



# THE EMPOWERED Learner Conference

The Power of Executive Function

## Presenter

**Dr. Brittany Barber**  
Psychologist, Clinical Director  
The Affinity Center  
10:00 a.m.

**Molly Bernosky**  
Director  
Springer Diagnostic Center  
11:15 a.m.

**Dr. Cheryl Chase**  
Founder  
Chasing Your Potential  
10:00 a.m.

## Session Description

### The ADHD Iceberg: The Hidden Links between Attention, Emotion, and Memory

ADHD is frequently written off as "not paying enough attention", or "having too much energy." In this presentation, we will explore the connections between executive functioning areas, specifically attention, emotions, and memory, and their impact on an individual's ability to manage their ADHD effectively. The goal of this presentation is to help develop a better understanding of what might be going on below the surface of the iceberg in order to recognize, and as a result, support the symptoms and daily struggles of ADHD.

### Pause, Check, Adjust: Teaching Self-Monitoring Skills in the ADHD Classroom

Defining and experiencing what self-monitoring looks like, classroom strategies to support self-monitoring, and building a self-monitoring culture.

### Dyslexia and ADHD - What If It's Both?

When students struggle with both dyslexia and ADHD, the challenges can multiply - but so can the opportunities for targeted support. This session explores how co-occurring learning and attention differences impact reading, executive function, and classroom behavior. Participants will learn how to recognize overlapping symptoms, avoid common misinterpretations, and implement strategies that address both conditions simultaneously. This session empowers educators to respond with clarity, compassion, and confidence.

## Presenter

**Dr. Cheryl Chase**

Founder

Chasing Your Potential

11:15 a.m.

**Dr. Amanda Conrad**

School Psychologist, Associate Professor

of Pediatrics, Behavioral Medicine and

Clinical Psychology

Cincinnati Children's

1:15 p.m.

**Sara Straley Cooper**

Speech Language Pathologist

Springer School and Center

11:15 a.m.

## Session Description

### **Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder at School: What's a teacher to do?**

ADHD can present in diverse ways across students, often challenging even the most experienced educators. This session offers a practical, research-informed look at how ADHD affects learning, behavior, and classroom dynamics. Participants will explore common myths, understand the neurological underpinnings of attention and self-regulation, and learn strategies that support executive function, reduce friction, and promote student success. Emphasis will be placed on proactive, inclusive approaches that benefit all learners - not just those with formal diagnoses.

### **Sanding Down the Myths of ADHD: Facts & Strategies to Get Students Engaged**

Move beyond the myths to form a real understanding of ADHD that will help you get your student engaged! Gain an understanding of the neurobiology and psycho-education of ADHD, understand common myths and misconceptions about ADHD, learn behavioral and environmental strategies at home to improve compliance and reduce academic difficulties related to attention, and get strategies to ensure adequate supports for your child at school.

### **Promoting Oral Language to Increase Writing Skills in the Classroom**

This session will discuss the connection between oral language skills and written language skills (reading comprehension and written expression) and offer practical strategies to support student success in the classroom.



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## Presenter

**Dr. Tracy Cummings, MD**  
Chief of Child/Adolescent Psychiatry,  
Medical Director of Adolescent PHP/IOP  
Lindner Center of Hope  
1:15 p.m.

**Kari Dixon**  
Language Arts Program Coordinator,  
Teacher, Learning Specialist  
Episcopal Day School of St. Matthew

**Courtney Rodgers**  
Lower School Learning Specialist  
Episcopal Day School of St. Matthew  
1:15 p.m.

## Session Description

### **Finding Function: Timeline, Tools and Treatment to Optimize Executive Functioning in Youth**

From the perspective of a board-certified child/adolescent psychiatrist, the session will highlight developmental milestones of executive functioning in children and adolescents, offering a practical framework for identifying and addressing executive function challenges as they arise. Tools for assessing and addressing executive functioning across home, school, and clinical settings will be discussed, with guidance on tailoring evaluations to different age groups and neurodevelopmental profiles. Individualized treatment strategies will be explored through a multidisciplinary lens, from behavioral supports to pharmacological options. Attendees will be left with a clear understanding of how to recognize executive function difficulties early, how to select effective tools and treatment options for intervention, and how to move toward meaningful, functional outcomes for youth.

### **Designing Instruction to Manage Cognitive Load: Strategies to Empower Diverse Learners**

In classrooms with diverse learners, students bring varying levels of working memory, attention, and executive functioning. When instructional materials inadvertently overload students, cognitive resources are spent managing complexity rather than learning. This interactive session introduces the principles of cognitive load theory and demonstrates practical strategies to reduce extraneous load and optimize learning. Participants will explore ways to redesign lessons using techniques such as chunking, signaling, worked examples, and modality switching. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to create lessons that are engaging, accessible, and supportive of all learners, including those with attention or learning differences.



## Presenter

Rachel Eccles, LPCC-S, RPT  
Clinical Counselor  
Springer School and Center  
1:15 p.m.

Erin Fiorito, LPCC-S  
Clinical Counselor  
E&L Counseling

Molly Ireton, LISW-S  
Therapist  
The Firefly Company  
10:00 a.m.

Barbara Hunter  
Owner  
Integrated Learning Designs  
1:15 p.m.

Cassandra Jones  
Director of Accessibility  
Xavier University  
10:00 a.m.

## Session Description

### Emotional First Aide

Adults will learn tools they can use in the classroom every day that will help them when a child becomes dysregulated. The tools can be behavioral (what can the do) & Cognitive (How can I think about the situation) Teachers will also gain resources they can use in the moment when a student become emotional.

### Friendship Foundations: Helping Children and Adolescents Build Healthy Social Skills and Connections

This program will focus on typical development of social skills in children and adolescents, and will highlight common barriers to success for youth in social settings.

### Teaching Students How to Manage Academic Information to Reduce Learning and Test Anxiety

Students often neglect studying and find it a source of anxiety, largely because they lack an understanding of how to manage the mountain of academic concepts presented to them. In this session, educators will learn how to teach information management directly to students and unlock a powerful method for really learning content for improved outcomes. Participants will leave with strategies and examples of how to use this approach immediately.

### Planning with a Purpose

This interactive session explores the connection between intentional planning skills and executive functioning. Participants will learn practical strategies to improve time management, enhance organization, and prioritize tasks effectively. Attendees will gain tools to increase productivity, reduce stress, and achieve personal goals through purposeful planning. Through guided discussion and real-world examples, this session empowers participants to move beyond making lists to creating meaningful systems that foster long-term success and well-being.



## Presenter

**Dr. Velissarios Karacostas, MD**  
Child Psychiatrist  
Cincinnati Center for Psychotherapy  
and Psychoanalysis

**Dr. Helmut Roehrig**  
Clinical Psychologist  
Springer School and Center  
11:15 a.m.

**Dr. Melissa Miller**  
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics  
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical  
Center  
10:00 a.m.

## Session Description

### **Attention Management: How Medication Impacts Executive Function and Shapes Student Learning**

ADHD affects more than just attention - it impacts the executive function skills that drive planning, working memory, and emotional control. This session reviews how psychiatric management and medication fit within a broader framework of support for students. Educators will leave with a better understanding of what medication can and can't help manage for the student with ADHD and what other practical tools may be helpful in maximizing a student's performance and engagement in the classroom.

### **Distracted by Daydreams: Identifying and Supporting Youth with Cognitive Disengagement Syndrome**

Cognitive disengagement syndrome (CDS, previously referred to as "sluggish cognitive tempo" or SCT) includes a set of attention problems that differ from those in ADHD. Up to half of those who have ADHD also experience CDS symptoms, especially those who have the inattentive presentation. However, CDS can also be present in children and teens who do not have ADHD. CDS is linked to poorer mental health, sleep impairment, academic challenges, and social difficulties. Despite this, CDS is often unfamiliar to families, teachers, and clinical providers. This presentation aims to provide education on CDS, including: 1) what CDS is and how it differs from ADHD, 2) difficulties associated with CDS at home, in school, and with peers, and 3) strategies for helping youth with CDS at home and in school.



## Presenter

**Adam Moler**  
Social Studies Teacher  
St. Ursula Villa - EduProtocols  
10:00 a.m.

**Ashley Morgan**  
Assistant Principal  
Walnut Hills High School  
Cincinnati Public Schools  
1:15 p.m.

**Bradley Paramore**  
Diagnostic Psychologist  
Springer Diagnostic Center  
10:00 a.m.

## Session Description

### **Engagement for Every Learner: Using EduProtocols to Reach All Students**

This session introduces three beginner-friendly EduProtocols—Fast & Curious, Thin Slide, and Sketch & Tell-o—that make lessons more engaging and accessible for all learners. Participants will experience each protocol hands-on and learn how they provide structure, repetition, and creativity that naturally support students with diverse needs, including attention and executive functioning challenges. By the end of the session, teachers will leave with ready-to-use strategies they can apply immediately to boost participation, lower stress, and help every student succeed.

### **Small Shifts, Big Impact: Leading Change Through Positive Culture**

What if small changes could transform your entire school culture? Drawing on lessons learned from serving as a principal for a year, this session explores practical strategies for building a positive culture, supporting strong classroom teams, and integrating restorative practices. Participants will leave with easy, actionable steps to begin creating meaningful change in their schools today.

### **How Challenges with Executive Functioning Impact Academics and Practical Strategies for Managing EF**

Challenges with executive functioning can manifest in academic underachievement for students who otherwise have average to above average academic skills. Learn some of the ways difficulties with executive functioning may manifest academically as well as strategies to support common challenges with executive functioning.



## Presenter

Dr. Larissa Phillips  
Director  
The Center for Reading Science  
1:15 p.m.

Brooke Richart  
Clinical Mental Health Counselor  
Pediatric Associates PSC  
11:15 a.m.

## Session Description

### Active Participation - Everyone Does Everything!

This session explores the critical role of active participation in student learning and classroom management. Grounded in research-based practices, participants will examine the concepts of Opportunities to Respond (OTR) - instructional prompts that elicit frequent student engagement through verbal, written, and action-based responses. The session will highlight evidence-backed strategies to enhance student interaction, decrease off-task behaviors, and improve learning outcomes, particularly in structured literacy instruction.

### How To Put Executive Function Knowledge into Practice, At Home and School

The session will include defining the specific parts of a "target task," the executive function skills involved, and then finding ways to modify the nature of the task, the environment, or the way they interact with the child/student, keeping in mind the strengths/weaknesses of themselves and the child/student. It would then cover ways to directly teach these tasks and design a plan to motivate the learner, track progress, and work towards independence. It will be a mix of me modeling this with a task and participants designing their own plan. I would ask participants to come with ideas about what tasks they want to target.



## Presenter

Alexis Rod, RN, APRN  
Cofounder and President  
The Digital Balance Project

Meghan Robinson, PT DPT OMT-c CCI  
Cofounder and Vice President  
The Digital Balance Project  
11:15 a.m.

Tyler Spaeth  
High School Teacher  
Springer High School

Megan Sheanshang  
High School Teacher  
Springer High School  
11:15 a.m.

## Session Description

**Anxious Generation: "We Read it So You Don't Have To" – a breakdown of the viral book written by Jonathan Haidt**

The Anxious Generation is a 2024 book by Jonathan Haidt which argues that the spread of smartphones, social media, and overprotective parenting have led to a "rewiring" of childhood and a rise in mental illness. This session explores these concepts in depth, providing a clear overview of the developmental risks associated with social media and screen overuse, strategies for setting age-appropriate digital boundaries, and tools for creating tech plans that align with family values.

**Engagement Strategies for the High School Math and Science Classroom: Tips, Tricks, and Misconceptions from Two Teachers**

The goal of this breakout room is to offer teachers more "tools" in their toolbox to support students with their executive function in the math and science classroom. Higher level math and science can present difficulties to students' working memory, processing, and schema. Megan and I wish to share what has worked for us, while also giving teachers the space to discuss what is currently working for them and brainstorm anything else they would like to implement in their classroom and/or schools.



## Presenter

**Dr. Wendy Strickler**  
Associate Professor  
Mount St. Joseph University

**Dr. Megan Dinnesen**  
Assistant Professor  
Mount St. Joseph University  
11:15 a.m.

**Sarah Ward, M.S., CCC-SLP**  
Co-Director of Cognitive  
Connections, LLP  
10:00 a.m.

**Carly Wise**  
Math and Technology Specialist  
Springer School and Center  
1:15 p.m.

## Session Description

### Cognitive Load in the Classroom

In this session, we will provide background research on cognitive load and considerations for addressing executive functioning across grade levels. Participants will practice the application of strategies for reducing cognitive load and plan for increased engagement and more efficient and effective learning opportunities. Participants will leave our session with better understanding of student needs related to executive functioning and strategies for addressing those needs in the classroom.

### Beyond the Checklist: Executive Function Strategies to Build Independent Thinkers

Discover how to help students see the plan, not just follow a checklist. Learn how to use mental dress rehearsal (MIME) and representational co-thought gestures to build true task planning skills - so students can move from needing constant cues to independently getting stuff done.

### Intersection of Math and Executive Function

The most successful mathematician not only understands mathematical concepts, but has working Executive Function skills as well. How does working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility impact math learning? What are the classroom routines and individual strategies that can help students overcome EF weaknesses to demonstrate their mathematical knowledge? Participants will leave with an understanding of how to create an environment of success for students and with increased confidence to provide just-right strategies to address EF weaknesses.

