



Portal Proofing Your Life

Strategies for managing executive dysfunction

What are portals?

- Stuff randomly disappears
- Neurodivergent people attract them
- Children may be especially vulnerable
 - Homework
 - PE kits
- Metaphor for executive dysfunction
- Support workers can summon them

**Which items get
portaled most
often in your life?**

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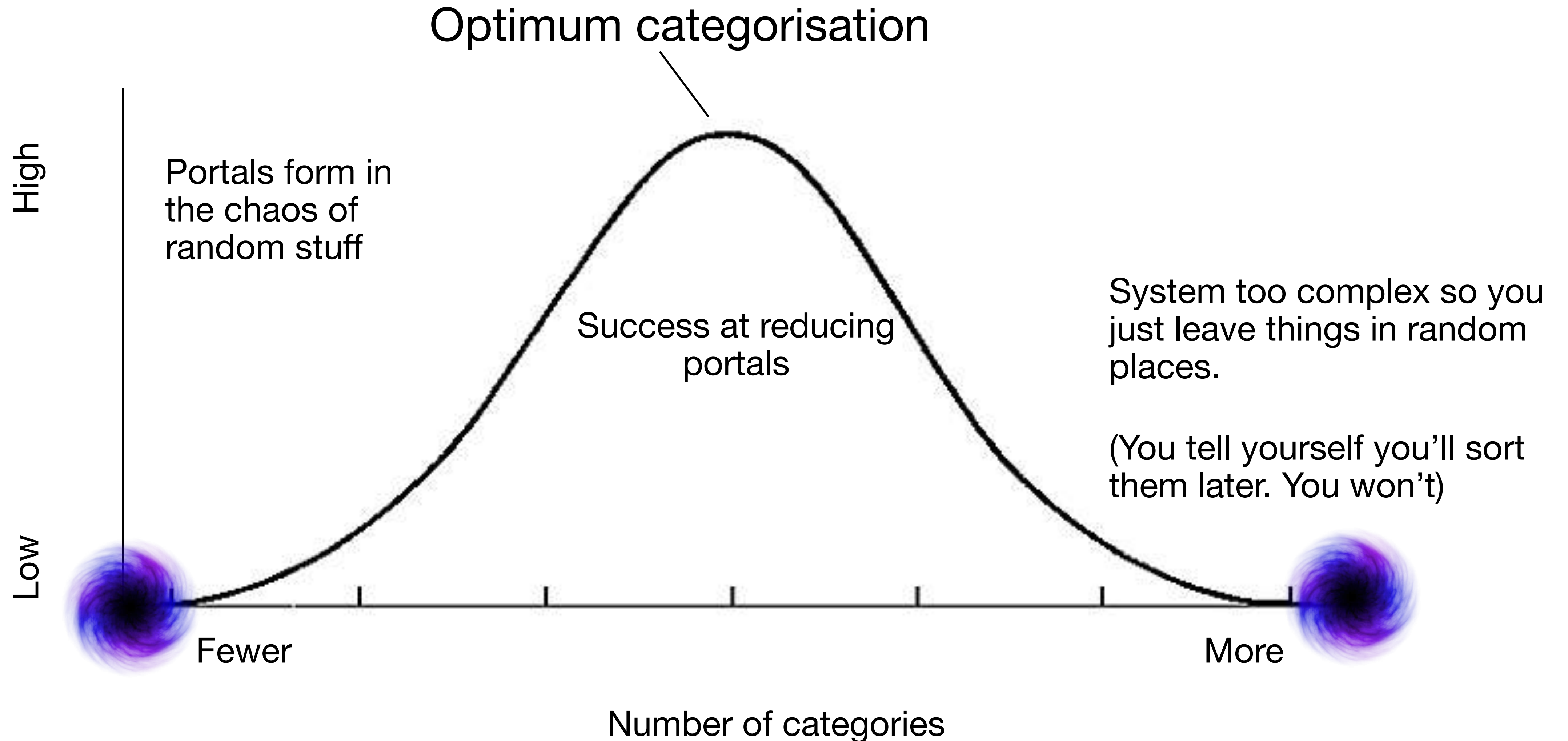
Portal proofing: general principles

Portal proofing general concepts

- Keep everything where you can see it
- Systems must be low effort, self maintaining
 - Portal proofing should not be aspirational, it should meet you where you are
- Wherever mess accumulates, put the mess container there
- Be systematic
- “Do it now” principle

System complexity

Categorisation helps prevent portals, but the more categories you have the harder it is to maintain the system



Systems

- Store things close to where you use them
- Store things that are used together together
 - Keep parts together (e.g. toolkit)
- Get multiple items if needed
- Attach things that you might lose with things you won't lose

Specific strategies

Strategy 1: Don't fight it

Put the container where the mess naturally occurs

- If you keep ending up with things in the same wrong place, redefine what the right place is.
 - Dirty clothes on the floor? Move the hamper!
 - Keys on the stairs? Put a key bowl there
 - For small things when you walk in the house - keys, pocket change, receipts, business cards

Make it easy

Inboxes

- A place to dump things that you don't want to deal with right now
 - **Post:** a shelf to put all post on so it doesn't go missing between being delivered and the next support worker visit
 - **Washing:** a box (near bedroom) to put all clean laundry in - you can fold and sort it later
- Socks (all the same sock)



Strategy 2: Anchors

- If you anchor something that is easily portaled to something that isn't, it can't get pulled away as easily.
 - Phone lanyard
 - Phone case wallet
 - Cloaks



Strategy 3: Portable containers

- Things are more likely to get portaled if there are many unrelated items jumbled together in one large area
 - or if they are separated from their container
- Tools that can help:
 - Pocket belt
 - Bag organiser





Doctors bag - it's like if the insert was just built into the bag



Strategy 4: Keep it in sight

- Portals develop out of sight and under things, so use visual storage when possible.
 - Transparent containers
 - Single layer
 - Tiers so you can see the things at the back
 - Ways of accessing the stuff at the back (drawers, turntables)

Strategy 5: Multisensory

- Portals are usually prevented by being able to see things
 - Remote case
 - Brightly coloured toddler
 - Bells
- Don't just check off what you have in your head, *touch* each object that you need to remember

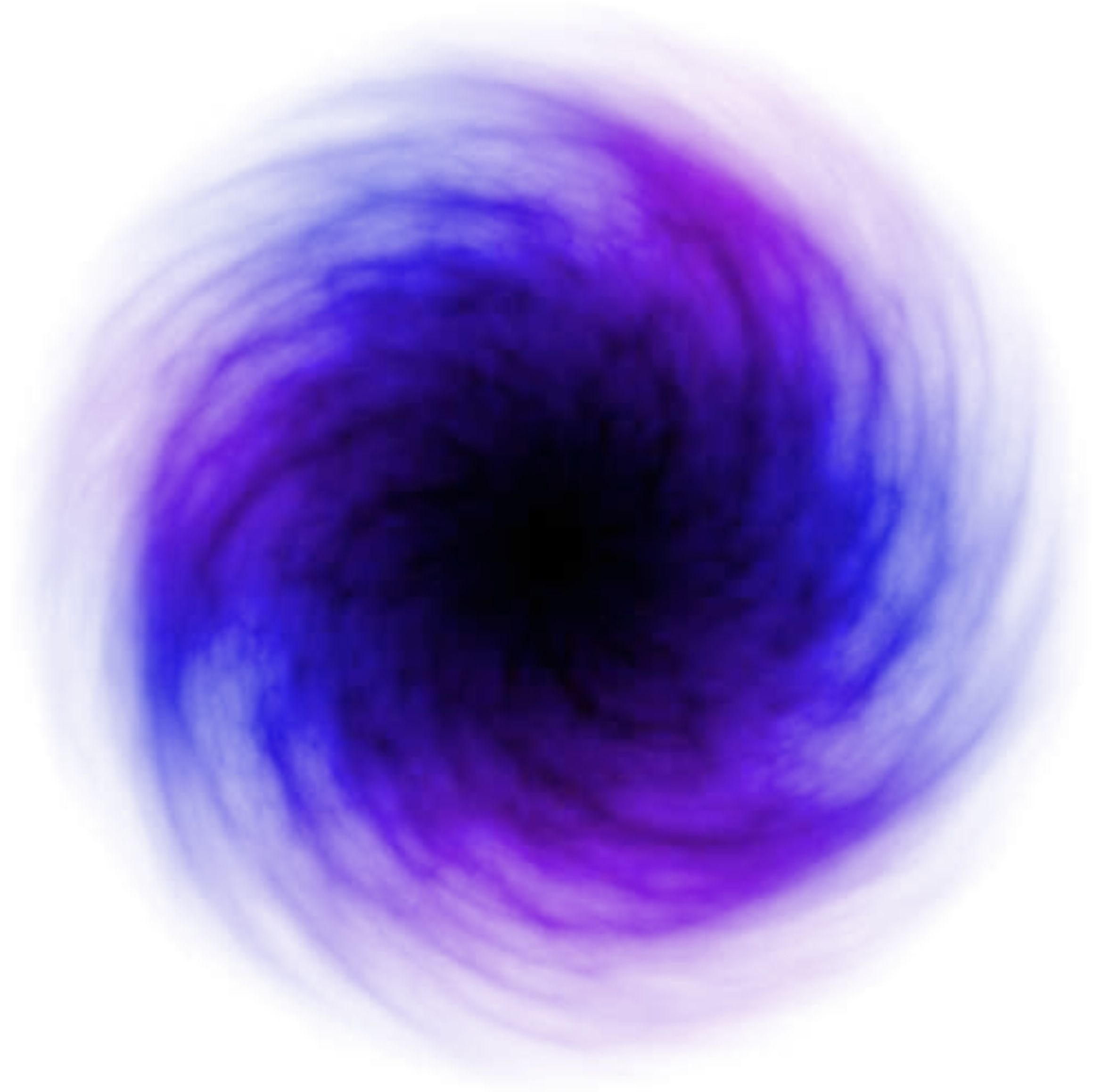


Special strategy: The Portal Proof Box

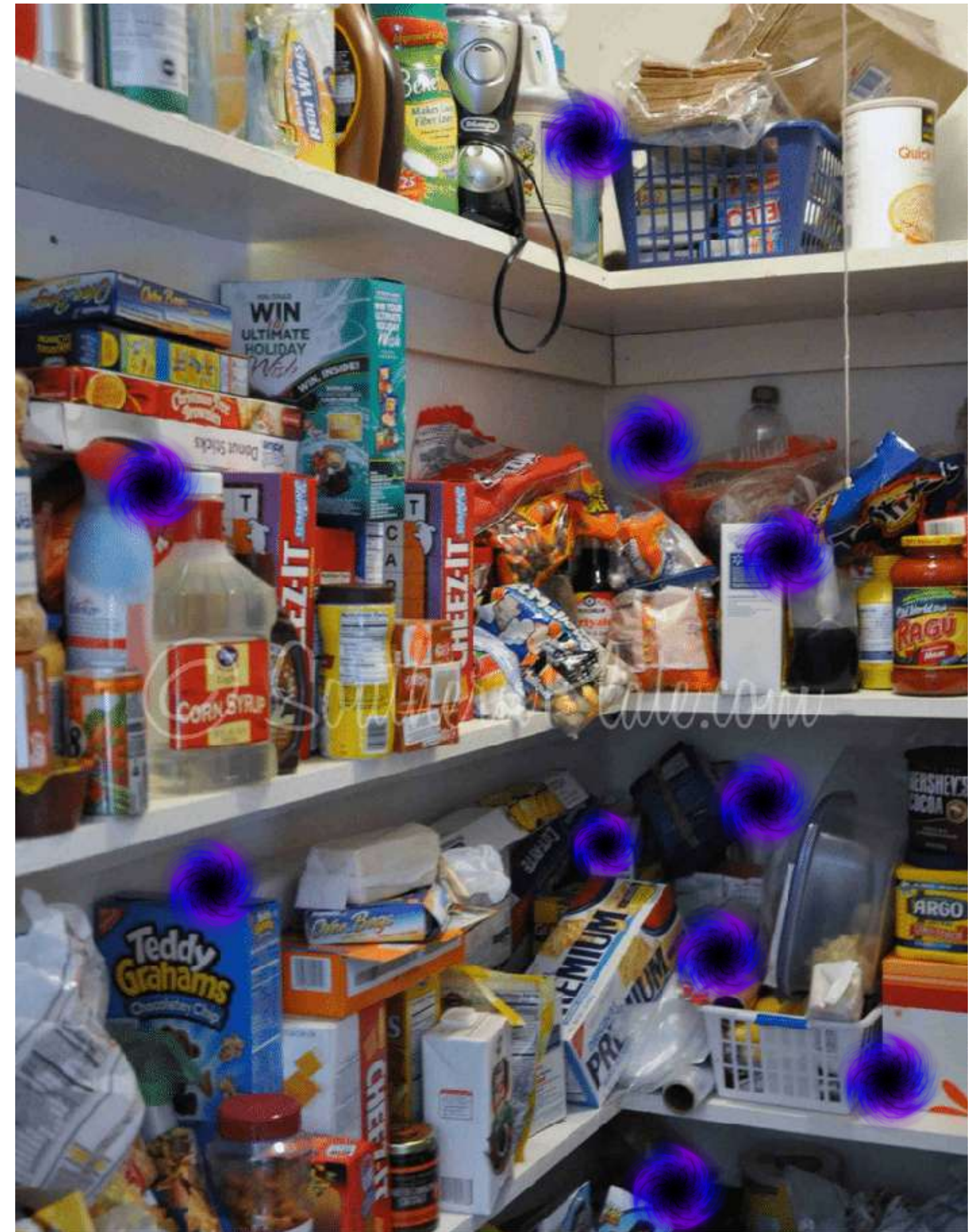
- A portal proof box has specific properties that prevent portals from appearing inside
- It does not hold many items
- The items it holds are for a specific time or purpose
- Distinctive
- For example, it may be used to hold special items that the kids need for school tomorrow (permission forms, swimming kits)

Your struggle with portals

What are some of your most remarkable examples of portaling?



**Portals will form
all over these
shelves!**



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What would you do to prevent portals in this cupboard?



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What portal proofing strategies can you spot in this image?



What portal proofing strategies can you spot in this image?

Similar things stored together

Transparent boxes so it's easy to see what's what



Tiered shelving so you can see what is behind

Rotating shelf means that you can store things behind other things but still easily see all of them.

Everything that is needed for a task (drink making) is stored together

Tea, coffee, etc.

Mugs

Biscuits

Coffee maker

Kettle



Summary

Portals and their prevention

- Portals are a fun analogy for executive dysfunction
- Neurodivergent people are far more likely than NTs to lose things
- Rather than trying to just stop having this difficulty by willpower or wishful thinking, you can adopt strategies to reduce losses, e.g.
 - Put containers in the places you tend to put things down
 - Attach easily lost items to ones that are less likely to be lost (e.g. a human)
 - Keep everything you need to take out in a single transferable container
 - Make things visible (or audible)