



Mental Inflexibility

Mental flexibility is the ability to quickly respond to changes around you. If you have poor mental flexibility, thinking about multiple ideas at once or switching between thoughts can be difficult. You may have a hard time deciding what to do when dealing with a new problem, changing your mind, learning new ways of doing things or understanding why somebody else acts differently. You might also be embarrassed to ask for help. Using and practicing the following tips can be helpful:

1. When planning your schedules, set reminders and give yourself extra time before your assignments or projects are due. Putting post-it notes on your wall, using calendars, and setting alarms on your phone are all ways to help you get things done when you need them to be.
2. We can all get stuck in “our” way of doing things. To help you become more mentally flexible, 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. When you have a hard time adopting different points of view, it can be tough to make decisions. Write down pros and cons, perhaps with someone you trust. Review the expected consequences of each possible decision out loud.
5. Try new things, like making a new friend outside of your friend group, listening to a new artist, or eating at a new restaurant.
6. Practice your strategies to relax, keep a clear mind and think through new options when an unexpected event changes the routine.
7. Get your body moving. Exercise directly benefits cognition and can improve mental flexibility.
8. Sleep is essential for mental flexibility. Review and use the attached sleep checklist to promote better sleep.