

Living and Functioning with Spina Bifida

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Agenda

Introduction

Mental Health & Executive
Functioning

Building confidence

Engaging with Others

Q&A





Overcoming Obstacles



- How do I deal with attention and executive functioning (EF) problems?
 - EF includes:
 - Impulsivity
 - Inhibition
 - Switching between tasks
 - Organizing
 - Planning
 - Working Memory
 - Time Management
- Living with chronic illnesses and physical disabilities can make us vulnerable to mental health concerns
 - Anxiety
 - Depression

The image features a light gray background with decorative white line art of leaves and branches in the corners. The top-left and top-right corners have clusters of elongated, pointed leaves. The bottom-left and bottom-right corners have clusters of rounded, lobed leaves. The central text is framed by these decorative elements.

The Power of YET

NOT EVERYONE YOU MEET WILL UNDERSTAND YOU
AND THAT IS OKAY!



Building Resilience: Mind over Matter

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING
STRATEGIES



- It has been shown that the better your ability to cope with EF difficulties, the better you are able to handle social situations
- Resilience and higher quality of life are attributed to:
 - Positive outlook toward SB
 - Future expectations
 - Family satisfaction and support
 - Coping and Hope

Building Blocks to Enhancing Relationships

Social Acceptance

- Being open to being different
- Closeness-all you need is one good friend

Social Problem Solving

- Communicating necessary information to peers (i.e., social language)
- Understanding the rules of social engagement
- Offer to help someone if needed

General Social Skills

- Make eye contact with others to create a sense of connection
- Confidence in speaking: Take a deep breath, speak slowly and clearly (you do not have to say a lot)
- Effective body language and personal space
- Greet people openly

Social Self-Efficacy (Sticking Up For Yourself)

- Be confident-Address stereotypes



How To Be A Good Friend

Most of us have to work at building and maintaining friendships.

- Communicate if you are going to change or cancel plans
- Communicate your needs and sensitivities
- Be aware of other people's needs, and if you don't know, ask!
- Limit oversharing of personal problems or being repetitive
- Smile, BE POSITIVE!, have gratitude, say thank you
- Try not to take everything personally and if you get frustrated, ask for space
- Try to crack a joke. Don't take yourself or the situation too seriously
- Become more open to saying "Yes"
- Stay calm, pause, and reflect before reacting
- Introduce yourself and participate in small talk
- Ask someone to go to lunch

Qualities in Friends

A good friend will:

- Forget about your limitations
- Be Kind
- Make you laugh
- Truly want to know more about you
- Listen to your troubles
- Give you unconditional acceptance and validation
- Talk through things when they are upset



Engaging Socially

Where to make friends:

- Join a club or community group (Walk-N-Roll for Spina Bifida, Boy and Girl Scouts, church youth groups, YMCA activities, and SBA Chapter events)
- Attend events
- Volunteer
- Join a life-skills or social skills group in the community
- Sign up to learn a new skills or craft
- Reach out to past friends you have lost touch with
- Participate in after-work activities



Q&A

Thank you!

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