after he graduates.

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Goal: Be an Active Participant in Your Own Learning

Individual factors that influence engagement:
- Motivational
- Cognitive
- Behavioral

Self Regulated Learning Theory; Zimmerman (2002)

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Motivational Factors

- Intrinsic motivation- do they find aspects of school interesting, enjoyable, or engaging

- Self-efficacy-do they believe they are capable of successful learning?

- Extrinsic motivation- Are there personally meaningful consequences of academic engagement?

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Cognitive Factors

- Executive Functioning
- Strategic Planning
- Memorizing
- Seeking Information
- Organizing oneself to complete tasks

They may be motivated, but can they get themselves to follow through and execute on motivation?

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Behavioral Factors (Skills)

- Structuring your environment to promote learning
- Keeping notes
- Reviewing texts and materials
- Seeking assistance from peers and adults

Zimmerman, 2008

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Kevin

- Motivational Factors:
  - Intrinsic Motivation "school is boring"
  - Self-Efficacy "School's just not my thing."
  - Extrinsic Motivation "I'm not learning anything useful", doesn't see a link between his interests (video games and digital technology) and school
- Cognitive Factors:
  - Lack of self-organization, executive function strategies
- Behavioral Factors:
  - Fails to study
  - Rushes through work
  - Does not seek help

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Does ADHD Influence Academic Engagement?

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Motivational Factors- Intrinsic

- ADHD is associated with abnormal anticipatory dopamine response
- Experience lower levels of endogenous pleasure during learning
- Students with ADHD report lower levels of interest in academics
- Find lengthy assignments aversive
- Lower experiences of novelty, curiosity, enjoyment
- Repetitive and complex tasks are hardest for students with ADHD
- Students with ADHD experience mental discomfort during tasks with delayed rewards (i.e., long-term project, final exams)
- Explains student preference for immediately rewarding activities (video games, social media)

Carlson, Booth, Shin, and Canu, 2002; Morsink et al., 2017; Oudeyer, Kaplan, Hafner, 2007; Volkow et al., 2011; Sonuga-Barke, Sergeant, Nigg, & Wilcutt, 2008

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Motivational Factors- Extrinsic

- Built in preferences for immediate reinforcement (delay discounting deficits) prevent valuation of grades (long-term, symbolic reinforcer)
- Students with ADHD show insensitivity to negative consequences
- Reduces day to day motivation to avoid negative consequences (retention, suspension)
- Students with ADHD report lower valuing of academic achievement and mastery compared to peers

Barron et al., 2006; Colomer, Berenguer, Roselló, Baixauli, & Miranda, 2017; Gut, Heckmann, Meyer, Schmid, & Grob, 2012; Olivier & Steenkamp, 2004; Zentall & Beike, 2012; Scheres et al., 2006; Toplak, Jain, & Tannock, 2005

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Motivational Factors- Self-Efficacy

- Students with ADHD receive years of continuous criticism from peers, parents, teachers, and self
- Can develop negative beliefs about the self
- Students with ADHD may exert lower academic effort if they believe they are unlikely to be successful even with effort

Newark, Elsasser, & Stieglitz, 2016

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Cognitive Factors

- Executive functions are impaired in most individuals with ADHD
  - Working memory-ability to sustain mental representation of a desired outcome
  - Response inhibition (i.e., ability to suppress urges to engage in problematic behaviors)
  - Cognitive flexibility (i.e., ability to shift from one strategy to another according to the demands of a new situation)
- Interferes with goal-directed academic behaviors
- Individuals with ADHD show difficulties with goal setting and goal pursuit

Castellanos et al., 2006; Sonuga-Barke, 2003; Hoza, Waschbusch, Owens, Pelham, & Kipp, 2001; Nyman et al., 2010

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Behavioral Factors

- Students with ADHD often lack the adaptive skills to apply themselves
  - Study skills
  - Materials management
  - Note-taking
  - Time management
  - Communication skills with peers and adults

Langberg et al., 2013; Kent et al., 2011

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How to foster self-motivation in students with ADHD?

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1. Harness Natural Interests

- Create opportunities for the student to make choices about areas of work and play that interest them most
- Find out what they are interested in. Weave natural interests into learning tasks.
- For older students: consider helping the student identify educational tracks or paths that connect to their interests
- What can you do to maximize the student's curiosity and enjoyment in your classroom? Students with ADHD need this most.

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2. Build self-efficacy

- Social encouragement: catch them doing things well and acknowledge their efforts
- Create visual monitoring of progress so students can see themselves advance, learn, and grow (levels systems, graphs, sticker charts)
- Avoid shaming and blaming
- Set fair expectations, that match their ability level so incremental success is celebrated
- Communicate that you value effort more than achievement
- Celebrate successes
- Ensure you have a 2:1 ratio of positive feedback to negative feedback to your students about their academic work

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3. Enhance desirability of positive academic behaviors

- Help student identify personally meaningful benefits of academic engagement
- Consider implementing an extrinsic rewards system when natural motivators cannot be identified
- Students with ADHD demonstrate lower response to rewards *but*
  - Elementary: Classroom behavior games, school-home rewards system, and token economies can be effective
  - Middle school: Home-school rewards systems can be effective
  - High School: Social reinforcement from peers (peer mentorship model) can be effective

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Behavioral Contingency Systems: Classroom

- Flip Card System (Stop-Light)
  - Visual board where each child has a green, yellow, & red card
  - All children start on "green"
  - Children are asked to change their card when classroom rules are broken
  - **Important that children are able to earn cards back**
    - Resetting cards to "green" after every period (or half-day)
    - Ability to go back to "yellow" or "green" for positive behavior
  - Different rewards for green vs. yellow day/period

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Behavioral Contingency Systems

- Token Economy
  - Point system (use tokens/chips)
  - Earn/lose points for **specific** behaviors
  - Use points to earn daily rewards
  - For younger children **tangible** tokens/poi

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Group Contingency: Classroom

Good Behavior Game

- Identify target behavior (e.g., classroom rule; raise your hand)
- Divide children within the class into teams
- Teams earn points for following the rule
- Teams lose a point for breaking the rule
- At the end of the activity/day, tally the points for teams
- Winning team earns a reward/privilege

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Daily Report Card

- Allows parent and teacher to communicate
- Lists daily target behaviors at school
- Teacher indicates whether child met target behavior goals
- Parent provides rewards at home when target behavior goals are met
- Daily (rather than weekly) reports are needed because children with ADHD need immediate and consistent feedback on their behavior

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Daily Report Card: Select Goals

- Involve parents and teachers
- Determine child's greatest areas of difficulty
- Think about peer relations, classroom rule-following, behavior toward adults, and academic performance

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Daily Report Card: Define Goals

- Make sure the behavior is meaningful
- Clear definition so parent, teacher, and child understand
- Needs to be observable and measurable (i.e., it can be counted)
- DRC should have 3 to 5 target behaviors
- Examples:
  - No instances of teasing a classmate
  - Completes all homework
  - Breaks two or fewer classroom rules

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Daily Report Card: Criteria

- Establish baseline behavior.
  - How often does child perform each target behavior?
  - How severe is the behavior?
- Goal should be a 20% improvement from current functioning
  - Ensures that goals are realistic for the child
- Allow child to miss one goal and still get reward (no one is perfect)

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Daily Report Card: Explain to Child

- Explain DRC in a positive manner
- Will help child focus and overcome difficulties
- An opportunity to earn rewards
- Make sure child understands how DRC works

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Daily Report Card: Establish Home Rewards

- Child and parent should select rewards together (ensures that child likes the rewards)
- Rewards should be natural (electronic device, play time) instead of artificial (gifts, money)
- Menu of rewards can be used to keep child interested
  - Child chooses one reward off the menu each day
- Long term rewards can be added when there is consistent good performance on the DRC (i.e., bigger weekly or monthly rewards)

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For Older Students:

- Offer a rationale for why the requested task is necessary
  - I would like you to spend at least 30 minutes on homework each day so that we can make sure you pass the class
- Acknowledge that the task is dull or boring
  - I know that this class is not as interesting to you as other classes, and that you aren't happy about this request.
- When the student doesn't see a point, acknowledge rather than argue.
  - I get that this is an area we see differently on, so I am willing to offer you a deal to help us compromise (ex: if you turn in a hw assignment completed, I will give you extra credit on your participation grade for that day).

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4. Model and Encourage Goal Setting.

- Help student think about their priorities.
- Goal setting can promote the pursuit of priorities.
- Goals can be short-term or long-term:
  - By the end of the week, I'd like to finish my science project.
  - By the end of this study session, I'd like to make 50 flashcards
- Help students identify steps to meet their goals
- Track progress on goals visually
- Consider using reinforcement (social or tangible) for meeting milestones

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Middle School Intervention for ADHD

- Focus on teaching executive function skills
  - Materials organization
  - Time management
  - Planning
  - Study Skills
- School staff meets twice weekly with student one on one to monitor progress
- Parents are taught to reward progress in notes sent home from teacher

Langberg et al., 2012

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Peer-delivered Intervention

- Successful peers are paired with struggling students
- Social reinforcement for goal setting, monitoring progress, and executive function skill use

Sibley et al., 2020, *School Psychology Review*

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Kevin

- Help Kevin identify courses that interest him as he moves to high school
- Use an intervention like HOPS to promote skills, executive functions, and motivation
- Involve home reinforcement that may include extra video game time for meeting academic expectations—limits when work isn't done yet
- Set SMART goals in alignment with class instruction
- Find small opportunities to provide encouragement and reinforcment

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Conclusions

- Students with ADHD are at risk for motivation and executive function deficits at school
- Strategies to address motivational challenges include:
  - Structuring tasks to harness intrinsic motivation
  - Building student self-efficacy
  - Enhancing student perception that task is personally beneficial
  - Use of Reinforcement Systems
  - Use of Goal Setting
  - Interventions for older students that combine
    - Behavioral skills
    - Cognitive Strategies
    - Reinforcement strategies to build motivation

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