Cognitive Ergonomics from the Inside Out® (Cog-Erg for short) - A Shift in Paradigm

People judge the world through the lens of their own experiences. This produces cognitive bias. We favor things that are tangible and dismiss the abstract. This is tangibility bias. It is convenient for society if you do it their way because they favor what is easiest to manage, measure, or standardize. This is systemic bias. These biases shape what we accept as reality- the framework of concepts, assumptions, and methods that define how society interprets reality. It is our shared understanding that defines our paradigm.

Cognition is intangible while behavior is tangible, so our bias has us focused on conditioning people's behavior so that they act in a standardized way. This manifests as behavioral or skills training for those with cognitive conditions such as ADHD.

Most paradigms have anomalies that cannot be explained by the current paradigm and are brushed off as acceptable levels of margin or are just ignored. New paradigms are born when enough of these anomalies occur that someone recognizes them, questions them, seeks a new understanding without bias, and develops a new theory that explains what the old paradigm could not.

People like new things. They defend anything that proves them wrong. This is why a shift in a paradigm comes with significant explosive intellectual conflict necessary to disprove old paradigms and for the ego to accept it was wrong. Many cannot make the shift because they simply resist or because of their dependency on the old model.

Significant changes come only in the face of undisputed proof. To change a paradigm, we must have a lens (framework), empirical proof (tangible evidence), and the ability to reframe anomalies as solvable problems.

The ADHD community was thrown into an explosive intellectual battle led by Dr. Russell Barkley. The deficit of attention model has anomalies that do not explain, for example, why ADHD kids can play computer games for hours on end or that an adult can go online and lose track of time, only to realize many hours later that it is suddenly 3 a.m. In these examples the issue is not engaging attention but rather disengaging it.

Dr. Barkley argues that ADHD is not a deficit of attention but rather that ADHD is an executive function impairment (largely self-regulation) with multiple research-based findings to back up his claim. This brought about a titanic shift in how we look at ADHD.

AttentionScope® was developed by attention and ADHD coach Jeff Copper as a lens used to bring tangibility to Dr. Barkley's executive function construct. In combining the two constructs, a new field of engineering was born called Cognitive Ergonomics From the Inside Out® (Cog-Erg for short).

Cognitive Ergonomics From the Inside Out® transforms abstract concepts of cognition into tangible phenomena, revealing causal relationships around intangible accommodations that shift how we understand support for executive function impairments.

With Cog-Erg, we are recognizing meaningful connections that explain many anomalies the current paradigm cannot explain, pointing to solutions hidden in plain sight due to bias and producing new insights on how to support those with executive function impairments.

This new paradigm changes our conceptual approach of supporting those with ADHD and executive function impairments. It is a move from conformity to accommodation to mitigate or eliminate the manifestation of the impairment in daily life.

The new paradigm brings a shift from conforming behavior to standardization to affording greater resources in the form of direct communication for those with ADHD as a required accommodation for their impairment at work and in school.