

Psychology Education Day

Tuesday February 27, 2018

Building Executive Function Skills in Children and Adolescents: Promoting Development and Facilitating Change

February is Psychology Month!

The Department of Psychology is sponsoring a 1-day conference focusing on developing our understanding of executive functioning in children and adolescents and increasing our knowledge of effective interventions to help support the development of these skills. Challenges with executive functioning can impact many aspects of a child's life, including school performance, peer and family relationships, and overall mental health. By developing strategies to support children with these struggles, we can foster more positive growth in these potentially vulnerable individuals.

Keynote Speaker: Dr Peg Dawson

Author of the best-selling books "[Smart but Scattered](#)" and "[Executive Functioning in Children and Adolescents](#)" will present: *Beyond Lazy and Unmotivated: What Healthcare and Educational Professionals Need to Know about Executive Skills* and *Taking Action: Strategies for Improving Executive Skills*.

Objectives:

- Provide an overview of executive function and the brain development required to support it
- Discuss developmentally appropriate expectations for executive function and how these impact daily life
- Develop a repertoire of intervention strategies to improve executive function, such as modifying the environment and coaching

Dr. Peg Dawson worked as a school psychologist for 16 years in Maine and New Hampshire, and has worked at the Center for Learning and Attention Disorders in Portsmouth, New Hampshire for more than 25 years. There she specializes in the assessment of children and adults with learning and attention disorders. Along with her colleague, Dr. Richard Guare, she has authored many books on executive skills for professionals and for parents, as well as books on how to coach students with executive skill challenges.

Trish McKeough, M.S.W. and **Karen Milligan, PhD, C.Psych** will present *Using Integra Mindfulness Martial Arts to Promote Attention and Executive Function in Youth*.

Getting youth to participate in therapy is not always an easy task. Without engagement, even the best interventions are prone to fail. Youth with executive function challenges are at increased risk for mental health difficulties. The Integra Mindfulness Martial Arts (MMA) program integrates mindfulness and cognitive therapy into martial arts training to target fight-or-flight patterns of avoidance, enhance attention and executive functions.

Objectives:

- Describe the structure and content of MMA using experiential activities and video
- Present research on Integra MMA that highlights its impact on attention, executive functions, and cognitions that are associated with the development and maintenance of mental health challenges

Trish McKeough is a registered social worker and the Coordinator of the Integra Mindfulness Martial Arts (MMA) Program at the Child Development Institute. She is an avid meditator and certified yoga instructor who is passionate about engaging both the body and the mind when working with youth. **Dr. Karen Milligan** is the Director of the Child Self-Regulation Lab and Associate Professor and Associate Director of Clinical Training in the Department of Psychology at Ryerson University. Dr. Milligan's research is focused on the promotion of self-regulation in children and adolescents with or at risk for neurodevelopmental disorders. Dr. Milligan currently holds research funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Scottish Rite Charitable Foundation.

Registration: <http://www.event.com/d/p5qv8w>

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