Overview of 'Task Initiation' Toolbox

Optimise Environment and Readiness (Click here for the related tools)

When faced with huge or complicated tasks, we often procrastinate due to distractions in the environment or trouble getting into a productive state. By proactively adjusting our environment and personal state, we can make it easier to begin.

Suitable situation:

- Is easily distracted by environmental stimuli or external temptations, making it hard to begin tasks.

Relevant tools	Completing Homework	Preparing for Assessment	Managing School Routines	Managing Daily Routines	Interacting with Others
6a. Focus Zone	✔	✔			
6b. Shield of Temptation	✔	✔	✔		

Suitable situation:

- Is easily affected by personal state, resulting in an inability to initiate tasks effectively.

Relevant tools	Completing Homework	Preparing for Assessment	Managing School Routines	Managing Daily Routines	Interacting with Others
6c. Self-Awareness Tools	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6d. Kick-Off 3-2-1	✔	✔	✔	✔	

'Effective Questions' available Download tool

Lower the Threshold  (Click here for the related tools)

Task difficulty often influences our willingness to act. When a task exceeds our ability, avoidance and procrastination frequently occur (Niermann & Scheres, 2014). Lowering the entry threshold can effectively alleviate the psychological resistence, making it easier to take that crucial first step. We can break tasks down into smaller, manageable steps, so they do not appear too massive or daunting. Additionally, we can flexibly adjust the execution order of tasks flexibly based on our current state and capacity, thereby building self-confidence through incremental progress.

Suitable situation:

- Lacks a comprehensive understanding of the overall structure and specific requirements of the task, making it difficult to initiate action due to uncertainty over subsequent steps.

Relevant tools		Completing Homework	Preparing for Assessment	Managing School Routines	Managing Daily Routines	Interacting with Others
6e.	Visual Schedule	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6f.	Task Initiation Hub	✔	✔	✔	✔	
6g.	Mission Route Map	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Suitable situation:

- Is prone to task avoidance when facing multi-step or demanding work due to emotional overwhelm, leading to delayed task initiation.

Relevant tools		Completing Homework	Preparing for Assessment	Managing School Routines	Managing Daily Routines	Interacting with Others
6g.	Mission Route Map	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6h.	Five-Minute Rule	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6i.	Task Pairing	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6j.	Positive Ladder Challenge	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

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Use External Driving Force  (Click here for the related tools)

When we lack sufficient intrinsic motivation, initiating action spontaneously becomes difficult. Introducing external supports at the right time, such as environmental cues or positive rewards, can effectively motivate us to take the first step.

Suitable situation:

- Lacks intrinsic motivation to initiate tasks independently and needs motivation by external prompts or incentives.

Relevant tools		Completing Homework	Preparing for Assessment	Managing School Routines	Managing Daily Routines	Interacting with Others
6k.	Walk-the-Talk	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
6l.	Procrastination Crusher	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

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Note

Difficulty in initiating a task may also arise from other factors or gaps in other executive skills. In such cases, effective strategies can be drawn from the appropriate toolboxes. For example, if task initiation is hindered by worries about not doing the task perfectly or the avoidance of negative emotions associated with the task, the 'Self-regulation of Affect' Toolbox can be referred to; if one cannot begin due to a failure to systematically organise the necessary materials, one can refer to the 'Organisation' Toolbox; if a task stalls due to a lack of proactive action planning, the 'Planning/Prioritisation' Toolbox can be utilised.

Reference

Niermann, H. C. M., & Scheres, A. (2014). The relation between procrastination and symptoms of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in undergraduate students. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research, 23*(4), 411–421.