



## Mental Inflexibility

Mental flexibility is the ability to quickly respond to changes around you. If you have poor mental flexibility, you will have trouble thinking about multiple ideas at once or switching between thoughts. You may have difficulty deciding what to do when faced with a new problem, changing your mind, learning new ways of doing things, or understanding why somebody else acts differently. In many settings, this may present as being stubborn, uncooperative, or unwilling to change. Using and practicing the following suggestions can be helpful:

1. When planning your schedule, leave extra time before a due date and set reminders for yourself. These reminders can be set on your phone, on a paper calendar, or on post-it notes on the wall
2. In order to improve your mental flexibility, practice simple routines out of order. For example, get dressed or ready for bed in a different order.
3. To stay on track with required assignments, write out the steps to lengthy assignments and cross steps off as you complete them.
4. Write down pros and cons, perhaps with help from someone you trust. Consider short-and long-term consequences for actions.
5. Try new things, like making a new friend who has different interests than you, tasting a new food, or learning a new dance.
6. Exercise directly benefits cognition. Make time to exercise several days a week.
7. Poor sleep can contribute to poor mental flexibility. You can review the attached sleep checklist to promote better sleep habits.

Compiled by E. Denson, E. Weaver, & S. Wilkinson March 11, 2019