

Brain Functions: What Does ABA Have to Do With it?

- Dr. Kasia Motylewicz, MS, DBH, BCBA

Abstract:

Executive functioning (EF) is the brain's director of operations: it manages and coordinates various processes, identifies and filters importance of the sensory input and coordinates the output. It is a set of specific cognitive skills such as impulse control, decision making, planning, maintaining motivation, attention control, finishing tasks, and many more... These skills allow us to plan ahead, stay focused, filter distractions, follow multi-step directions, and control our impulses. Many neurodivergent people present with deficits in executive functions. ABA can be very effective in building specific skills such as "dealing" with distractions, increasing attention span, strengthening visual and auditory memory, setting up goals, planning and organizing, increasing flexibility, initiating difficult tasks, managing own time, or self-monitoring.

Learning objectives:

1. Participants will be able to identify the brain regions and their functions in developmental context
2. Participants will be able to identify how executive functions impact the ability to manage time, tasks, and emotions
3. Participants will learn about the dysfunction of executive functions and how it can affect behavior
4. Participants will learn how executive functions present in neurodivergent people
5. Participants will learn about effectiveness of ABA in building the executive functions skills

About the Speaker:

Dr. Katarzyna Motylewicz, MS, DBH, BCBA, is an autism specialist with a BA in psychology from the City University of New York (CUNY), postgraduate degrees from Touro College and Penn State, and a PhD in behavioral health from the Cummings Graduate Institute. With extensive experience as a clinical director and consultant, she focuses on integrated approaches to improving motor and social communication skills in children with autism. Additionally, as a former athlete and karate practitioner, she has integrated her passion for sports into her clinical work by developing a functional training protocol for clinicians treating individuals with ASD.

