# The Open-Source Executive Function Coaching Curriculum: A Comprehensive Practitioner’s Guide

## 1. Introduction: The Architecture of Human Potential

The discipline of Executive Function (EF) coaching has emerged as a vital intersection between education, psychology, and neuroscience. Unlike traditional tutoring, which focuses on the acquisition of content knowledge, or psychotherapy, which often delves into emotional healing and past trauma, EF coaching is distinct in its focus on the *processes* of doing. It addresses the neurological "how" of daily life: how an individual plans, initiates, sustains, and completes goal-directed behavior. This curriculum serves as a definitive, open-source pathway for independent practitioners to establish expertise in this field, leveraging high-quality, publicly available research and pedagogical resources.

The premise of this curriculum rests on the understanding that executive function deficits are rarely deficits of knowing; they are deficits of *doing*. Dr. Russell Barkley, a seminal figure in the field, characterizes these challenges not as a lack of skill, but as a "disorder of the point of performance".1 This distinction is critical for the coach. The role is not merely to teach a client how to use a planner—knowledge that is often already present—but to engineer the environment and the client’s behavioral responses so that the planner is actually used when it is needed.

This document outlines a rigorous six-module training program. Each module integrates theoretical depth with practical application, supported by specific "Open Source Reading Packets" containing high-quality PDFs, lectures, and tools available freely online. By completing the readings, viewings, and assignments detailed herein, the practitioner will construct a robust foundation for a professional, ethical, and effective coaching practice.

## Module I: Theoretical Foundations of the Executive System

### 1.1 The Neurobiology of the "Air Traffic Control" System

To coach effectively, one must understand the biological hardware being coached. The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University provides the foundational metaphor for this field: the brain as an Air Traffic Control system. Just as a busy airport requires a complex system to manage the arrivals and departures of multiple aircraft on intersecting runways, the human brain relies on executive functions to filter distractions, prioritize tasks, set goals, and control impulses.2

These skills are not innate reflexes; they are learned capabilities that depend on the maturation of the prefrontal cortex (PFC). This development is protracted, beginning in infancy and continuing well into the mid-twenties. This extended developmental timeline creates a "gap" period—often during adolescence and young adulthood—where societal demands for independence outpace the biological maturity of the executive system.3 The coach enters this gap as a "surrogate frontal lobe," providing the external scaffolding necessary for success while the client’s internal systems come online.

The core components of this system are generally agreed to include three dimensions:

1. **Working Memory:** The capacity to hold information in mind and manipulate it over short periods. This is the mental "scratchpad" used for mental arithmetic, following multi-step instructions, or considering multiple variables before making a decision.3
2. **Inhibitory Control:** The ability to master thoughts and impulses. This includes resisting the urge to check a phone notification, stopping a reactive emotional outburst, or pausing to assess a situation before acting.3
3. **Cognitive Flexibility:** The mental agility to switch gears, adjust to changed demands, or view a problem from a new perspective.4

### 1.2 The Evolutionary Perspective: From Public to Private

Dr. Russell Barkley’s evolutionary model of executive function provides a necessary theoretical layer for understanding *why* coaching works. He posits that executive functions are essentially forms of behavior that were once public (observable) but have become internalized (private) to serve the purpose of self-regulation.5

For example, young children talk to themselves out loud to direct their behavior ("I need to put the red block here"). As the brain matures, this speech becomes internalized as "verbal working memory" or the inner voice. Similarly, motivation evolves from needing immediate, external rewards (a cookie, a gold star) to internalized, private motivation (feeling pride, working toward a long-term goal).5

Coaching interventions often involve *re-externalizing* these functions. When a client’s internal working memory is weak, the coach encourages writing things down (externalizing memory). When internal motivation is insufficient, the coach helps set up external accountability or rewards (externalizing motivation). Understanding this evolutionary trajectory prevents the coach from viewing these interventions as "crutches" and instead frames them as necessary prosthetic devices for a developing or divergent neurobiology.1

### 1.3 Reading Packet & Assignments: Module I

**Required Open-Source Readings & Viewings:**

| **Resource ID** | **Title / Description** | **Source / Access** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2 | *InBrief: Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning* | Harvard Center on the Developing Child (Video) |
| 3 | *Building the Brain's “Air Traffic Control” System* | Harvard Center on the Developing Child (Working Paper) |
| 1 | *ADHD, Executive Function, and Self-Regulation* | RussellBarkley.org (Fact Sheet) |
| 5 | *The Executive Functions: What They Are, How They Work, and Why They Evolved* | Russell Barkley (Article) |

**Trainee Assignment 1.1: The "Temporal Horizon" Analysis** *Objective: To internalize the concept of "Time Blindness" and its impact on planning.* Write a 1,500-word analysis addressing the following prompt: "Dr. Barkley argues that individuals with EF deficits suffer from a 'temporal myopia,' or nearsightedness to time.1 Contrast the 'temporal horizon' of a neurotypical 25-year-old with that of a 25-year-old with significant EF challenges. How does this difference in time perception explain behaviors often mislabeled as 'laziness' or 'apathy'? Propose three specific environmental modifications that would artificially extend the temporal horizon for a client."

## Module II: Comprehensive Frameworks and Models

Effective coaching requires a structured taxonomy to identify and label client challenges. This module compares the three dominant models in the field: the Dawson & Guare Skills Model, the Brown Cluster Model, and the Barkley Self-Regulation Model. A proficient coach must be fluent in all three to effectively conceptualize diverse client profiles.

### 2.1 The Dawson & Guare Model: Thinking and Doing

Drs. Peg Dawson and Richard Guare offer the most practical, skills-based framework for coaching. They categorize executive function into 12 distinct skills, separated into two domains: "Thinking" (Cognition) and "Doing" (Behavior).6 This separation is crucial for assessment, as a client may possess high-level cognitive EF (able to plan a complex project) but suffer from severe behavioral EF deficits (unable to inhibit the urge to play video games instead of working).

**The "Thinking" Skills (Cognition):**

* **Working Memory:** The ability to hold data in mind while performing complex tasks.7
* **Planning/Prioritization:** Creating a roadmap to reach a goal and deciding what is most important.7
* **Organization:** Creating and maintaining systems to keep track of information or materials.7
* **Time Management:** Estimating how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within limits.7
* **Metacognition:** The ability to stand back and take a bird’s-eye view of oneself; self-monitoring and self-evaluating.7

**The "Doing" Skills (Behavior):**

* **Response Inhibition:** The capacity to think before acting; this is often considered the "gatekeeper" skill.7
* **Emotional Control:** The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals or complete tasks.7
* **Sustained Attention:** The capacity to maintain focus on a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.7
* **Task Initiation:** The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.7
* **Goal-Directed Persistence:** The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.7
* **Flexibility:** The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes.7
* **Stress Tolerance:** The ability to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands.7

### 2.2 The Brown Model: Six Clusters of Impairment

Dr. Thomas Brown’s model is particularly relevant for clients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Brown emphasizes that these functions are not discrete lists but operate in an integrated cluster, much like a symphony orchestra. His model is essential for explaining the variability of symptoms—why a client can focus intensely on a video game (which provides high stimulation) but cannot focus on a spreadsheet (which requires internal regulation of alertness).8

**The Six Clusters:**

1. **Activation:** Organizing, prioritizing, and getting started on tasks. This cluster explains the "inertia" many clients feel—the physical difficulty of moving from a state of rest to a state of work.10
2. **Focus:** Focusing, sustaining, and shifting attention. This includes the difficulty of "tuning out" distraction and the struggle to "shift" focus away from a hyper-fixation.10
3. **Effort:** Regulating alertness, sustaining effort, and processing speed. This is often described as the "dimmer switch" of the brain; clients may struggle to maintain sufficient alertness for boring tasks.10
4. **Emotion:** Managing frustration and modulating emotions. Brown places emotion centrally in the EF framework, recognizing that chronic frustration often derails cognitive performance.10
5. **Memory:** Utilizing working memory and accessing recall.
6. **Action:** Monitoring and self-regulating action.10

### 2.3 The Barkley Model: The Hierarchy of Self-Regulation

Barkley’s model is hierarchical. He argues that the executive functions develop in a specific sequence, and deficits in lower-level functions inevitably disrupt higher-level ones.8

1. **Inhibition:** The base of the pyramid. Without the ability to stop a response, no other executive function can occur.
2. **Non-Verbal Working Memory:** The ability to hold images in mind (hindsight and foresight).
3. **Verbal Working Memory:** Internalized speech (self-instruction).
4. **Emotional Self-Regulation:** Using the previous two to manipulate one's emotional state.
5. **Planning/Problem Solving:** The highest level, allowing for the reconstitution of behavior into new sequences.1

**Insight for Coaches:** If a client cannot inhibit their immediate response to a notification (Level 1), no amount of planning strategies (Level 5) will be effective. The intervention must target the inhibition first.1

### 2.4 Reading Packet & Assignments: Module II

**Required Open-Source Readings & Viewings:**

| **Resource ID** | **Title / Description** | **Source / Access** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 6 | *Executive Skills-Based Coaching: A Guide* | ACF.hhs.gov (PDF Guide) |
| 9 | *Brown's Model of Executive Functions Impaired in ADHD* | Pearson Clinical (Webinar Slides) |
| 11 | *Smart but Scattered: Handout Package* | Jack Hirose / Peg Dawson (PDF) |
| 10 | *Brown Model of ADD/ADHD* | Scribd / Thomas Brown (Document) |

**Trainee Assignment 2.1: The Comparative Case Study**

*Objective: To apply theoretical models to a real-world scenario.*

**Case Scenario:** "Sarah is a college sophomore. She is bright and articulate but currently on academic probation. She attends classes but rarely turns in papers. She describes sitting at her computer for hours, knowing she needs to write, but feeling physically unable to type the first sentence. She is often late because she 'loses track of time' while getting dressed. When she receives a poor grade, she is devastated and often skips the next class out of shame."

**Analysis Task (2,000 words):**

1. Analyze Sarah’s profile using the **Dawson & Guare** model. Which of the 12 skills are weak? (Likely: Task Initiation, Time Management, Emotional Control).
2. Analyze Sarah’s profile using **Brown’s Clusters**. (Likely: Activation, Emotion).
3. Analyze Sarah’s profile using **Barkley’s Hierarchy**. How does a deficit in Inhibition or Working Memory contribute to her inability to "feel" the future consequence of failing?
4. Conclude with which model you find most useful for explaining Sarah’s situation to *her* to reduce her shame.

## Module III: The Diagnostic Landscape and Assessment

Before interventions can begin, the coach must conduct a thorough assessment. In the open-source context, this does not mean administering expensive neuropsychological batteries (like the WAIS or Woodcock-Johnson). Instead, it involves structured interviewing, self-report questionnaires, and "performance audits" to gather data on how the client functions in their natural environment.

### 3.1 The Intake Architecture

The intake session is the most critical hour of the coaching engagement. It serves three purposes: data gathering, rapport building, and establishing the "Goodness of Fit." The "Goodness of Fit" concept, highlighted by Dawson and Guare, suggests that problems arise when the demands of the environment exceed the client’s executive skills.7 The intake must identify *both* the skill deficits and the environmental demands.

**The "Getting to Know You" Protocol:**

An effective intake uses a structured questionnaire to identify the client’s history, interests, and goals. Key areas to probe include:

* **Academic/Career History:** Looking for patterns of "strong starts and poor finishes" or specific subjects of difficulty.
* **Bio-Regulatory Factors:** Sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Research indicates that EF reserves are depleted by fatigue and stress.1
* **Strengths:** Identifying "islands of competence." Where does the client succeed? (e.g., video games, sports, art). This reveals that their EF is context-dependent, not absent.6

### 3.2 The Executive Skills Questionnaire (ESQ)

The ESQ is the primary open-source tool for this curriculum. It consists of 25-36 items (depending on the version) where the client rates themselves on specific behaviors.

**Scoring and Interpretation:**

The ESQ yields scores for each of the 12 skills. The coach’s task is to identify the **Top 3 Strengths** and **Top 3 Weaknesses**.

* **Strengths-Based Coaching:** It is vital to share the strengths first. "You have excellent Flexibility and Stress Tolerance." This reduces defensiveness when discussing the weaknesses (e.g., "Planning and Organization are your challenge areas").12
* **Discrepancy Analysis:** Look for discrepancies between the client’s self-report and the report of a parent or teacher (if applicable). A student might rate their *Organization* as high because they "know where everything is" in their messy room, while the parent rates it low. This discrepancy is a coaching opportunity for Metacognition.12

### 3.3 The "Point of Performance" Audit

Following Barkley’s guidance, the coach must assess the environment. Questionnaires capture *perception*, but audits capture *reality*.

* **The Digital Audit:** Have the client share their screen. Open their Learning Management System (Canvas/Blackboard). How many missing assignments are there? What does their Google Drive look like? (Is it one folder titled "Stuff"?)
* **The Physical Audit:** If conducting a video session, ask the client to give a tour of their workspace. Is it cluttered? Is there a clock visible? Are there distractions?.13

### 3.4 Reading Packet & Assignments: Module III

**Required Open-Source Readings & Viewings:**

| **Resource ID** | **Title / Description** | **Source / Access** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12 | *Executive Skills Questionnaire (ESQ)* | NYS PTA (PDF Assessment) |
| 13 | *Reproducible Forms: Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews* | Augusta Schools (PDF Toolkit) |
| 14 | *Executive Coaching Intake Form Template* | Hello Bonsai (Template) |
| 15 | *Executive Coaching Intake Questions* | Content Snare (Guide) |

**Trainee Assignment 3.1: The Intake Simulation**

*Objective: To practice data gathering and synthesis.*

**Task:**

1. Locate a volunteer (friend, colleague, or family member).
2. Administer the Executive Skills Questionnaire 12.
3. Conduct a 30-minute structured intake interview using the questions derived from  
   14  
   and  
   7  
   (e.g., assessing the "Goodness of Fit").
4. **Deliverable:** Create a "Client Profile Report" (3-4 pages) that includes:
   * **Executive Profile:** A visual graph of their 12 skills scores.
   * **Narrative Summary:** A description of how their weak skills (e.g., Task Initiation) are impacting their specific goals (e.g., finishing a renovation project).
   * **Environmental Analysis:** Identification of environmental barriers discussed in the interview.
   * **Initial Goal Setting:** Three SMART goals based on the assessment data.7

## Module IV: The Coaching Architecture and Competencies

Possessing a theoretical understanding of Executive Function is insufficient; the practitioner must possess the pedagogical and relational skills to facilitate change. This module bridges the gap between the "what" (EF theory) and the "how" (Coaching methodology). It relies heavily on the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Core Competencies, adapted for the neurodivergent context.

### 4.1 The Coach as "External Frontal Lobe"

A central metaphor in EF coaching is that the coach initially serves as the client's "external frontal lobe" or "surrogate executive system".7 This involves a delicate balance of *Lending Executive Skills* while simultaneously fostering independence.

* **Lending Organization:** The coach provides the structure (agendas, shared documents) that the client lacks.
* **Lending Inhibition:** The coach models pausing and reflecting: "Let's stop for a moment. If we say 'yes' to this new project, what happens to the deadline for the current one?"
* **The Fade Plan:** Critical to this model is the plan for obsolescence. From session one, the coach must plan how to transfer these functions back to the client. This distinguishes coaching from enabling.6

### 4.2 ICF Core Competencies in the EF Context

The ICF provides a rigorous ethical and competency framework. Four specific domains are paramount for EF coaches 16:

**1. Foundation: Ethical Practice & Mindset**

* **The Therapy Boundary:** EF coaches must distinguish between "coaching for action" and "therapy for healing." If a client’s procrastination is rooted in deep-seated trauma or clinical depression, the ethical mandate is to refer to a mental health professional.17
* **Confidentiality:** Particularly with student clients paid for by parents, the coach must establish clear boundaries. The "Triangle of Trust" requires the coach to report *process* to parents (e.g., "We are working on a calendar system") but keep *content* confidential (e.g., "He is worried about his girlfriend").18

**2. Co-Creating the Relationship**

* **Trust and Safety:** Clients with EF deficits often carry significant shame ("I am lazy," "I am broken"). The coach must create a "shame-free zone" where missed tasks are viewed as data points for problem-solving, not moral failings.16
* **Agreements:** The "Coaching Agreement" is not just a contract; it is the session-by-session agreement on what will be worked on. "What do you want to walk away with at the end of this 45 minutes?".19

**3. Communicating Effectively**

* **Active Listening:** Listening for what is *not* said. For an EF client, silence often indicates overwhelm or working memory overload. The coach must check in: "I noticed a long pause. What is happening in your mind right now?".20
* **Powerful Questioning:** Moving from "Why?" (which invites excuses) to "What?" and "How?" (which invite solutions). Instead of "Why didn't you do the homework?", ask "What got in the way of starting?".21

**4. Cultivating Learning and Growth**

* **Facilitating Growth:** Helping the client transform a specific win (organizing a backpack) into a generalized skill (organizing a digital desktop). This is the process of *generalization*.16

### 4.3 Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Resistance

Resistance in EF coaching often manifests as "Yeah, but..." behaviors. Motivational Interviewing is the tool for this.

* **Rolling with Resistance:** Rather than arguing for change ("You really need to use a planner"), the coach explores the ambivalence. "On one hand, you want to get better grades, but on the other, using a planner feels restrictive. Tell me more about that restriction."
* **Developing Discrepancy:** Helping the client see the gap between their current behavior (staying up late) and their stated values (being a high-performing athlete).21

### 4.4 Reading Packet & Assignments: Module IV

**Required Open-Source Readings & Viewings:**

| **Resource ID** | **Title / Description** | **Source / Access** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 22 | *ICF Code of Ethics* | Coaching Federation (Web/PDF) |
| 17 | *PAAC Code of Ethics (ADHD Specific)* | PAAC (Web/PDF) |
| 21 | *Family Centered Coaching Toolkit (Motivational Interviewing)* | FamilyCenteredCoaching.org (PDF) |
| 23 | *Coaching Competencies & Session Structure* | Sean McCormick (YouTube) |

**Trainee Assignment 4.1: The Ethics & Competency Portfolio**

*Objective: To demonstrate readiness for professional practice.*

**Task:** Create a portfolio containing:

1. **The "Therapy vs. Coaching" Script:** Write a script for a conversation with a potential client who begins discussing severe anxiety and past trauma during the intake. How do you hold the boundary while remaining empathetic?
2. **The Session Agenda Template:** Design a one-page template for a coaching session that includes specific prompts for:
   * Review of previous action items (Accountability).
   * Setting the agenda (Agreement).
   * Exploring barriers (Awareness).
   * Designing new actions (Growth).
3. **Reflective Essay (1,000 words):** Analyze the phrase "Lending the Frontal Lobe." Discuss the risks of over-functioning for a client and specific strategies you will use to ensure you are empowering rather than enabling.

## Module V: Strategic Interventions and Environmental Engineering

This module constitutes the "toolkit" of the practitioner. It transitions from theory to the specific "how-to" strategies for remediating executive dysfunction. The guiding philosophy here is *Environmental Engineering*: changing the environment to modify behavior.

### 5.1 Time Management: Curing "Time Blindness"

**The Deficit:** Clients with EF challenges often perceive time as a nebulous concept. They struggle to "feel" the passage of time or estimate how long tasks take.1 **The Interventions:**

1. **Analog Clocks:** Dr. Barkley advises replacing digital clocks with analog ones. Digital clocks show a meaningless number; analog clocks show a "pie slice" of time that is physically disappearing. This visualizes the passage of time.1
2. **The "Time Timer":** A specific tool (often an app or physical device) where a red disk vanishes as time elapses.
3. **Prediction vs. Reality:** A metacognitive exercise where the client predicts task duration (e.g., "Shower will take 10 mins") and then times it (Actual: 25 mins). This data creates a "Time Correction Factor" for future planning.13
4. **Backwards Planning:** Starting from the deadline and working backward. "If the paper is due Friday at 5 PM, and you need 2 hours to proofread, you must finish writing by 3 PM."

### 5.2 Task Initiation: Overcoming the "Wall of Awful"

**The Deficit:** Procrastination is often an emotional regulation issue, not a laziness issue. The task has become associated with negative emotions (fear of failure, boredom), creating a "Wall of Awful".10 **The Interventions:**

1. **Micro-Tasking:** Breaking a task down until it is "stupid small." Instead of "Write Essay," the task is "Open Laptop." Then, "Open Word Doc." These tasks trigger less amygdala resistance.6
2. **The Five-Minute Rule:** Negotiating with the brain: "I will do this for only five minutes. If I want to stop after five minutes, I can." Usually, once the threshold of initiation is crossed, the client continues.6
3. **Body Doubling:** A social intervention where the client works in the presence of another (the coach or a peer). The mirror neurons and social pressure facilitate initiation. This is highly effective for ADHD.25

### 5.3 Organization and Working Memory: Offloading the Brain

**The Deficit:** Working memory is a "leaky bucket." Clients lose items and forget instructions because they rely on internal storage.1 **The Interventions:**

1. **The "Launch Pad":** Designating a specific 2x2 foot square by the front door for all "leaving the house" items (keys, wallet, bag). The rule is: items *never* live anywhere else.
2. **Checklists:** Developing external checklists for routine transitions (e.g., "Morning Routine," "End of Workday Routine"). These must be posted at the "point of performance" (e.g., taped to the bathroom mirror or the door).26
3. **Cognitive Offloading:** The rule of "Write it down immediately." Clients are trained to stop trusting their brain to hold appointments and to immediately input them into a calendar.

### 5.4 Emotional Regulation: The "Hard Times" Protocol

**The Deficit:** Emotional flooding that hijacks cognitive resources.10 **The Interventions:**

1. **The "Hard Times" Board:** A menu of pre-approved coping strategies created when the client is calm (e.g., "Drink water," "Walk the dog," "Listen to Playlist A"). When dysregulated, the client does not have to *think* of a solution; they just pick one from the menu.13
2. **Visualizing the Future Self:** Using guided imagery to help the client connect with how their "Future Self" will feel if the task is done vs. if it is ignored. This activates the "hot" emotional motivational circuits.1

### 5.5 Reading Packet & Assignments: Module V

**Required Open-Source Readings & Viewings:**

| **Resource ID** | **Title / Description** | **Source / Access** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 27 | *Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills* | Harvard Center (Activity Guide) |
| 13 | *Reproducible Forms (Planning, Routines)* | Augusta Schools (PDF Toolkit) |
| 26 | *Executive Function Skills Checklists* | EffectiveStudents.com (PDF) |
| 24 | *9 Free Executive Functioning Activities* | Pathway 2 Success (Web Resource) |
| 10 | *Brown Model (Details on Activation)* | Scribd (Document) |

**Trainee Assignment 5.1: The Intervention Design Project**

*Objective: To design a comprehensive intervention plan for a complex client.*

**Case Study:** "Marcus is a 30-year-old software developer working from home. He is brilliant but constantly on the verge of being fired for missed deadlines. He works in a chaotic home office. He often forgets to eat lunch until 4 PM, then binges, crashes, and cannot finish his work. He stays up until 3 AM playing video games to 'wind down' and sleeps through his 9 AM stand-up meetings."

**Task (2,500 words):** Design a "Full-Stack" Intervention Plan.

1. **Physical Environment:** Redesign his home office. What specific changes (lighting, clocks, desk organization) do you recommend?
2. **Bio-Regulation:** Design a protocol for his lunch/sleep issues. How will you use external cues to trigger eating/sleeping?
3. **Working Memory:** Implement a system for his deadlines.
4. **Task Initiation:** Create a "Startup Routine" for his workday to overcome the inertia.  
   *Requirement: Use specific tools (e.g., Time Timer, Body Doubling) and justify each choice using the theoretical models from Module II.*

## Module VI: Professional Practice and Business Development

The final module addresses the practicalities of launching an independent coaching practice. Even the most skilled coach cannot help clients if they cannot attract them or manage the business logistics.

### 6.1 Defining the Niche and Value Proposition

The market for "Life Coaching" is saturated; the market for "Executive Function Coaching for" is growing. Niche specialization allows for targeted marketing and higher fees.28

* **Potential Niches:** College transition (Freshmen), High school athletes, Adults with late-diagnosis ADHD, Corporate executives with organizational deficits.
* **Value Proposition:** Do not sell "sessions." Sell outcomes. The value is not "60 minutes of talking"; the value is "A completed semester without academic probation" or "A peaceful household without fighting over homework".29

### 6.2 The Business Model: Pricing and Packaging

* **Hourly vs. Packages:** Hourly billing is discouraged. It creates income instability and allows clients to quit when the work gets hard. The recommended model is the **Package** (e.g., "The 3-Month Semester Success Program"). This ensures the client commits to the time necessary for neuroplastic change (minimum 3-6 months usually).30
* **Pricing Strategy:** Rates vary by geography and experience.
  + *Entry Level:* $100-$150 per session.
  + *Experienced:* $200-$400+ per session.
  + *Retainers:* Monthly fees (e.g., $1,500/month) for weekly sessions plus text support.30

### 6.3 Marketing and Client Acquisition

* **Referral Networks:** The most robust source of clients is professional referrals. Neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, and pediatricians often diagnose ADHD/EF deficits but do not treat the day-to-day management. They *need* reliable coaches to refer to.28
* **Content Marketing:** Providing value upfront. Create a "Lead Magnet" (e.g., a PDF titled "The ADHD College Packing List" or "5 Tools to Stop Procrastination"). This builds trust and captures email addresses for nurturing.31
* **The Discovery Call:** A free 15-20 minute consultation. The goal is not to coach, but to assess fit. Use a script: "Tell me about your current struggles. What would 'success' look like in 6 months? Here is how I work...".33

### 6.4 Legal and Administrative Infrastructure

* **The Coaching Agreement:** A non-negotiable document. It must cover:
  + **Scope:** Definition of coaching vs. therapy.
  + **Logistics:** Cancellation policy (usually 24-hour notice required).
  + **Payment:** Terms and refund policies.
  + **Confidentiality:** Limitations (harm to self/others).
* **Insurance:** Professional Liability Insurance is strongly recommended to protect against claims (e.g., a client blaming the coach for a failed class).34

### 6.5 Reading Packet & Assignments: Module VI

**Required Open-Source Readings & Viewings:**

| **Resource ID** | **Title / Description** | **Source / Access** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 35 | *One Page Business Plan for Coaches* | Scribd / Entrepreneur (Template) |
| 19 | *ICF Sample Coaching Agreement* | Coaching Federation (PDF) |
| 31 | *How to Start a Coaching Practice* | Stephanie Fiteni (Guide) |
| 30 | *Executive Coaching Pricing Strategies* | Accountability Now (Article) |

**Trainee Assignment 6.1: The "Launch Kit" Capstone**

*Objective: To build the actual assets needed to open a business.*

**Task:** Create a professional "Launch Kit" containing:

1. **Business Plan:** A one-page business plan defining your niche, target audience, pricing model, and revenue goals.35
2. **Service Menu:** A one-page document describing your packages (e.g., "The Intensive," "The Maintenance Plan") with pricing and deliverables.33
3. **Client Agreement:** A customized contract based on the ICF template, adapted for your specific niche (e.g., including clauses for communicating with parents if your niche is students).19
4. **Professional Bio:** A 200-word bio establishing your authority and philosophy.

## 7. Conclusion: The Path Forward

Completing this curriculum marks the beginning, not the end, of the practitioner's journey. Executive Function coaching is a dynamic field. The brain is plastic, and our understanding of it is constantly evolving. The "open source" nature of this curriculum implies a commitment to lifelong learning—constantly seeking out new research, new tools, and new perspectives.

By mastering the theoretical foundations of the "Air Traffic Control" system, internalizing the models of Barkley, Brown, and Dawson/Guare, and deploying the practical interventions of environmental engineering, the practitioner is now equipped to do profound work. You are prepared to step into the "gap" between potential and performance, acting as the scaffold that allows your clients to build the lives they are capable of living.

### Appendix: Summary of Open Source Toolkits

* **Intake & Assessment:** Executive Skills Questionnaire 12; Intake Templates.14
* **Planning Tools:** Reproducible Forms (Daily Planners, Project Sheets).13
* **Activity Guides:** Harvard Center Activity Guide 27; Effective Students Checklists.26
* **Business Tools:** ICF Ethics 22; Business Plan Template.35

*(Note: Practitioners are encouraged to download and save all linked PDFs locally to build their own permanent digital library.)*

#### Works cited

1. The Important Role of Executive Functioning and ... - Russell Barkley, accessed February 11, 2026, <https://www.russellbarkley.org/factsheets/ADHD_EF_and_SR.pdf>
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