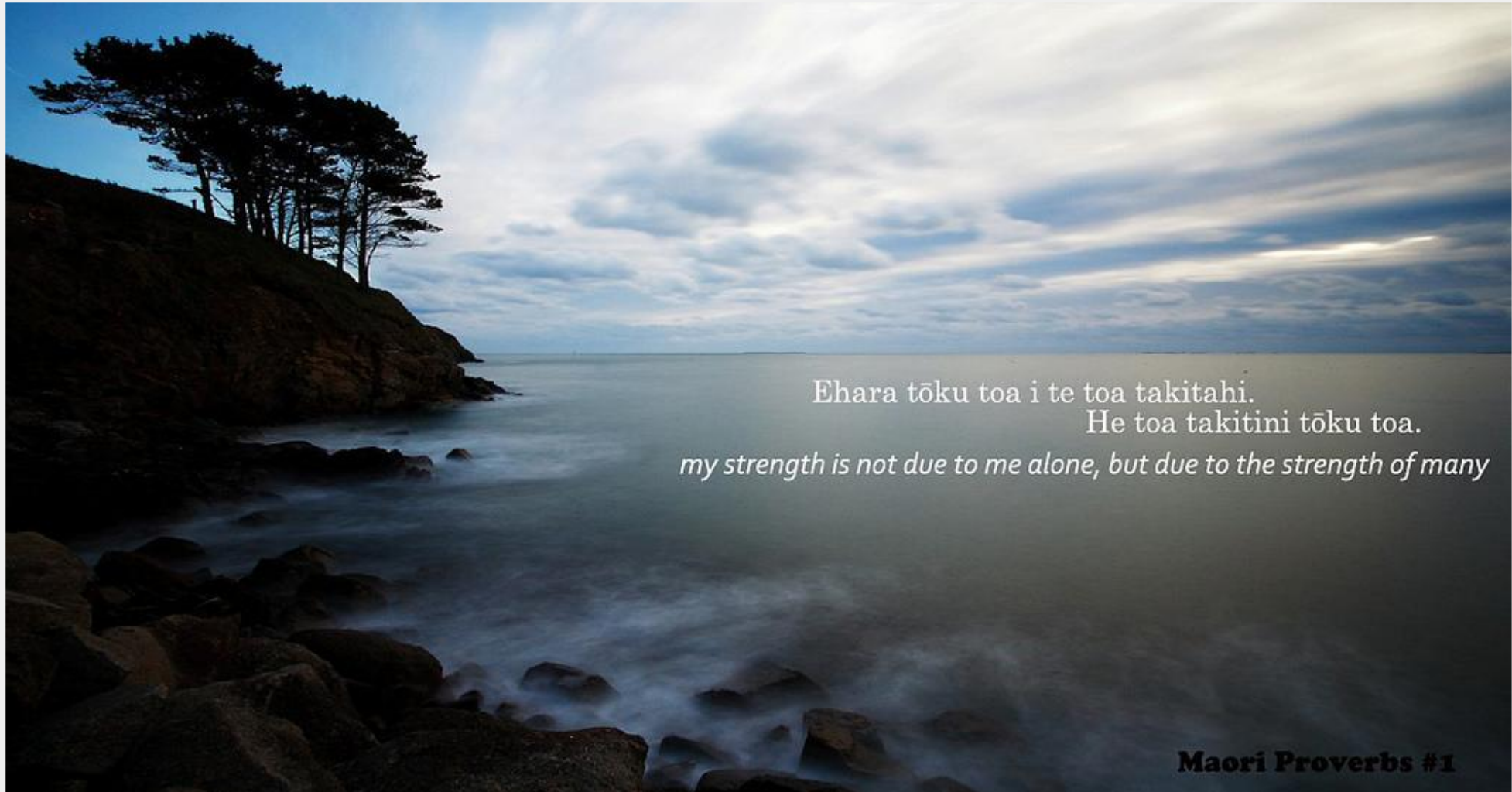# Encouraging Learner Independence in Years 7-10

Kelly Wheeler, Nick Bates and
Ann Edmundson, Rachael Webber
Te Paeroa RTLB, Cluster 34

# He Whakatauki



Ehara tōku toa i te toa takitahi.
He toa takitini tōku toa.
*my strength is not due to me alone, but due to the strength of many*

Maori Proverbs #1

# Whakawhanaungatanga - Connection activity

Choose one or two of the following of statements to discuss in groups of 3

**Green** - what would your ideal day/date look like?

**Orange** - what is your favourite time of the year?

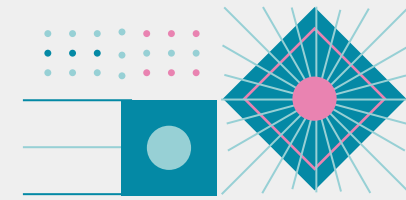**Yellow** - are you an extrovert or an introvert?

**Red** - where were you born and raised?
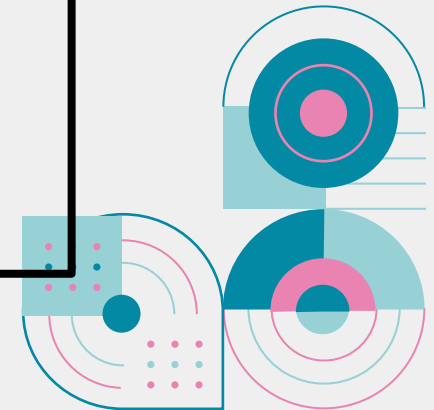
**Purple** - describe yourself in 3 words

LandSlideFilmsUK 2012. *Most boring lesson EVER!! Anyone?* Retrieved from https://youtu.be/Yk3-Vb7CH-ot

# Kaupapa (purpose of this session)

- Encouraging learner independence in the classroom

  - Learning about executive functioning skills

  - Panic, comfort  and learning zones

  - Processing sensory information

# Let's brainstorm

What are the different ways that you support students? Any challenges that you encounter?
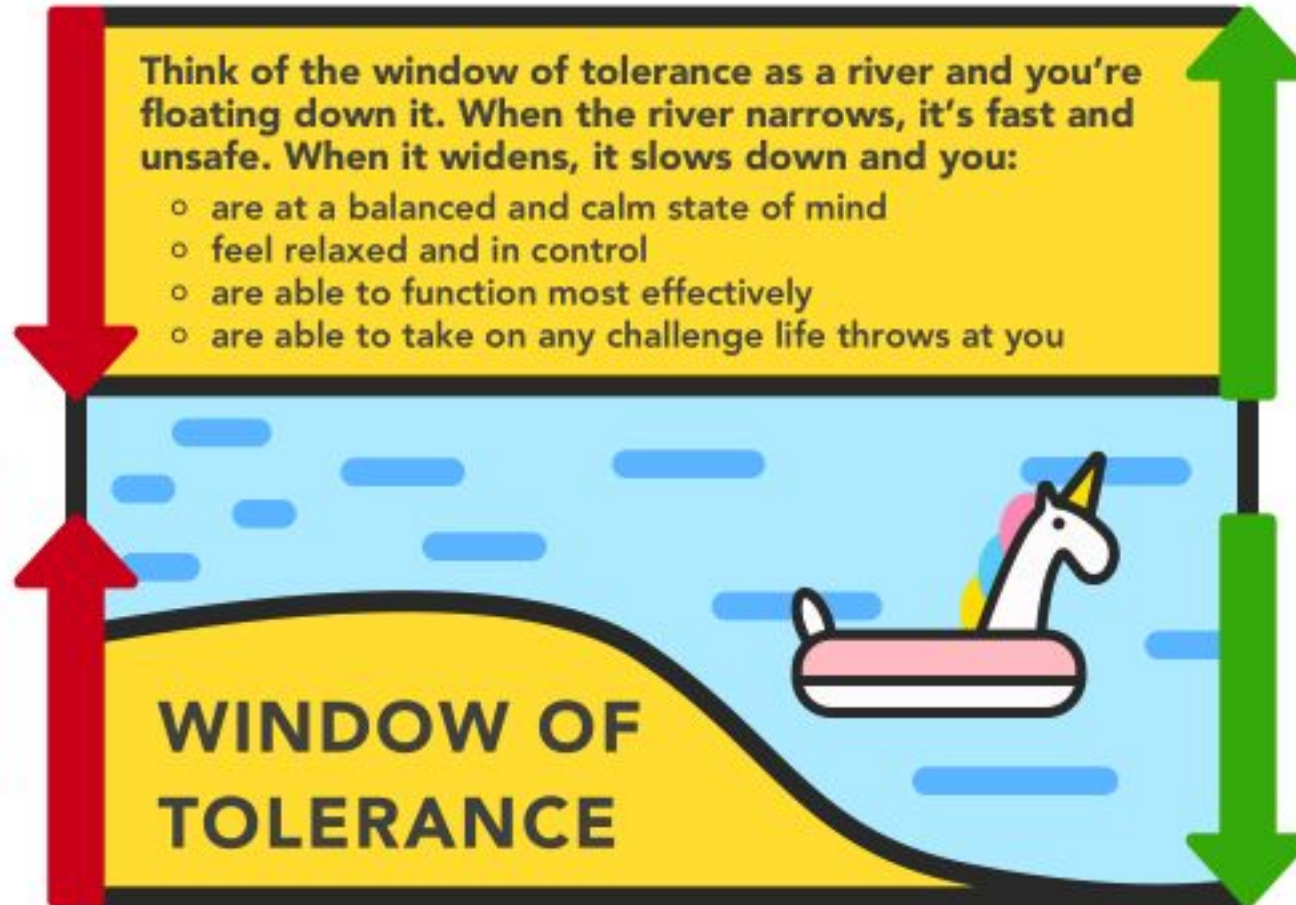
# Learning zone

**SHRINK** your Window of Tolerance

Stress and trauma can cause your window of tolerance to shrink

Think of the window of tolerance as a river and you're floating down it. When the river narrows, it's fast and unsafe. When it widens, it slows down and you:
- are at a balanced and calm state of mind
- feel relaxed and in control
- are able to function most effectively
- are able to take on any challenge life throws at you

Meditation, listening to music, or engaging in hobbies can expand your window of tolerance

**EXPAND** your Window of Tolerance

**WINDOW OF TOLERANCE**

Mindmypeelings. (2019). How to recognise your window of tolerance [blogpost]. Retrieved from
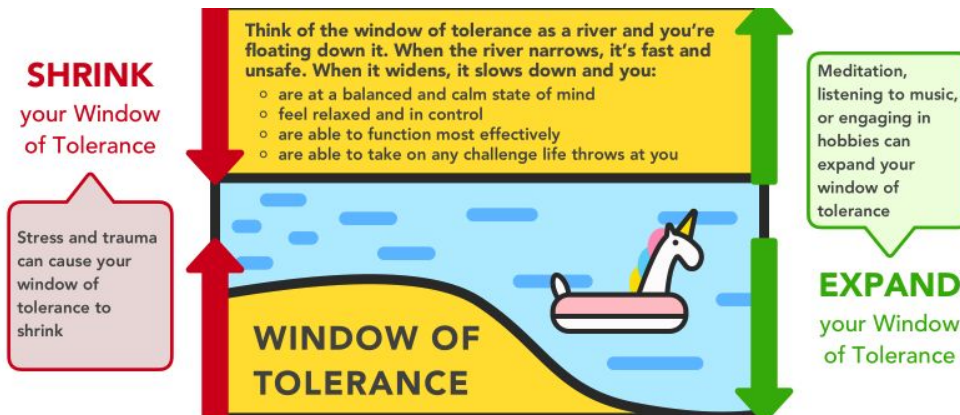https://www.mindmypeelings.com/blog/window-of-tolerance

For HYPERAROUSAL, check all the symptoms you experience and enter the level of severity from 1 to 5 (one is the least severe and five is extreme and paralyzing):

- Abnormal state of increased responsiveness
- Feeling anxious, angry and out of control
- You may experience wanting to fight or run away

**SHRINK** your Window of Tolerance

Stress and trauma can cause your window of tolerance to shrink

Think of the window of tolerance as a river and you're floating down it. When the river narrows, it's fast and unsafe. When it widens, it slows down and you:
- are at a balanced and calm state of mind
- feel relaxed and in control
- are able to function most effectively
- are able to take on any challenge life throws at you

Meditation, listening to music, or engaging in hobbies can expand your window of tolerance

**EXPAND** your Window of Tolerance

**WINDOW OF TOLERANCE**

For HYPOAROUSAL, check all the symptoms you experience and enter the level of severity from 1 to 5 (one is the least severe and five is extreme and paralyzing):

- Abnormal state of decreased responsiveness
- Feeling emotional numbness, exhaustion, and depression
- You may experience your body shutting down or freeze

Mindmypeelings. (2019). How to recognise your window of tolerance [blogpost]. Retrieved from https://www.mindmypeelings.com/blog/window-of-tolerance

# Strategies to support students to stay regulated

*Discuss these strategies and any others that you may be using.*


Square Breathing



| |
|---|
| Ask or direct student to take a break, reset or move away from the sensory overload |
| Have a system for the student to communicate when feeling elevated eg. traffic light systems, coloured counters |
| Use of headphones or music |
| Provide fidget objects, weighted items, wobbly seating available |
| Encourage the student to gather equipment before or after the bulk of the class move |
| Have a 10-second hug by wrapping your arms around yourself and holding tightly |
| Stretch your arms out in front of you to relieve tension built up |
| Breathing techniques eg. box breathing |
| Grounding exercises eg. notice your feet connecting with the floor, how does it make you feel?
Hold an object in your hand and really focus on it |




Break Cards


The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique
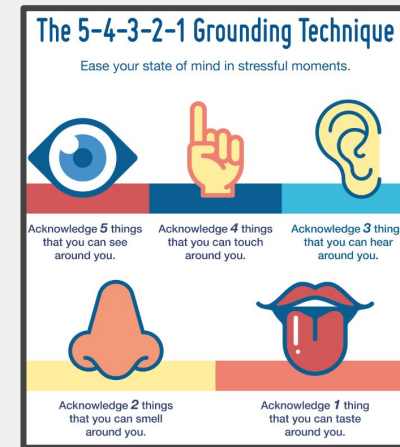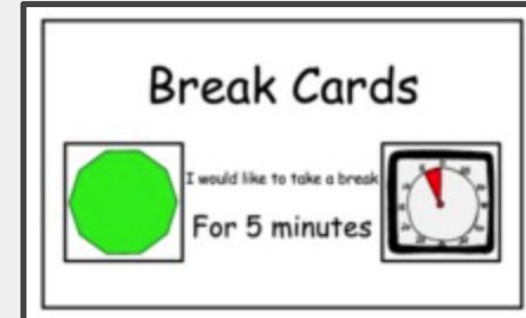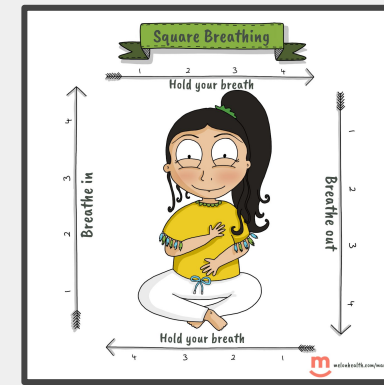
# Strategies to support student learning

*Discuss these strategies and any others that you may be using.*


Google Chrome Extensions

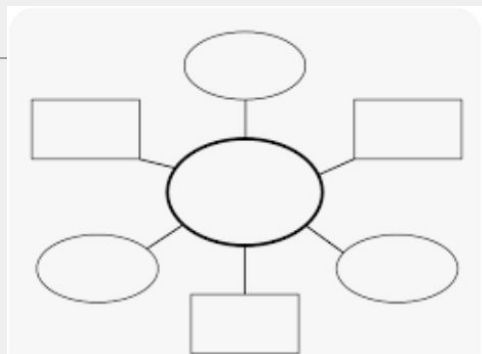| |
|---|
| Give students extra time to respond to instructions and complete tasks |
| Ensure students can see the kaiako speaking if they have auditory processing challenges |
| Support students to make good decisions around their seating placement |
| Suggest technology supports to meet student need - reference to possible options later |
| Encourage scaffolds that are available and encourage the use of highlighters to identify main points |
| Support students to have the equipment that they need for learning |
| Model and prompt students to fill in checklists and exit tickets when provided |
| Check in with students to give them next steps |
| Consider your questioning |

| Closed questions | rephrased as | Open questions |
|---|---|---|
| **Do you** have any ideas to add? | | **What** ideas would you like to add? |
| **Have you** thought about? | | **What** are your thoughts about…? |
| **Will you**…? | | **How might** you …? |
| **Can you** …? | | **Tell me** how you feel about…. |
| **Did you**…? | | **I'm curious about**….. |

**Key statements that you could use to deepen thinking…**
- Can you help me understand what you mean when you say…
- Have you considered?
- So, what is your goal here?
- How else might you look at this?

| What does success look like? | |
|---|---|
| Get equipment out | |
| Put phone and headphones away | |
| Listen to the teacher's instructions | |
| Start the task within 2 minutes | |
| Work on the task for_____ minutes | |

# Technology to Support Learner Independence

The website is called: **Control Alt Achieve, transforming education with technology**

[https://www.controlaltachieve.com/](https://www.controlaltachieve.com/)

**WHAT?**

This is a handy website for teachers who have students with literacy needs, English language learners, neuro-diverse students and those with processing disorders.   Some suggested Chrome extensions include:

- **Read&Write** for Google Chrome (a good general extension with a range of features)
- **Immersive Reader** (a read-aloud extension with other features such as colour coding)
- **Read Aloud** (this is a text-to-speech extension with a good range of voices to choose from)
- **Voice In Voice Typer** (this is a speech-to-text extension)
- **Mercury Reader** (this removes distractions such as ads, comments, etc)
- **Reader View** (this has a range of features, such as stripping away distracting backgrounds)
- **OpenDyslexic** (this overrides all the fonts on a web page, replacing them with OpenDyslexic font)
- **Color Overlay** (this adds a coloured filter to the browser to help some students visually)
- **Visor** (this darkens out the page except for a moveable horizontal band)
- **Auto Highlight** (this highlights the important information in a text, like a summary)
- **Move It** (this tells students to have a break and do something physical)
  Plus many other Google Extensions that can help our ākonga.
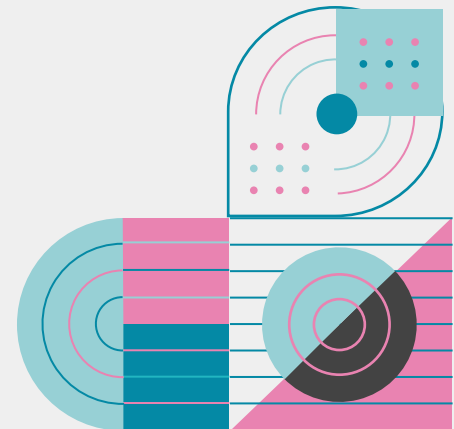
# Activity: Hierarchy of Support

Your task:  Match the type of support with the correct definition and example.  Then, rank the support on the handout on the next page.

| Type of support | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| <ul><li>Direct Oral</li><li>Gestural</li><li>Modeling</li><li>Natural</li><li>Indirect verbal</li></ul> | <ul><li>Providing no cue; allowing the ordinary cues that exist in the environment help the student know what to do</li><li>Oral information provided directly to the student</li><li>A physical movement to communicate or accentuate a cue (e.g., head nod, thumbs up, pointing).</li><li>A demonstration of what the student is to do</li><li>A verbal reminder that prompts the student to attend to or think about what is expected</li></ul> | <ul><li>Teacher instructions are sufficient to support students to complete tasks</li><li>Asking students how much they believe they will have completed within a set time frame</li><li>Sentence starter</li><li>Giving a task and the expectation of work completion prior to next check in</li><li>Thumbs up, point to where focus needs to be</li><li>Tapping the work to increase focus, using proximity</li></ul> |

SLIDESMANIA.COM

# Hierarchy of Support

Place the type of support in a hierarchy from least intrusive to most intrusive.

| Least Intrusive Type of Support | Example(s) of Support |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| **Most Intrusive Type of Support** |  |

# Activity: Hierarchy of Support

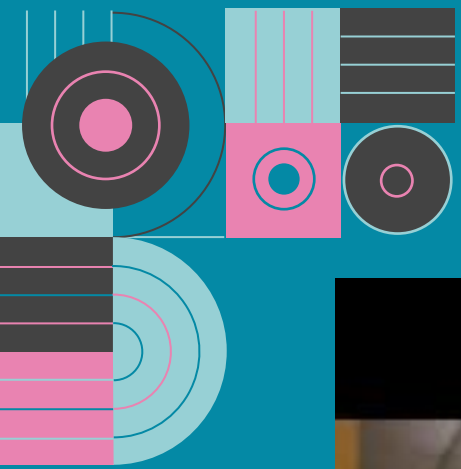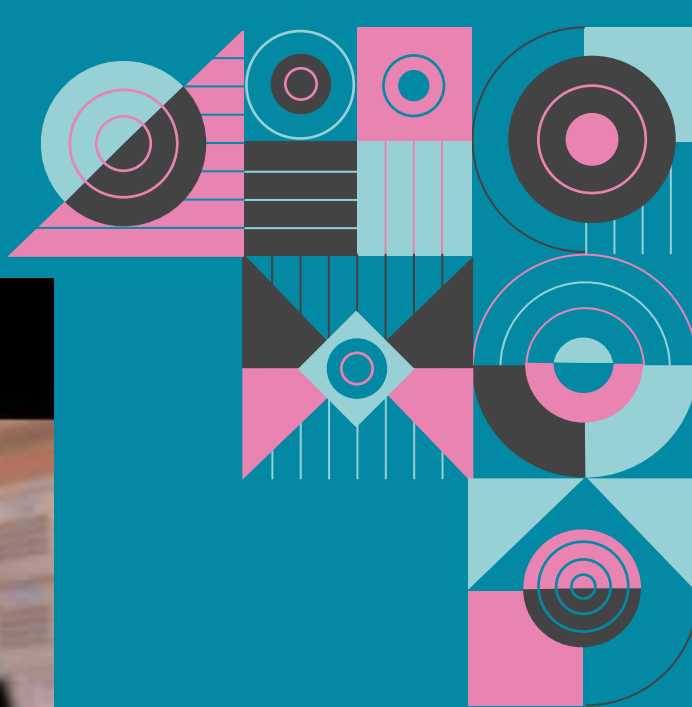| Type of support | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| **Least intrusive support** | | |
| Natural | Providing no cue; allowing the ordinary cues that exist in the environment help the student know what to do | Teacher instructions are sufficient to support students to complete tasks |
| Gestural | A physical movement to communicate or accentuate a cue (e.g., head nod, thumbs up, pointing). | Thumbs up, point to where focus needs to be Tapping the work to increase focus, using proximity |
| Indirect verbal | A verbal reminder that prompts the student to attend to or think about what is expected | Asking student how much they believe they will have completed within a set time frame |
| Direct Oral | Oral information provided directly to the student | Giving a task and the expectation of work completion prior to next check in |
| Modelling | A demonstration of what the student is to do | Sentence starter |
| **Most intrusive support** | | |
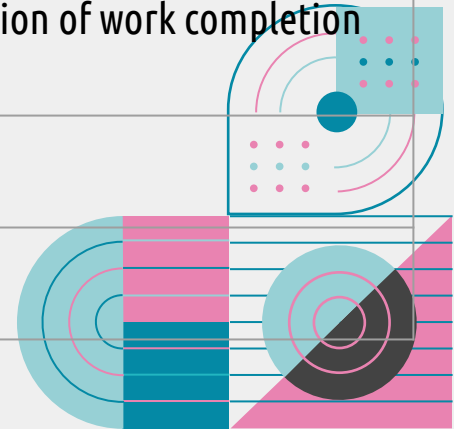
# Executive Functioning Skills

## 8 Key Executive Functions

Executive functions are skills everyone uses to organize and act on Information. If your child has executive functioning issues, he may struggle with some or all of the following skills.

| Skill | What it means | How it looks |
|---|---|---|
| Impulse Control | Impulse control helps your child think before acting. | Kids with weak impulse control might blurt out inappropriate things. They're also more likely to engage in risky behavior. |
| Emotional Control | Emotional control helps your child keep his feelings in check. | Kids with weak emotional control often overreact. They can have trouble dealing with criticism and regrouping when something goes wrong. |
| Flexible Thinking | Flexible thinking allows your child to adjust to the unexpected. | Kids with "rigid" thinking don't roll with the punches. They might get frustrated if asked to think about something from a different angle. |
| Working Memory | Working memory helps your child keep key information in mind. | Kids with weak working memory have trouble remembering directions--even if they've taken notes or you've repeated them several times. |
| Self-Monitoring | Self-monitoring allows your child to evaluate how he's doing. | Kids with weak self-monitoring skills may be surprised by a bad grade or negative feedback. |
| Planning and Prioritizing | Planning and prioritizing help your child decide on a goal and a plan to meet it. | Kids with weak planning and prioritizing skills may not know which parts of a project are most important. |
| Task Initiation | Task initiation helps your child take action and get started. | Kids who have weak task initiation skills may freeze up because they have no idea where to begin. |
| Organization | Organization lets your child keep track of things physically and mentally. | Kids with weak organization skills can lose their train of thought--as well as their cell phone and homework. |

www.NCLEXQuiz.com

Executive Functioning is like the air traffic control system in the brain, allowing the brain to work efficiently filtering and prioritising.



Edutopia. ( April, 2021). *Bolstering Executive Function in Middle and High School Students*. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/NqOsPl2OqT0

# Reflecting on your own practice.........
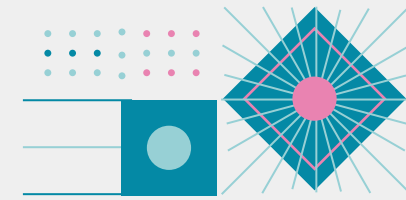
1. Dedicate time to develop executive functioning skills within the classroom

2. Make the learning accessible to all students- to do lists, visuals, graphic organisers

3. Listen and act upon student voice - Ako, Tuakana teina - get students to support one another to think about strategies to be effective learners

4. Authentic learning - make links between learning and real life

*What is something that you already do?*

*What would you find challenging to do?*
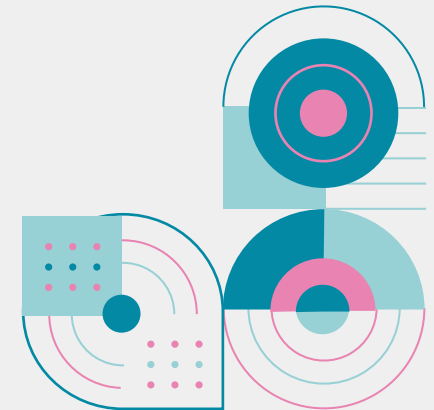
# Strategies to support executive functioning skills

Stowell, J. (2018). *The Executive Functions Toolkit for Classroom Teachers.* Janet Stowell Publishing.

## Strategies to support Diverse Learners

### What Will Help Strengthen Working Memory?

- Teach how and why to ask for help
- Limit noise and distractions
- Break tasks down into steps
- Prior knowledge & connecting to emotions
- Provide information in many different ways such as visual, audial, kinaesthetic
- Engage the senses
- Teach and model self-talk, lists, notes, chunking visualisation, graphic organisers & mnemonics
- Provide sequencing practise
- Model and practise retelling events in sequence
- Build routines and structure

### What Will Help Strengthen Time Management?

- Explicitly teach and model how to read time
- Model self-talk when managing your time
- Keep a calendar with upcoming events
- Play "Guess When a Minute is Up?"
- Students practise estimating how long tasks will take; time the task and compare how long it actually took
- Model planning something and create a timeline for each step
- Students make a timeline for an upcoming event
- Provide sequencing activities
- Model a sense of time urgency

### What Will Help Strengthen Cognitive Flexibility?

- Deliberately model using self-talk
- Encourage growth mindset
- Model looking at problems in different ways
- Decrease distractions
- Have a visual daily schedule
- Help them understand ambiguous language-idioms
- Have section of your day/lesson when you tell jokes/riddles
- Role playing new situations and others points of view

### What Will Help Strengthen Goal Setting?

- Develop self-awareness of how they learn
- Visualise the end goal
- Help them break their goal down into steps
- Teach students how to develop their plan and
- Model the problem-solving process
- break it down into steps how to achieve a goal
- Provide students with a plan and the steps
- Model the goal setting process
- Teach and practise self-talk
- Plan an event together - brainstorm
- Teach and practise visualisation
  - where, when, how, why
- Teach and practise growth mindset
- Teach students how to set SMART goals
- Provide opportunities to practise using the planning process regularly
- Model using self-talk to ask questions at each step
- Students create a timeline for each plan

### What Will Help Strengthen Task Initiation?

- Check that the student understands what they have to do
- Help them to reach a decision if that is what is stopping them
- Ask the student to write the goal down or write a plan with steps
- Useful strategies: self-talk, visualisation, key words, task organisers, graphic organisers
- Give extra supervision until they have managed to start
- Have a class discussion about the problem of being unable to start
- Ask students to share useful strategies that have worked for them
- Check in regularly with students who can't get started
- they need to put their plan into action
- Students create checklist to tick off each step

### What Will Help Strengthen Organisation?

- Ensure students understand what to do
- Students need to feel empowered
- Students need to be responsible for equipment
- Have a set place and label equipment
- Create checklists to help keep materials in order
- Model using a to-do list
- Model how to use colour coding
- Teach how to do note-taking
- Daily practice in these skills helps to cement routines and form habits
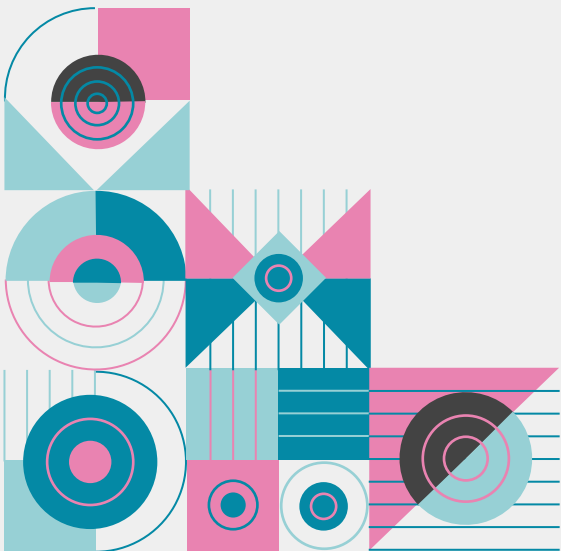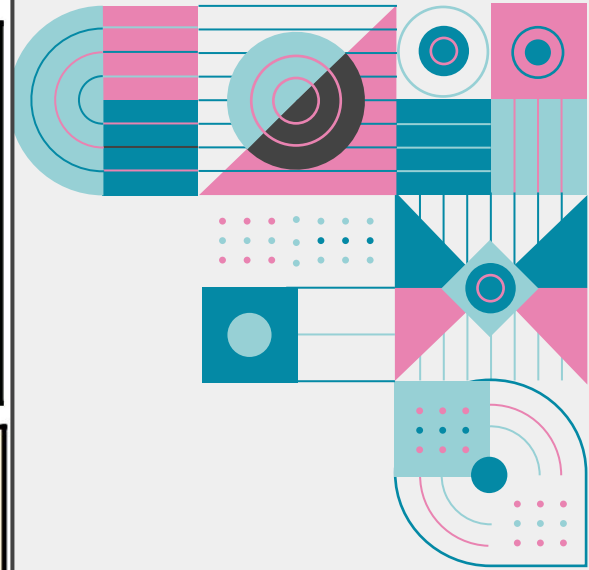
**Bus stop activity:** Use the previous slide to brainstorm how you could support students in these scenarios.
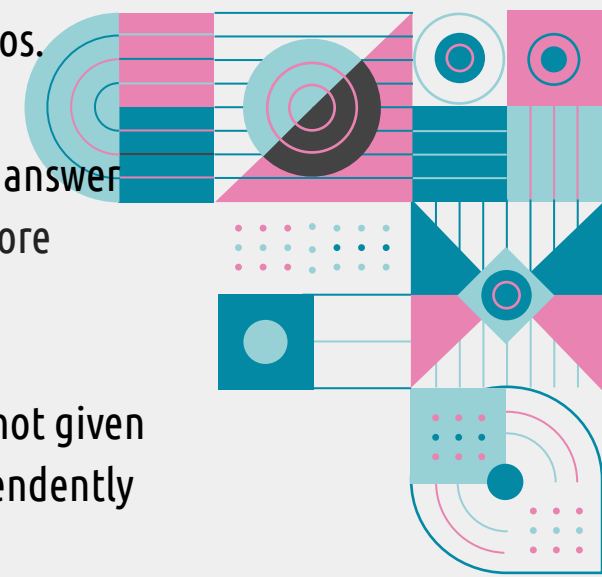
**Scenario 1:** During learning activities I find that one student is struggling to produce quality work. They tend to answer the question but in the least amount of time and with the least amount of output. How can I elicit more information to help to deepen the student's knowledge and develop their self managing skills?

**Scenario 2:** A student in my class will only start a task when supported one on one by an adult. If this student is not given one on one support they will sit and wait rather than seeking help. How can I support them to independently start and sustain work?

**Scenario 3:** When given an independent work task, one of my students is not able to manage their time effectively to complete all parts of the task. They tend to focus on the details for too long which results in them running out of time. How can I help them to plan their learning tasks efficiently?
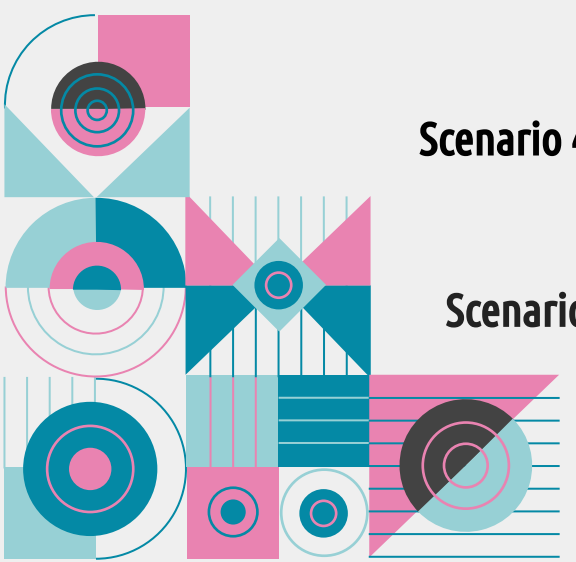
**Scenario 4:** I have a student in my class who when given a list of instructions to complete a task will not get past the first step. How can I help them complete all their work?

**Scenario 5:** A student in my class has difficulty remaining on task. How can I support this student to be fully engaged in the lesson rather than using their phone or talking to their friends?

# Brainstorm how you can promote inclusion and learner independence when the teacher is doing the following….

| If the teacher is doing this: | You can be doing this |
|---|---|
| Teacher instruction to whole class | |
| Taking attendance | |
| Giving directions | |
| Providing large-group instruction | |
| Giving a test | |
| Facilitating stations or small groups | |
| Facilitating sustained silent reading | |
| Teaching a new concept | |
| Reteaching or pre teaching with a small group | |
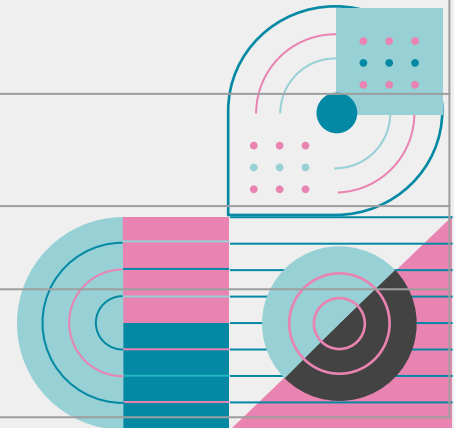
# Brainstorm how you can promote inclusion and learner independence

| If the teacher is doing this: | You can be doing this |
|---|---|
| Teacher instruction to whole class | Model note taking, draw the ideas, take notes so you are able to explain the process |
| Taking attendance | Roving |
| Giving directions | Bullet point the key directions so you can share these with learners, seek direction from the kaiako around priorities |
| Providing large-group instruction | Give feedback to students on their behaviour. Where possible focus your attention on positive behaviour |
| Giving a test | Read the test to students who prefer to have the test read to them |
| Facilitating stations or small groups | Also facilitate stations or groups |
| Facilitating sustained silent reading and writing tasks | Support students to access assistive technology |
| Teaching a new concept | Use the key notes from kaiako instructions to support understanding in a one on one or small group setting |
| Reteaching or pre teaching with a small group | Monitor the large group while they work independently. |

Causton-Theoharis, J. (2009). *The Golden Rule of Providing Support in Inclusive Classrooms: Support Others as You Would Wish to Be Supported.* Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237683855_The_Golden_Rule_of_Providing_Support_in_Inclusive_Classrooms_Support_Others_as_You_Would_Wish_to_Be_Supported
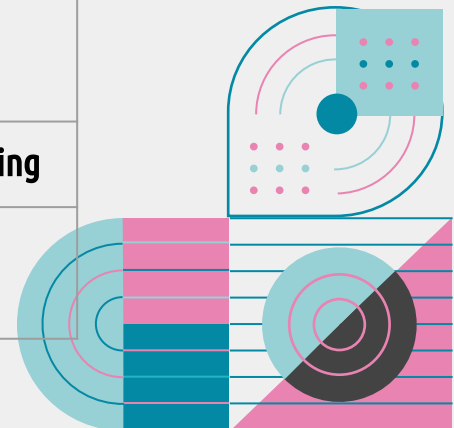
# Overview: Fostering independence

- **Active monitoring**
  - *Be ready to monitor and support students to get started as soon as they are released for independent work*
  - **Avoid sitting next to the student all the time- support other students as well to avoid the student feeling singled out**
  - **When the students work in pairs, don't pair up with a student.**
  - *Allow the student to start activity before offering help→ Allow time to persist and problem solve*
    - *Some students may need support to get started on a task (EF)*
    - *Don't assume the student needs help- always ask first*
- **Support accountability during independent work**
  - *Check in with purpose*
  - *Give a timeframe for when your next check in will be and what you will expect to be completed*
  - *Support the student but don't do their work*
  - *Use inquiring questions to encourage students to think for themselves*
  - *Important to "watch and wait"--> Make space for learning*
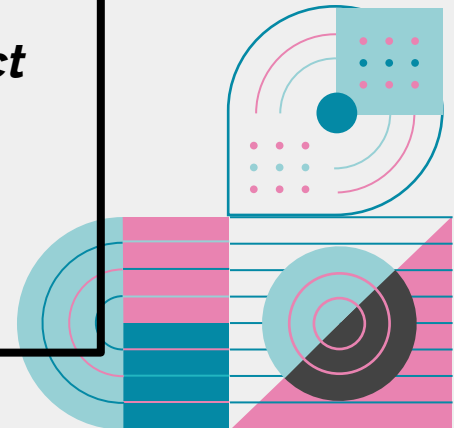
# Key takeaways…

Executive functioning skills, learner independence and regulation
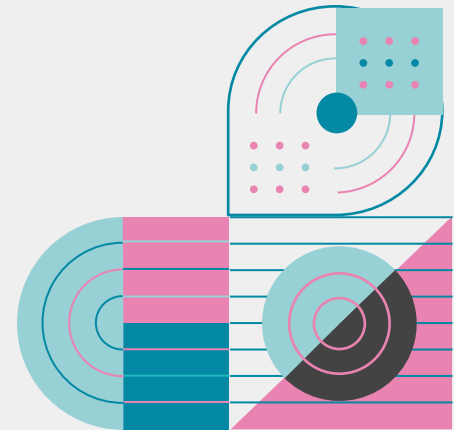
## He Karakia Whakakapi

Ka whakairia te tapu

Kia wātea ai te ara

Kia tūruki whakataha ai

Kia tūruki whakataha ai

Hui ē! Tāiki ē!


Restrictions are moved aside, so the pathway is clear.

To return to everyday activities, to return to everyday activities.

Enriched, unified and blessed

# Ngā mihi nui ki a tātou