

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING AHEAD OF AND MANAGING CAMPER ANXIETY & DYSREGULATION

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Welcome + Optional Warm-Up Activity

01

Grab a Brain Printout

Pick up a brain printout near the projector. These are for our first activity together!

02

Take Markers/Crayons

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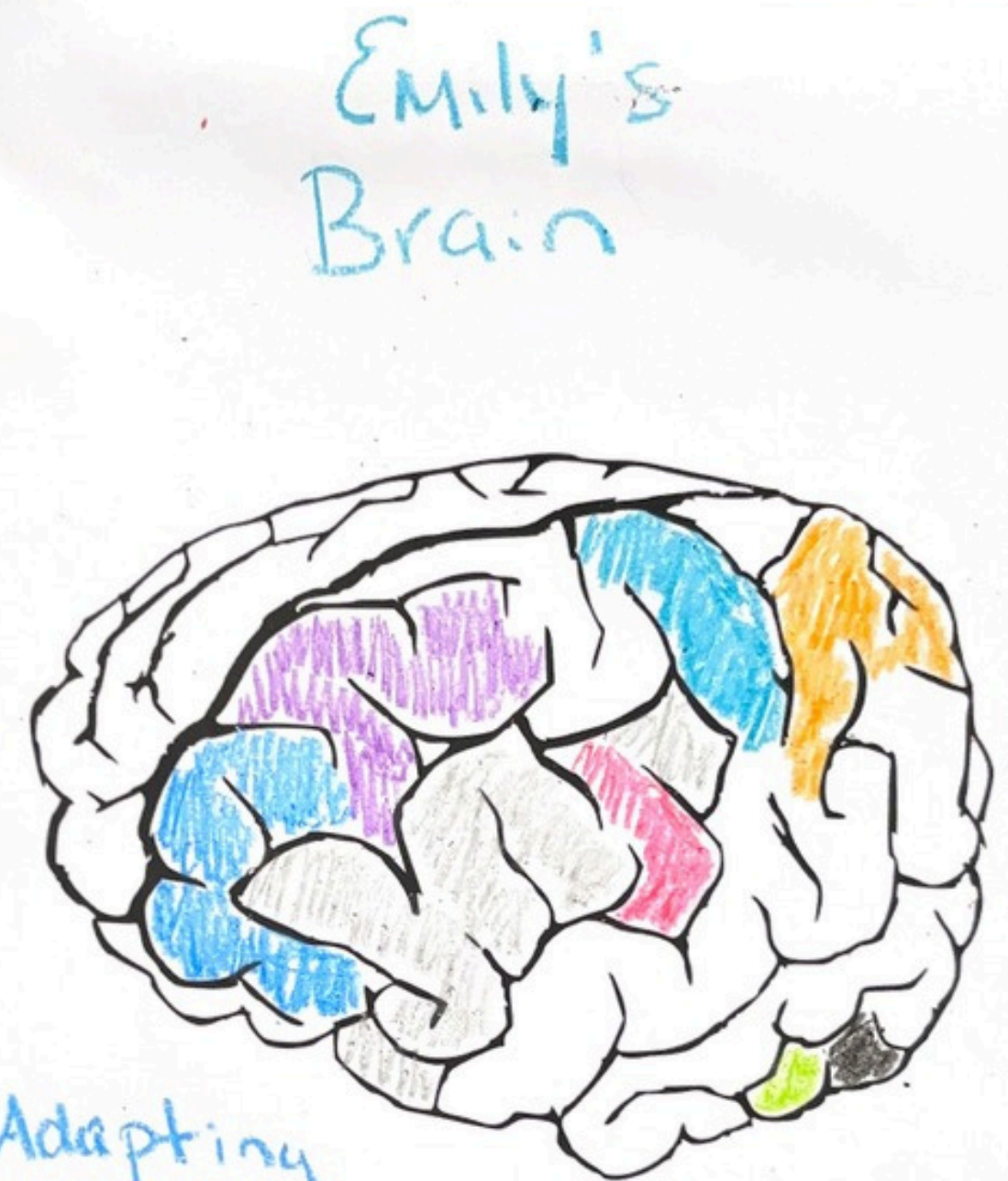
Choose your favorite colors from the art supplies. You'll use these to color your brain drawing.

03

Color Your Brain

Highlight areas of strength and areas for growth.

- Do I have to share? No!
- What is this for? We'll talk about it.
- Participation is *optional*; explanation to follow.
- I'm no brain expert!!! Doesn't matter, just color where you want!



- Adapting
- Making Friends
- Planning Ahead
- Problem-Solving
- Loving My Family
- Skiing
- Singing
- Being Outside
- tedious details

When We Don't Know the Plan

We worry about what's coming next. When campers worry, they may act out, withdraw, or struggle to participate fully in activities.

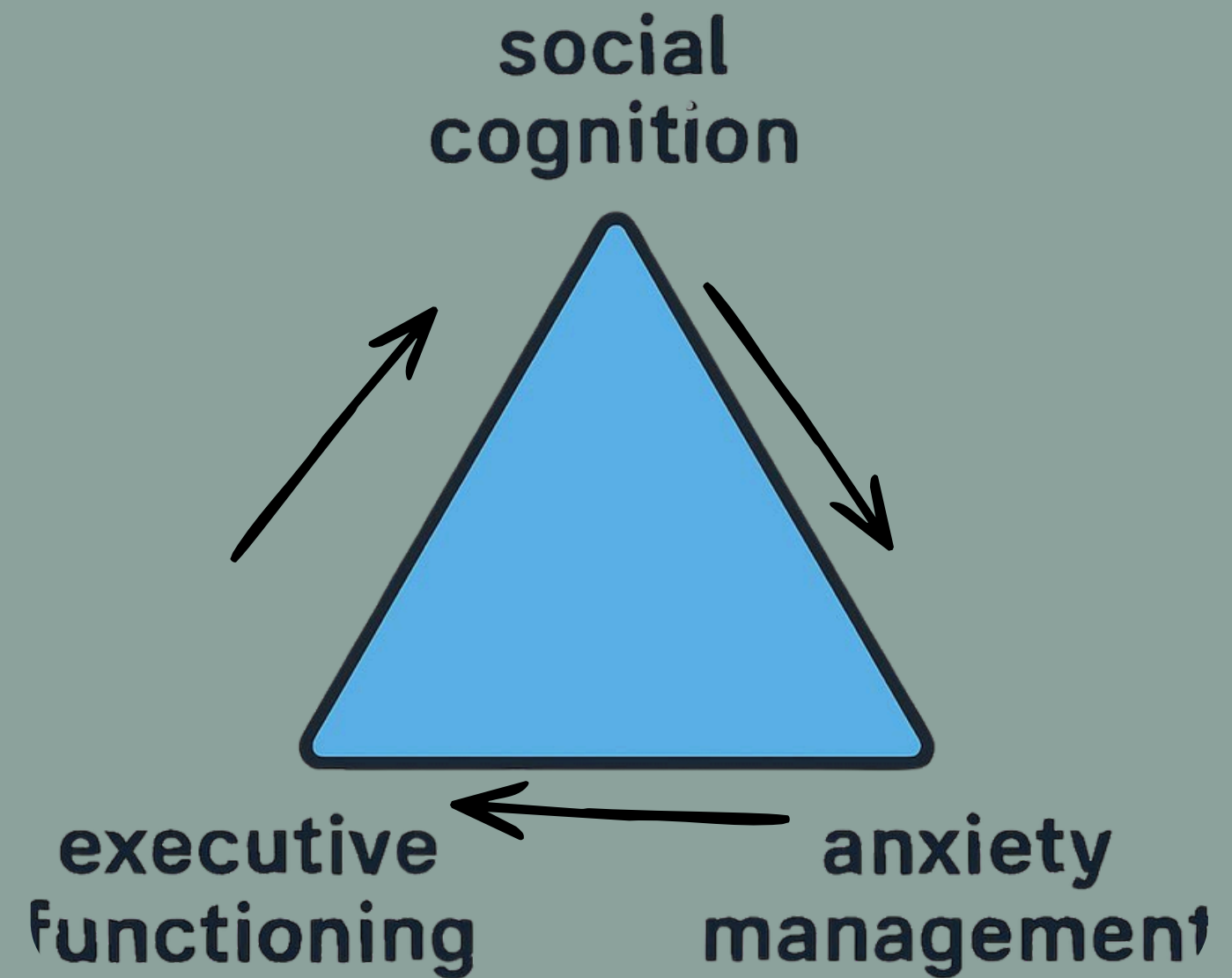
Executive Functioning Is

The ability to Plan, Process, Regulate, and Engage. These are the mental skills that help campers navigate their day successfully.

Why This Matters

Anxiety impacts our ability to think clearly, follow routines, and participate. Understanding this helps us support our campers better. And helps us understand ourselves!

Executive Functioning + Anxiety



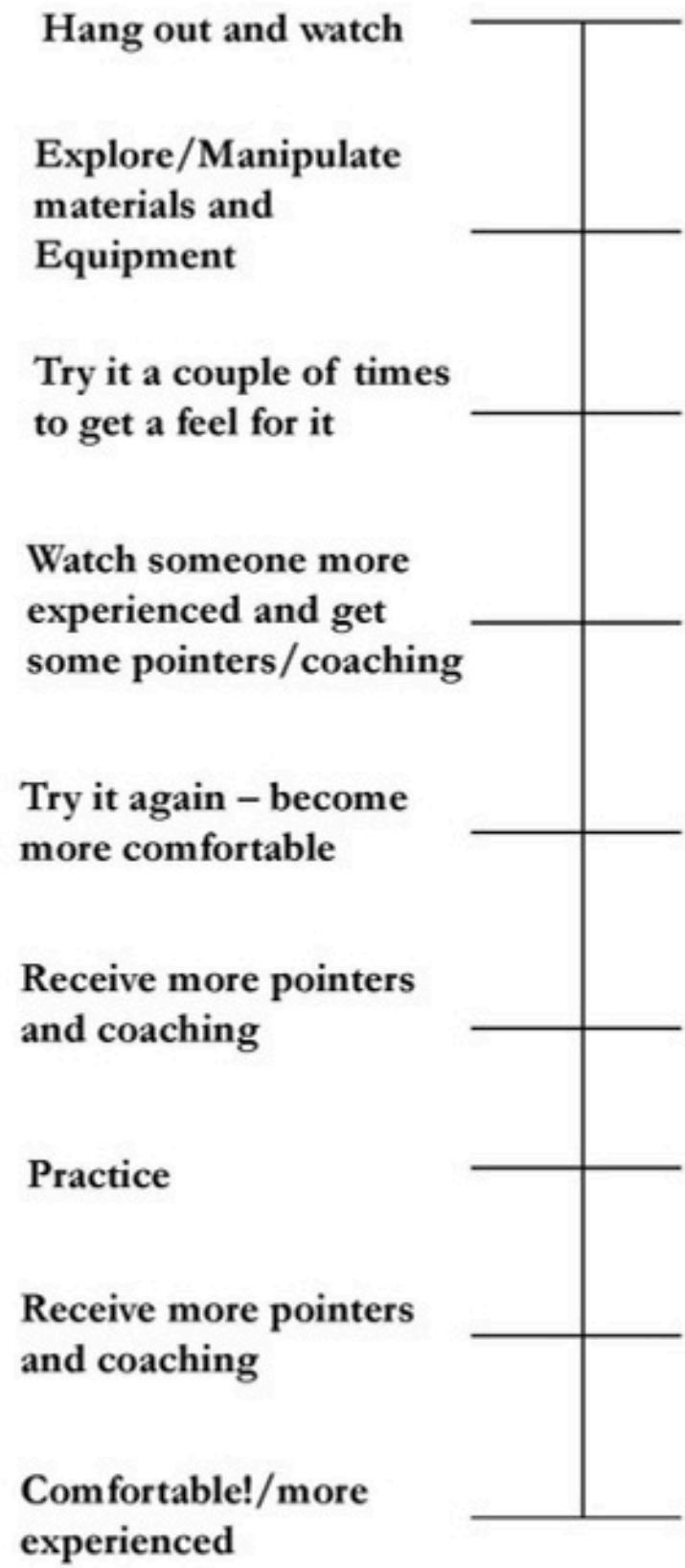
**This camper isn't giving me a hard
time, this child is
HAVING A HARD TIME.**

Know Your Camp's Capacity

- ✓ **What Does Inclusion Mean Here?**
Be honest about what you can and can't do.
Set Expectations Early -
Go with the Group Plan
- ✓ **Alternative Participation**
Participation can look different
- ✓ **1:1 Support Options ?**
- ✓ **Physical and Emotional Safety is Paramount**



Learning a New Skill



Goals of Support

✓ Support for Everyone

Support isn't just for a few campers—it's for everyone. When we create systems that help all campers feel safe and included, the whole community benefits.

✓ Mitigate, Not Eliminate

Our goal is to reduce challenges, not make them disappear entirely. Progress over perfection—small wins add up to meaningful change for anxious campers.

✓ Build Connection

Focus on building rapport, trust, and understanding with each camper. These relationships become the foundation for effective support and growth.



Pre-Camp *(if possible)*

✓ Connect 1:1 with Families

- What coping strategies does the child have?
- What do they anticipate being a challenge?
- What tools often help this child when challenges arise?

✓ Group Zoom Meetings (live or recorded) with Campers and Families

- Provide visuals of key spaces and places
- Answer questions
- Share staff faces and names
- Position drop off/saying goodbye

4. You will get a temperature check and a lice check.



7. Your coaches and family will help you drop your luggage off in your room.



The Power of Previewing First-Day Supports and Beyond

✓ Morning Routines

- Draw or type up a morning schedule, have other campers help create it
- “Picture Yourself”

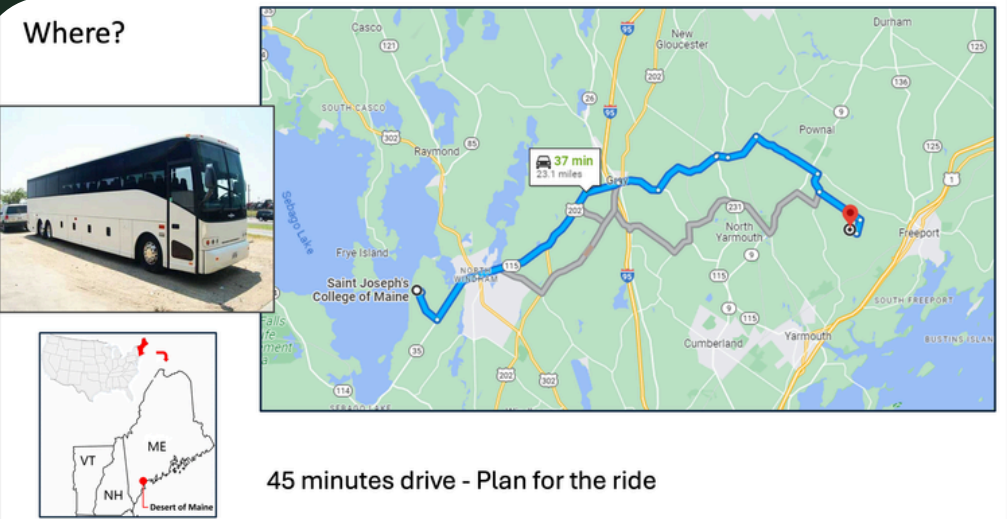
✓ Dining Hall

- Provide skits at the first meal on dining hall routines (and other routines)

✓ Transitions/Field Trips

- Skits and lists for behavior expectations, time management

Where?



45 minutes drive - Plan for the ride



PLAN

- 10:15 BUS ARRIVES
- 10:30 LEAVE CAMP
- 11:15 ARRIVE, BATHROOM
- 11:30 -11:55 PLAYGROUND
- 12:00-12:30 LUNCH

**COACHES WILL HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULE



Give Meaningful Roles

Assign campers jobs that matter—setting up activities, helping younger campers, or being a cabin helper. Real responsibility builds real confidence. Heavy lifting



Let Them Teach

Invite campers to share something they love—a game, a skill, a fun fact. Teaching others transforms anxiety into pride and connection.



Normalize Contributing

Make it clear that everyone has something to offer. When contribution is expected from all, no one feels singled out or left behind.



Role Modeling

Show other campers and staff how awesome you think this kid is.

Building Confidence & Leadership

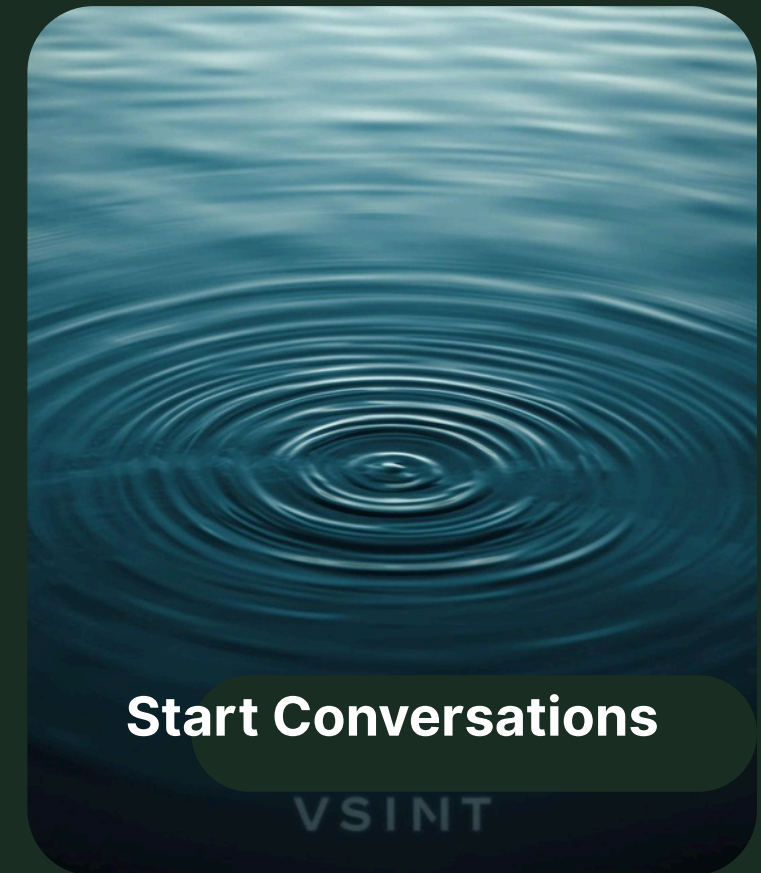


Social Connection Strategies



Pair Campers

Help campers build relationships by pairing like-minded campers intentionally and giving activity leaders a heads-up.



Start Conversations

Use conversation starters like "Did you know that...?" and "Can you tell me more about...?"

Address Bullying/Exclusion EARLY

What is bullying?

- Targeting one person
- Ganging Up → bringing others in
- Hassling someone, ~~making~~ laughing + Making fun of them behind their back or in front of them
- Excluding someone

How to Avoid Being a Bully:

- Let people join, invite people
- Kind language
- Cooperate, be helpful
- Take space when you need it

When It's Not Working

Support for staff in the moment: Remember that you don't have to solve everything alone. Take a breath and focus on connection first.



- ✓ **Manage your own anxiety**
- ✓ **Sit with the camper**
- ✓ **Ask for help when needed**

Questions for Emily and Haley