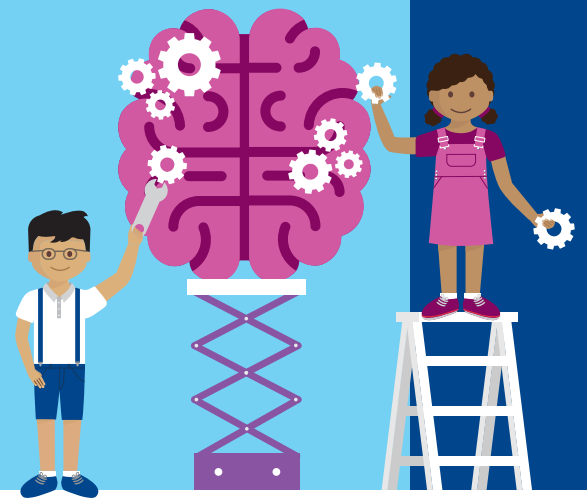


BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING

Behavioral Health Education
for Pediatric Primary Care

Guided Self-Management Toolkit for Families



**Boston
Children's
Hospital**

Department of Psychiatry
and Behavioral Sciences



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL

*This Toolkit is dedicated to families everywhere,
who work tirelessly every day to enhance the
health and well-being of their children.*

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Dr. Walter is Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Senior Attending Psychiatrist, Boston Children's Hospital; former Associate Medical Director for Behavioral Health, Pediatric Physicians' Organization at Children's; and former Medical Co-Director, Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program. Dr. Walter completed her general psychiatry training at New York University Medical Center/Bellevue Hospital and her child and adolescent psychiatry training at Columbia University Medical Center/The New York State Psychiatric Institute. She also completed training in preventive medicine at UCLA Medical Center and earned her MPH degree in epidemiology at the UCLA School of Public Health. Dr. Walter has achieved board certification in General Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, General Preventive Medicine, and Public Health and has practiced child and adolescent psychiatry in New York, Chicago, and Boston for over 35 years. In addition to clinical work, Dr. Walter's career has encompassed research, education, clinical administration, and advocacy. Dr. Walter has over 170 papers and chapters reporting the findings from her research and educational innovations, including more than 25 national clinical practice guidelines for child and adolescent psychiatry and multiple chapters on pediatric behavioral health in leading child and adolescent psychiatry and pediatric textbooks, including Dulcan's Textbook of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics, and Mental Health Care of Children and Adolescents – A Guide for Primary Care Clinicians. Dr. Walter has held major administrative positions at multiple academic medical centers, including Director of School Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical Center, Director of Outpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Northwestern University/Children's Memorial Hospital, and Chief

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Ms. Judd is the Graphic Designer for the Behavioral Health Education in Pediatric Primary Care program in the Department of Psychiatry at Boston Children's Hospital. Ms. Judd has a background in early childhood education with degrees from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in Communication Disorders and Psychology, with a concentration in Education. She studied graphic design at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and received her MS in Experience Design from Northeastern University. Ms. Judd has a special interest in designing health and wellness educational materials for pediatric patients and their families.

Dr. D'Angelo is Professor of Clinical Psychology at Harvard Medical School and the Chief of the Division of Psychology, Director of Training in Psychology, and Linda and Timothy O'Neill Chair in Psychology at Boston Children's Hospital. He was the Director of the Outpatient Psychiatry Service at BCH for approximately 20 years. He earned his PhD from the Joint Program in Social Work and Clinical Psychology at the University of Michigan in 1980. He completed his internship in Clinical Psychology at Boston Children's Hospital and a post-doctoral fellowship at the Boston Children's Hospital/Judge Baker Children's Center. He is board certified in Clinical Psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology. Dr. D'Angelo has received the Karl Heiser Presidential Award from the American Psychological Association, the Career Contribution Award from the Massachusetts Psychological Association, and the Connie Hersey Distinguished Service Award for Contributions to Education and Training from the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers. He is the past President of the American Academy of Clinical Psychology and also of the Massachusetts Psychological Association. He is also Past Chair of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers. He is a Fellow and a Commissioner in the Commission on Accreditation, American Psychological Association. He holds numerous appointments to both state and federal advocacy committees where he focuses on prevention, access to care, and education and training in mental health. He has published numerous papers and book chapters on education and training in psychology, adaptations of evidence-based interventions for youth from diverse backgrounds, suicide risk, and investigations of both clinical high risk and first episode psychosis.

Dr. DeMaso is George P. Gardner - Olga E. Monks Professor of Child Psychiatry and Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School; and former Psychiatrist-in-Chief, Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. DeMaso completed his pediatric internship at Massachusetts General Hospital, his general psychiatry training at Duke University Medical Center and his child and adolescent psychiatry training at Boston Children's Hospital/Judge Baker Guidance Center. He also completed training in pediatric consultation liaison psychiatry at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. DeMaso has board certification in General Psychiatry and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and has practiced child and adolescent psychiatry in Boston for over 40 years. In addition to clinical work, Dr. DeMaso's career has encompassed research, administration, and advocacy. Dr. DeMaso has over 240 published works reporting the findings from his clinical and research innovations, including multiple chapters on pediatric behavioral health in the Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics and Mental Health Care of Children and Adolescents – A Guide for Primary Care Clinicians. He also co-edited the genre-leading Textbook on Pediatric Psychosomatic Medicine and co-authored the genre-leading Clinical Manual of Pediatric Psychosomatic Medicine (now re-titled the Clinical Manual of Pediatric Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry). Dr. DeMaso has held top leadership positions at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and has earned multiple awards from AACAP, including the Simon Wile Award for Leadership in Pediatric Consultation Psychiatry, the Klingenstein Third Generation Foundation Award for Research in Depression or Suicide, the Catchers in the Rye Advocacy Award, the Outstanding Mentor Award, and Distinguished Life Fellow.

Guided Self-Management Overview



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Background

Guided-self management tools are designed to teach youth with **early, mild symptoms** of **anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**, and related disorders (**disruptive behavior**) how to develop skills to effectively manage their symptoms at home.

These skills have been shown in scientific research to help prevent the escalation of early, mild symptoms to more serious psychiatric disorders. The skills can be learned and practiced by children with the help of their parents, and by teens on their own or with the help of their parents as they choose. The skills can also help other family members support the symptomatic youth by engaging the entire family in accessible learning experiences that are helpful for anyone struggling from time-to-time with difficult feelings and behaviors.

There are three types of self-management guides: one for **children and their parents**, one for **teens**, and one for **parents of teens**. Each guide is structured in a similar way, as follows:

First, the **cover** page includes the name of the problem area; the intended user; and the appropriate age range for the user.

Second, the **table of contents** page includes a description of the appropriate evidence-based management of the symptom; a list of the specific skills included in the guide; and a brief overview of how to use the guide effectively.

Third, **handouts** are provided for each skill that include a description of the skill and how it can help; a list of instructions on how to use the skill; skills worksheets to guide home practice; the rationale for using a specific skill to manage a specific symptom; and common concerns and frequently asked questions, including when families should seek a higher level of support.

There are several options for pediatric primary care practitioners (PCPs) to use the self-management guides in their practices.

For sub-clinical to mild presentations of the target symptoms identified on a behavioral health screen or by verbal disclosure, the PCP can give the guides to the families directly – reviewing the table of contents page to orient the family to the guide. A sample script for the PCP to follow when introducing the guides to families is as follows:

- *Because your [name of symptom or problem area] is pretty manageable right now, we can start with providing you with some good tips that can help you cope with your [name of symptom or problem area].*
- *All of these tips are evidence-based, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven effective through rigorous scientific research.*
- *I suggest that you go over these tips together, and try out some of the skills.*
- *It may be challenging at first to master the skills, but the more you practice, the easier it will get.*
- *Once you have found the skills that work for you, make them a part of your daily routine.*
- *You may find that you can become very good at managing your [name of symptom or problem area] all by yourself!*

For moderately severe presentations of anxiety, depression, and disruptive behavior, although a referral for psychotherapy would nearly always be indicated, if there is a wait to begin therapy the family can try out the corresponding guides as a first step in treatment. The family should be advised that the guides should not replace therapy, as a professional is generally needed to help the youth overcome more severe symptoms.

For moderately severe presentations of ADHD, although medication would nearly always be indicated, the family can try out the corresponding guide as an adjunctive treatment to medication.

In any case, the PCP should always schedule a follow-up appointment with the youth and parents to assess whether the symptoms have responded to guided self-management, or whether additional treatments are needed.

Not all families will be appropriate for the use of these guides. Before distributing the guides, the PCP should assess the family culture, language, organizational skills, and motivation for using a self-management approach.

For severe presentations of anxiety, depression, ADHD, and disruptive behavior, use of the guides would not be appropriate; rather, a referral to specialty behavioral health care would always be indicated.

Guided Self-Management

Purpose and Intended Use



Purpose

The purpose of Guided Self-Management is to support the self-management of sub-clinical to mild presentations of anxiety, depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and related disorders (disruptive behavior) in pediatric primary care by providing evidence-based tools for prevention and treatment.



Limitations

The guided self-management materials are not intended to guide the care of severe, complex, or treatment-unresponsive presentations of anxiety, depression, ADHD, stress reactions, or disruptive behavior, or presentations with high medical or social complexity. The guides also do not address psychiatric disorders nearly always characterized by severity and complexity (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar, eating, substance-related, obsessive-compulsive, trauma-related, and conduct disorders). For these types of severe and complex presentations, management in the specialty behavioral health setting generally is warranted.



Stipulations

The guided self-management materials should not be considered to be a statement of the standard of care. They do not account for individual variation among patients. As such, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the effects of not implementing the guides, either in general or for a specific patient. The ultimate decision regarding the use of the guides must be made by the appropriate clinician in light of the evaluation findings, other clinical data, the patient's and family's personal preferences and values, and the treatment options available.

Use of the guided self-management materials is voluntary. Boston Children's Hospital provides them for teaching and educational purposes "AS IS" and makes no warranty, expressed or implied, regarding any information provided hereunder. Boston Children's Hospital and its clinical staff assume no responsibility for any injury or damage to persons or property arising out of or related to any use of the guided self-management materials, any information provided, or for any errors or omissions.

The guided self-management materials are protected by copyright and should not be disseminated without permission from the authors.

Guided Self-Management Research



Research

The guided self-management tools were originally created as an educational resource for the patients (and their families) of pediatric primary care practitioners (PCPs) and behavioral health clinicians (BHCs) participating in the Learning Community of the **Behavioral Health Integration Program** (BHIP) at the Pediatric Physicians' Organization at Children's (PPOC), and for PCPs participating in the Learning Collaborative of the **Making Behavioral Health Visits Matter** program at the Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) Health Network. These programs have provided quality improvement support for the guided self-management tools, as follows.



Massachusetts

The guided self-management tools were implemented in a statewide, community-based, independently-owned pediatric practice association (the PPOC) affiliated with Boston Children's Hospital. The PPOC comprises more than 80 pediatric practices in Massachusetts with more than 500 pediatric PCPs serving over 350,000 children and adolescents. In 2019, 39 PPOC PCPs, nurses, and BHCs were trained in the use of the guides. Of the 39 participants, 84% agreed that the training "increased my understanding of how Guided Self-Management tools can help my patients and their families"; 74% agreed that the tools are "appealing in appearance and easy to read and comprehend"; 76% agreed that the tools are "feasible to use with patients and families"; 82% agreed that the tools would be "useful to patients and their families"; and 86% responded that they were "likely or very likely" to use the tools with patients and their families.



California

The guided self-management tools were implemented in a regional, community-based pediatric practice association (CHLA Health Network) affiliated with the Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The CHLA Health Network comprises 64 pediatric practices in Southern California with more than 200 pediatric PCPs serving 400,000 children and adolescents. In 2019, 27 CHLA Health Network PCPs were trained in the use of the guides. Of those, 100% agreed that the tools will be "feasible to use with patients and their families"; 100% agreed that the tools would be "useful to use with patients and families"; and 94% responded that they were "likely or very likely" to use the tools with patients and their families.

Guided Self-Management Testimonials



"I just finished providing therapy to a family with a small child and was able to guide sessions utilizing the self-guided management skills. As a trainee, this manual provided me with the structure and tools to provide evidence-based skills to this family and collaborate on behavior change. Even though this case was a new type of presenting problem for me, having this resource helped me feel more prepared. I felt empowered to teach new skills and appreciated having ideas available to me to assist in treatment planning. The family additionally expressed gratitude for this resource, used the worksheets, and followed along each session."

Kendra Alkire, MA, MS

Psychology Intern

Boston Children's Hospital | Harvard Medical School

More Testimonials Forthcoming

Guided Self-Management Tools for Anxiety

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS

FOR Anxiety

Children 6-12



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

FOR ANXIETY



INTRODUCTION

Everyone worries sometimes. School, friends, and stress can cause children and teens to feel anxiety. For some children, anxious feelings can become difficult to manage. This can cause problems at home, school, and/or with friends. Working with your child's primary care team can help you assist your child in managing symptoms of anxiety.

Behavioral health specialists have worked hard to figure out ways to help manage anxiety. One of the most effective interventions is a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. This type of therapy helps people with anxiety learn how to change their thoughts and behaviors in order to feel less worried and to cope when worries do occur. The worksheets in this guide will help your child and family try CBT strategies at home. There are tips for parents and activities for your child, which can be used with children across a wide age range. We find that the skills are most effective when used in order. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, and instructions for how to use the strategy at home. We've also included a list of common questions and concerns parents usually have about each skill, along with our answers. Work through the guide with your child and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will be to make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your child need any additional support for anxiety management. Good luck!



Skill 1

Fear Thermometer

These worksheets will help your child pay attention to situations that make them anxious and rate their worried feelings.



Skill 2

Relaxation Skills

These worksheets teach simple skills and exercises that help increase feelings of calm and well-being. Make these skills a consistent part of your family's daily life to reduce stress for everyone.



Skill 3

Thinking Traps

These worksheets teach new ways to look at situations and suggest questions to ask in order to reduce anxious thoughts.



Skill 4

Facing Your Fears

These worksheets help you and your child design exposures, which are opportunities to face fears in a controlled and safe way.

PARENT HANDOUT: FEAR THERMOMETER



Anxiety Skill 1

WHAT IS A FEAR THERMOMETER?

- ▶ You may notice that your child worries, or gets anxious, during many kinds of situations. They may also avoid certain situations or things. The anxiety may feel like it comes out of nowhere, which can make it hard for your child to describe what exactly makes them anxious. To begin managing your child's anxiety, you need to help them name the problem.
- ▶ A fear thermometer is a tool that can do just that. A fear thermometer helps your child organize or rank the things and situations that make them anxious. The things/situations that make your child only a little worried are near a 1 on the thermometer. The things/situations that make your child the most worried are usually near the 10 on the thermometer.
- ▶ Once you and your child have a better understanding of their worries, you can use the fear thermometer to help your child plan ways to face their fears. These techniques can help them realize they can still do things they want and need to do even when they are worried.

HERE'S HOW TO CREATE A FEAR THERMOMETER

You can use the following script with your child:

- 1 Introduce the Idea.** "Everyone feels worried sometimes. In fact, our anxious feelings can sometimes be useful and important signals that help keep us safe. Other times, worries can get out of hand and make us too scared to do the things we need to and want to do. Today we are going to make a special thermometer that will help us name the things you're worried about. Doing this will help us figure out when you need help with your worries. Together we will figure out ways to solve problems and face your fears."
- 2 Look at the Example.** "Let's look at this example. The thermometer goes from 1 to 10. This kid is afraid of frogs! At the bottom near 1 it says, "seeing a frog," because that's something that makes the kid who made this a little worried. At 3 it has "a frog jumping near me" because that makes the kid a little more worried. The thermometer keeps going up like that until we get to 10, "holding a frog", the situation that causes this kid to feel the most worried."
- 3 List Worries.** "Before you make your thermometer, let's list all of the things you are worried about. We don't have to put them in order yet, just name everything you can think of. If you like, I can give you suggestions from things you've told me and what I've noticed."
- 4 Rate the Worries and Put them on the Thermometer.** "Great job! Naming all of these things and talking about them is an important step to feeling less worried and anxious. Okay, now that we have our whole list, let's see where they go on the thermometer. Let's start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle?" Wait for your child to name the fear, say a rating, and put on thermometer. "That makes sense, great job! Let's keep going." Move on to the next fear on the list.
- 5 Use the Fear Thermometer to plan next steps.** "We will keep the Fear Thermometer handy as we continue to work through this guide. The Fear Thermometer will be a tool to help us understand the details of your worries and pay attention to when you might need help. When these worry situations come up, you will use the skills we are going to learn in this guide to help." If you notice that your child has a lot of unrelated, more generalized worries (e.g., if friends like them, thunderstorms, midterm exams, spending the night away from home, etc.), you can use Anxiety Skills 2 and 3 (Relaxation Skills and Thinking Traps) to help them learn tools to cope. If you notice that your child has fears of a specific situation or thing (e.g., animals or heights), the other skills in this guide will be very beneficial, but it will be essential to use Anxiety Skill 4 (Face Your Fears) to help them learn to face their fears instead of avoiding them.

CHILD WORKSHEET: MY FEAR THERMOMETER



Use this space to brainstorm all the things you are worried about, in no particular order:

frogs

holding a frog

someone holding a frog near me

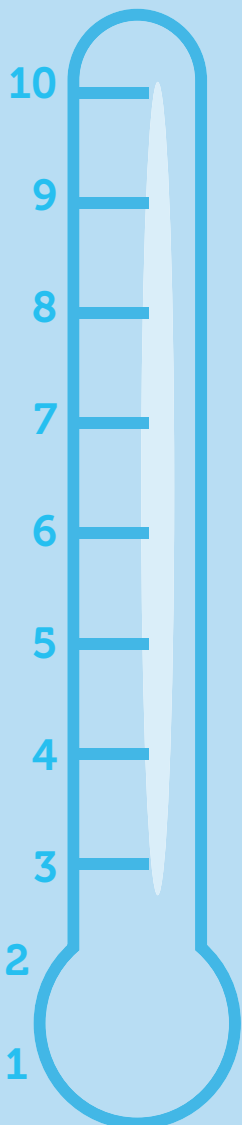
touching a frog

seeing a frog

a frog jumping near me



Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle? Write it down and move on to the next fear.



10. Holding a frog



9.

8. Touching a frog



7.

6.

5. Someone holding a frog right near me



4. A frog jumping near me

3.



2. Seeing a frog

1.

CHILD WORKSHEET: MY FEAR THERMOMETER



Use this space to brainstorm all the things you are worried about, in no particular order:



Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle? Write it down and move on to the next fear.

10		10. _____
9		9. _____
8		8. _____
7		7. _____
6		6. _____
5		5. _____
4		4. _____
3		3. _____
2		2. _____
1		1. _____

PARENT HANDOUT: FEAR THERMOMETER TIPS



Anxiety Skill 1

HOW CAN USING A FEAR THERMOMETER HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Learning the details about what things or situations make your child feel worried is a very important first step towards successfully managing their anxiety.
- ▶ Increasing your understanding of your child's anxiety through this process will help you be more aware of when to support your child in situations that cause them stress.
- ▶ Learning to identify and express worried feelings helps you and your child notice when a coping strategy (like the ones in Anxiety Skill 2) will be helpful.
- ▶ Creating a fear thermometer will also help you and your child make a plan for facing fears. They will be able to start with facing fears that are lower on their list in their ranking list and move up the thermometer as they feel braver (see Anxiety Skill 4).

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child finds it hard to rank their fears.

Rating fears can seem strange at first. Show your child the example in this guide to help them understand how to describe their fear. Ask questions to help them rate each fear (e.g., "Is it scarier to speak in a small group or to speak in front of the whole class?"). Let your child know that you can change the ratings as needed so they don't have to be "perfect."

My child rates everything at a 1 or a 10.

Ordering things from least to greatest is a hard concept, especially for younger children. If you notice that your child went through their whole list and rated each thing without using the middle ratings, gently ask them if there are some things that might go in the middle. You might say, "I wonder if there are some things that don't make you super worried (so less than 10) but also make you feel more than a little worried (so more than 1)?" Ask them to rate something fun (e.g., ranking foods from not tasty to the most delicious, or heights of family members from shortest to tallest) so they can practice the task.

My child gets upset while trying to make the ratings.

Thinking about worries can cause "in the moment" anxiety for many children. If your child is having a hard time, take a break from making the fear thermometer to relax and then come back to it. Let your child know that many people feel anxious when talking about their worries, but that it's important to do this exercise because in the end it will help them understand their anxiety and feel better.

Your child may also benefit from learning relaxation skills to manage anxious feelings. Try some of the strategies in Anxiety Skill 2 and see if they make talking about the feelings thermometer easier for them. They can also use the fear thermometer to remember to use relaxation skills (e.g., when your child's rating gets above a 4, it may be time to take some deep breaths).

I don't think my child's ratings are accurate.

If one of your child's ratings feels very off, talk to your child about that specific rating and things you've noticed about the situation. For example, "You put talking in front of the class as least scary. You labeled it a 2. I remember you seemed very worried about your last history project, more worried than you seem about ordering food at a restaurant. What do you think?". If your child won't change the ranking right then, leave it be and revisit the thermometer later. 100% accuracy isn't as important as your child feeling ownership over their thermometer.

PARENT HANDOUT: DEEP BREATHING



WHAT IS DEEP BREATHING?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **deep breathing**.
- ▶ Deep breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in which you fill your belly with air on the inhales (i.e., the breathe *in* part) and release the air on the exhales (i.e., when you breathe *out*).
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

HERE'S HOW TO USE DEEP BREATHING AT HOME

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your child feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your child times when you can use deep breathing in your own life (e.g., "I feel stressed when the grocery store is this busy, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before we go in."). If you notice your child looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try deep breathing to see if it makes them feel better.

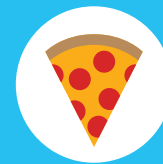
DEEP BREATHING PRACTICE

Deep Breathing Script: "Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to focus on our breathing. Start by taking some nice deep breaths, the same way you normally would. Notice how your belly rises and falls as you breathe. You can put your hand on your belly to help you feel the air going in and out. Now we are going to try to breathe in a way that will help us feel even more relaxed. Breathe in through your nose. This is the inhale. When you do this, make your belly fill with air like a balloon. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. This is the exhale and it makes you empty the air out of your belly balloon. Good. You can make a 'whoosh' sound on the exhale if that helps you. Now do that again, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can, slowly and calmly. Take your time and focus on the rhythm of your breathing. Try to make your belly balloon fill with air on the inhale and empty on the exhale. Great job. If other thoughts pop into your mind, that's okay. Just try to stay calm and start thinking about your breathing again. Now take three more slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, making your belly rise and fall three times. One. Two. Three. You can do this any time you need to relax. Great job! When you're ready, you can open your eyes."



Number Breathing

Once your child understands how to breathe more deeply, try variations such as 3-1-3. This involves breathing in for a count of three, holding it for one, and breathing out for a count of three. You can try other numbers and combinations and use whatever your child likes and finds comfortable.



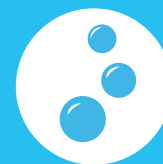
Pizza Imagery

A fun image that can help you or your child practice this skill anytime, anywhere: Imagine you are breathing in the smell of a slice of hot, delicious pizza and then blowing out to cool the slice down. Or think of another hot food you love!



Stuffed Animal Belly Breathing

Have your child lie down on the floor with a small stuffed animal on their belly. When they breathe in, the stuffed animal should rise as their belly fills with air. As they breathe out, the stuffed animal should sink slightly as air flows out. Older children can use their hand on their belly to practice instead of a stuffed animal.



Bubbles

Have some fun and use bubbles to show how breathing in and blowing out calmly can help you make bigger bubbles. Show your child how fast, more anxious breathing doesn't work as well.

PARENT HANDOUT: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



Anxiety Skill 2

WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **progressive muscle relaxation**.
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing different muscle groups one at a time and then releasing them. An example is flexing your arm muscle, then relaxing it.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

HERE'S HOW TO USE PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION AT HOME

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your child feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, when you can point out to your child times when you can use progressive muscle relaxation in your own life (e.g., "I've been clenching the steering wheel the whole way home. I'm going to try to relax my muscles now to feel calmer."). If you notice your child looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try progressive muscle relaxation to see if it makes them feel better.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION PRACTICE

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script:

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to practice relaxing our muscles by squeezing them tight and then releasing them. Let's start with our legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and point your toes. Hold your position and count to 5. Now relax your legs. Good job! Do that again. Stretch, hold for 5, and relax. Now make two fists like you are squeezing a lemon in each hand. Squeeze your lemons as tightly as you can to get the juice out for a count of 5. Now drop your lemons. Great job! Now repeat. Squeeze for 5 and drop. Let's next focus on our arms. Hold them out in front of you, stiff and straight for 5. Good. Now drop your arms to your sides like they are cooked, limp spaghetti. Now repeat. Stiff for 5 and then loose. Okay, now we're going to squeeze our stomach muscles as if we are trying to squeeze through a door. Hold them tight and count to 5! Now release. Great job. Repeat. Squeeze for 5 and release. Now we are going to scrunch up our faces like we are trying to get flies off our noses. Keep your face scrunched up for 5! Good. Release. Again, scrunch for 5 and release. For our last step we are going to hold our whole body as tight and scrunched up as we can. Tense all the parts and count to 5! Great job. Now release. Do that one last time. Tense for 5, now relax. Notice how good it feels to relax all your muscles. You can open your eyes."

Simon Says:

(best for younger children)

Turn progressive muscle relaxation into a game of Simon Says. Start with the caregiver as Simon and tell your child to tense different body parts ("Simon says scrunch your toes" or "Simon says flex your arm muscles"). Have your child release each part before moving on. Now let your child be Simon. Get creative and have fun!

PARENT HANDOUT: GUIDED IMAGERY



WHAT IS GUIDED IMAGERY?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **guided imagery**.
- ▶ Guided imagery involves imagining a calm image or scene using all 5 senses (i.e., sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), sometimes with the help of a script or recording.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

HERE'S HOW TO USE GUIDED IMAGERY AT HOME

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your child feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your child times when you can use guided imagery in your own life to feel better (e.g., "What a busy day! I need to take a mini vacation to my relaxing place!").
- ▶ If you notice your child looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try guided imagery to see if it makes them feel better.

GUIDED IMAGERY PRACTICE

Guided Imagery Script

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I want you to use your imagination to go on a vacation in your mind. Think of a calm and peaceful place. It can be some place you have been before or some place you would like to go. The place doesn't even have to be real; it can be imaginary. Spend a few moments picturing your peaceful place. Now think about the things you **see** in your special place. Notice the colors, shapes, and patterns. Think about how peaceful it is to see the details of your special place. Now think about the things you **hear** in your peaceful place. Is there music, animal sounds, or ocean waves? Or maybe you hear something different. Now think about the things you **feel** in your calm place. Warm sunshine on your face, grass under your feet, or something else? Notice how these feelings help you relax. Now think about what you **smell** in your relaxing place. The salty ocean, cookies baking, or something else? Take a deep breath of the amazing smells. Now think about what you **taste** in your calm place. A popsicle? Or a fresh cookie? Or something else? Think about how good it tastes. You can always take a trip back to your relaxing place if you need to feel calm. This is a tool you can always use to feel better. When you are ready, you can open your eyes."

Mini Vacation

Once you have practiced with the script above, encourage your child to close their eyes briefly and go on a mini vacation to their calm place when they feel tense or down.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation

Help your child relax at any time by prompting them to notice 5 things they see, 4 things they feel, 3 things they hear, 2 things they smell, and 1 thing they taste. This technique is a **grounding exercise** and can help your child feel better in challenging moments. Here's an example of using this in the kitchen: "I see my plate, the table, my sister sitting across from me, the clock, and the wall. I feel the chair, the floor, the table, and the warmth from the heater. I hear water running in the sink, water boiling on the stove, and my sister's voice. I smell cookies in the oven and the pasta I am eating. I taste the pasta."

PARENT HANDOUT: RELAXATION SKILLS TIPS



HOW CAN RELAXATION SKILLS HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Muscle tension is often associated with anxiety. Think about yourself clenching the steering wheel while stuck in traffic. Your muscles are tight and you are likely feeling stressed. Similarly, children with anxiety can experience shoulder tension, stomachaches, headaches, and other physical symptoms.
- ▶ This is because the mind and the body are connected. When children who are anxious or feeling some other negative emotion learn to practice relaxation, they find that they can calm their bodies, reduce anxiety, improve their sleep, and experience many other benefits.
- ▶ Your child needs to practice relaxation skills regularly during times of low anxiety so that they are better able to use the skills when they need them during times of higher anxiety. You can't use a skill well in "the game" if you don't practice!
- ▶ Relaxation skills are "portable." Your child can do them at home, school, or in public. Most relaxation skills can be done quickly and without anyone noticing.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child thinks this is too hard.

Relaxation skills may feel uncomfortable or challenging at first. Practicing regularly helps make the skills feel easier and more comfortable. Figuring out which skills (and methods of practicing the skills) your child prefers will also be helpful. Try out the different strategies we suggest, and see which ones work best for your family.

My child doesn't want to practice regularly.

Relaxation practice should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into the daily routine. For example, can they practice for a few minutes on the way home from school or use an app on their phone before getting ready for bed? Together, set a specific goal for regular practice (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward your child can earn for reaching it. Remind your child that this skill gets easier the more they do it, and that this is one way they can be in control of their anxiety.

My child thinks relaxation practice is boring or strange.

Ask specific questions to find out what could make it more appealing. Do they prefer a certain skill over others? Do they want to use technology in their practice (e.g., relaxation phone apps, guided imagery videos, etc.)? Would they be more interested in an active practice like yoga? Encourage them to keep trying new things until they find something that is enjoyable and comfortable.

My child can never use the skills in the moment to manage their anxiety.

If you are in a situation with your child where they could use a relaxation skill but are not doing so, give a gentle reminder to encourage them and then model the skill yourself. Talk with your child about times when relaxation skills can be helpful (e.g., deep breathing before a test) and set a goal with them to try to use that skill in that specific situation for a reasonable amount of times for the next week.



PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS



WHAT ARE THINKING TRAPS?

- ▶ **Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that increase anxiety, worry, and stress. They often involve jumping to conclusions, guessing that things will go badly in the future, and making connections that might not really make sense.
- ▶ Here are **4 Common Thinking Traps** that are often connected to anxiety. Discuss these with your child and see if you can come up with more examples that apply to them.

HERE'S HOW TO DECREASE THINKING TRAPS

Ask your child these questions to help them think in more positive ways:

- 1 **What are the facts? What is the likelihood that what you're worrying about will happen?** Often there is very little evidence that the things we are worried about will actually happen! Working with your child to look at the facts will help them think more realistically and often empower them to notice that they are capable of facing their fears.
- 2 **What would you tell a friend in this situation?** Focusing on helping a peer may help your child with perspective taking and problem solving. This strategy can help them feel calmer and more positive about their worry.
- 3 **What can you do to solve your problem or take your mind off the worry?** If possible, help your child take concrete steps to solve their problem. If that's not possible, encourage them to use relaxation or other coping skills (Anxiety Skill 2) to reduce anxiety and take their mind off things.



FORTUNE TELLING

Predicting that bad things will happen in the future.

People with anxiety often spend a lot of time imagining bad things they fear will happen in the future.

Fortune Telling Example: "My parents are going out to dinner. What if something bad happens to them? They might get food poisoning and have to go to the hospital! We'll be all alone!"



CATASTROPHIZING

Making little problems or worries seem like big problems.

When we catastrophize, we make a big deal out of our worries, even when they might actually be pretty small.

Catastrophizing Example: "I'm feeling a little nervous about the play tomorrow. I'm probably going to forget all my lines and get laughed off the stage! I should tell my mom I'm sick."



OVERGENERALIZATION

Assuming that because we were worried or nervous in one situation, we will feel like that again.

When we overgeneralize, we ignore the unique facts about a situation.

Overgeneralization Example: "I was nervous about that math test, because I didn't study as much as I should have. I'm going to do terribly on my science test, too! I know I studied, but I bet I'll get a bad grade again."



ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Seeing things as "all good" or "all bad."

When we use all-or-nothing thinking, we ignore the fact that many situations are somewhere in between and have both positive *and* negative aspects.

All-or-Nothing Thinking Example: "That dog jumped on me and freaked me out! All dogs are scary and mean."

CHILD WORKSHEET: THINKING TRAP PRACTICE

Here's an example of how to use your new skills to deal with a **Catastrophizing Thinking Trap**:



"I'm feeling nervous about the play tomorrow. I'm probably going to forget all my lines and get laughed off the stage! I should tell my mom I'm sick."

What are the Facts?	"I've been in six plays before and have never forgotten my lines. I did really well at the dress rehearsal yesterday. My friend made mistakes in the last play, and no one laughed."
What Would I Say to a Friend?	"You've worked hard, and it's going to go great!"
What can I do to take my mind off things?	"I'm going to go play a game with my brother to forget about this for a little while."

FORTUNE TELLING: "My parents are going out to dinner. What if something bad happens to them? They might get food poisoning and have to go to the hospital! We'll be all alone!"

What are the Facts?	
What Would I Say to a Friend?	
What can I do to take my mind off things?	

OVERGENERALIZATION: "I was nervous about that math test, because I didn't study as much as I should have. I'm going to do terribly on my science test, too! I know I studied, but I bet I'll get a bad grade again."

What are the Facts?	
What Would I Say to a Friend?	
What can I do to take my mind off things?	

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING: "That dog jumped on me and freaked me out! All dogs are scary and mean."

What are the Facts?	
What Would I Say to a Friend?	
What can I do to take my mind off things?	

PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS TIPS



Anxiety Skill 3

HOW CAN UNDERSTANDING THINKING TRAPS HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When people experience worry and anxiety, they often think about their present situation and things that might happen in the future in negative ways.
- ▶ By learning about thinking traps (i.e., ways of thinking that make us feel worried, stuck, or upset), your family can help each other pay attention to the ways you talk and think about anxiety.
- ▶ Once everyone has practiced noticing their thinking traps, you can help each other take those thinking trap statements and make them more positive and realistic.
- ▶ Learning how to discuss anxiety in realistic and self-esteem boosting ways can help your whole family feel more confident and capable when facing stressful situations.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

Some of the thinking traps are hard for my child to understand.

If a particular type of thinking trap is challenging for your child, brainstorm additional examples that might make it clearer. Ask friends and family to help if needed. Examples that connect to your child's interests (e.g., their favorite sport or movie) can be very useful. If your child struggles to separate the thinking traps into different categories, just focus on noticing worry-increasing thoughts in general and changing them. For example, call them "worry thoughts" or using their "worry brain." You can still improve thinking this way.

My child says that thinking traps aren't a problem for them, but I know that they are.

It's hard for people of all ages to notice or acknowledge a harmful habit. Be an example by pointing out thinking traps in your own life (e.g., "When I realized I was running late to get you, I was so worried you'd be upset or alone and think I'm the worst mom ever! Then I realized I was *catastrophizing* and reminded myself that traffic is terrible and you were safe playing with your friends."). Make similar connections in media you watch together (e.g., "Is that character using a thinking trap? Which one?"). Gently bring up times you notice your child using a thinking trap after the situation has calmed down (e.g., "Before your game, you were worried that your team was definitely going to lose. I wonder if that was a thinking trap, maybe *fortune telling*? Just because you're nervous doesn't mean that you're not great! You all have been practicing so hard.").

Changing negative thinking is very hard for my child.

Negative thoughts are often automatic, like a habit. Becoming a more positive thinker requires breaking this habit. It takes a lot of practice to make a change like this! Start with more fun and playful examples if jumping right into your child's particular style of anxious thinking feels overwhelming. Practice on a regular basis for a few minutes at a time (daily if you can manage it) to start forming a new habit of positive thinking. If your child is still having a difficult time, talk to your child's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

PARENT HANDOUT: FACING YOUR FEARS



FACING YOUR FEARS USING EXPOSURE

- ▶ “Exposure” is the clinical term for dealing directly with things that make someone anxious, instead of avoiding them.
- ▶ Research shows that approaching situations we fear is the most effective way to decrease anxiety. This can be challenging because avoidance of feared situations is a natural response. However, when we run away from our fear, we are “proving” to ourselves that the thing we are afraid of is too terrible to face.
- ▶ It doesn’t have to be this way! Our Anxiety Skills are designed to help you and your child face fears in a safe way. Exposure gives your child a real world opportunity to see that they can overcome scary situations and reduce anxiety in the process.
- ▶ Exposure is most beneficial and straightforward to address at home when the fear is a specific thing (such as an animal) or situation (such as riding an elevator, speaking in class, or talking to new people).
- ▶ Making an exposure plan can provide your child with repeated experience facing feared situations in a calm and organized way. In an exposure plan, exposures are organized in a hierarchy, from tasks that cause your child the least amount of worry all the way up to situations that create more significant anxiety.
- ▶ These plans are most successful when the tasks are all related to each other and are increasing approximations of the worry that most gets in your child’s way. An example exposure for a child with a worry about making new friends would be simply saying hello to a new child on the playground, and then a later step on the hierarchy could be asking a child to play.
- ▶ Over time, exposure will help your child become more confident and less fearful. They can potentially no longer feel anxious in situations that currently cause them to worry a lot! Or their anxiety may not go away completely, but they will feel more in control and more able to effectively manage worry. This helps your child learn that they can achieve their goals and have fun even when anxious.

HERE’S HOW TO CREATE AN EXPOSURE PLAN

You will need your child’s Fear Thermometer from Anxiety Skill 1, plus our Create Your Own Exposure Plan worksheet on the coming pages, to help you create a plan together. Make copies of the Create Your Own Exposure Plan so you can repeat this process for multiple worries and repeat certain exposures if needed. Review the script below and our examples on the Exposure Plan Examples worksheet before helping your child. This will help you better understand the way exposures work before you get started. The examples show how all the steps of an exposure plan should be connected to your child’s major worry. Adapt the script for your child as needed so they can create their own personalized plan. Your child may have a wide range of unconnected fears on their fear thermometer; this is okay. Work together to pick one specific thing or feared situation to focus on at a time, as exposure works best when there is a clear target on which to focus.

HERE'S HOW TO CREATE AN EXPOSURE PLAN (cont.)

Introducing Creating an Exposure Plan to Your Child:

- 1 “We are going to make a plan to help you face the fears that you put on your Fear Thermometer. One fear that you included is _____.” Work with your child to choose a specific fear that may work well based on our tips, such as a specific thing or situation. Once you both agree, proceed to step 2.
- 2 “We are going to use this worksheet to help us make a plan.” Show your child the Create Your Own Exposure Plan worksheet. “Here, the worksheet has a place for us to write down the name of the worry we will be working on in your exposure. Exposure is the word for facing the thing you are afraid of instead of avoiding it or running away.” You or your child should write the worry you will be working on in the space provided.
- 3 “Right here is a place for us to write down each part of the exposure.” Point at the empty rows 1-6. “The worksheet also has a place for us to rate how you feel before and after you face your fears. The Worry Scale on the page can help us do those ratings.” Point at the Before and After columns and the Worry Scale.
- 4 “Our goal is going to be for you to do the things you need and want to do without feeling too scared or running away. I think you will feel strong and brave!” Add in more ideas about what it could be like for them to conquer their particular fear.
- 5 “That might seem like it could never happen, but I believe in you and you can do it! We will take baby steps to get there.”
- 6 “If you were afraid of swimming, we wouldn’t plan for you to just dive into the ocean without any steps before that. First we might have you put your feet into the water to slowly start getting more comfortable. What is something we can do to that is like that, something that will help you begin to get comfortable?” Wait for your child’s response. Share some responses applicable to their fear that are similar to steps 1 and 2 in our example plans if they can’t come up with anything. You are looking for steps that will be a “warm up” for facing the big fear. You or your child should write these steps down.
- 7 “Great idea! Now let’s think about the next step with this fear. What comes after the steps we just put down? What will we need to do to get even closer to facing and overcoming your fear?” Wait and provide responses similar to steps 3 and 4 on our example plans if needed. Remember, we are taking bigger and bigger steps toward facing the fear! You or your child should write these steps down.
- 8 Now you are ready to name the activities that will be near the top of the exposure plan. “You’ve given so many great ideas for getting more comfortable with this worry! Now let’s talk about what will be our big goal. What are the biggest challenges connected to this fear?” Wait and provide responses similar to steps 5 and 6 in our examples if needed. You or your child should write these steps down. “Good work! Let’s review the worksheet and start to plan how we will begin our exposures.”



PARENT HANDOUT: EXPOSURE PLAN EXAMPLES



Anxiety Skill 4

Exposure Plan Examples

Example 1: Fear of Frogs

This example is for a child who has a fear of frogs, but is also very interested in science and animals. The goal of these exposures is to help the child hold a frog comfortably, a wish they have because of their interests. The example on the Fear Thermometer worksheet also deals with this worry; you can refer back to it now if needed (Anxiety Skill 1).

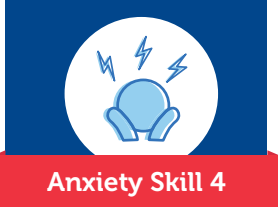
		Before	After
1	Looking at pictures of cartoon frogs on the internet or in a book.		
2	Looking at pictures of real frogs on the internet or in a book.		
3	Looking at frogs in aquariums at the pet store.		
4	Going near frogs in the pond at the science center.		
5	Touching a frog at the science center while an employee holds it.		
6	Holding a frog all by myself at the science center.		

Example 2: Fear of Elevators

This example is for an adolescent who has a fear of elevators. The goal of these exposures is for the adolescent to feel okay riding an elevator alone, an ability they wish to have as they increase their independence.

		Before	After
1	Looking at pictures of an elevator on the internet or in a book.		
2	Watching a video of someone riding in an elevator.		
3	Going to an elevator and standing inside it briefly with a parent.		
4	Going in an elevator and riding it with a parent.		
5	Going in the elevator and standing inside it briefly alone.		
6	Going in the elevator and riding it alone.		

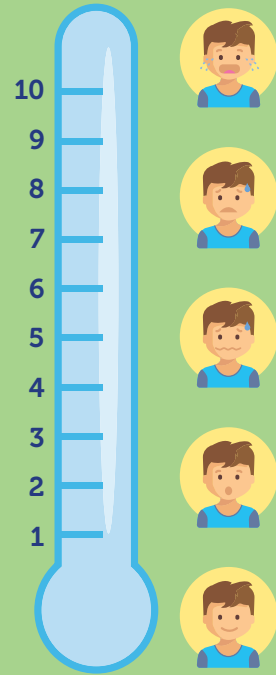
PARENT HANDOUT: CREATE YOUR OWN EXPOSURE PLAN



Using Your Exposure Plan

- 1 You and your child should pick a time when things are calm and not rushed at home to begin working on exposures. Start with step 1 on your plan, which is the exposure your child rated as easiest to try.
- 2 Before each exposure practice, get a Worry Scale rating. Ask, "Look at the Worry Scale. How worried/afraid do you feel? 1 is not that worried and 10 is the most worried."
- 3 After each exposure practice, get a Worry Scale. Say, "Great job! Look at the Worry Scale. How worried/afraid do you feel? 1 is not that worried and 10 is the most worried."
- 4 Record these Worry Scale ratings next to the exposures listed on your plan. This will help you and your child track their progress over time.
- 5 You can repeat each step above until your child's ratings go down and they notice an exposure is less scary than it was before. Then, move onto step 2 on your plan, the next exposure. Go at a pace that is comfortable for your child, but be consistent about moving through the exposures at a steady pace.

1-10 Worry Scale



Create Your Own Exposure Plan

Put your child's plan here:

	Before	After
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

PARENT HANDOUT: FACING YOUR FEARS TIPS



Anxiety Skill 4

HOW CAN FACING FEARS THROUGH EXPOSURES HELP OUR FAMILY?

- ▶ Children and adolescents who have anxiety often avoid necessary and positive experiences due to their fears. This can impact their functioning at home, school, and with friends. Facing their fears through exposures helps them tackle their fears in a safe, controlled way and can improve their quality of life.
- ▶ Families are often unsure of how to help their child address the things that scare them. These worksheets help parents get organized by giving them a road map to assist their children in tackling their worries. Remember to take your time moving through the plan. As your child builds confidence, it will get easier to face their fears.
- ▶ Anxiety can feel very overwhelming for everyone, and children and adolescents may be unsure of how to articulate their concerns. The Fear Thermometer (Anxiety Skill 1) and Facing Your Fears worksheets in this guide help them identify their worries and break them down into manageable parts to be conquered!

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

We are having a hard time coming up with ideas for exposures.

Sometimes it is hard to figure out how to “expose” your child to situations that aren’t part of daily life. You can use the internet, books, or magazines to help you look up realistic images and videos of fears (e.g., bugs and heights). Review any media you will use in exposures first before showing them to your child. You can also role play anxiety-provoking scenarios; these can be exposures, too. Use your imagination and get creative!

My child refuses to do the exposures.

Empathize with your child. Tell them that you understand that this is very challenging but that you believe in them. Explain that exposures will help them worry less and have more fun in their lives. Explain that avoiding things actually makes them seem scarier, but that facing them helps us realize we can handle it. Remind them that you will start with the first step of their exposure plan, which they rated as the easiest step, and move through their plan slowly. You can try giving small incentives to encourage and motivate your child (e.g., a special activity once they get to a certain point on their Fear Thermometer).

When we do exposures, my child becomes very distressed. Sometimes they even cry!

It can often be challenging for parents to watch their children feel upset during exposures; however, it’s important to stay supportive and calm as your child learns to cope with their fears. Explain that you understand that this is tough and that they are upset. Remind your child and yourself that completing exposures will help them be less worried over time. If they are still having a hard time, encourage them to use deep breathing or another coping skill (see Anxiety Skill 2). If this doesn’t help, take a break from exposures to do something fun for distraction, but then come back to the exposure later.

We did exposures and my child still has anxiety.

Exposures won’t always “get rid” of anxiety completely. Anxiety at a low level is a normal part of life that can give us useful information about the world. The purpose of exposure is for your child to be able to achieve their goals and have fun, even if they still feel anxious sometimes. If your child has completed their exposures and is still having difficulties functioning at school, home, and/or with friends because of their fears, or if your child is unable to complete their exposures due to anxiety, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS **FOR ANXIETY**

Teens 13-17



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

FOR ANXIETY



INTRODUCTION

Everyone worries sometimes. School, friends, and stress can cause anyone to feel anxiety. For some teens, anxious feelings can become difficult to manage. This can cause problems at home, school, and/or with your friends. Working with your primary care team and your parents can help you manage symptoms of anxiety.

Behavioral health specialists have worked hard to figure out ways to help manage anxiety. One of the most effective interventions is a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. This type of therapy helps people with anxiety learn how to change their thoughts and behaviors in order to feel less worried and to cope when worries do occur. The worksheets in this guide will help you and your family try CBT strategies at home. There are tips and activities for you and advice for your parents. We find that the skills are most effective when used in the order we show here. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many teens have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help you and your family and instructions for how to use the strategy at home. We've also included a list of common questions and concerns people may have about each skill, along with our answers. Work through the guide along with your parents and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit you best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will be to make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you need any additional support for anxiety management. Good luck!



Skill 1

Fear Thermometer

These worksheets will help you pay attention to situations that make you anxious and rate your worried feelings.



Skill 2

Relaxation Skills

These worksheets teach simple skills and exercises that help increase feelings of calm and well-being. Make these skills a consistent part of your daily life in order to reduce stress.



Skill 3

Thinking Traps

These worksheets teach new ways to look at situations and suggest questions to ask in order to reduce anxious thoughts.



Skill 4

Facing Your Fears

These worksheets help you and your parents design exposures, which are opportunities to face fears in a controlled and safe way.



What is a Fear Thermometer?

- ▶ You may notice that you worry during many kinds of situations. You may also avoid certain situations or things. The anxiety may feel like it comes out of nowhere, which can make it hard for you to describe to family or friends exactly what makes you anxious. To begin managing your anxiety, you need help naming the problem.
- ▶ A fear thermometer is a tool that can do just that. A fear thermometer helps you organize or rank the things and situations that make you anxious. The things/situations that make you only a little worried are near a 1 on the thermometer. The things/situations that make you most worried are usually near the 10 on the thermometer.
- ▶ Once you have a better understanding of your worries, you can use the fear thermometer to plan ways to face your fears. These techniques can help you understand something really important: you can do things you want and need to do even when you are worried.

Here's How to Create a Fear Thermometer

Walk through the steps below; your parent can help you if you need it:

- 1 Look at the example.** Look at the example. The thermometer goes from 1 to 10. This teen is afraid of frogs! At the bottom near 1 it says, "seeing a frog," because that's something that makes the teen who made this a little worried. At 3 it has "a frog jumping near me" because that makes the teen a little more worried. The thermometer keeps going up like that until we get to 10, "holding a frog", the situation that causes this teen to feel the most worried.
- 2 List worries.** Before you make your thermometer, list all of the things you are worried about. You don't have to put them in order yet, just name everything you can think of. If you like, ask your parent for suggestions based on from things you've told them and what they've noticed.
- 3 Rate the worries and put them on the Thermometer.** Great job! Naming all of these things and talking about them is an important step to feeling less worried and anxious. Okay, now that you have your whole list, it's time to see where they go on the thermometer. Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle?" Keep going! Move on to the next fear on the list.
- 4 Use your Fear Thermometer to plan next steps.** Keep your Fear Thermometer handy as you continue to work through this guide. The Fear Thermometer will be a tool to help you understand the details of your worries and pay attention to when you might need help. When these worry situations come up, you will use the skills you are going to learn in this guide to help. If you notice that you have a lot of unrelated, more generalized worries (e.g., if friends like you, thunderstorms, midterm exams, spending the night away from home, etc.), you can use Anxiety Skills 2 and 3 (Relaxation Skills and Thinking Traps) to learn tools to cope. If you notice that you have fears of a specific situation or thing (e.g., animals or heights), the other skills in this guide will be very beneficial, but it will be essential to use Anxiety Skill 4 (Facing Your Fears) to help you learn to face your fears instead of avoiding them.

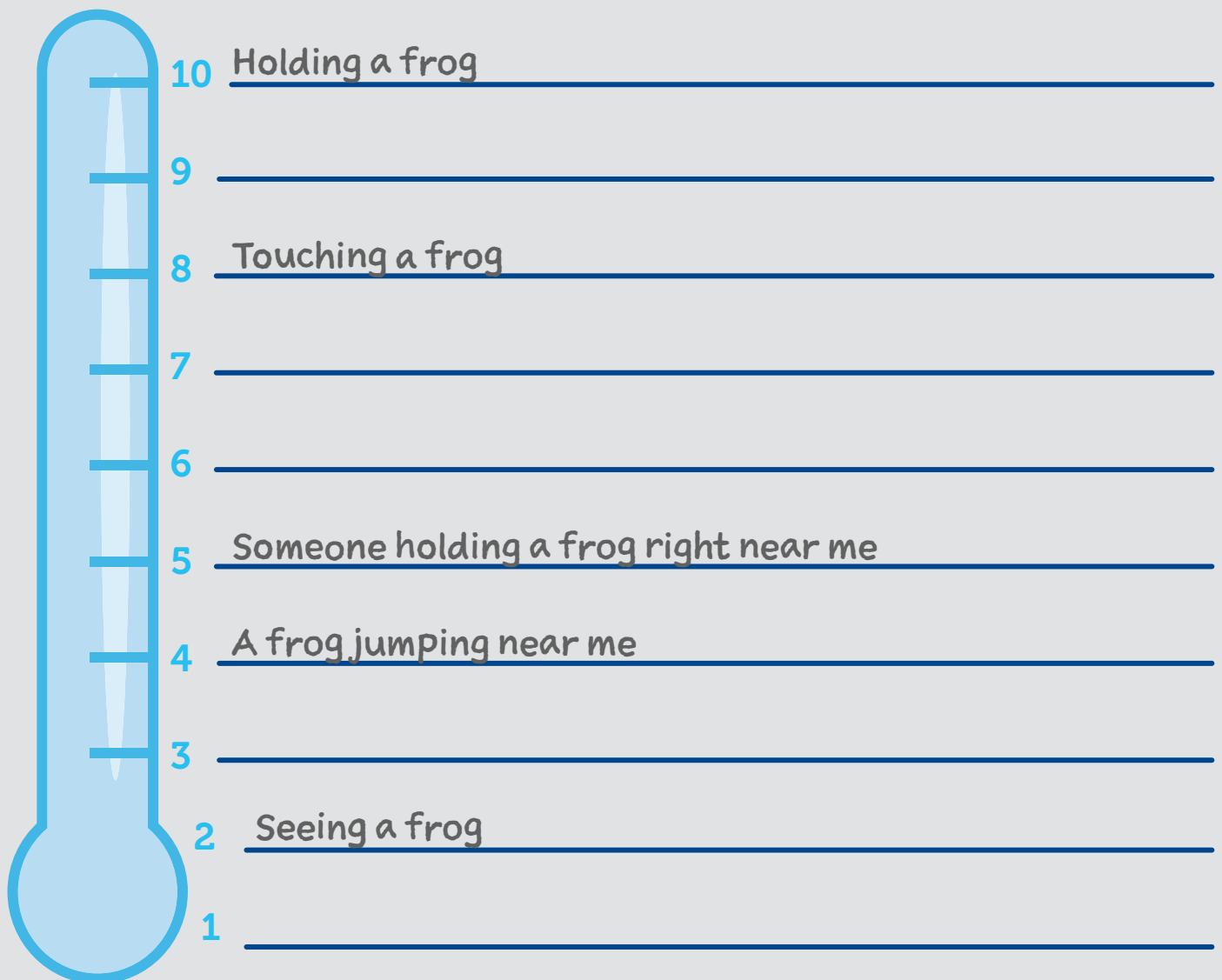
TEEN WORKSHEET: MY FEAR THERMOMETER



Use this space to brainstorm all the things you are worried about, in no particular order:

- frogs
- someone holding a frog near me
- seeing a frog
- holding a frog
- touching a frog
- a frog jumping near me

Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle? Write it down and move on to the next fear.



10 Holding a frog

9 _____

8 Touching a frog

7 _____

6 _____

5 Someone holding a frog right near me

4 A frog jumping near me

3 _____

2 Seeing a frog

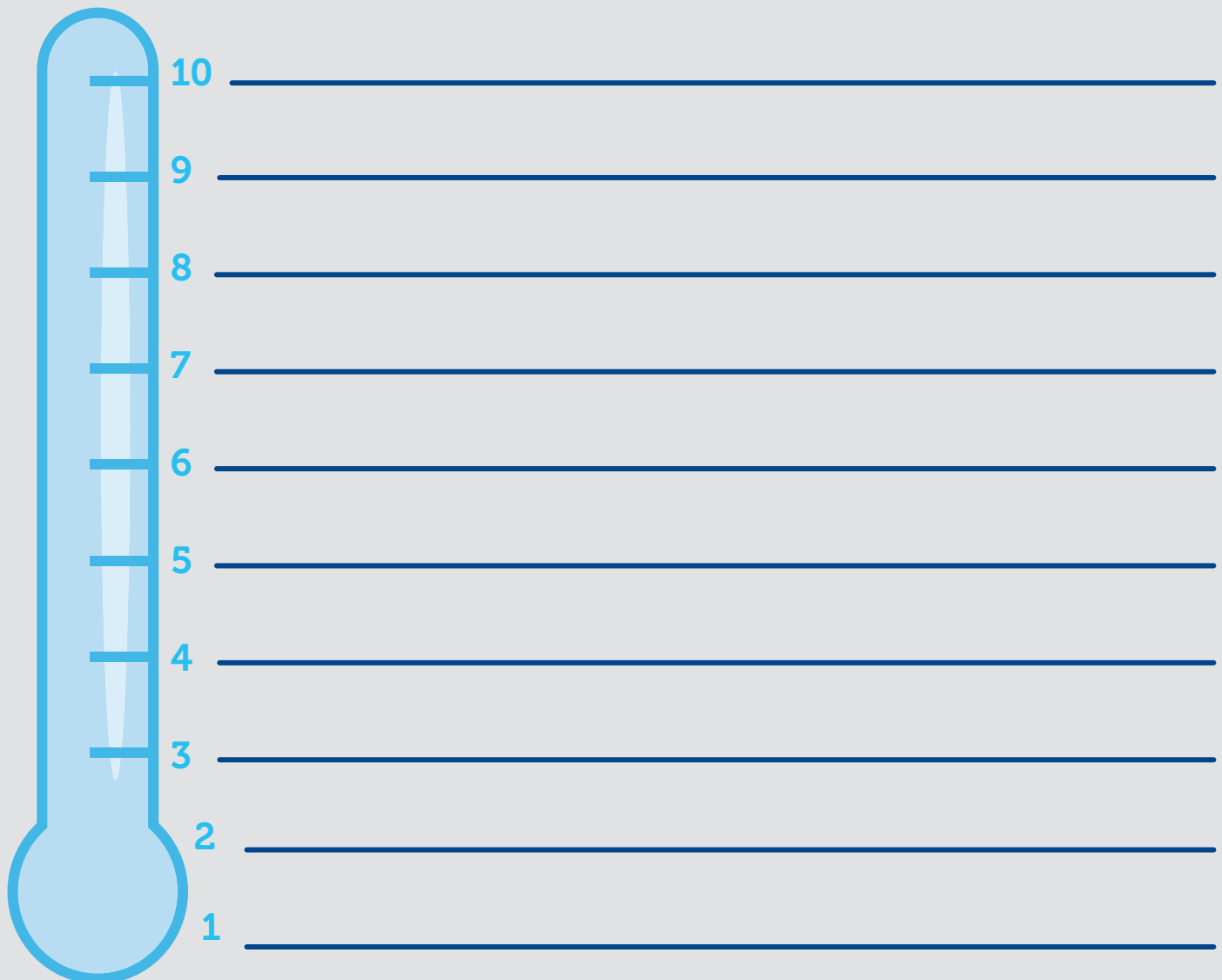
1 _____

TEEN WORKSHEET: MY FEAR THERMOMETER



Use this space to brainstorm all the things you are worried about, in no particular order:

Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle? Write it down and move on to the next fear.



10 _____

9 _____

8 _____

7 _____

6 _____

5 _____

4 _____

3 _____

2 _____

1 _____



How Can Using a Fear Thermometer Help Me?

- ▶ Learning the details about what things or situations make you feel worried is a very important first step towards successfully managing anxiety.
- ▶ Increasing your understanding of your anxiety through this process will help you be more aware of when you might need support in situations that cause you stress.
- ▶ Learning to identify and express worried feelings helps you notice when a coping strategy (like the Relaxation Skills in Anxiety Skill 2) will be helpful.
- ▶ Creating a fear thermometer will also help you make a plan for facing fears. You will be able to start with facing fears that are lower on your ranking list and move up the thermometer as you feel braver (see Anxiety Skill 4, Facing Your Fears).

Common Teen Concerns

I find it hard to rank my fears.

Rating fears can seem strange at first. Look at the example in this guide to help you understand how to describe your fears in more detail. Ask yourself questions to help you rate each fear (e.g., "Is it scarier to speak in a small group or to speak in front of the whole class?"). You can change the ratings as needed, so they don't have to be "perfect." Ask a parent or other support person for help if you need it!

I rated everything at a 1 or a 10.

Ordering things from least to greatest is a hard concept! If you notice that you went through your whole list and rated each thing without using the middle ratings, ask yourself if there are some things that don't make you super worried (so less than 10) but also make you feel more than a little worried (so more than 1). If it's feeling too stressful to practice this technique with your actual fears, try to rate something fun (e.g., rate foods from not tasty (1) to the most delicious (10), or heights of family members from shortest (1) to tallest (10).

I get upset while trying to make the ratings.

Thinking about worries can cause "in the moment" anxiety for many people. If you're having a hard time, take a break from making the fear thermometer to relax and then come back to it. Many people feel anxious when talking about their worries, but it's important to do this exercise because in the end it will help you understand your anxiety and feel better.

You may also benefit from learning relaxation skills to manage anxious feelings. Try some of the strategies in Anxiety Skill 2 and see if they make working on your feelings thermometer easier. You can also use the fear thermometer to remember to use relaxation skills (e.g., when your rating gets above a 4, it may be time to take some slow, deep breaths).

TEEN HANDOUT: DEEP BREATHING



What is Deep Breathing?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help you with anxiety. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **deep breathing**.
- ▶ Deep breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in which you fill your belly with air on the inhales (i.e., when you breathe *in*) and release the air on the exhales (i.e., when you breathe *out*).
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help you feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Deep Breathing Practice

Deep Breathing Script: "Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to focus on our breathing. Start by taking some nice deep breaths, the same way you normally would. Notice how your stomach rises and falls as you breathe. You can put your hand on your stomach to help you feel the air going in and out. Now we are going to try to breathe in a way that will help us feel even more relaxed. Breathe in through your nose. This is the inhale. When you do this, make your stomach fill with air like a balloon. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. This is the exhale and it makes you empty the air out of your belly balloon. Good. You can make a 'whoosh' sound on the exhale if that helps you. Now do that again, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can, slowly and calmly. Take your time and focus on the rhythm of your breathing. Try to make your belly balloon fill with air on the inhale and empty on the exhale. Great job. If other thoughts pop into your mind, that's okay. Just try to stay calm and start thinking about your breathing again. Now take three more slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, making your stomach rise and fall three times. One. Two. Three. You can do this any time you need to relax. Great job! When you're ready, you can open your eyes."

Here's How to Use Deep Breathing

- ▶ Making relaxation an activity that you teach your family could help you practice your relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when you could begin giving one person, or your whole family, "relaxation lessons" (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ Encourage everyone to point out times when they used their new deep breathing skills. If you notice a family member looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try deep breathing to see if it makes them feel better.



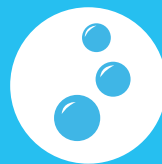
Check Your Form!

To make sure you are doing deep breathing properly for maximum anxiety relief, place your hand on your stomach. When you breathe in, your hand should move up slightly as air flows in. When you breathe out, your hand should sink slightly as air flows out.



Number Breathing

Once you understand how to breathe more deeply, try variations such as 3-1-3. This involves breathing in for a count of three, holding it for one, and breathing out for a count of three. You can try other numbers and combinations and use whatever you like and find comfortable.



Bubbles

Break out some bubbles and spend a few moments relaxing like a little kid! Notice that when you blow out slowly and calmly you can make bigger bubbles. Now try out some fast, anxious-style breathing: it doesn't work as well.



Pizza Imagery

A fun image that can help you practice this skill anytime, anywhere: Imagine you are breathing in the smell of a slice of hot, delicious pizza and then blowing out to cool the slice down. Or think of another hot food you love!

TEEN HANDOUT: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help you with anxiety. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **progressive muscle relaxation**.
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing different muscle groups one at a time and then releasing them. An example is flexing your arm muscle, then relaxing it.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help you feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- ▶ Making relaxation an activity that you teach your family could help you practice your relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when you could begin giving one person, or your whole family, "relaxation lessons" (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ Encourage everyone to point out times when they used their new progressive muscle relaxation skills. If you notice a family member looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try progressive muscle relaxation to see if it makes them feel better.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Practice

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script:

You can ask a parent or other support person to read this to you. Or record it on your phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to practice relaxing our muscles by squeezing them tight and then releasing them. Let's start with our legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and point your toes. Hold your position and count to 5. Now relax your legs. Good job! Do that again. Stretch, hold for 5, and relax. Now make two fists like you are squeezing a lemon in each hand. Squeeze your lemons as tightly as you can to get the juice out for a count of 5. Now drop your lemons. Great job! Now repeat. Squeeze for 5 and drop. Let's next focus on our arms. Hold them out in front of you, stiff and straight for 5. Good. Now drop your arms to your sides like they are cooked, limp spaghetti. Now repeat. Stiff for 5 and then loose. Okay, now we're going to squeeze our stomach muscles as if we are trying to squeeze through a door. Hold them tight and count to 5! Now release. Great job. Repeat. Squeeze for 5 and release. Now we are going to scrunch up our faces like we are trying to get flies off our noses. Keep your face scrunched up for 5! Good. Release. Again, scrunch for 5 and release. For our last step we are going to hold our whole body as tight and scrunched up as we can. Tense all the parts and count to 5! Great job. Now release. Do that one last time. Tense for 5, now relax. Notice how good it feels to relax all your muscles. You can open your eyes."

Progressive Muscle Relaxation on Your Own:

Time to get creative and have fun! If you like this skill, try to come up with your own script or do an internet search for additional progressive muscle relaxation scripts. You don't have to stop there, you can create your own or search for other examples of all the relaxation skills in this guide! Find a bunch that suit your personality and lifestyle.

TEEN HANDOUT: GUIDED IMAGERY



What is Guided Imagery?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **guided imagery**.
- ▶ Guided imagery involves imagining a calm image or scene using all 5 senses (i.e., sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), sometimes with the help of a script or recording.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Guided Imagery

- ▶ Making relaxation an activity that you teach your family could help you practice your relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when you could begin giving one person, or your whole family, "relaxation lessons" (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ Encourage everyone to point out times when they used their new guided imagery skills. If you notice a family member looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try guided imagery to see if it makes them feel better.

Guided Imagery Practice

Guided Imagery Script:

You can ask a parent or other support person to read this to you. Or record it on your phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I want you to use your imagination to go on a vacation in your mind. Think of a calm and peaceful place. It can be some place you have been before or some place you would like to go. The place doesn't even have to be real; it can be imaginary. Spend a few moments picturing your peaceful place. Now think about the things you **see** in your special place. Notice the colors, shapes, and patterns. Think about how peaceful it is to see the details of your special place. Now think about the things you **hear** in your peaceful place. Is there music, animal sounds, or ocean waves? Or maybe you hear something different. Now think about the things you **feel** in your calm place. Warm sunshine on your face, grass under your feet, or something else? Notice how these feelings help you relax. Now think about what you **smell** in your relaxing place. The salty ocean, cookies baking, or something else? Take a deep breath of the amazing smells. Now think about what you **taste** in your calm place. A popsicle? Or a fresh cookie? Or something else? Think about how good it tastes. You can always take a trip back to your relaxing place if you need to feel calm. This is a tool you can always use to feel better. When you are ready, you can open your eyes."

Mini Vacation

Once you have practiced with the script above, you can close your eyes briefly and go on a mini vacation to your calm place when you feel tense or down.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation

You can relax at any time by noticing 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste. This technique is a **grounding exercise** and can help you feel better in challenging moments. Here's an example of using this in the kitchen: "I see my plate, the table, my sister sitting across from me, the clock, and the wall. I feel the chair, the floor, the table, and the warmth from the heater. I hear water running in the sink, water boiling on the stove, and my sister's voice. I smell cookies in the oven and the pasta I am eating. I taste the pasta."



How Can Relaxation Skills Help Me?

- ▶ Muscle tension is often associated with anxiety. Think about clenching your pen or pencil while taking a test. Your muscles are tight and you are likely feeling stressed. If you have anxiety, you may experience shoulder tension, stomachaches, headaches, and other physical symptoms.
- ▶ This is because the mind and the body are connected: calmer body, calmer mind. Learning to practice relaxation can help your calm your body, reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and experience many other benefits.
- ▶ Practice relaxation skills regularly during times of low anxiety so that you are better able to use the skills when you need them during times of higher anxiety. You can't use a skill well in "the game" if you don't practice!
- ▶ Relaxation skills are "portable." You can do them at home, school, or in public. Most relaxation skills can be done quickly and without anyone noticing.

Common Teen Concerns

The relaxation skills are too hard.

Relaxation skills may feel uncomfortable or challenging at first. Practicing regularly helps make the skills feel easier and more comfortable. Taking the time to figure out which skills (and methods of practicing the skills) you prefer will also be helpful. Ask a support person for help if you need it.

I can't get into the habit of practicing regularly.

Relaxation practice should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into your daily routine. For example, can you practice for a few minutes on the way home from school or use an app on your phone before getting ready for bed? Set a specific goal for regular practice (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward you can earn for reaching it. These skills get easier the more you do them. Remember that this is one way you can gain control over your anxiety.

Relaxation practice is boring and/or strange.

What could make it more appealing? Do you prefer a certain skill over others? Do you want to use technology in your practice (e.g., relaxation phone apps, guided imagery videos, etc.)? Would you be more interested in an active practice like yoga? Keep trying new things until you find something that is enjoyable and comfortable.





What Are Thinking Traps?

▶ **Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that increase anxiety, worry, and stress. They often involve jumping to conclusions, guessing that things will go badly in the future, and making connections that might not really make sense.

▶ Here are **4 Common Thinking Traps** that are often connected to anxiety. Read this guide and see if you can come up with more examples of thinking traps that apply to your life.

Here's How to Decrease Thinking Traps

Here are some questions to help you think in more positive ways:

- 1 **What are the facts? What is the likelihood that what you're worrying about will happen?** Often there is very little evidence that the things we are worried about will actually happen! Try to look at the facts to think more realistically and begin empowering yourself to notice that you are capable of facing your fears.
- 2 **What would you tell a friend in this situation?** Focusing on helping a peer may help you with perspective taking and problem solving. This strategy can help you feel calmer and more positive about the worry.
- 3 **What can you do to solve your problem or take your mind off the worry?** If possible, take concrete steps to solve the problem. If that's not possible, use relaxation or other coping skills (Anxiety Skill 2) to reduce your anxiety and take your mind off things.



FORTUNE TELLING

Predicting that bad things will happen in the future.

People with anxiety often spend a lot of time imagining bad things they fear will happen in the future.

Fortune Telling Example: "This is the longest car ride ever. We're going to get stuck in traffic and miss the whole soccer tournament. Or we'll get into an accident! Ugh, this is so stressful!"



CATASTROPHIZING

Making little problems or worries seem like big problems.

When we catastrophize, we make a big deal out of our worries, even when they might actually be pretty small.

Catastrophizing Example: "I'm feeling nervous about my learner's permit test. I'm going to get all the questions wrong and never be able to drive! I should tell my mom I'm sick."



OVERGENERALIZATION

Assuming that because we were worried or nervous in one situation, we will feel like that again.

When we overgeneralize, we ignore the unique facts about a situation.

Overgeneralization Example: "Madison laughed when I tripped in the cafeteria that one time. She's going to keep making fun of me and get other people to start doing it. Should I stop hanging out with her?"



ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Seeing things as "all good" or "all bad."

When we use all-or-nothing thinking, we ignore the fact that many situations are somewhere in between and have both positive *and* negative aspects.

All-or-Nothing Thinking Example: "I got an '86' on my math exam; 7 problems wrong. I'm an idiot! Will my grade go down? What if my parents are disappointed?"

TEEN WORKSHEET: THINKING TRAP PRACTICE



Here's an example of how to use your new skills to deal with a **Catastrophizing** Thinking Trap:



"I'm feeling nervous about my learner's permit test. I'm going to get all the questions wrong and never be able to drive! I should tell my mom I'm sick."

What are the Facts?	"I read the manual tons of times and took the practice test. My parents quizzed me and said I know my stuff."
What Would I Say to a Friend?	"You've studied hard, it's going to go great!"
What can I do to take my mind off things?	"I'm going to go watch some funny YouTube videos to forget about this for a little while."

FORTUNE TELLING

"This is the longest car ride ever. We're going to get stuck in traffic and miss the whole soccer tournament. Or we'll get into an accident! Ugh, this is so stressful!"

What are the Facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

OVERGENERALIZATION

"Madison laughed when I tripped in the cafeteria that one time. She's going to keep making fun of me and get other people to start doing it. Should I stop hanging out with her?"

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

"I got an '86' on my math exam; 7 problems wrong. I'm an idiot! Will my grade go down? What if my parents are disappointed?"

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?



How Can Understanding Thinking Traps Help Me?

- ▶ When people experience worry and anxiety, they often think about their present situation and things that might happen in the future in negative ways.
- ▶ By learning about thinking traps (i.e., ways of thinking that make us feel worried, stuck, or upset), you can start paying more attention to the ways you talk and think about anxiety.
- ▶ Once you have practice noticing thinking traps, you can take those thinking trap statements and make them more positive and realistic.
- ▶ Learning how to talk about anxiety in realistic and self-esteem boosting ways can help you feel more confident and capable when facing stressful situations.

Common Teen Concerns

Some of the thinking traps are hard to understand.

If a particular type of thinking trap is challenging for you, ask parents or friends for help brainstorming additional examples that might make it clearer. Thinking about ways your anxiety impacts your interests or activities (e.g., favorite sport or movie) can be very useful. For example, if you notice yourself stressing a lot during your after school club meetings, you may be falling into thinking traps. Can you notice what thoughts come up, then see if you can gently challenge them? For example, instead of thinking “No one liked my idea about the fundraiser. I bet no one likes me and I’ll get kicked out this club,” you could say something like the following: “People in this club like me and my ideas so much that I got voted secretary. Just because they didn’t like that one fundraiser idea, doesn’t mean they’re rejecting me.” If you struggle to separate the thinking traps into different categories, just focus on noticing worry-increasing thoughts in general and changing them. For example, call them “worry thoughts” or using your “worry brain.” You can still improve your thinking this way.

Changing negative thinking is very hard for me.

Negative thoughts are often automatic, like a habit. Becoming a more positive thinker requires breaking this habit. It takes a lot of practice to make a change like this! Start with more fun and playful topics if jumping right into your own particular style of anxious thinking feels overwhelming. Practice on a regular basis for a few minutes at a time (daily if you can manage it) to start forming a new habit of positive thinking. If you are still having a difficult time, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



Facing Your Fears Using Exposure

- ▶ **“Exposure”** is the clinical term for dealing directly with things that make someone anxious, instead of avoiding them.
- ▶ **Research shows that approaching situations we fear is the most effective way to decrease anxiety.** This can be challenging because avoidance of feared situations is a natural response. However, when we run away from our fear, we are “proving” to ourselves that the thing we are afraid of is too terrible to face.
- ▶ It doesn’t have to be this way! The skills in this guide are designed to help you face fears in a safe way. Exposure gives you a real world opportunity to see that you can overcome scary situations and reduce anxiety in the process.
- ▶ Exposure is most beneficial and straightforward to address at home when the fear is a specific thing (such as an animal) or situation (such as riding an elevator, speaking in class, or talking to new people).
- ▶ Making an **exposure plan** can provide you with repeated experience facing feared situations in a calm and organized way. In an exposure plan, exposures are organized in a hierarchy, from tasks that cause you the least amount of worry all the way up to situations that create more significant anxiety.
- ▶ These plans are most successful when the tasks are all related to each other and are increasing approximations of the worry that most gets in your way. An example exposure for someone with a worry about making new friends would be simply saying hello to a potential new friend in class, and then a later step on the hierarchy could be asking the person to eat lunch with you.
- ▶ Over time, exposure will help you become more confident and less fearful. You may potentially no longer feel anxious in situations that currently cause you to worry a lot! Or your anxiety may not go away completely, but you will feel more in control and more able to effectively manage worry. This helps you realize that you can achieve your goals and have fun even when anxious.

Here’s How to Create an Exposure Plan

You will need your Fear Thermometer from Anxiety Skill 1, plus our Create Your Own Exposure Plan worksheet on the coming pages, to help you create a plan. Make copies of the Create Your Own Exposure Plan so you can repeat this process for multiple worries and repeat certain exposures if needed. You can follow along with your parent as they help you review the steps below, as well as read through our examples on the Exposure Plan Examples worksheet before you begin. This will help you better understand the way exposures work before you get started. The examples show how all the steps of an exposure plan should be connected to your major worry. Adapt the steps as needed so you can create your own personalized plan. You may have a wide range of unconnected fears on your fear thermometer; this is okay. Brainstorm with your parent or other support person in order to pick one specific thing or feared situation to focus on at a time, as exposure works best when there is a clear target on which to focus.

Here's How to Create an Exposure Plan (continued)

Your parent can read the introduction script in quotes below to you or you can just read the script yourself. There are things for you to do in each step:

- 1 *"We are going to make a plan to help you face the fears that you put on your Fear Thermometer. One fear that you included is _____."* Work with your parent to choose a specific fear that may work well based on our tips, such as a specific thing or situation. Once you both agree, proceed to step 2.
- 2 *"We are going to use this worksheet to help us make a plan."* Look at the Create Your Own Exposure Plan worksheet. *"Here, the worksheet has a place for us to write down the name of the worry we will be working on in your exposure. Exposure is the word for facing the thing you are afraid of instead of avoiding it or running away."* You or your parent should write the worry you will be working on in the space provided.
- 3 *"Right here is a place for us to write down each part of the exposure."* Look at the empty rows 1-6. *"The worksheet also has a place for us to rate how you feel before and after you face your fears. The Worry Scale on the page can help us do those ratings."* Look at the Before and After columns and the Worry Scale.
- 4 *"Our goal is going to be for you to do the things you need and want to do without feeling too scared or running away. I think you will feel strong and brave!"* Think of more ideas about what it could be like to conquer this particular fear.
- 5 *"That might seem like it could never happen, but I believe in you and you can do it! We will take baby steps to get there."*
- 6 *"If you were afraid of swimming, we wouldn't plan for you to just dive into the ocean without any steps before that. First we might have you put your feet into the water to slowly start getting more comfortable. What is something we can do to that is like that, something that will help you begin to get comfortable?"* Share some responses applicable to the fear that are similar to steps 1 and 2 in our example plans. You are looking for steps that will be a "warm up" for facing the big fear. You or your parent should write these steps down.
- 7 *"Great idea! Now let's think about the next step with this fear. What comes after the steps we just put down? What will we need to do to get even closer to facing and overcoming your fear?"* Brainstorm responses similar to steps 3 and 4 on our example plans. Remember, we are taking bigger and bigger steps toward facing the fear! You or your parent should write these steps down.
- 8 Now you are ready to name the activities that will be near the top of the exposure plan. *"You've given so many great ideas for getting more comfortable with this worry! Now let's talk about what will be our big goal. What are the biggest challenges connected to this fear?"* Brainstorm responses similar to steps 5 and 6 in our examples. You or your parent should write these steps down. *"Good work! Let's review the worksheet and start to plan how we will begin our exposures."*



TEEN HANDOUT: EXPOSURE PLAN EXAMPLES

Example 1: Fear of Frogs

This example is for a younger kid who has a fear of frogs, but is also very interested in science and animals. The goal of these exposures is to help the kid hold a frog comfortably, a wish they have because of their interests. The example on the Fear Thermometer worksheet also deals with this worry; you can refer back to it now if needed (Anxiety Skill 1).

		Before	After
1	Looking at pictures of cartoon frogs on the internet or in a book.		
2	Looking at pictures of real frogs on the internet or in a book.		
3	Looking at frogs in aquariums at the pet store.		
4	Going near frogs in the pond at the science center.		
5	Touching a frog at the science center while an employee holds it.		
6	Holding a frog all by myself at the science center.		

Example 2: Fear of Elevators

This example is for a teen who has a fear of elevators. The goal of these exposures is for the teen to feel okay riding an elevator alone, an ability they wish to have as they increase their independence.

		Before	After
1	Looking at pictures of an elevator on the internet or in a book.		
2	Watching a video of someone riding in an elevator.		
3	Going to an elevator and standing inside it briefly with a parent.		
4	Going in an elevator and riding it with a parent.		
5	Going in the elevator and standing inside it briefly alone.		
6	Going in the elevator and riding it alone.		

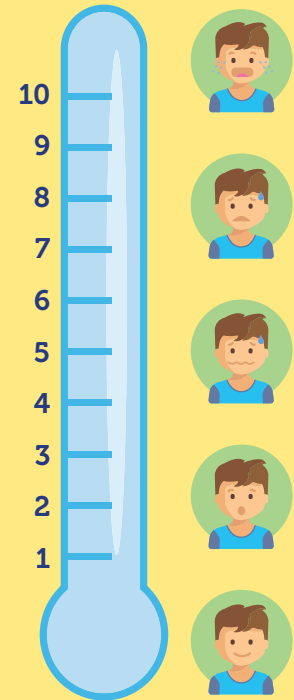
TEEN WORKSHEET: CREATE YOUR OWN EXPOSURE PLAN



Using Your Exposure Plan

- 1 You should pick a time when things are calm and not rushed at home to begin working on exposures. Start with step 1 on your plan, which is the exposure you rated as easiest to try.
- 2 Before each exposure practice, get a Worry Scale rating. Look at the Worry Scale. How worried/afraid do you feel? 1 is not that worried and 10 is the most worried.”
- 3 Great job! After each exposure practice, get a Worry Scale rating. Look at the Worry Scale. How worried/afraid do you feel? 1 is not that worried and 10 is the most worried.
- 4 Record these Worry Scale ratings next to the exposures listed on your plan. This will help you track progress over time.
- 5 You can repeat each step above until your ratings go down and you notice an exposure is less scary than it was before. Then, move onto step 2 on your plan, the next exposure. Go at a pace that is comfortable for you, but be consistent about moving through the exposures at a steady pace.

1-10 Worry Scale



Create Your Own Exposure Plan

Put your plan here:

	Before	After
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

TEEN HANDOUT: FACING YOUR FEARS TIPS



Anxiety Skill 4

How Can Facing Fears Through Exposures Help Me?

- ▶ Teens who have anxiety often avoid necessary and positive experiences due to their fears. This can impact functioning at home, school, and with friends. Facing fears through exposures will help you tackle fears in a safe, controlled way and can improve your quality of life.
- ▶ Teens are often unsure how to address the things that scare them. These worksheets help you get organized by giving you a road map to use when tackling your worries. Remember to take your time moving through the plan. As you build confidence, it will get easier to face your fears.

Common Teen Concerns

I am having a hard time coming up with ideas for exposures.

Sometimes it is hard to figure out how to “expose” yourself to situations that aren’t part of daily life. You can use the internet, books, or magazines to help you look up realistic images and videos of fears (e.g., bugs and heights). You can also role play anxiety-provoking scenarios with others; these can be exposures, too. Use your imagination and get creative!

I don’t want to do my exposures.

We understand that this is very challenging. We believe in you! Exposures will help you worry less and have more fun in your life. Remember that avoiding things actually makes them seem scarier, but facing them helps us realize we can handle it. Remember to start with the first step of your exposure plan, which you rated as the easiest step, and move through the plan slowly. You can try planning small incentives to encourage and motivate yourself (e.g., a special activity once you get to a certain point on your Fear Thermometer).

When I do exposures, I get really stressed. Sometimes I even cry!

We know that that this can be tough and you might get upset when doing your exposures. Remember that completing exposures will help you feel less worried over time. If you are having a hard time, use deep breathing or another coping skill when doing your exposure (see Relaxation Skills, Anxiety Skill 2). If that doesn’t help, take a break from exposures to do something fun for distraction, but then come back to the exposure later and try again.

I did exposures and I still have anxiety.

Exposures won’t always “get rid” of anxiety completely. Anxiety at a low level is a normal part of life that can give us useful information about the world. The purpose of exposure is for you to be able to achieve your goals and have fun, even if you still feel anxious sometimes. If you have completed your exposures and are still having difficulty functioning at school, home, and/or with friends because of your fears, or if you are unable to complete your exposures due to anxiety, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS **FOR ANXIETY**

Parents of Teens 13-17



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

FOR ANXIETY



INTRODUCTION

Everyone worries sometimes. School, friends, and stress can cause teens to feel anxiety. For some teens, anxious feelings can become difficult to manage. This can cause problems at home, school, and/or with friends. Working with your teen's primary care team can help you assist your teen in managing symptoms of anxiety.

Behavioral health specialists have worked hard to figure out ways to help manage anxiety. One of the most effective interventions is a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. This type of therapy helps people with anxiety learn how to change their thoughts and behaviors in order to feel less worried and to cope when worries do occur. The worksheets in this guide will help your teen and family try CBT strategies at home. There are tips for parents and activities for your teen, which can be used with adolescents across the teen years. We find that the skills are most effective when used in the order we suggest. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, and instructions for how to use the strategy at home. We've also included a list of common questions and concerns parents usually have about each skill, along with our answers. Work through the guide with your teen and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will be to make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your teen need any additional support for anxiety management. Good luck!



Skill 1

Fear Thermometer

These worksheets will help your teen pay attention to situations that make them anxious and rate their worried feelings.



Skill 2

Relaxation Skills

These worksheets teach simple skills and exercises that help increase feelings of calm and well-being. Make these skills a consistent part of your family's daily life to reduce stress for everyone.



Skill 3

Thinking Traps

These worksheets teach your teen new ways to look at situations and suggest questions to ask in order to reduce anxious thoughts.



Skill 4

Facing Your Fears

These worksheets help you and your teen design exposures, which are opportunities to face fears in a controlled and safe way.

PARENT HANDOUT: FEAR THERMOMETER



Anxiety Skill 1

What is a Fear Thermometer?

- ▶ You may notice that your teen worries, or gets anxious, during many kinds of situations. They may also avoid certain situations or things. The anxiety may feel like it comes out of nowhere, which can make it hard for your teen to describe what exactly makes them anxious. To begin managing your teen's anxiety, you need to help them name the problem.
- ▶ A fear thermometer is a tool that can do just that. A fear thermometer helps your teen organize or rank the things and situations that make them anxious. The things/situations that make your teen only a little worried are near a 1 on the thermometer. The things/situations that make your teen the most worried are usually near the 10 on the thermometer.
- ▶ Once you and your teen have a better understanding of their worries, you can use the fear thermometer to help your teen plan ways to face their fears. These techniques can help them realize they can still do things they want and need to do even when they are worried.

Here's How to Create a Fear Thermometer

You can use the following script with your teen and they can follow along in the teen worksheets:

- 1 Introduce the idea.** "Everyone feels worried sometimes. In fact, our anxious feelings can sometimes be useful and important signals that help keep us safe. Other times, worries can get out of hand and make us too scared to do the things we need to and want to do. Today we are going to make a special thermometer that will help us name the things you're worried about. Doing this will help us figure out when you need help with your worries. Together we will figure out ways to solve problems and face your fears."
- 2 Look at the example.** "Let's look at this example. The thermometer goes from 1 to 10. This teenager is afraid of frogs! At the bottom near 1 it says, "seeing a frog," because that's something that makes the teen who made this a little worried. At 3 it has "a frog jumping near me" because that makes the teen a little more worried. The thermometer keeps going up like that until we get to 10, "holding a frog", the situation that causes this teen to feel the most worried."
- 3 List worries.** "Before you make your thermometer, let's list all of the things you are worried about. We don't have to put them in order yet, just name everything you can think of. If you like, I can give you suggestions from things you've told me and what I've noticed."
- 4 Rate the worries and put them on the thermometer.** "Great job! Naming all of these things and talking about them is an important step to feeling less worried and anxious. Okay, now that we have our whole list, let's see where they go on the thermometer. Let's start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle?" Wait for your teen to name the fear, give it a rating, and put it on the thermometer. "That makes sense, great job! Let's keep going." Move on to the next fear on the list.
- 5 Use the Fear Thermometer to plan next steps.** "We will keep the Fear Thermometer handy as we continue to work through this guide. The Fear Thermometer will be a tool to help us understand your worries and pay attention to when you might need help. When these worry situations come up, you will use the skills we are going to learn in this guide to help." If you notice that your teen has a lot of unrelated, more generalized worries (e.g., if friends like them, midterm exams, spending the night away from home, etc.), you can use Anxiety Skills 2 and 3 (Relaxation Skills and Thinking Traps) to help them learn tools to cope. If you notice that your teen has fears of a specific situation or thing (e.g., animals or heights), the other skills in this guide will be very beneficial, but it will be essential to use Anxiety Skill 4 (Facing Your Fears) to help them learn to face their fears instead of avoiding them.

TEEN WORKSHEET: FEAR THERMOMETER EXAMPLE

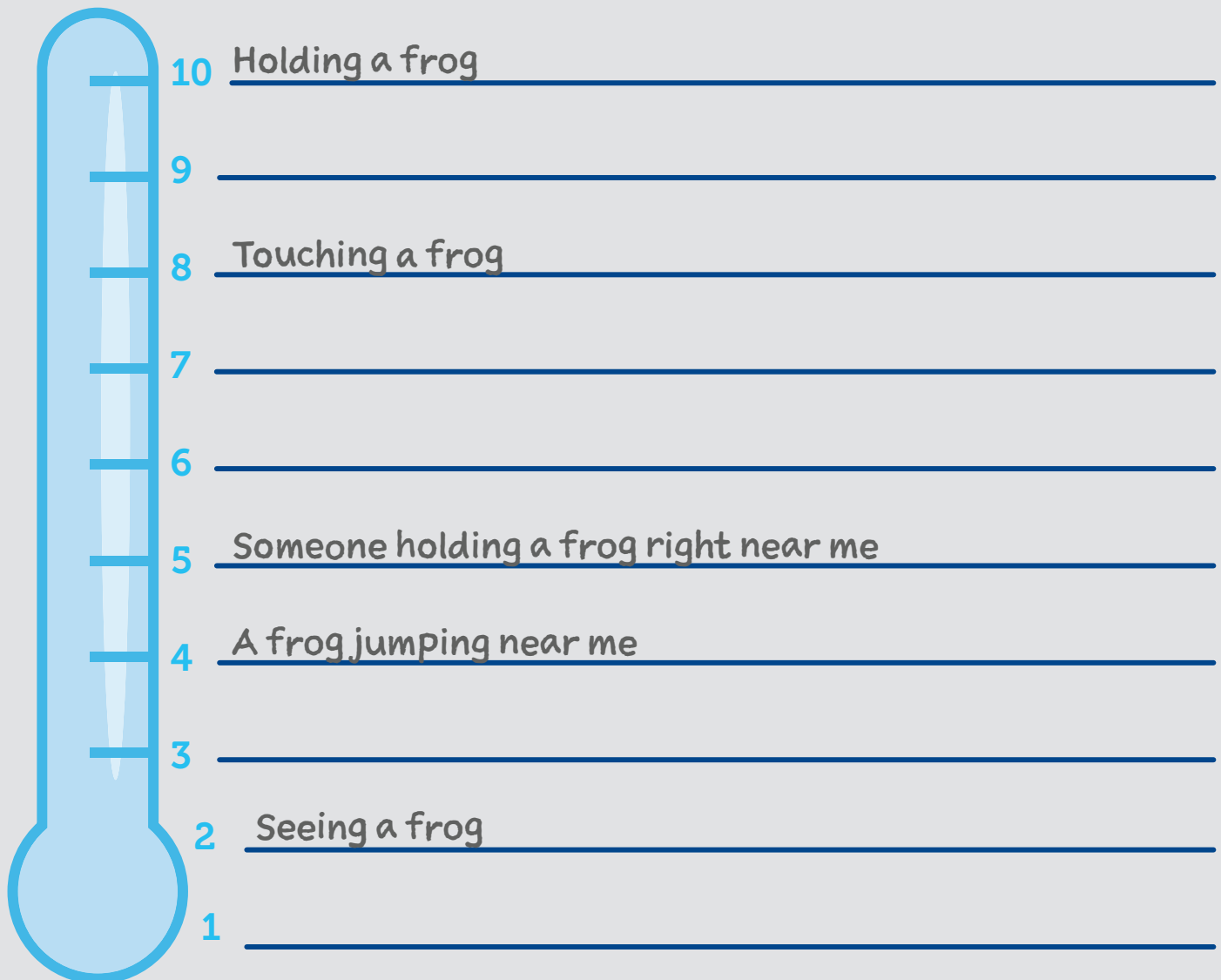


Anxiety Skill 1

Use this space to brainstorm all the things you are worried about, in no particular order:

- frogs
- someone holding a frog near me
- seeing a frog
- holding a frog
- touching a frog
- a frog jumping near me

Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle? Write it down and move on to the next fear.



TEEN WORKSHEET: MY FEAR THERMOMETER



Anxiety Skill 1

Use this space to brainstorm all the things you are worried about, in no particular order:

Start with the first fear you wrote. Where would that fit on the thermometer: at the bottom near 1, at the top near 10, or somewhere in the middle? Write it down and move on to the next fear.

10 _____

9 _____

8 _____

7 _____

6 _____

5 _____

4 _____

3 _____

2 _____

1 _____

PARENT HANDOUT: FEAR THERMOMETER TIPS



Anxiety Skill 1

How Can Using a Fear Thermometer Help My Family?

- ▶ Learning the details about what things or situations make your teen feel worried is a very important first step towards successfully managing their anxiety.
- ▶ Increasing your understanding of your teen's anxiety through this process will help you be more aware of when to support your teen in situations that cause them stress.
- ▶ Learning to identify and express worried feelings helps you and your teen notice when a coping strategy (like the Relaxation Skills in Anxiety Skill 2) will be helpful.
- ▶ Creating a fear thermometer will also help you and your teen make a plan for facing fears. They will be able to start with facing fears that are lower on their list in their ranking list and move up the thermometer as they feel braver (see Anxiety Skill 4, Facing Your Fears).

Common Parent Concerns

My teen finds it hard to rank their fears.

Rating fears can seem strange at first. Show your teen the example in this guide to help them understand how to describe their fear. Ask questions to help them rate each fear (e.g., "Is it scarier to speak in a small group or to speak in front of the whole class?"). Let your teen know that you can change the ratings as needed so they don't have to be "perfect."

My teen rates everything at a 1 or a 10.

Ordering things from least to greatest worry is a hard concept. If you notice that your teen went through their whole list and rated each thing without using the middle ratings, gently ask them if there are some things that might go in the middle. You might say, "I wonder if there are some things that don't make you super worried (so less than 10) but also make you feel more than a little worried (so more than 1)?" Ask them to rate something fun (e.g., ranking foods from not tasty to the most delicious, or heights of family members from shortest to tallest) so they can practice the task.

My teen gets upset while trying to make the ratings.

Thinking about worries can cause "in the moment" anxiety for many teens. If your teen is having a hard time, take a break from making the fear thermometer to relax and then come back to it. Let your teen know that many people feel anxious when talking about their worries, but that it's important to do this exercise because in the end it will help them understand their anxiety and feel better.

Your teen may also benefit from learning relaxation skills to manage anxious feelings. Try some of the strategies in Anxiety Skill 2 and see if they make talking about the fear thermometer easier for them. They can also use the fear thermometer to remember to use relaxation skills (e.g., when your teen's rating gets above a 4, it may be time to take some slow, deep breaths).

I don't think my teen's ratings are accurate.

If one of your teen's ratings feels very off, talk to them about that specific rating and things you've noticed about the situation. For example, "You put talking in front of the class as least scary. You labeled it a 2. I remember you seemed very worried about your last history project, more worried than you seem about ordering food at a restaurant. What do you think?". If your teen won't change the ranking right then, leave it be and revisit the thermometer later. 100% accuracy isn't as important as your teen feeling ownership over their thermometer.

PARENT HANDOUT: DEEP BREATHING



What is Deep Breathing?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your teen and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **deep breathing**.
- ▶ Deep breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in which you fill your belly with air on the inhales (i.e., when you breathe *in*) and release the air on the exhales (i.e., when you breathe *out*).
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your teen feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Deep Breathing Practice

Deep Breathing Script: "Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to focus on our breathing. Start by taking some nice deep breaths, the same way you normally would. Notice how your stomach rises and falls as you breathe. You can put your hand on your stomach to help you feel the air going in and out. Now we are going to try to breathe in a way that will help us feel even more relaxed. Breathe in through your nose. This is the inhale. When you do this, make your stomach fill with air like a balloon. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. This is the exhale and it makes you empty the air out of your belly balloon. Good. You can make a 'whoosh' sound on the exhale if that helps you. Now do that again, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can, slowly and calmly. Take your time and focus on the rhythm of your breathing. Try to make your belly balloon fill with air on the inhale and empty on the exhale. Great job. If other thoughts pop into your mind, that's okay. Just try to stay calm and start thinking about your breathing again. Now take three more slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, making your stomach rise and fall three times. One. Two. Three. You can do this any time you need to relax. Great job! When you're ready, you can open your eyes."

Here's How to Use Deep Breathing at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your teen feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Go over the skills with your teen, then let them lead the way. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your teen times when you can use deep breathing in your own life (e.g., "I feel stressed when the grocery store is this busy, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before we go in."). If you notice your teen looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try deep breathing to see if it makes them feel better.



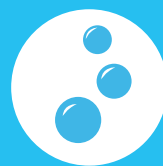
Check Your Form!

To make sure your teen is doing deep breathing properly for maximum anxiety relief, encourage them to check their form by placing their hand on their stomach. When they breathe in, their hand should move up slightly as air flows in. When they breathe out, their hand should sink slightly as air flows out.



Number Breathing

Once your teen understands how to breathe more deeply, try variations such as 3-1-3. This involves breathing in for a count of three, holding it for one, and breathing out for a count of three. You can try other numbers and combinations and use whatever your teen likes and finds comfortable.



Bubbles

Break out some bubbles and spend a few moments relaxing like a little kid! Notice that when you blow out slowly and calmly you can make bigger bubbles. Now try out some fast, anxious-style breathing: it doesn't work as well.



Pizza Imagery

A fun image that can help you or your teen practice this skill anytime, anywhere: Imagine you are breathing in the smell of a slice of hot, delicious pizza and then blowing out to cool the slice down. Or think of another hot food you love!

PARENT HANDOUT: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



Anxiety Skill 2

What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your teen and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **progressive muscle relaxation**.
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing different muscle groups one at a time and then releasing them. An example is flexing your arm muscle, then relaxing it.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your teen feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your teen feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Go over the skills with your teen, then let them lead the way. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, when you can point out to your teen times when you can use progressive muscle relaxation in your own life (e.g., "I've been clenching the steering wheel the whole way home. I'm going to try to relax my muscles now to feel calmer."). If you notice your teen looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try progressive muscle relaxation to see if it makes them feel better.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Practice

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script:

You can read this to your teen or have them record it on their phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to practice relaxing our muscles by squeezing them tight and then releasing them. Let's start with our legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and point your toes. Hold your position and count to 5. Now relax your legs. Good job! Do that again. Stretch, hold for 5, and relax. Now make two fists like you are squeezing a lemon in each hand. Squeeze your lemons as tightly as you can to get the juice out for a count of 5. Now drop your lemons. Great job! Now repeat. Squeeze for 5 and drop. Let's next focus on our arms. Hold them out in front of you, stiff and straight for 5. Good. Now drop your arms to your sides like they are cooked, limp spaghetti. Now repeat. Stiff for 5 and then loose. Okay, now we're going to squeeze our stomach muscles as if we are trying to squeeze through a door. Hold them tight and count to 5! Now release. Great job. Repeat. Squeeze for 5 and release. Now we are going to scrunch up our faces like we are trying to get flies off our noses. Keep your face scrunched up for 5! Good. Release. Again, scrunch for 5 and release. For our last step we are going to hold our whole body as tight and scrunched up as we can. Tense all the parts and count to 5! Great job. Now release. Do that one last time. Tense for 5, now relax. Notice how good it feels to relax all your muscles. You can open your eyes."

Progressive Muscle Relaxation on Your Own:

Time to get creative and have fun! Encourage your teen to come up with their own script or do an internet search for additional progressive muscle relaxation scripts. You don't have to stop there; they can create their own or search for other examples of all the relaxation skills in this guide! Find a bunch that suit their personality and lifestyle.

PARENT HANDOUT: GUIDED IMAGERY



Anxiety Skill 2

What is Guided Imagery?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your teen and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **guided imagery**.
- ▶ Guided imagery involves imagining a calm image or scene using all 5 senses (i.e., sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), sometimes with the help of a script or recording.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your teen feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Guided Imagery at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your teen feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Go over the skills with your teen, then let them lead the way. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your teen times when you can use guided imagery in your own life to feel better (e.g., "What a busy day! I need to take a mini vacation to my relaxing place!").
- ▶ If you notice your teen looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try guided imagery to see if it makes them feel better.

Guided Imagery Practice

Guided Imagery Script:

You can read this to your teen or have them record it on their phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I want you to use your imagination to go on a vacation in your mind. Think of a calm and peaceful place. It can be some place you have been before or some place you would like to go. The place doesn't even have to be real; it can be imaginary. Spend a few moments picturing your peaceful place. Now think about the things you **see** in your special place. Notice the colors, shapes, and patterns. Think about how peaceful it is to see the details of your special place. Now think about the things you **hear** in your peaceful place. Is there music, animal sounds, or ocean waves? Or maybe you hear something different. Now think about the things you **feel** in your calm place. Warm sunshine on your face, grass under your feet, or something else? Notice how these feelings help you relax. Now think about what you **smell** in your relaxing place. The salty ocean, cookies baking, or something else? Take a deep breath of the amazing smells. Now think about what you **taste** in your calm place. A popsicle? Or a fresh cookie? Or something else? Think about how good it tastes. You can always take a trip back to your relaxing place if you need to feel calm. This is a tool you can always use to feel better. When you are ready, you can open your eyes."

Mini Vacation

Once you have practiced with the script above, encourage your teen to close their eyes briefly and go on a mini vacation to their calm place when they feel tense or down.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation

Help your teen relax at any time by prompting them to notice 5 things they see, 4 things they feel, 3 things they hear, 2 things they smell, and 1 thing they taste. This technique is a **grounding exercise** and can help your teen feel better in challenging moments. Here's an example of using this in the kitchen: "I see my plate, the table, my sister sitting across from me, the clock, and the wall. I feel the chair, the floor, the table, and the warmth from the heater. I hear water running in the sink, water boiling on the stove, and my sister's voice. I smell cookies in the oven and the pasta I am eating. I taste the pasta."

PARENT HANDOUT: RELAXATION SKILLS TIPS



Anxiety Skill 2

How Can Relaxation Skills Help My Family?

- ▶ Muscle tension is often associated with anxiety. Think about yourself clenching the steering wheel while stuck in traffic. Your muscles are tight and you are likely feeling stressed. Similarly, teens with anxiety can experience shoulder tension, stomachaches, headaches, and other physical symptoms.
- ▶ This is because the mind and the body are connected. When teens who are anxious or feeling some other negative emotion learn to practice relaxation, they find that they can calm their bodies, reduce anxiety, improve their sleep, and experience many other benefits.
- ▶ Your teen needs to practice relaxation skills regularly during times of low anxiety so that they are better able to use the skills when they need them during times of higher anxiety. You can't use a skill well in "the game" if you don't practice!
- ▶ Relaxation skills are "portable." Your teen can do them at home, school, or in public. Most relaxation skills can be done quickly and without anyone noticing.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen thinks this is too hard.

Relaxation skills may feel uncomfortable or challenging at first. Practicing regularly helps make the skills feel easier and more comfortable. Figuring out which skills (and methods of practicing the skills) your teen prefers will also be helpful. Try out the different strategies we suggest, and see which ones work best for your family.

My teen doesn't want to practice regularly.

Relaxation practice should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into the daily routine. For example, can they practice for a few minutes on the way home from school or use an app on their phone before getting ready for bed? Together, set a specific goal for regular practice (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward your teen can earn for reaching it. Remind your teen that this skill gets easier the more they do it, and that this is one way they can be in control of their anxiety.

My teen thinks relaxation practice is boring or strange.

Ask specific questions to find out what could make it more appealing. Do they prefer a certain skill over others? Do they want to use technology in their practice (e.g., relaxation phone apps, guided imagery videos, etc.)? Would they be more interested in an active practice like yoga? Encourage them to keep trying new things until they find something that is enjoyable and comfortable.

My teen can never use the skills in the moment to manage their anxiety.

If you are in a situation with your teen where they could use a relaxation skill but are not doing so, give a gentle reminder to encourage them and then model the skill yourself. Talk with your teen about times when relaxation skills can be helpful (e.g., deep breathing before a test) and set a goal with them to try to use that skill in that specific situation for a reasonable amount of times for the next week.



PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS



What Are Thinking Traps?

- ▶ **Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that increase anxiety, worry, and stress. They often involve jumping to conclusions, guessing that things will go badly in the future, and making connections that might not really make sense.
- ▶ Here are **4 Common Thinking Traps** that are often connected to anxiety. Discuss these with your teen and see if you can come up with more examples that apply to them.

Here's How to Decrease Thinking Traps

Ask your teen these questions to help them think in more positive ways:

- 1 **What are the facts? What is the likelihood that what you're worrying about will happen?** Often there is very little evidence that the things we are worried about will actually happen! Working with your teen to look at the facts will help them think more realistically and often empower them to notice that they are capable of facing their fears.
- 2 **What would you tell a friend in this situation?** Focusing on helping a peer may help your teen with perspective taking and problem solving. This strategy can help them feel calmer and more positive about their worry.
- 3 **What can you do to solve your problem or take your mind off the worry?** If possible, help your teen take concrete steps to solve their problem. If that's not possible, encourage them to use relaxation or other coping skills (see Anxiety Skill 2) to reduce anxiety and take their mind off things.



FORTUNE TELLING

Predicting that bad things will happen in the future.

People with anxiety often spend a lot of time imagining bad things they fear will happen in the future.

Fortune Telling Example: "This is the longest car ride ever. We're going to get stuck in traffic and miss the whole soccer tournament. Or we'll get into an accident! Ugh, this is so stressful!"



CATASTROPHIZING

Making little problems or worries seem like big problems.

When we catastrophize, we make a big deal out of our worries, even when they might actually be pretty small.

Catastrophizing Example: "I'm feeling nervous about my learner's permit test. I'm going to get all the questions wrong and never be able to drive! I should tell my mom I'm sick."



OVERGENERALIZATION

Assuming that because we were worried or nervous in one situation, we will feel like that again.

When we overgeneralize, we ignore the unique facts about a situation.

Overgeneralization Example: "Madison laughed when I tripped in the cafeteria that one time. She's going to keep making fun of me and get other people to start doing it. Should I stop hanging out with her?"



ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Seeing things as "all good" or "all bad."

When we use all-or-nothing thinking, we ignore the fact that many situations are somewhere in between and have both positive *and* negative aspects.

All-or-Nothing Thinking Example: "I got an '86' on my math exam; 7 problems wrong. I'm an idiot! Will my grade go down? What if my parents are disappointed?"

TEEN WORKSHEET: THINKING TRAP PRACTICE



Here's an example of how to use your new skills to deal with a **Catastrophizing** Thinking Trap:



"I'm feeling nervous about my learner's permit test. I'm going to get all the questions wrong and never be able to drive! I should tell my mom I'm sick."

What are the Facts?	"I read the manual tons of times and took the practice test. My parents quizzed me and said I know my stuff."
What Would I Say to a Friend?	"You've studied hard, it's going to go great!"
What can I do to take my mind off things?	"I'm going to go watch some funny YouTube videos to forget about this for a little while."

FORTUNE TELLING

"This is the longest car ride ever. We're going to get stuck in traffic and miss the whole soccer tournament. Or we'll get into an accident! Ugh, this is so stressful!"

What are the Facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

OVERGENERALIZATION

"Madison laughed when I tripped in the cafeteria that one time. She's going to keep making fun of me and get other people to start doing it. Should I stop hanging out with her?"

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

"I got an '86' on my math exam; 7 problems wrong. I'm an idiot! Will my grade go down? What if my parents are disappointed?"

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS TIPS



Anxiety Skill 3

How Can Understanding Thinking Traps Help My Family?

- ▶ When people experience worry and anxiety, they often think about their present situation and things that might happen in the future in negative ways.
- ▶ By learning about thinking traps (i.e., ways of thinking that make us feel worried, stuck, or upset), your family can help each other pay attention to the ways you talk and think about anxiety.
- ▶ Once everyone has practiced noticing their thinking traps, you can help each other take those thinking trap statements and make them more positive and realistic.
- ▶ Learning how to discuss anxiety in realistic and self-esteem boosting ways can help your whole family feel more confident and capable when facing stressful situations.

Common Parent Concerns

Some of the thinking traps are hard for my teen to understand.

If a particular type of thinking trap is challenging for your teen, brainstorm additional examples that might make it clearer. Ask friends and family to help if needed. Examples that connect to your teen's interests (e.g., their favorite sport or movie) can be very useful. If your teen struggles to separate the thinking traps into different categories, just focus on noticing worry-increasing thoughts in general and changing them. For example, call them "worry thoughts" or using their "worry brain." You can still improve thinking this way.

My teen says that thinking traps aren't a problem for them, but I know that they are.

It's hard for people of all ages to notice or acknowledge a harmful habit. Be an example by pointing out thinking traps in your own life (e.g., "When I realized I was running late to pick you up, I was so worried you'd be upset and think I'm the worst mom ever! Then I realized I was catastrophizing, so I reminded myself that traffic is terrible and you were happy chatting with your friends."). Make similar connections in media you watch together (e.g., "Is that character using a thinking trap? Which one?"). Gently bring up times you notice your teen using a thinking trap after the situation has calmed down (e.g., "Before your game, you were worried that your team was definitely going to lose. I wonder if that was a thinking trap, maybe fortune telling? Just because you're nervous doesn't mean that you're not great! You all have been practicing so hard.").

Changing negative thinking is very hard for my teen.

Negative thoughts are often automatic, like a habit. Becoming a more positive thinker requires breaking this habit. It takes a lot of practice to make a change like this! Start with more fun and playful examples if jumping right into your teen's particular style of anxious thinking feels overwhelming. Practice with them on a regular basis for a few minutes at a time (daily if you can manage it) to start forming a new habit of positive thinking. If your teen is still having a difficult time, talk to your teen's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



Facing Your Fears Using Exposure

- ▶ **“Exposure”** is the clinical term for dealing directly with things that make someone anxious, instead of avoiding them.
- ▶ **Research shows that approaching situations we fear is the most effective way to decrease anxiety.** This can be challenging because avoidance of feared situations is a natural response. However, when we run away from our fear, we are “proving” to ourselves that the thing we are afraid of is too terrible to face.
- ▶ It doesn’t have to be this way! The skills in this guide are designed to help you and your teen face fears in a safe way. Exposure gives your teen a real world opportunity to see that they can overcome scary situations and reduce anxiety in the process.
- ▶ Exposure is most beneficial and straightforward to address at home when the fear is a specific thing (such as an animal) or situation (such as riding an elevator, speaking in class, or talking to new people).
- ▶ Making an **exposure plan** can provide your teen with repeated experience facing feared situations in a calm and organized way. In an exposure plan, exposures are organized in a hierarchy, from tasks that cause your teen the least amount of worry all the way up to situations that create more significant anxiety.
- ▶ These plans are most successful when the tasks are all related to each other and are increasing approximations of the worry that most gets in your teen’s way. An example exposure for someone with a worry about making new friends would be simply saying hello to a potential new friend in class, and then a later step on the hierarchy could be asking the person to eat lunch with them.
- ▶ Over time, exposure will help your teen become more confident and less fearful. They can potentially no longer feel anxious in situations that currently cause them to worry a lot! Or their anxiety may not go away completely, but they will feel more in control and more able to effectively manage worry. This helps your teen learn that they can achieve their goals and have fun even when anxious.

Here’s How to Create an Exposure Plan

You will need your teen’s Fear Thermometer from Anxiety Skill 1, plus our Create Your Own Exposure Plan worksheet on the coming pages, to help you create a plan together. Make copies of the Create Your Own Exposure Plan so you can repeat this process for multiple worries and repeat certain exposures if needed. Review the script below and our examples on the Exposure Plan Examples worksheet before helping your teen. This will help you better understand the way exposures work before you get started. The examples show how all the steps of an exposure plan should be connected to your teen’s major worry. Adapt the script for your teen as needed so they can create their own personalized plan. Your teen may have a wide range of unconnected fears on their fear thermometer; this is okay. Work together to pick one specific thing or feared situation to focus on at a time, as exposure works best when there is a clear target on which to focus.

Here's How to Create an Exposure Plan (continued)

Introducing Creating an Exposure Plan to Your Teen:

- 1 *"We are going to make a plan to help you face the fears that you put on your Fear Thermometer. One fear that you included is _____. "* Work with your teen to choose a specific fear that may work well based on our tips, such as a specific thing or situation. Once you both agree, proceed to step 2.
- 2 *"We are going to use this worksheet to help us make a plan."* Show your teen the Create Your Own Exposure Plan worksheet. *"Here, the worksheet has a place for us to write down the name of the worry we will be working on in your exposure. Exposure is the word for facing the thing you are afraid of instead of avoiding it or running away."* You or your teen should write the worry you will be working on in the space provided.
- 3 *"Right here is a place for us to write down each part of the exposure."* Point at the empty rows 1-6. *"The worksheet also has a place for us to rate how you feel before and after you face your fears. The Worry Scale on the page can help us do those ratings."* Point at the Before and After columns and the Worry Scale.
- 4 *"Our goal is going to be for you to do the things you need and want to do without feeling too scared or running away. I think you will feel strong and brave!"* Add in more ideas about what it could be like for them to conquer their particular fear.
- 5 *"That might seem like it could never happen, but I believe in you and you can do it! We will take baby steps to get there."*
- 6 *"If you were afraid of swimming, we wouldn't plan for you to just dive into the ocean without any steps before that. First we might have you put your feet into the water to slowly start getting more comfortable. What is something we can do to that is like that, something that will help you begin to get comfortable?"* Wait for your teen's response. Share some responses applicable to their fear that are similar to steps 1 and 2 in our example plans if they can't come up with anything. You are looking for steps that will be a "warm up" for facing the big fear. You or your teen should write these steps down.
- 7 *"Great idea! Now let's think about the next step with this fear. What comes after the steps we just put down? What will we need to do to get even closer to facing and overcoming your fear?"* Wait and provide responses similar to steps 3 and 4 on our example plans if needed. Remember, we are taking bigger and bigger steps toward facing the fear! You or your teen should write these steps down.
- 8 Now you are ready to name the activities that will be near the top of the exposure plan. *"You've given so many great ideas for getting more comfortable with this worry! Now let's talk about what will be our big goal. What are the biggest challenges connected to this fear?"* Wait and provide responses similar to steps 5 and 6 in our examples if needed. You or your teen should write these steps down. *"Good work! Let's review the worksheet and start to plan how we will begin our exposures."*



PARENT HANDOUT: EXPOSURE PLAN EXAMPLES



Example 1: Fear of Frogs

This example is for a younger kid who has a fear of frogs, but is also very interested in science and animals. The goal of these exposures is to help the kid hold a frog comfortably, a wish they have because of their interests. The example on the Fear Thermometer worksheet also deals with this worry; you can refer back to it now if needed (Anxiety Skill 1).

		Before	After
1	Looking at pictures of cartoon frogs on the internet or in a book.		
2	Looking at pictures of real frogs on the internet or in a book.		
3	Looking at frogs in aquariums at the pet store.		
4	Going near frogs in the pond at the science center.		
5	Touching a frog at the science center while an employee holds it.		
6	Holding a frog all by myself at the science center.		

Example 2: Fear of Elevators

This example is for a teen who has a fear of elevators. The goal of these exposures is for the teen to feel okay riding an elevator alone, an ability they wish to have as they increase their independence.

		Before	After
1	Looking at pictures of an elevator on the internet or in a book.		
2	Watching a video of someone riding in an elevator.		
3	Going to an elevator and standing inside it briefly with a parent.		
4	Going in an elevator and riding it with a parent.		
5	Going in the elevator and standing inside it briefly alone.		
6	Going in the elevator and riding it alone.		

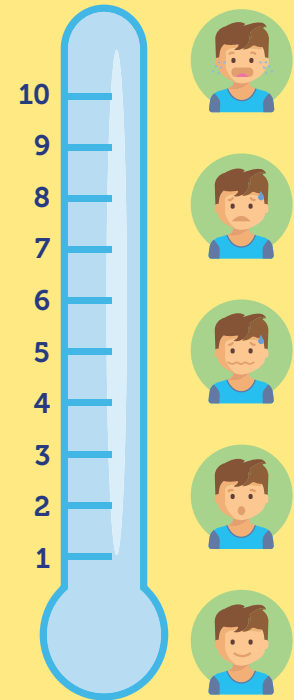
TEEN WORKSHEET: CREATE YOUR OWN EXPOSURE PLAN



Using Your Exposure Plan

- 1 You should pick a time when things are calm and not rushed at home to begin working on exposures. Start with step 1 on your plan, which is the exposure you rated as easiest to try.
- 2 Before each exposure practice, get a Worry Scale rating. Look at the Worry Scale. How worried/afraid do you feel? 1 is not that worried and 10 is the most worried.”
- 3 Great job! After each exposure practice, get a Worry Scale rating. Look at the Worry Scale. How worried/afraid do you feel? 1 is not that worried and 10 is the most worried.
- 4 Record these Worry Scale ratings next to the exposures listed on your plan. This will help you track progress over time.
- 5 You can repeat each step above until your ratings go down and you notice an exposure is less scary than it was before. Then, move onto step 2 on your plan, the next exposure. Go at a pace that is comfortable for you, but be consistent about moving through the exposures at a steady pace.

1-10 Worry Scale



Create Your Own Exposure Plan

Put your plan here:

	Before	After
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

PARENT HANDOUT: FACING YOUR FEARS TIPS



Anxiety Skill 4

How Can Facing Fears Through Exposures Help Our Family?

- ▶ Teens who have anxiety often avoid necessary and positive experiences due to their fears. This can impact their functioning at home, school, and with friends. Facing their fears through exposures helps them tackle their fears in a safe, controlled way and can improve their quality of life.
- ▶ Families are often unsure of how to help their teen address the things that scare them. These worksheets help parents get organized by giving them a road map to assist their teens in tackling their worries. Remember to take your time moving through the plan with your teen. As they build confidence, it will get easier to face their fears.
- ▶ Anxiety can feel very overwhelming for everyone, and teens may be unsure of how to articulate their concerns. The Fear Thermometer (Anxiety Skill 1) and Facing Your Fears worksheets in this guide help them identify their worries and break them down into manageable parts to be conquered!

Common Parent Concerns

We are having a hard time coming up with ideas for exposures.

Sometimes it is hard to figure out how to “expose” your teen to situations that aren’t part of daily life. You can use the internet, books, or magazines to help you look up realistic images and videos of fears (e.g., bugs and heights). Review any media you will use in exposures first before showing them to your teen. You can also role play anxiety-provoking scenarios; these can be exposures, too. Use your imagination and get creative!

My teen refuses to do the exposures.

Empathize with your teen. Tell them that you understand that this is very challenging but that you believe in them. Explain that exposures will help them worry less and have more fun in their lives. Explain that avoiding things actually makes them seem scarier, but that facing them helps us realize we can handle it. Remind them that you will start with the first step of their exposure plan, which they rated as the easiest step, and move through their plan slowly. You can try giving small incentives to encourage and motivate your teen (e.g., a special activity once they get to a certain point on their Fear Thermometer).

When we do exposures, my teen becomes very distressed. Sometimes they even cry!

It can often be challenging for parents to watch their teens feel upset during exposures; however, it’s important to stay supportive and calm as your teen learns to cope with their fears. Explain that you understand that this is tough and that they are upset. Remind your teen and yourself that completing exposures will help them be less worried over time. If they are still having a hard time, encourage them to use deep breathing or another coping skill (see Anxiety Skill 2). If this doesn’t help, take a break from exposures to do something fun for distraction, but then come back to the exposure later.

We did exposures and my teen still has anxiety.

Exposures won’t always “get rid” of anxiety completely. Anxiety at a low level is a normal part of life that can give us useful information about the world. The purpose of exposure is for your teen to be able to achieve their goals and have fun, even if they still feel anxious sometimes. If your teen has completed their exposures and is still having difficulties functioning at school, home, and/or with friends because of their fears, or if your teen is unable to complete their exposures due to anxiety, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

Guided Self-Management Tools for Depression

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR Depression

Children 6-12



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

FOR DEPRESSION



INTRODUCTION

Everyone feels sad sometimes. School, friends, and family concerns can cause children and teens to feel down. Disappointments and challenges in life can also have an impact on mood. For some children, sad feelings can become difficult to manage. This can cause problems at home, school, and/or with friends. If this is happening for your child, they may be depressed. Working with your child's primary care team can help you assist your child in managing symptoms of depression.

Behavioral health specialists have worked hard to figure out ways to help manage depression. One of the most effective interventions is a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. This type of therapy helps people with depression learn how to change their thoughts and behaviors in order to feel less sad and to cope when sad feelings do occur. The worksheets in this guide will help your child and your family try CBT strategies at home. There are tips for parents and activities for your child, which can be used with children across a wide age range. We find that the skills are most effective when used in order. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, and instructions for how to use the strategy at home. We've also included a list of common questions and concerns parents usually have about each skill, along with our answers. Work through the guide with your child and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will be to make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your child need any additional support for depression management. Good luck!



Skill 1

Mood Tracking

These worksheets will help your child pay attention to their feelings, see how different situations impact their mood, and practice sharing their feelings with others.



Skill 2

Making Time for Fun

These worksheets will help you and your child plan time in their day for activities they enjoy and learn additional positive coping skills for improving mood.



Skill 3

Relaxation Skills

These worksheets teach simple skills and exercises that help increase feelings of calm and well-being. Make these skills a consistent part of your family's daily life to reduce stress for everyone.



Skill 4

Thinking Traps

These worksheets teach new ways to look at situations and suggest questions to ask in order to reduce negative thoughts and increase positive thinking.



Skill 5

Problem Solving

These worksheets help your child gain confidence and improve their mood by teaching strategies that help to 1) solve problems independently and 2) seek help when needed.

PARENT HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING



WHAT IS MOOD TRACKING?

- ▶ In order for you and your child to better understand how your child feels, they will need to practice feelings identification and feelings expression.
- ▶ Feelings identification is a term for being able to name your feelings with detail and accuracy. Feelings identification goes beyond saying you feel “good” or “bad” and instead involves developing a richer feelings vocabulary. Feelings expression is a term for sharing emotions in safe and productive ways.
- ▶ The use of mood tracking to identify and record feelings is a helpful way to increase feelings identification and expression. A Mood Tracker is a simple system that can help your child label and record their feelings.
- ▶ As your child improves their feelings identification and expression through mood tracking, you and your child may notice patterns in their moods. Paying attention to these patterns is an important first step to figuring out ways to improve mood. Having a better understanding of their emotions will help your child use other helpful skills, such as the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problems Solving worksheets (Depression Skill 5) in this guide.

HERE'S HOW TO BEGIN MOOD TRACKING AT HOME

- 1 Make a master list of emotions.
 - a **Important Feelings for Children:** You may want to track the following feelings: **Happy, Sad, Mad, and Scared.** You can add more based on your child’s vocabulary, understanding, and needs.
 - b **Important Feelings for Adolescents:** You may want to track the following feelings: **Happy, Sad, Depressed, Angry, Frustrated, Stressed, Worried,** and **Neutral.** You can add more based on your adolescent’s vocabulary, understanding, and needs.
- 2 Expand feelings vocabulary.
 - a **Expanding the Feelings Vocabulary:** You will need a timer, two pieces of paper, and two pens. Set the timer for one minute (30 seconds for younger children) and say to your child, **“We are going to come up with as many different feelings words as we can. Words like happy, sad, and any more you can think of. When I say go, start your list. I’ll do mine at the same time. We will put our lists together at the end.”** When time is up, compare your lists and create a “master list” that contains the feeling words you and your child think are most necessary for tracking their moods. Use tips 1 and 2 above to make sure you are including key feelings.
- 3 Introduce mood tracking.
 - a **Introduction to Mood Tracking for Children:** “Feelings have names like happy, sad, mad, and scared. We show how we are feeling on our faces, through our words, and through our actions. Feelings can also be called emotions or moods. We are going to try an activity that will help us understand more about your feelings. At the end of each day, we will use this worksheet to track your feelings for that day. Did you feel happy, sad, mad, or something else? We will also write down what happened that day. Doing this will help you become an expert at sharing your feelings, which will let us work together on helping you feel better.”
 - b **Introduction to Mood Tracking for Adolescents:** “We named a lot of different feelings during the Speed Game. Feelings can also be called emotions or moods. Happy, sad, depressed (which means really down and hopeless), angry, frustrated, stressed, worried and neutral (that means no feeling) are important ones that you and I are going to make sure we include in our vocabularies. Many people find it helpful to track their moods in order to get more practice identifying how they feel, notice any patterns in moods throughout the day, and then use the information to figure out ways to improve mood. This worksheet is one good way to try this. You can record your feelings and the situation that caused those feelings for morning, afternoon, and evening. Some people like to do this in the moment and other people like to do this at the end of the day. What would you like to do?”

CHILD WORKSHEET: HOW I FEEL

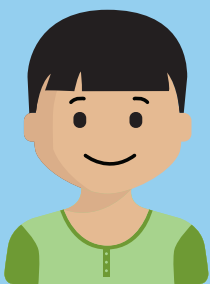
- 1 Make copies of this worksheet so you can continue this practice beyond the first week.
- 2 Keep the master list of emotions you made with your child near the mood tracking worksheets for easy reference. Adolescents and older children with electronic devices may want to keep the list on their device.
- 3 If your child can't think of a feeling word when it's time to fill in their worksheet, provide examples from the master list.
- 4 If your child can't think of something for the What Happened? section, ask, **"Where were you when you noticed your feeling? What was the situation? What were you doing?"**
- 5 Once your child has completed a week of Mood Tracking, start to look for patterns together. Read all of the emotions and situations from the week's Mood Tracker. Ask, **"What do you notice? Are certain events connected to certain feelings a lot?"**
- 6 Once you and your child notice and identify their patterns, think about which other skills in this guide could help. Many families find that the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving worksheets (Depression Skill 5) in this guide are useful.

Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Mood	happy	sad	mad				
What Happened?	took muffin to dog park	forgot my homework at home	I wanted to play more, but it was time for dinner				

Here are some emotions that you may be feeling:

Happy



Sad



Mad



Scared



CHILD WORKSHEET: HOW I FEEL



Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Mood							
What Happened?							

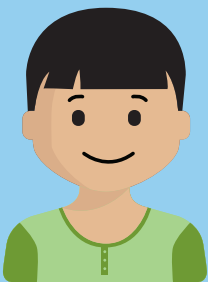
Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Mood							
What Happened?							

Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Mood							
What Happened?							

Happy



Sad



Mad



Scared



CAREGIVER HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING TIPS



Depression Skill 1

HOW CAN MOOD TRACKING HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Children and adolescents who are having a hard time with sad or depressed mood sometimes struggle to both explain how they feel and show how they feel in appropriate ways. Mood Tracking can help your child become more skilled at feelings identification and feelings expression.
- ▶ Improving these skills can help your child feel more in control when a low mood occurs. This can in turn reduce certain behaviors that may be connected to difficulty expressing emotions (e.g., temper tantrums, acting out, withdrawing from friends and family, etc.).
- ▶ Mood Tracking can help you and your child notice patterns in their moods that can give you valuable insight into your child's triggers and challenges (e.g. they notice that they tend to feel worse when they're left out at school).
- ▶ You can use this information to work together to find coping skills that can improve specific moods and solve problems that may be causing stress.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

When I ask my child how they feel, they say they don't know!

Sometimes Mood Tracking can feel overwhelming or confusing. Use your master list of feelings to give your child ideas. You can also ask them questions about how they felt in specific situations (e.g., "How did you feel in math class? At recess? After school?"). You can first ask them to use "good" or "positive" and "bad" or "negative" to identify if they were feeling a positive or negative emotion. Then focus together on narrowing that range of emotions down to be more specific, using the list we provide for suggestions.

My child refuses to mood track.

Empathize with your child. It can feel hard to begin expressing emotions if you've kept them bottled up inside. Your child could be feeling overwhelmed, or too down to be motivated. Mood Tracking should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into your daily routine (e.g., can they fill out the worksheet after dinner, or use their phone to keep track?). Together, set a specific goal for regular mood tracking (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward your child can earn for reaching it.

I'm not sure how to use the Mood Tracker to plan or problem solve.

Think of the Mood Tracker as data: important information about your child's day-to-day experience. Look for patterns, such as certain moods that happen over and over on the same day, at the same time, or in the same situation. Use this information to brainstorm ways to improve those situations together. Are they always sad on Mondays? Maybe Mondays would feel more positive if there were occasionally a fun activity or special dinner to look forward to. See the Making Time for Fun worksheets (Depression Skill 2) for more ideas like this. Are evenings stressful? Perhaps this could be improved by starting homework earlier or thinking of a calming bedtime routine. Read the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving (Depression Skill 5) worksheets for more ideas like these. Once you have more information about the specific circumstances around certain moods, you can plan ahead.

Our Mood Trackers show that my child is almost always in a low mood, no matter what.

Help your child figure out ways to add more fun and relaxing activities to their daily life (see Making Time for Fun and Relaxation Skills, Depression Skills 2 and 3). Notice if this results in any changes. Also discuss with your child whether negative thinking may be impacting their report of their mood. Are they reporting the facts? Would using a skill from Thinking Traps help (Depression Skill 4)? If your child's low mood continues, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help. If your child's mood causes you concern for their safety, seek emergency help.

PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN



Depression Skill 2

WHAT IS MAKING TIME FOR FUN?

- ▶ If your child is struggling with sadness or depression, they may stop doing things that they used to enjoy. They may engage in more passive activities (e.g., screen time) reduce the amount of active choices (e.g. sports, hobbies) they engage in, or spend less time with others. Or you may find that they aren't doing many fun activities at all, or report that activities they usually enjoy are less fun than they used to be. These changes in activity and motivation are common symptoms of depression.
- ▶ **Behavioral activation** is a method for increasing the amount of enjoyable activities that are a part of your child's day. It is a great tool for helping your child improve their mood and increase their active coping skills. Since your child may feel unmotivated right now, activities are scheduled ahead of time in order to help with consistency and planning.
- ▶ Your child may not be in a good mood at the start of an activity, but they may notice a significant improvement in mood once they get going! Keeping track of their moods before and after the activity will help them notice which activities make a big positive difference in their mood. In the future, they can return to these activities to cope with low mood.

HERE'S HOW TO USE BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION AT HOME

You can use the following script with your child:

- 1 Introduce behavioral activation.** "I've noticed that you've been feeling sad and down lately. When people feel down, they often stop doing things they used to love. That sometimes happens because they feel tired or uninterested in their hobbies and activities. This causes them to have less fun and feel even more down! Do you think this is happening to you?" Wait for an answer and provide encouragement in a way that feels comfortable to you. "Together, we are going to make an effort to plan for more fun in your daily life. Scheduling fun in your day to help you feel happier is called *behavioral activation*."
- 2 Introduce the Making Time for Fun worksheet.** "We are going to use the Making Time for Fun worksheet to organize your behavioral activation. Your job is to make a list of fun activities you'd like to do and then choose one activity for each day. We will try to put mostly everyday things on the worksheet that you can do daily (even on school nights!). However, we can also include the occasional bigger, special activity. We will also rate your mood before and after to see if the activity makes you feel better." We can use a scale from 1-10 where 1 means very down, and 10 means very happy. See Mood Tracking worksheets in Depression Skill 1 for additional support on feelings identification and expression.
- 3 Brainstorm and choose activities.** "Do you have any ideas about things you want to do? We will add them to the Fun Ideas List." Wait for your child to name activities; if they need help you can make suggestions based on activities you know they once enjoyed and/or the suggestions on the worksheet. Record the activities on the Fun Ideas List as you go.
- 4 Make the schedule:** "Great job! Now I'll read the list to you. Why don't you pick which day of the week you would like to do some of these things?" Write the activities down in the schedule according to your child's choices. Review the chart together once it's filled in.

CHILD WORKSHEET: MAKING TIME FOR FUN

1 Fun Activities Suggestions



Arts and crafts Play outside Play with a pet
 Exercise or practice a sport Journal Go for a walk
 Listen to music Play a game Watch a movie
 Read a book or listen to an audiobook

2 My Fun Ideas List

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

3 My Making Time for Fun Chart

Day of the Week	Fun Activity	Mood Before (1-10)	Mood After (1-10)
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

10 very happy

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1 very down

PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN TIPS



Depression Skill 2

HOW CAN MAKING TIME FOR FUN HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When children or adolescents are struggling with sadness or depression, they often stop doing activities they once loved because they feel tired, think once enjoyable activities are boring, feel frustrated or irritable, or start withdrawing from friends. Unfortunately, the more your child reduces their pleasurable activities, the more their sadness may increase.
- ▶ Using the Making Time for Fun worksheet can help you organize and motivate your child to increase their positive activities through behavioral activation. It can reduce the need to nag your child to choose something to do when they seem sad or bored. The whole family can benefit from mood-boosting activities if you do them together. For example, physical activity as a family can make a big difference. In addition, spending time in nature can have positive and soothing effects on everyone's mood.
- ▶ Another benefit of the Making Time for Fun skill is that it helps your child increase their active coping skills. They will be able to keep track of which activities improve their mood the most. These activities, along with relaxation skills (see Relaxation Skills worksheets in Depression Skill 3), will be powerful tools that you can turn to for improving mood in a variety of circumstances.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child only wants to include video games on their chart.

Many children prefer screen time over other activities and it's okay to include a few of these activities in their plan. However, too much screen time can be passive and isolating, leading to more negative effects than positive ones. Try to help your child balance their Fun Activities List so that there is a mix of high and low energy activities and not too many activities with screen time. Explain to your child that physical activities can make a huge difference in their mood and that low key activities like reading or coloring can also help them feel calm. Praise your child for including activities with no screen time on the list.

My child has too many expensive activities on their list.

Help your child pick some simple and free activities and explain to them that these activities are beneficial and necessary because they are easier to access and can happen several times a week. Based on your family's practices and budget, decide if and when you would like to include some activities that have a cost and calmly but firmly explain this to your child. Decide together when to occasionally fit these activities in. You may even want to choose a special activity as a reward for your child's use of coping skills!

My child doesn't want to do their activities when I suggest them.

Ask specific questions to find out what could make doing behavioral activation more appealing. Have they decided that they want to change the order of activities, or do completely new ones? Edit your Making Time for Fun worksheets as needed. Encourage them to keep trying new things until they find something that is enjoyable and comfortable. Remind them that it's hardest to do fun things when they feel down, but that this is when doing fun things is actually most important!

My child still has a low mood, even after doing their fun activities.

Brainstorm with your child to see if trying different activities could be more impactful. Adjust the planned activities on the worksheet as needed. Discuss with your child whether negative thinking may be impacting their report of their mood. Are they reporting the facts? Would using a skill from Thinking Traps help (Depression Skill 4)? If your child's low mood continues, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help. If your child's mood causes you concern for their safety, seek emergency help.

PARENT HANDOUT: DEEP BREATHING



WHAT IS DEEP BREATHING?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ There are three main forms of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout is an introduction to a skill called **deep breathing**.
- ▶ Deep breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in which you fill your belly with air on the inhales (i.e., the breathe *in* part) and release the air on the exhales (i.e., the breathe *out* part).
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

HERE'S HOW TO USE DEEP BREATHING AT HOME

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your child feel comfortable and use their skills consistently. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your child times when you can use the skill of deep breathing in your own life (e.g., "I don't like when the grocery store is this busy, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before we go in.")

DEEP BREATHING PRACTICE

Deep Breathing Script: "Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to focus on our breathing. Start by taking some nice deep breaths, the same way you normally would. Notice how your belly rises and falls as you breathe. You can put your hand on your belly to help you feel the air going in and out. Now we are going to try to breathe in a way that will help us feel even more relaxed. Breathe in through your nose. This is the inhale. When you do this, make your belly fill with air like a balloon. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. This is the exhale and it makes you empty the air out of your belly balloon. Good. You can make a 'whoosh' sound on the exhale if that helps you. Now do that again, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can, slowly and calmly. Take your time and focus on the rhythm of your breathing. Try to make your belly balloon fill with air on the inhale and empty on the exhale. Great job. If other thoughts pop into your mind, that's okay. Just try to stay calm and start thinking about your breathing again. Now take three more slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, making your belly rise and fall three times. One. Two. Three. You can do this any time you need to relax. Great job! When you're ready, you can open your eyes."



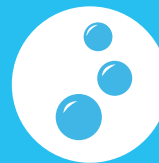
Number Breathing

Once your child understands how to breathe more deeply, try variations such as 3-1-3. This involves breathing in for a count of three, holding it for one, and breathing out for a count of three. You can try other numbers and combinations and use whatever your child likes and finds comfortable.



Pizza Imagery

A fun image that can help you or your child practice this skill anytime, anywhere: Imagine you are breathing in the smell of a slice of hot, delicious pizza and then blowing out to cool the slice down. Or think of another hot food you love!



Bubbles

Have some fun and use bubbles to show how breathing in and blowing out calmly can help you make big bubbles. Show your child how fast, more anxious breathing doesn't work as well.



Stuffed Animal Belly Breathing

Have your child lie down on the floor with a small stuffed animal on their belly. When they breathe in, the stuffed animal should rise as their belly fills with air. As they breathe out, the stuffed animal should sink slightly as air flows out. Older children can use their hand on their belly to practice instead of a stuffed animal.

PARENT HANDOUT: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ There are three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout is an introduction to a skill called **progressive muscle relaxation**.
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing different groups of muscles one at a time and then releasing them. An example is flexing your arm muscle, then relaxing it.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

HERE'S HOW TO USE PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION AT HOME

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your child feel comfortable and use their skills consistently. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your child times when you can use progressive muscle relaxation in your own life (e.g., "I've been clenching the steering wheel the whole way home. I'm going to try to relax my muscles now to feel better.")

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION PRACTICE

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to practice relaxing our muscles by squeezing them tight and then releasing them. Let's start with our legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and point your toes. Hold your position and count to 5. Now relax your legs. Good job! Do that again. Stretch, hold for 5, and relax. Now make two fists like you are squeezing a lemon in each hand. Squeeze your lemons as tightly as you can to get the juice out for a count of 5. Now drop your lemons. Great job! Now repeat. Squeeze for 5 and drop. Let's next focus on our arms. Hold them out in front of you, stiff and straight for 5. Good. Now drop your arms to your sides like they are cooked, limp spaghetti. Now repeat. Stiff for 5 and then loose. Okay, now we're going to squeeze our stomach muscles as if we are trying to squeeze through a door. Hold them tight and count to 5! Now release. Great job. Repeat. Squeeze for 5 and release. Now we are going to scrunch up our faces like we are trying to get flies off our noses. Keep your face scrunched up for 5! Good. Release. Again, scrunch for 5 and release. For our last step we are going to hold our whole body as tight and scrunched up as we can. Tense all the parts and count to 5! Great job. Now release. Do that one last time. Tense for 5, now relax. Notice how good it feels to relax all your muscles. You can open your eyes."

Simon Says

(best for younger children)

Turn progressive muscle relaxation into a game of Simon Says. Start with the caregiver as Simon and tell your child to tense different body parts ("Simon says scrunch your toes" or "Simon says flex your arm muscles"). Have your child release each part before moving on. Now let your child be Simon. Get creative and have fun!

PARENT HANDOUT: GUIDED IMAGERY



WHAT IS GUIDED IMAGERY?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ There are three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout is an introduction to a skill called **guided imagery**.
- ▶ Guided imagery involves imagining a calm image or scene using all 5 senses (i.e., sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell), sometimes with the help of a script or recording.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

HERE'S HOW TO USE GUIDED IMAGERY AT HOME

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your child feel comfortable and use their skills consistently. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your child times when you can use guided imagery in your own life (e.g., "What a busy day! I need to take a mini vacation to my peaceful place!")
- ▶ If you notice your child looking down or stressed, you can also suggest they try guided imagery to see if it makes them feel better.

GUIDED IMAGERY PRACTICE

Guided Imagery Script

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I want you to use your imagination to go on a vacation in your mind. Think of a calm and peaceful place. It can be some place you have been before or some place you would like to go. The place doesn't even have to be real; it can be imaginary. Spend a few moments picturing your peaceful place. Now think about the things you *see* in your special place. Notice the colors, shapes, and patterns. Think about how peaceful it is to see the details of your special place. Now think about the things you *hear* in your peaceful place. Is there music, animal sounds, or ocean waves? Or maybe you hear something different. Now think about the things you *feel* in your calm place. Warm sunshine on your face, grass under your feet, or something else? Notice how these feelings help you relax. Now think about what you *smell* in your relaxing place. The salty ocean, cookies baking, or something else? Take a deep breath of the amazing smells. Now think about what you *taste* in your calm place. A popsicle? Or a fresh cookie? Or something else? Think about how good it tastes. You can always take a trip back to your relaxing place if you need to feel calm. This is a tool you can always use to feel better. When you are ready, you can open your eyes."

Mini Vacation

Once you have practiced with the script above, encourage your child to close their eyes briefly and go on a mini vacation to their calm place when they feel sad or down.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation

Help your child relax at any time by prompting them to notice 5 things they see, 4 things they feel, 3 things they hear, 2 things they smell, and 1 thing they taste. This technique is a **grounding exercise** and can help your child feel better in challenging moments. Here's an example of using this in the kitchen: "I see my plate, the table, my sister sitting across from me, the clock, and the wall. I feel the chair, the floor, the table, and the warmth from the heater. I hear water running in the sink, water boiling on the stove, and my sister's voice. I smell cookies in the oven and the pasta I am eating. I taste the pasta."

PARENT HANDOUT: RELAXATION SKILLS TIPS



HOW CAN RELAXATION SKILLS HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Relaxation techniques can be very important coping skills for children having problems with sad feelings and low mood. These strategies can reduce stress by helping children calm their bodies, take their mind off of their sad feelings, and focus more on positive thinking and feelings. Reducing stress also makes it easier to problem solve and use other coping skills.
- ▶ This is because the mind and the body are connected. When children who are sad or feeling some other negative emotion learn to practice relaxation, they can change their moods, improve their sleep, and experience many other benefits.
- ▶ Your child needs to practice relaxing regularly when they are in a good mood so that they are better able to use the skills when they are in a bad mood and need them. You can't use a skill well in "the game" if you don't practice!
- ▶ Relaxation skills are "portable." Your child can do them at home, school, or in public. Most skills can be done without anyone noticing.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child thinks this is too hard.

Relaxation skills may feel uncomfortable or challenging at first. Practicing regularly helps make the skills feel easier and more comfortable. Figuring out which skills (and methods of practicing the skills) your child prefers will also be helpful. Try out the different strategies we suggest, and see which ones work best for your family.

My child doesn't want to practice regularly.

Relaxation practice should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into the daily routine. For example, can they practice for a few minutes on the way home from school or use an app on their phone before getting ready for bed? Together, set a specific goal for regular practice (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward your child can earn for reaching it. Remind your child that this skill gets easier the more they do it, and that this is one way they can be in control of their mood.

My child thinks relaxation practice is boring or strange.

Ask specific questions to find out what could make it more appealing. Do they prefer a certain skill over others? Do they want to use technology in their practice (e.g., relaxation phone apps, guided imagery videos, etc.)? Would they be more interested in an active practice like yoga? Encourage them to keep trying new things until they find something that is enjoyable and comfortable.

My child can never use the skills in the moment to manage their mood.

If you are in a situation with your child where they could use a relaxation skill but are not doing so, give a gentle reminder to encourage them and then model the skill yourself. Talk with your child about times when relaxation skills can be helpful (e.g., academic stress is making them sad, so suggest *progressive muscle relaxation* before they start their homework) and set a goal with them regarding trying to use that skill in that specific situation for a reasonable amount of times for the next week.



PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS



WHAT ARE THINKING TRAPS?

- ▶ **Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that increase sadness, anger, and stress. They often involve jumping to conclusions, guessing that things will go badly in the future, and making connections that might not really make sense.
- ▶ Here are **4 Common Thinking Traps** that are often connected to sadness and depression. Discuss these with your child and see if you can come up with more examples that apply to them.

HOW TO DECREASE THINKING TRAPS

Ask your child these questions to help them think in more positive ways:

- 1 **What are the facts? What is the likelihood that what you're worrying about will happen?** Often there is very little evidence that the things we are stressed about will actually happen! Working with your child to look at the facts will help them think more realistically and often empower them to notice that they are capable of solving their problems.
- 2 **What would you tell a friend in this situation?** Focusing on helping a peer may help your child with perspective taking and problem solving. This strategy can help them feel calmer and more positive about their stress.
- 3 **What can you do to solve your problem or take your mind off it?** If possible, help your child take concrete steps to solve their problem. If that's not possible, encourage them to use relaxation or other coping skills (Depression Skill 3) reduce stress and take their mind off things.



CATASTROPHIZING

Making little problems or disappointments seem like big problems.

When we catastrophize, we make a big deal out of situations, even when they might not be that serious.

Catastrophizing Example: "My best friend sat with a new kid at lunch yesterday. She probably hates me now and is going to ditch me."



FORTUNE TELLING

Predicting that bad things will happen in the future.

People who struggle with negative thinking often spend a lot of time imagining bad things happening in the future. People dealing with depression sometimes predict their sadness will continue.

Fortune Telling Example: "I've felt really sad for the past few weeks. I'm probably going to be sad forever."



OVERGENERALIZATION

Assuming that because we had a hard time in one situation, our same problem will happen again in a new one.

When we overgeneralize, we are ignoring the unique facts about a situation.

Overgeneralization Example: "Painting was tough for me in art class. I'm going to be terrible at drawing and pottery, too!"



ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Seeing things as "all good" or "all bad."

When we use all-or-nothing thinking, we ignore the fact that many situations are somewhere in between and have both positive *and* negative aspects.

All-or-Nothing Thinking Example: "I got three problems wrong out of ten on the math homework. I'm terrible at math."

CHILD WORKSHEET: THINKING TRAP PRACTICE

Here's an example of how to use your new skills to deal with a **Fortune Telling Thinking Trap**:

"I've felt really sad for the past few weeks. I'm probably going to be sad forever."



What are the facts?	"My mom and dad are helping me learn ways to feel better. I already feel happy sometimes after I use my coping skills. I've felt sad in the past, and it didn't last forever."
What would I say to a friend?	"It's going to get better! You are working hard at being more positive."
What can I do to take my mind off things?	"I'm going to go play a game with my brother to forget about this thought for a little while."

CATASTROPHIZING: "My best friend sat with a new kid at lunch yesterday. I bet he hates me now and is going to ditch me."

What are the facts?	
What would I say to a friend?	
What can I do to take my mind off things?	

OVERGENERALIZATION: "Painting was tough for me in art class. I'm going to be terrible at drawing and pottery, too!"

What are the facts?	
What would I say to a friend?	
What can I do to take my mind off things?	

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING: "I got three problems wrong out of ten on the math homework. I'm terrible at math."

What are the facts?	
What would I say to a friend?	
What can I do to take my mind off things?	

PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS TIPS



Depression Skill 4

HOW CAN UNDERSTANDING THINKING TRAPS HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When people experience sadness or depression, they often think about the past, their present situation, and/or things that might happen in the future in negative ways. These negative thought patterns often make them feel worse and can lead to feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- ▶ By learning about thinking traps (i.e., ways of thinking that make us feel sad, stuck, or angry), your child will learn to identify times they may be thinking in overly negative or unrealistic ways.
- ▶ Your family can also help each other pay attention to the ways you talk about feelings and problems. Once everyone has practiced noticing the thinking traps, you can help each other take those thinking trap statements and make them more positive and realistic.
- ▶ Learning how to discuss feelings and problems in realistic and self-esteem boosting ways can help your whole family feel more confident and capable when facing stressful situations.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

Some of the thinking traps are hard for my child to understand.

If a particular type is challenging for your child, brainstorm additional examples that might make it clearer. Ask friends and family to help if needed. Examples that connect to your child's interests (e.g., their favorite sport or movie) can be very useful. If your child struggles to separate the thinking traps into different categories, just focus on noticing negative thoughts in general and changing them. For example, call them "sad thoughts" or another name you come up with together. You can still improve thinking this way.

My child says that thinking traps aren't a problem for them, but I know that they are.

It's hard for people of all ages to notice or acknowledge a harmful habit. Be a role model by pointing out thinking traps out in your own life (e.g., "I noticed the living room was messy and thought, 'This house is always a mess!'. That made me feel sad and frustrated. Then I realized that was *all-or-nothing thinking* because the rest of the house is clean!"). Make similar connections in media you watch together (e.g., "Is that character using a thinking trap? Which one?"). Gently bring up times you notice your child using a thinking trap when the situation is calmer (e.g., "After you guys lost that tough game, you said that you wanted to quit basketball because it 'will always be this way'. I wonder if that was a thinking trap, maybe *overgeneralization*? Just because you lost that one game doesn't mean you will lose every game in the future and you've told me that you love playing basketball.").

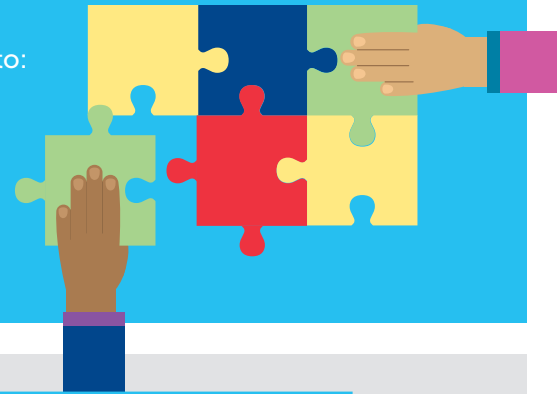
Changing negative thinking is very hard for my child.

Negative thoughts are often automatic, like a bad habit. Becoming a more positive thinker requires breaking this habit. It takes a lot of practice to make a change like this! Start with more fun and playful examples if jumping right into your child's own thinking patterns feels overwhelming. Practice on a regular basis for a few minutes at a time (daily if you can manage it) to start forming a new habit of positive thinking. If your child is still having a difficult time, talk to your child's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



WHAT IS PROBLEM SOLVING?

- ▶ Children dealing with low mood and depression may be in particular need of targeted strategies to deal with daily challenges and concerns. Everyone can benefit from solving problems in their lives; these skills can help you and the rest of your family as well!
- ▶ Your child may be frustrated that they are having a hard time dealing with problems. This can further increase their low mood and low motivation. You may be frustrated that they are not taking your advice or making good choices, creating conflict between the two of you.
- ▶ These worksheets teach a simple plan for solving problems. You will learn to:
 1. Name the problem
 2. Identify 3 possible solutions
 3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
 4. Pick one to try
 5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution



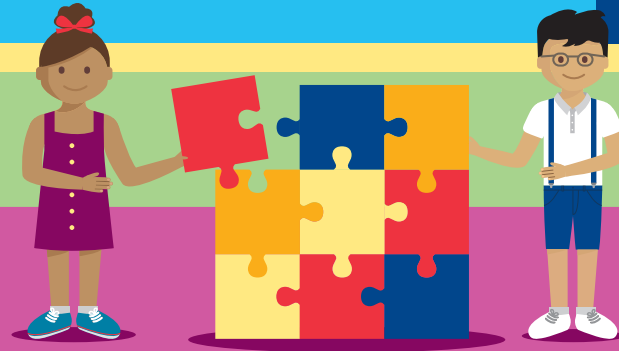
HERE'S HOW TO MAKE A PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN AT HOME

You can introduce the plan by saying, "Everyone can use help solving problems. When people are sad, they sometimes need strategies that make it easier to deal with challenges. Here's the Problem Solving Plan we are going to start using." Introduce the 5 parts of the plan to your child by going through them together and reading the explanations below:

- 1 What's the problem?** "You may be feeling overwhelmed and not know exactly how to describe the issue you need to handle. Clearly stating the problem helps us both focus on what we need to do to solve it."
- 2 What are 3 possible solutions?** "I want you to think of 3 possible solutions so you have some good options, but not so many that you are overwhelmed with choices. Let's not worry about how good or bad they are yet. We will evaluate them together in the next part."
- 3 What's one good thing and one bad thing about each?** "This part means you will name one positive possibility and one negative possibility that could occur with each solution. This will help you consider the benefits and challenges of each choice."
- 4 Pick one!** This is your chance to take charge as you pick which solution you want to try out first.
- 5 How did it go?** "After you follow through with a solution, we will evaluate it. This will help us both learn what the best options for different problems are and we can refer back to these tested solutions as needed. If the first solution isn't successful in solving the problem, we can try a different one or start a completely new solution brainstorming session."

The next section puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart. Go over the example together and then have your child try to solve the practice problems. Come up with solutions for our example problems and then try it for one of your own.

CHILD WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 1: "I am so sad and tired all time that I am not paying attention in math class. Now I don't understand today's homework."

What's the Problem? "I don't understand the homework."

		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1	Don't do the homework.	I can play videogames tonight because I'll have less to do	I'll get a zero.
Soution 2	Text my friend for help.	She is good at math and can help me.	She might not respond.
Solution 3	Talk to my teacher tomorrow and ask for extra help.	My teacher will explain what I missed.	She might still give me a zero for today's homework.
My Choice	Text my friend for help.		
How'd it go?	My friend texted me back. She called and helped me. I understood and did the homework.		

Example 2: "I get mad really easily now. I have been mean to my little brother a lot. This morning I heard him crying and telling mom that he thinks I don't like him."

What's the Problem?

		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

CHILD WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 3: "I've known that we had a history project due for a while but I just couldn't focus on it because of how I'm feeling. Now it's due tomorrow."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

Example 4: "My friends have stopped inviting me places because I kept saying no. Now I'm ready to use my Making Time for Fun Skills and I want them to ask me to hang out again."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

CHILD WORKSHEET: BLANK PROBLEM SOLVING PLANS



What's the Problem?		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



Depression Skill 5

HOW CAN PROBLEM SOLVING HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Children and adolescents who are having a hard time with sadness or depression sometimes struggle to deal with challenges and solve everyday problems.
- ▶ These difficulties with problem solving can occur because they are more sad or irritable, more easily overwhelmed, not feeling motivated, and/or struggling with negative thinking due to depression. They may also try to solve a problem, but give up easily if they aren't successful right away.
- ▶ The problem solving skill described here can provide a concrete way to help your child think through challenges, brainstorm options, notice what works and what doesn't, and keep trying if their first attempt doesn't work. Increasing positive outcomes through successful problem solving can help significantly improve your child's mood and sense of control.
- ▶ In addition, making and following a problem solving plan can reduce frustration for both of you while increasing feelings of independence and mastery for your child. You won't be telling your child what to do, but instead supporting and guiding them in their plans to overcome challenges on their own.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child doesn't think they have problems that need solving.

It can be hard for children to notice which challenges or frustrations in their lives can benefit from problem solving skills. You and your child can identify potential problem solving opportunities by reviewing the situations they connected to their low mood and recorded on their How I Feel/Mood Tracker worksheets (review Mood Tracking, Depression Skill 1). Fill in the Problem Solving Plan for past situations that made your child feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion. In addition, if you notice a situation that is applicable to these skills in daily life, you can gently point this out to your child (e.g., "You told me you were sad because you didn't know who to sit with at lunch today. Do you think we can use the Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

My child can't think of any solutions.

Talk to your child about what might be getting in the way. They may be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Offer guidance without being demanding (e.g., "What if you tried [insert potential solution here]?"). Very often, once you give a child one example, they are able to get creative with solutions of their own. Remind them that they don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. They can make mistakes and you will help them. Review the practice examples we provide, both to remind your child of potential options for common concerns as well as the fact that they came up with great solutions for the examples!

All the solutions my child comes up with are bad choices.

If the solutions are not harmful or unsafe, try not to dismiss them right away. Working through the different choices together will improve your child's positive problem solving and ability to distinguish between solutions. Encourage your child to focus on the one good thing and one bad thing step of the plan (step 3). If there is no "good" aspect to a solution or the good thing your child identifies is actually detrimental, gently point this out. Encourage them to pick a choice with a positive outcome at the "pick one" stage (step 4). If they don't have a choice like that, gently suggest that you go back to the brainstorming solutions stage (step 2). Let them know that it's okay to go back to this step to think of additional options, because the goal is to solve the problem in a safe and positive way.

When I ask my child to use their problem solving plan, they get upset and sometimes even cry.

Sometimes children experiencing depression can feel overwhelmed when trying to problem solve. Remind yourself and your child that feeling upset is okay and that their emotions are giving you both a message that they are having a tough time and need support. Some children will benefit from using a relaxation skill to lower their stress levels before trying problem solving. For tips, review Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3). In addition, negative thinking can make problems seem huge and unsolvable. Review strategies from Thinking Traps (Depression Skill 4) to help encourage more realistic thinking. If you and your child are still having a hard time using problem solving skills and this is impacting their depression, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

GUIDED
SELF-MANAGEMENT
TOOLS
FOR DEPRESSION

Teens 13-17



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

FOR DEPRESSION



INTRODUCTION

Everyone feels sad sometimes. School, friends, and family concerns can cause teens to feel down. Disappointments and challenges in life can also have an impact on mood. For some teens, sad feelings can become difficult to manage. This can cause problems at home, school, and/or with friends. If this is happening for you, you may be depressed. Working with your primary care team and your parents can help you manage symptoms of depression.

Behavioral health specialists have worked hard to figure out ways to help manage depression. One of the most effective interventions is a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. This type of therapy helps people with depression learn how to change their thoughts and behaviors in order to feel less sad and to cope when sad feelings do occur. The worksheets in this guide will help you and your family try CBT strategies at home. There are tips and activities for you and advice for your parents. We find that the skills are most effective when used in order. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help you and your family, and instructions for how to use the strategy at home. We've also included a list of common questions and concerns people usually have about each skill, along with our answers. Work through the guide along with your parents and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit you best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will be to make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you need any additional support for depression management. Good luck!



Skill 1

Mood Tracking

These worksheets will help you pay attention to your feelings, see how different situations impact your mood, and practice sharing your feelings with others.



Skill 2

Making Time for Fun

These worksheets will help you plan time in your day for activities you enjoy and learn additional positive coping skills for improving mood.



Skill 3

Relaxation Skills

These worksheets teach simple skills and exercises that help increase feelings of calm and well-being. Make these skills a consistent part of your daily life to reduce stress.



Skill 4

Thinking Traps

These worksheets teach new ways to look at situations and suggest questions to ask in order to reduce negative thoughts and increase positive thinking.



Skill 5

Problem Solving

These worksheets help you gain confidence and improve your mood by teaching strategies that help you to 1) solve problems independently and 2) seek help when needed.



What is Mood Tracking?

- ▶ In order for you to better understand how you feel, you will need to practice feelings identification and feelings expression.
- ▶ **Feelings identification** is a term for being able to name your feelings with detail and accuracy. Feelings identification goes beyond saying you feel “good” or “bad” and instead involves developing a richer feelings vocabulary. **Feelings expression** is a term for sharing emotions in safe and productive ways.
- ▶ The use of **mood tracking** to identify and record feelings is a helpful way to increase feelings identification and expression. A **Mood Tracker** is a simple system that can help you label and record your feelings.
- ▶ As you improve your feelings identification and expression through mood tracking, you may notice patterns in your moods. Paying attention to these patterns is an important first step to figuring out ways to improve mood. Having a better understanding of your emotions will help you use other helpful skills, such as the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problems Solving worksheets (Depression Skill 5) in this guide.

Here's How to Begin Mood Tracking at Home

Your parent can read the introduction and script in quotes below to you or you can just read it yourself. There are things for you to do at each step.

- 1 Make a master list of emotions .**
You may want to track the following feelings: **Happy, Sad, Depressed, Angry, Frustrated, Stressed, Worried, and Neutral.** You can add more based on your vocabulary, understanding, and needs.
- 2 Expand your feelings vocabulary.**
You will need a timer, two pieces of paper, and two pens. Set the timer for one minute. Read along with your parent or just read to yourself: **“We are going to come up with as many different feelings words as we can. Words like happy, sad, and any more you can think of. When I say go, start your list. I’ll do mine at the same time. We will put our lists together at the end.”** When time is up, compare your list with your parent’s and create a “master list” that contains the feeling words you and they think are most necessary for tracking their moods. Use tips 1 and 2 above to make sure you are including key feelings.
- 3 Introduce mood tracking.**
“We named a lot of different feelings during the naming feelings game. Feelings can also be called emotions or moods. Happy, sad, depressed (which means really down and hopeless), angry, frustrated, stressed, worried and neutral (that means no feeling) are important ones that you and I are going to make sure we include in our vocabularies. Many people find it helpful to track their moods in order to get more practice identifying how they feel, notice any patterns in moods throughout the day, and then use the information to figure out ways to improve mood. This worksheet is one good way to try this. You can record your feelings and the situation that caused those feelings for morning, afternoon, and evening. Some people like to do this in the moment and other people like to do this at the end of the day. What would you like to do?”

TEEN WORKSHEET: MOOD TRACKER FOR TEENS



Depression
Skill 1

- 1 Make copies of this worksheet so you can continue this practice beyond the first week.
- 2 Keep the master list of emotions you made with your mood tracking worksheets for easy reference. If you have electronic devices, you may want to keep the list on a device.
- 3 If you can't think of a feeling word when it's time to fill in their worksheet, use examples from the master list.
- 4 If you can't think of something for the What Happened? section, ask yourself, *"Where were you when you noticed your feeling? What was the situation? What were you doing?"*
- 5 Once you have completed a week of Mood Tracking, start to look for patterns. You can do this together with your parent or a support person. Read all of the emotions and situations from the week's Mood Tracker. Ask yourself, *"What do you notice? Are certain events connected to certain feelings a lot?"* Also notice if certain times of day are connected: *"Do you notice anything interesting about how you feel at certain times of the day?"*
- 6 Once you notice and identify patterns, think about which other skills in this guide could help. Many teens find that the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving worksheets (Depression Skill 5) in this guide are useful.

		Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	Mood							
	What Happened?							
Afternoon	Mood							
	What Happened?							
Evening	Mood							
	What Happened?							

TEEN WORKSHEET: MOOD TRACKER FOR TEENS



Depression
Skill 1

Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Afternoon	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Evening	Mood						
	What Happened?						

Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Afternoon	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Evening	Mood						
	What Happened?						

TEEN HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING TIPS



Depression Skill 1

How Can Mood Tracking Help Me?

- ▶ Teens who are having a hard time with sad or depressed mood sometimes struggle to both explain how they feel and show how they feel in appropriate ways. Mood Tracking can help you become more skilled at feelings identification and feelings expression.
- ▶ Improving these skills can help you feel more in control when a low mood occurs. This can in turn reduce certain behaviors that may be connected to difficulty expressing emotions (e.g., yelling outbursts, acting out, or withdrawing from friends and family).
- ▶ Mood Tracking can help you notice patterns in your moods that can give you valuable insight into your triggers and challenges (e.g. you notice that you tend to feel worse when you're left out at school).
- ▶ You can use this information to find coping skills that can improve specific moods and solve problems that may be causing stress.

Common Teen Concerns

When I sit down to mood track, I don't know how I feel!

Sometimes Mood Tracking can feel overwhelming or confusing. Use your master list of feelings to get ideas. You can also ask yourself questions about how you felt in specific situations (e.g., "How did you feel in math class? At lunch? After school?"). You can first use words such as "good" or "positive" and "bad" or "negative" to identify if you were feeling a positive or negative emotion. Then focus on narrowing that range of emotions down to be more specific, using the list we provide for suggestions. Ask your parents or a support person for help if you need it.

I don't want to mood track.

We empathize! It can feel hard to begin expressing emotions if you've kept them bottled up inside. You could be feeling overwhelmed, or too down to be motivated. Mood Tracking should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into your daily routine (e.g., can you fill out the worksheet after dinner, or use your phone to keep track?). With your parent, set a specific goal for regular mood tracking (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward you can earn for reaching it.

I'm not sure how to use the Mood Tracker to plan or problem solve.

Think of the Mood Tracker as data: important information about your day-to-day experience. Look for patterns, such as certain moods that happen over and over on the same day, at the same time, or in the same situation. Use this information to brainstorm ways to improve those situations, together with your parent or support person if you need it. Are you always sad on Mondays? Maybe Mondays would feel more positive if there were occasionally a fun activity or special dinner to look forward to. See the Making Time for Fun worksheets (Depression Skill 2) for more ideas like this. Are evenings stressful? Perhaps this could be improved by starting homework earlier or thinking of a calming bedtime routine. Read the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving (Depression Skill 5) worksheets for more ideas like these. Once you have more information about the specific circumstances around certain moods, you can plan ahead.

My Mood Trackers show that I'm almost always in a low mood, no matter what.

Figure out ways to add more fun and relaxing activities to your daily life (see Making Time for Fun and Relaxation Skills, Depression Skills 2 and 3). Notice if this results in any changes. Also ask yourself whether negative thinking may be impacting your report of your mood. Are you reporting the facts? Would using a skill from Thinking Traps help (Depression Skill 4)? If your low mood continues, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help. If your mood causes you concern for your safety, talk to a parent or other supportive adult and seek emergency help.



What is Making Time for Fun?

- ▶ If you are struggling with sadness or depression, you may stop doing things that you used to enjoy. You may engage in more passive activities (e.g., screen time) reduce the amount of active choices (e.g. sports, hobbies) you engage in, or spend less time with others. Or you may find that you aren't doing many fun activities at all, or feel that activities you usually enjoy are less fun than they used to be. These changes in activity and motivation are common symptoms of depression.
- ▶ **Behavioral activation** is a method for increasing the amount of enjoyable activities that are a part of your day. It is a great tool for helping you improve your mood and increase your active coping skills. Since you may feel unmotivated right now, activities are scheduled ahead of time in order to help you with consistency and planning.
- ▶ You may not be in a good mood at the start of an activity, but you may notice a significant improvement in mood once you get going! Keeping track of your moods before and after an activity will help you notice which activities make a big positive difference in your mood. In the future, you can return to these activities to cope with low mood.

Here's How to Use Behavioral Activation at Home

Your parent or support person can read the introduction and scripts in quotes below to you or you can just read it yourself. There are things for you to do in each step:

- 1 **Introduce behavioral activation.** "You've been feeling sad and down lately. When people feel down, they often stop doing things they used to love. That sometimes happens because they feel tired or uninterested in their hobbies and activities. This causes them to have less fun and feel even more down! Do you think this is happening to you? Together, we are going to make an effort to plan for more fun in your daily life. Scheduling fun in your day to help you feel happier is called *behavioral activation*."
- 2 **Introduce the Making Time for Fun worksheet.** "We are going to use the Making Time for Fun worksheet to organize your behavioral activation. Your job is to make a list of fun activities you'd like to do and then choose one activity for each day. We will try to put mostly everyday things on the worksheet that you can do daily (even on school nights!). However, we can also include the occasional bigger, special activity. We will also rate your mood before and after to see if the activity makes you feel better." We can use a scale from 1-10 where 1 means very down, and 10 means very happy. See the Mood Tracking worksheets in Depression Skill 1 for additional support on feelings identification and expression.
- 3 **Brainstorm and choose activities.** "Do you have any ideas about things you want to do? We will add them to the Fun Activities List." Record the activities on the Fun Activities List as you go.
- 4 **Make the schedule.** "Great job! Now look over your list. Why don't you pick which day of the week you would like to do some of these things?" You or your parent can write the activities down in a schedule according to your choices. Review the chart once it's filled in.

TEEN WORKSHEET: MAKING TIME FOR FUN



My Fun Activities List

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Fun Activities Suggestions

- Play outside
- Journal
- Listen to music
- Go for a walk
- Exercise or practice a sport
- Draw or paint
- Play with a pet
- Watch a funny movie
- Talk to a friend
- Read a book or listen to an audiobook

Behavioral Activation Schedule

Day of the Week	Fun Activity	Mood Before	Mood After
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

TEEN HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN TIPS



Depression Skill 2

How Can Making Time for Fun Help Me?

- ▶ When teens are struggling with sadness or depression, they often stop doing activities they once loved because they feel tired, think once enjoyable activities are boring, feel frustrated or irritable, or start withdrawing from friends. Unfortunately, the more you reduce your pleasurable activities, the more your sadness may increase.
- ▶ Using the Making Time for Fun worksheet can help you organize and motivate yourself to increase your positive activities through behavioral activation. It can reduce how often your parents nag you to choose something to do when you seem sad or bored. You can be a leader in your family by helping everyone benefit from mood-boosting activities if you do them together. For example, physical activity as a family can make a big difference. In addition, spending time in nature can have positive and soothing effects on everyone's mood.
- ▶ Another benefit of the Making Time for Fun skill is that it helps you increase your active coping skills. You will be able to keep track of which activities improve your mood the most. These activities, along with relaxation skills (see Relaxation Skills worksheets in Depression Skill 3), will be powerful tools that you can turn to for improving mood in a variety of circumstances.

Common Teen Concerns

I really only want to include video games on my chart.

Many teens prefer screen time over other activities and it's okay to include a few of these activities in your plan. However, too much screen time can be passive and isolating, leading to more negative effects than positive ones, even if they feel good in the short term. Try to balance your Fun Activities List so that there is a mix of high and low energy activities and not too many activities with screen time. Physical activities, especially outside in nature, can make a huge difference in mood, and low-key activities like reading or art projects can also help you feel really relaxed and put you in a better mood.

My parent says I have too many expensive activities on my list.

Try to pick some simple and free activities too. These activities are beneficial and necessary because they are easier to access and can happen several times a week. Based on your family's practices and budget, work together with your parent to decide when to include some activities that have a cost at reasonable intervals. You can also use your own money (from chores, gifts, a job, etc.) to pay for some of the activities if your parents are okay with them.

I don't want to do activities when my parent suggests them.

Ask yourself what could make doing behavioral activation more appealing. Have you decided that you want to change the order of activities, or do completely new ones? Edit your Making Time for Fun worksheets as needed. Keep trying new things until you find something that feels enjoyable and comfortable. It's hardest to do fun things when you feel down, but that this is when doing fun things is actually most important!

I still have a low mood, even after doing their fun activities.

Brainstorm with your parent or support person to see if trying different activities could be more impactful. Adjust the planned activities on the worksheet as needed. Consider whether practicing some relaxation strategies (Depression Skill 3) could help you feel more relaxed and peaceful. Think about whether negative thinking may be impacting your report of your mood. Are you reporting the facts? Would using a skill from Thinking Traps help (Depression Skill 4)? If your low mood continues, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help. If your mood causes you concern for your safety, talk to a parent or other supportive adult and seek emergency help.

TEEN HANDOUT: DEEP BREATHING



What is Deep Breathing?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help you with anxiety. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **deep breathing**.
- ▶ Deep breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in which you fill your belly with air on the inhales (i.e., the breathe *in* part) and release the air on the exhales (i.e., when you breathe *out*).
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help you feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Deep Breathing Practice

Deep Breathing Script: "Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to focus on our breathing. Start by taking some nice deep breaths, the same way you normally would. Notice how your stomach rises and falls as you breathe. You can put your hand on your stomach to help you feel the air going in and out. Now we are going to try to breathe in a way that will help us feel even more relaxed. Breathe in through your nose. This is the inhale. When you do this, make your stomach fill with air like a balloon. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. This is the exhale and it makes you empty the air out of your belly balloon. Good. You can make a 'whoosh' sound on the exhale if that helps you. Now do that again, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can, slowly and calmly. Take your time and focus on the rhythm of your breathing. Try to make your belly balloon fill with air on the inhale and empty on the exhale. Great job. If other thoughts pop into your mind, that's okay. Just try to stay calm and start thinking about your breathing again. Now take three more slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, making your stomach rise and fall three times. One. Two. Three. You can do this any time you need to relax. Great job! When you're ready, you can open your eyes."

Here's How to Use Deep Breathing at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation an activity that you teach your family could help you practice your relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when you could begin giving one person, or your whole family, "relaxation lessons" (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ Encourage everyone to point out times when they used their new deep breathing skills. If you notice a family member looking sad or stressed, you can also suggest they try deep breathing to see if it makes them feel better.



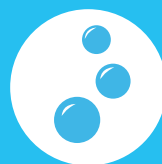
Check Your Form!

To make sure you are doing deep breathing properly for maximum anxiety relief, place your hand on your belly. When you breathe in, your hand should move up slightly as air flows in. When you breathe out, your hand should sink slightly as air flows out.



Number Breathing

Once you understand how to breathe more deeply, try variations such as 3-1-3. This involves breathing in for a count of three, holding it for one, and breathing out for a count of three. You can try other numbers and combinations and use whatever you like and find comfortable.



Bubbles

Break out some bubbles and spend a few moments relaxing like a little kid! Notice that when you blow out slowly and calmly you can make bigger bubbles. Now try out some fast, anxious-style breathing: it doesn't work as well.



Pizza Imagery

A fun image that can help you practice this skill anytime, anywhere: Imagine you are breathing in the smell of a slice of hot, delicious pizza and then blowing out to cool the slice down. Or think of another hot food you love!

TEEN HANDOUT: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ There are three different types of relaxation skills that can help your child and family. This handout is an introduction to a skill called **progressive muscle relaxation**.
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing different groups of muscles one at a time and then releasing them. An example is flexing your arm muscle, then relaxing it.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your child feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation an activity that you teach your family could help you practice your relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when you could begin giving one person, or your whole family, "relaxation lessons" (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ Encourage everyone to point out times when they used their new progressive muscle relaxation skills. If you notice a family member looking sad or stressed, you can also suggest they try deep breathing to see if it makes them feel better.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Practice

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

You can ask your parent or support person to read this to you, or record it on your phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to practice relaxing our muscles by squeezing them tight and then releasing them. Let's start with our legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and point your toes. Hold your position and count to 5. Now relax your legs. Good job! Do that again. Stretch, hold for 5, and relax. Now make two fists like you are squeezing a lemon in each hand. Squeeze your lemons as tightly as you can to get the juice out for a count of 5. Now drop your lemons. Great job! Now repeat. Squeeze for 5 and drop. Let's next focus on our arms. Hold them out in front of you, stiff and straight for 5. Good. Now drop your arms to your sides like they are cooked, limp spaghetti. Now repeat. Stiff for 5 and then loose. Okay, now we're going to squeeze our stomach muscles as if we are trying to squeeze through a door. Hold them tight and count to 5! Now release. Great job. Repeat. Squeeze for 5 and release. Now we are going to scrunch up our faces like we are trying to get flies off our noses. Keep your face scrunched up for 5! Good. Release. Again, scrunch for 5 and release. For our last step we are going to hold our whole body as tight and scrunched up as we can. Tense all the parts and count to 5! Great job. Now release. Do that one last time. Tense for 5, now relax. Notice how good it feels to relax all your muscles. You can open your eyes."

Progressive Muscle Relaxation on Your Own

Time to get creative and have fun! If you like this skill, try to come up with your own script or do an internet search for additional progressive muscle relaxation scripts. You don't have to stop there; you can create your own or search for other examples of all the relaxation skills in this guide! Find a bunch that suit your personality and lifestyle.

TEEN HANDOUT: GUIDED IMAGERY



What is Guided Imagery?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help you with anxiety. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **guided imagery**.
- ▶ Guided imagery involves imagining a calm image or scene using all 5 senses (i.e., sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), sometimes with the help of a script or recording.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help you feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Guided Imagery at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation an activity that you teach your family could help you practice your relaxation skills more consistently. Pick a time when you could begin giving one person, or your whole family, "relaxation lessons" (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ Encourage everyone to point out times when they used their new guided imagery skills. If you notice a family member sad or stressed, you can suggest they try guided imagery to see if it makes them feel better.

Guided Imagery Practice

Guided Imagery Script:

You can ask your parent or support person to read this to you, or record it on your phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I want you to use your imagination to go on a vacation in your mind. Think of a calm and peaceful place. It can be some place you have been before or some place you would like to go. The place doesn't even have to be real; it can be imaginary. Spend a few moments picturing your peaceful place. Now think about the things you **see** in your special place. Notice the colors, shapes, and patterns. Think about how peaceful it is to see the details of your special place. Now think about the things you **hear** in your peaceful place. Do you hear music, animal sounds, or ocean waves? Or maybe you hear something different. Now think about the things you **feel** in your calm place. Warm sunshine on your face, grass under your feet, or something else? Notice how these feelings help you relax. Now think about what you **smell** in your relaxing place. The salty ocean, cookies baking, or something else? Take a deep breath of the amazing smells. Now think about what you **taste** in your calm place. A popsicle? Or a fresh cookie? Or something else? Think about how good it tastes. You can always take a trip back to your relaxing place if you need to feel calm. This is a tool you can always use to feel better. When you are ready, you can open your eyes."

Mini Vacation

Once you have practiced with the script above, encourage your teen to close their eyes briefly and go on a mini vacation to their calm place when they feel sad or down.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation

You can relax at any time by noticing 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste. This technique is a **grounding exercise** and can help you feel better in challenging moments. Here's an example of using this in the kitchen: "I see my plate, the table, my sister sitting across from me, the clock, and the wall. I feel the chair, the floor, the table, and the warmth from the heater. I hear water running in the sink, water boiling on the stove, and my sister's voice. I smell cookies in the oven and the pasta I am eating. I taste the pasta."



How Can Relaxation Skills Help Me?

- ▶ Relaxation techniques can be very important coping skills for teens having problems with sad feelings and low mood. These strategies can reduce stress by helping you calm your body, take your mind off of your sad feelings, and focus more on positive thinking and feelings. Reducing stress also makes it easier to problem solve and use other coping skills.
- ▶ This is because the mind and the body are connected: calmer body, calmer mind. Learning to practice relaxation when you have a sad feeling or other negative emotion can help you better control your moods, improve sleep, and experience many other benefits.
- ▶ Practice relaxation skills regularly when you're in a good mood so that you are better able to use the skills when you need them during times when you feel low. You can't use a skill well in "the game" if you don't practice!
- ▶ Relaxation skills are "portable." You can do them at home, school, or in public. Most relaxation skills can be done quickly and without anyone noticing.

Common Teen Concerns

The relaxation skills are too hard.

Relaxation skills may feel uncomfortable or challenging at first. Practicing regularly helps make the skills feel easier and more comfortable. Taking the time to figure out which skills (and methods of practicing the skills) you prefer will also be helpful. Ask a parent or support person for help if you need it.

I can't get into the habit of practicing regularly.

Relaxation practice should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into the daily routine. For example, can you practice for a few minutes on the way home from school or use an app on your phone before getting ready for bed? Set a specific goal for regular practice (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward you can earn for reaching it. These skills gets easier the more you do them. Remember that this is one way you can gain control over your mood.

Relaxation practice is boring and/or strange.

What could make it more appealing? Do you prefer a certain skill over others? Do you want to use technology in your practice (e.g., relaxation phone apps, guided imagery videos, etc.)? Would you be more interested in an active practice like yoga? Keep trying new things until you find something that is enjoyable and comfortable.



TEEN HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS FOR TEENS



What Are Thinking Traps?

▶ **Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that increase sadness, anger, and stress. They often involve jumping to conclusions, guessing that things will go badly in the future, and making connections that might not really make sense.

▶ Here are **4 Common Thinking Traps** that are often connected to sadness and depression. Read this guide and see if you can come up with more examples of thinking traps that apply to your life.

How to Decrease Thinking Traps

Here are some questions to help you think in more positive ways:

- 1 **What are the facts? What is the likelihood that what you're worrying about will happen?** Often there is very little evidence that the things we are stressed about will actually happen! Try to look at the facts in order to think more realistically and feel empowered that you are capable of dealing with stress.
- 2 **What would you tell a friend in this situation?** Focusing on helping a peer may help you with perspective taking and problem solving. This strategy can help you feel calmer and more positive about the stressor.
- 3 **What can you do to solve your problem or take your mind off it?** If possible, take concrete steps to solve the problem. If that's not possible, use relaxation or other coping skills (Depression Skill 3) to reduce stress and take your mind off things.



FORTUNE TELLING

Predicting that bad things will happen in the future.

People who struggle with negative thinking often spend a lot of time imagining bad things happening in the future. People dealing with depression sometimes predict their sadness will continue.

Fortune Telling Example: "I've felt really sad for the past few weeks. I'm probably going to be sad forever."



CATASTROPHIZING

Making little problems or disappointments seem like big problems.

When we catastrophize, we make a big deal out of situations, even when they might not be that serious or bad.

Catastrophizing Example: "My best friend didn't text me at all today. I bet she hates me now and is going to ditch me."



OVERGENERALIZATION

Assuming that because we had a hard time in one situation, our same problem will happen again in a new one.

When we overgeneralize, we ignore the unique facts about a situation.

Overgeneralization Example: "I had a hard time with the essay questions on our English exam. I'm going to mess up the essay questions in History, too!"



ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Seeing things as "all good" or "all bad."

When we use all-or-nothing thinking, we ignore the fact that many situations are in the middle and have both positive *and* negative aspects.

All-or-Nothing Thinking Example: "Three of my friends said they like my sneakers, but Tim didn't say anything. I look stupid. I should have gotten a different pair."

TEEN WORKSHEET: THINKING TRAP PRACTICE



Depression
Skill 4

Here's an example of how to use your new skills to deal with a **Fortune Telling** Thinking Trap:

"I've felt really depressed for the past few weeks. I'm going to be depressed forever."



What are the Facts?	"I'm learning things that might help me start to feel better. I already feel happy sometimes after I do the stuff in Making Time for Fun. I've felt sad in the past, and it didn't last forever."
What Would I Say to a Friend?	"It's going to get better! You are working hard at being more positive."
What can I do to take my mind off things?	"I'm going to go for a run and try to forget about this thought for a little while."

CATASTROPHIZING

"My best friend didn't text me at all today. I bet she hates me now and is going to ditch me."

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

OVERGENERALIZATION

"I had a hard time with the essay questions on our English exam. I'm going to mess up the essay questions in History, too!"

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

"Three of my friends said they like my sneakers, but Tim didn't say anything. I look stupid. I should have gotten a different pair."

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?



How Can Understanding Thinking Traps Help Me?

- ▶ When people experience sadness or depression, they often think about the past, their present situation, and/or things that might happen in the future in negative ways. These negative thought patterns often make them feel worse and can lead to feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- ▶ By learning about thinking traps (i.e., ways of thinking that make us feel sad, stuck, or angry), you will learn to identify times you may be thinking in overly negative or unrealistic ways.
- ▶ Once you have practice noticing thinking traps, you can take your thinking trap statements and make them more positive and realistic. Learning how to discuss feelings and problems in realistic and self-esteem boosting ways can help you feel more confident and capable when facing stressful situations.

Common Teen Concerns

Some of the thinking traps are hard to understand.

If a particular type of thinking trap is challenging for you, ask for help brainstorming additional examples that might make it clearer. Examples that connect to your interests (e.g., your favorite sport or movie) can be very useful. For example, if you notice yourself getting very down after school when doing your homework, you may be falling into thinking traps. Can you notice what thoughts come up, then see if you can gently challenge them? For example, instead of thinking, "This chemistry problem set is hard for me; I'm such an idiot," you could say something like this instead: "This new chapter we are on has been hard for everyone. Just because I'm having a hard time solving these problems doesn't mean I'm not smart." If you struggle to separate the thinking traps into different categories, just focus on noticing your negative thoughts in general and changing them. For example, call them "sad thoughts," "negative thinking," or some other name you come up with. You can still improve thinking this way.

Changing negative thinking is very hard for me.

Negative thoughts are often automatic, like a habit. Becoming a more positive thinker requires breaking this habit. It takes a lot of practice to make a change like this! Start with more fun and playful examples if jumping right into your own particular style of negative thinking feels overwhelming. Here's a silly example about pizza that would be catastrophizing: "I asked for sausage and they gave me pepperoni! This is the worst pizza place ever!" Practice on a regular basis for a few minutes at a time (daily if you can manage it) to start forming a new habit of positive thinking. If you are still having a difficult time, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is Problem Solving?

- ▶ Teens dealing with low mood and depression may be in particular need of targeted strategies to deal with daily challenges and concerns. Everyone can benefit from solving problems in their lives; these skills can help you and the rest of your family as well!
- ▶ You may feel frustrated that you are having a hard time dealing with problems. This can further increase your low mood and low motivation. You may be annoyed that your parents are always trying to give you advice or say that you are not making good choices, creating conflict and stress for you.
- ▶ These worksheets teach a simple plan for solving problems. You will learn to:
 1. Name the problem
 2. Identify 3 possible solutions
 3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
 4. Pick one to try
 5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution.



Here's How to Make a Problem Solving Plan at Home

Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

- 1 **What's the problem?** "You may be feeling overwhelmed and not know exactly how to describe the issue you need to handle. Clearly stating the problem helps us both focus on what we need to do to solve it."
- 2 **What are 3 possible solutions?** "I want you to think of 3 possible solutions so you have some good options, but not so many that you are overwhelmed with choices. Let's not worry about how good or bad they are yet. We will evaluate them together in the next part."
- 3 **What's one good thing and one bad thing about each?** "This part means you will name one positive possibility and one negative possibility that could occur with each solution. This will help you consider the benefits and challenges of each choice."
- 4 **Pick one!** "This is your chance to take charge as you pick which solution you want to try out first."
- 5 **How did it go?** "After you follow through with a solution, we will evaluate it. This will help us both learn what the best options for different problems are and we can refer back to these tested solutions as needed. If the first solution isn't successful in solving the problem, we can try a different one or start a completely new solution brainstorming session."

The next section puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart. Go over the example and then try to solve the practice problems. Come up with solutions for our example problems and then try it for one of your own.

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 1: "I am so sad and tired all time that I am not paying attention in math class. Now I don't understand today's homework."

What's the Problem?	"I don't understand the homework."		
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1	Don't do the homework.	I can play videogames tonight because I'll have less to do	I'll get a zero.
Soution 2	Text my friend for help.	She is good at math and can help me.	She might not respond.
Solution 3	Talk to my teacher tomorrow and ask for extra help.	My teacher will explain what I missed.	She might still give me a zero for today's homework.
My Choice	Text my friend for help.		
How'd it go?	My friend texted me back. She called and helped me. I understood and did the homework.		

Example 2: "I get mad really easily now. I have been mean to my little brother a lot. This morning I heard him crying and telling mom that he thinks I don't like him."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Depression Skill 5

Example 3: "I've known that we had a history project due for a while but I just couldn't focus on it because of how I'm feeling. Now it's due tomorrow."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

Example 4: "My friends have stopped inviting me places because I kept saying no. Now I'm ready to use my Making Time for Fun Skills and I want them to ask me to hang out again."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

BLANK PROBLEM SOLVING PLANS

Here are a couple Blank Problem Solving Plans. Make copies and use it to help guide your decision making when problems arise.



Depression Skill 5

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			



How Can Problem Solving Help Me?

- ▶ Children and adolescents who are having a hard time with sadness or depression sometimes struggle to deal with challenges and solve everyday problems.
- ▶ These difficulties with problem solving can occur because they are more sad or irritable, more easily overwhelmed, not feeling motivated, and/or struggling with negative thinking due to depression. They may also try to solve a problem, but give up easily if they aren't successful right away.
- ▶ The problem solving skill described here can provide a concrete way to help your child think through challenges, brainstorm options, notice what works and what doesn't, and keep trying if their first attempt doesn't work. Increasing positive outcomes through successful problem solving can help significantly improve your child's mood and sense of control.
- ▶ In addition, making and following a problem solving plan can reduce frustration for both of you while increasing feelings of independence and mastery for your child. You won't be telling your child what to do, but instead supporting and guiding them in their plans to overcome challenges on their own.

Common Teen Concerns

I don't have problems that need solving.

It can be hard to notice which challenges or frustrations in your life can benefit from problem solving skills. You can identify potential problem solving opportunities by reviewing the situations connected to low mood and recorded on your Mood Tracker worksheets (review Mood Tracking, Depression Skill 1). Fill in the Problem Solving Plan for past situations that made you feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion. In addition, you can ask your parents or support people to gently point things out to you if they notice a situation where you could use these skills in your daily life (e.g., "You told me you were sad because you didn't know who to sit with at lunch today. Do you think we can use the Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

I can't think of any solutions.

Think about what might be getting in the way. Ask a parent or support person for help as needed. You may be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Very often once you get one example from a helpful person in your life, you will be able to get creative with solutions of your own. Remember, you don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. You can make mistakes and get help if you need it. Review the practice examples we provide, both to remind yourself of potential options for common concerns as well as the fact that you came up with great solutions for the examples!

When I try to use my problem solving plan, I get really frustrated and upset.

Sometimes people experiencing depression can feel overwhelmed when trying to problem solve. Remind yourself that feeling upset is okay and that your emotions are giving you a message that you are having a tough time and need support. You might benefit from using a relaxation skill to lower your stress levels before trying problem solving. For tips, review Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3). In addition, negative thinking can make problems seem huge and unsolvable. Review the strategies from Thinking Traps (Depression Skill 4) to help encourage yourself to use more realistic thinking. If you are still having a hard time using problem solving skills and this is impacting your depression, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

GUIDED
SELF-MANAGEMENT
TOOLS
FOR DEPRESSION

Parents of Teens 13-17



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

FOR DEPRESSION



INTRODUCTION

Everyone feels sad sometimes. School, friends, and family concerns can cause teens to feel down. Disappointments and challenges in life can also have an impact on mood. For some teens, sad feelings can become difficult to manage. This can cause problems at home, school, and/or with friends. If this is happening for your teen, they may be depressed. Working with your teen's primary care team can help you assist your teen in managing symptoms of depression.

Behavioral health specialists have worked hard to figure out ways to help manage depression. One of the most effective interventions is a type of therapy called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT. This type of therapy helps people with depression learn how to change their thoughts and behaviors in order to feel less sad and to cope when sad feelings do occur. The worksheets in this guide will help your teen and your family try CBT strategies at home. There are tips for parents and activities for your teen, which can be used with teens across a wide age range. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, and instructions for how to use the strategy at home. We've also included a list of common questions and concerns parents have about each skill, along with our answers. Work through the guide with your teen and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will be to make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your teen need any additional support for depression management. Good luck!



Skill 1

Mood Tracking

These worksheets will help your teen pay attention to their feelings, see how different situations impact their mood, and practice sharing their feelings with others.



Skill 2

Making Time for Fun

These worksheets will help you and your teen plan time in their day for activities they enjoy and learn additional positive coping skills for improving mood.



Skill 3

Relaxation Skills

These worksheets teach simple skills and exercises that help increase feelings of calm and well-being. Make these skills a consistent part of your family's daily life to reduce stress for everyone.



Skill 4

Thinking Traps

These worksheets teach your teen new ways to look at situations and suggest questions to ask in order to reduce negative thoughts and increase positive thinking.



Skill 5

Problem Solving

These worksheets help your teen gain confidence and improve their mood by teaching strategies that help to 1) solve problems independently and 2) seek help when needed.

PARENT HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING



Depression Skill 1

What is Mood Tracking?

- ▶ In order for you and your teen to better understand how your teen feels, they will need to practice feelings identification and feelings expression.
- ▶ **Feelings identification** is a term for being able to name your feelings with detail and accuracy. Feelings identification goes beyond saying you feel “good” or “bad” and instead involves developing a richer feelings vocabulary. **Feelings expression** is a term for sharing emotions in safe and productive ways.
- ▶ The use of **mood tracking** to identify and record feelings is a helpful way to increase feelings identification and expression. A **Mood Tracker** is a simple system that can help your teen label and record their feelings.
- ▶ As your teen improves their feelings identification and expression through mood tracking, you and your teen may notice patterns in their moods. Paying attention to these patterns is an important first step to figuring out ways to improve mood. Having a better understanding of their emotions will help your teen use other helpful skills in this guide, such as Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving (Depression Skill 5).

Here's How to Begin Mood Tracking at Home

- 1 Make a master list of emotions .**
You may want to track the following feelings: **Happy, Sad, Depressed, Angry, Frustrated, Stressed, Worried,** and **Neutral**. You can add more based on your teens vocabulary, understanding, and needs.
- 2 Expand your feelings vocabulary.**
You will need a timer, two pieces of paper, and two pens. Set the timer for one minute. Read along with your parent or just read to yourself: **“We are going to come up with as many different feelings words as we can. Words like happy, sad, and any more you can think of. When I say go, start your list. I’ll do mine at the same time. We will put our lists together at the end.”** When time is up, compare your lists and create a “master list” that contains the feeling words you and your teen think are most necessary for tracking their moods. Use steps 1 and 2 above to make sure you are including key feelings.
- 3 Introduce mood tracking.**
Say to your teen, **“We named a lot of different feelings during the naming feelings game. Feelings can also be called emotions or moods. Happy, sad, depressed (which means really down and hopeless), angry, frustrated, stressed, worried, and neutral (that means no feeling) are important ones that you and I are going to make sure we include in our vocabularies. Many people find it helpful to track their moods in order to get more practice identifying how they feel, notice any patterns in their moods throughout the day, and then use the information to figure out ways to improve mood. This worksheet is one good way to try this. You can record your feelings and the situation that caused those feelings for morning, afternoon, and evening. Some people like to do this in the moment and other people like to do this at the end of the day. What would you like to do?”**

TEEN WORKSHEET: MOOD TRACKER FOR TEENS



Depression
Skill 1

- 1 Make copies of this worksheet so you can continue this practice beyond the first week.
- 2 Keep the master list of emotions you made with your mood tracking worksheets for easy reference. If you have electronic devices, you may want to keep the list on a device.
- 3 If you can't think of a feeling word when it's time to fill in their worksheet, use examples from the master list.
- 4 If you can't think of something for the What Happened? section, ask yourself, *"Where were you when you noticed your feeling? What was the situation? What were you doing?"*
- 5 Once you have completed a week of Mood Tracking, start to look for patterns. You can do this together with your parent or a support person. Read all of the emotions and situations from the week's Mood Tracker. Ask yourself, *"What do you notice? Are certain events connected to certain feelings a lot?"* Also notice if certain times of day are connected: *"Do you notice anything interesting about how you feel at certain times of the day?"*
- 6 Once you notice and identify patterns, think about which other skills in this guide could help. Many teens find that the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving worksheets (Depression Skill 5) in this guide are useful.

		Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	Mood							
	What Happened?							
Afternoon	Mood							
	What Happened?							
Evening	Mood							
	What Happened?							

TEEN WORKSHEET: MOOD TRACKER FOR TEENS



Depression
Skill 1

Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Afternoon	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Evening	Mood						
	What Happened?						

Week: _____

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Afternoon	Mood						
	What Happened?						
Evening	Mood						
	What Happened?						

PARENT HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING TIPS



Depression Skill 1

How Can Mood Tracking Help My Family?

- ▶ Teens who are having a hard time with sad or depressed mood sometimes struggle to both explain how they feel and show how they feel in appropriate ways. Mood Tracking can help your teen become more skilled at feelings identification and feelings expression.
- ▶ Improving these skills can help your teen feel more in control when a low mood occurs. This can in turn reduce certain behaviors that may be connected to difficulty expressing emotions (e.g., yelling outbursts, acting out, or withdrawing from friends and family).
- ▶ Mood Tracking can help you and your teen notice patterns in their moods that can give you valuable insight into your teen's triggers and challenges (e.g. they notice that they tend to feel worse when they're left out at school).
- ▶ You can use this information to work together to find coping skills that can improve specific moods and solve problems that may be causing stress.

Common Parent Concerns

When I ask my teen how they feel, they say they don't know!

Sometimes Mood Tracking can feel overwhelming or confusing. Use your master list of feelings to give your teen ideas. You can also ask them questions about how they felt in specific situations (e.g., "How did you feel in math class? At lunch? After school?"). You can first ask them to use "good" or "positive" and "bad" or "negative" to identify if they were feeling a positive or negative emotion. Then focus together on narrowing that range of emotions down to be more specific, using the list we provide for suggestions.

My teen refuses to track their moods.

Empathize with your teen. It can feel hard to begin expressing emotions if you've kept them bottled up inside, or if you're not comfortable talking about them. Your teen could be feeling overwhelmed, or too down to be motivated. Mood Tracking should not be another chore but something short and simple that you can work into your daily routine (e.g., can they fill out the worksheet after dinner, or use their phone to keep track?). Together, set a specific goal for regular mood tracking (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward your teen can earn for reaching it.

I'm not sure how to use the Mood Tracker to plan or problem solve.

Think of the Mood Tracker as data: important information about your teen's day-to-day experience. Look for patterns, such as certain moods that happen over and over on the same day, at the same time, or in the same situation. Use this information to brainstorm ways to improve those situations together. Are they always sad on Mondays? Maybe Mondays would feel more positive if there were occasionally a fun activity or special dinner to look forward to. See the Making Time for Fun worksheets (Depression Skill 2) for more ideas like this. Are evenings stressful? Perhaps this could be improved by starting homework earlier or thinking of a calming bedtime routine. Read the Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3) and Problem Solving (Depression Skill 5) worksheets for more ideas like these. Once you have more information about the specific circumstances around certain moods, you can plan ahead.

Our Mood Trackers show that my teen is almost always in a low mood, no matter what.

Help your teen figure out ways to add more fun and relaxing activities to their daily life (see Making Time for Fun and Relaxation Skills, Depression Skills 2 and 3). Notice if this results in any changes. Also discuss with your teen whether negative thinking may be impacting their report of their mood. Are they reporting the facts? Would using a skill from Thinking Traps help (Depression Skill 4)? If your teen's low mood continues, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help. If your teen's mood causes you concern for their safety, seek emergency help.

PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN



Depression Skill 2

What is Making Time for Fun?

- ▶ If your teen is struggling with sadness or depression, they may stop doing things that they used to enjoy. They may engage in more passive activities (e.g., screen time) reduce the amount of active choices (e.g. sports, hobbies) they engage in, or spend less time with others. Or you may find that they aren't doing many fun activities at all, or report that activities they usually enjoy are less fun than they used to be. These changes in activity and motivation are common symptoms of depression.
- ▶ **Behavioral activation** is a method for increasing the amount of enjoyable activities that are a part of your teen's day. It is a great tool for helping your teen improve their mood and increase their active coping skills. Since your teen may feel unmotivated right now, activities are scheduled ahead of time in order to help with consistency and planning.
- ▶ Your teen may not be in a good mood at the start of an activity, but they may notice a significant improvement in mood once they get going! Keeping track of their moods before and after the activity will help them notice which activities make a big positive difference in their mood. In the future, they can return to these activities to cope with low mood.

Here's How to Use Behavioral Activation at Home

You can use the following script with your teen:

- 1 Introduce behavioral activation.** "I've noticed that you've been feeling sad and down lately. When people feel down, they often stop doing things they used to love. That sometimes happens because they feel tired or uninterested in their hobbies and activities. This causes them to have less fun and feel even more down! Do you think this is happening to you?" Wait for an answer and provide encouragement in a way that feels comfortable to you. "Together, we are going to make an effort to plan for more fun in your daily life. Scheduling fun in your day to help you feel happier is called behavioral activation."
- 2 Introduce the Making Time for Fun worksheet.** "We are going to use the Making Time for Fun worksheet to organize your behavioral activation. Your job is to make a list of fun activities you'd like to do and then choose one activity for each day. We will try to put mostly everyday things on the worksheet that you can do daily (even on school nights!). However, we can also include the occasional bigger, special activity. We will also rate your mood before and after to see if the activity makes you feel better." We can use a scale from 1-10 where 1 means very down, and 10 means very happy. See Mood Tracking worksheets in Depression Skill 1 for additional support on feelings identification and expression.
- 3 Brainstorm and choose activities.** "Do you have any ideas about things you want to do? We will add them to the Fun Activities List." Wait for your teen to name activities; if they need help you can make suggestions based on activities you know they once enjoyed and/or the suggestions on the worksheet. Record the activities on the Fun Activities List as you go.
- 4 Make the schedule.** "Great job! Now I'll read the list to you. Why don't you pick which day of the week you would like to do some of these things?" Write the activities down in the schedule according to your teen's choices. Review the chart together once it's filled in.

TEEN WORKSHEET: MAKING TIME FOR FUN



Depression
Skill 2

My Fun Activities List

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Fun Activities Suggestions

- Play outside
- Journal
- Listen to music
- Go for a walk
- Exercise or practice a sport
- Draw or paint
- Play with a pet
- Watch a funny movie
- Talk to a friend
- Read a book or listen to an audiobook

Behavioral Activation Schedule

Day of the Week	Fun Activity	Mood Before	Mood After
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN TIPS



Depression Skill 2

How Can Making Time for Fun Help My Family?

- ▶ When teens are struggling with sadness or depression, they often stop doing activities they once loved because they feel tired, think once enjoyable activities are boring, feel frustrated or irritable, or start withdrawing from friends. Unfortunately, the more your teen reduces their pleasurable activities, the more their sadness may increase.
- ▶ Using the Making Time for Fun worksheet can help you organize and motivate your teen to increase their positive activities through behavioral activation. It can reduce the need to nag your teen to choose something to do when they seem sad or bored. The whole family can benefit from mood-boosting activities if you do them together. For example, physical activity as a family can make a big difference. In addition, spending time in nature can have positive and soothing effects on everyone's mood.
- ▶ Another benefit of the Making Time for Fun skill is that it helps your teen increase their active coping skills. They will be able to keep track of which activities improve their mood the most. These activities, along with relaxation skills (see Relaxation Skills worksheets in Depression Skill 3), will be powerful tools that you can turn to for improving mood in a variety of circumstances.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen only wants to include video games on their chart.

Many teens prefer screen time over other activities and it's okay to include a few of these activities in their plan. However, too much screen time can be passive and isolating, leading to more negative effects than positive ones. Try to help your teen balance their Fun Activities List so that there is a mix of high and low energy activities and not too many activities with screen time. Explain to your teen that physical activities can make a huge difference in their mood and that low key activities like reading or art projects can also help them feel relaxed and in a better mood. Praise your teen for including activities with no screen time on the list.

My teen has too many expensive activities on their list.

Help your teen pick some simple and free activities and explain to them that these activities are beneficial and necessary because they are easier to access and can happen several times a week. Based on your family's practices and budget, decide if and when you would like to include some activities that have a cost and calmly but firmly explain this to your teen. Decide together when to occasionally fit these activities in. You may even want to choose a special activity as a reward for their use of coping skills!

My teen doesn't want to do their activities when I suggest them.

Ask specific questions to find out what could make doing behavioral activation more appealing. Have they decided that they want to change the order of activities, or do completely new ones? Edit your Making Time for Fun worksheets as needed. Encourage them to keep trying new things until they find something that is enjoyable and comfortable, make sure to give them little reminders of how they felt when they had fun in the past. Remind them that it's hardest to do fun things when they feel down, but that this is when doing fun things is actually most important!

My teen still has a low mood, even after doing their fun activities.

Brainstorm with your teen to see if trying different activities could be more impactful. Adjust the planned activities on the worksheet as needed. Discuss with your teen whether negative thinking may be impacting their report of their mood. Are they reporting the facts? Would using a skill from Thinking Traps help (Depression Skill 4)? If your teen's low mood continues, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help. If your child's mood causes you concern for their safety, seek emergency help.

PARENT HANDOUT: DEEP BREATHING



What is Deep Breathing?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your teen and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **deep breathing**.
- ▶ Deep breathing involves taking slow, deep breaths in which you fill your belly with air on the inhales (i.e., the breathe *in* part) and release the air on the exhales (i.e., when you breathe *out*).
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your teen feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Deep Breathing Practice

Deep Breathing Script: "Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to focus on our breathing. Start by taking some nice deep breaths, the same way you normally would. Notice how your stomach rises and falls as you breathe. You can put your hand on your stomach to help you feel the air going in and out. Now we are going to try to breathe in a way that will help us feel even more relaxed. Breathe in through your nose. This is the inhale. When you do this, make your stomach fill with air like a balloon. Now breathe out slowly through your mouth. This is the exhale and it makes you empty the air out of your belly balloon. Good. You can make a 'whoosh' sound on the exhale if that helps you. Now do that again, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can, slowly and calmly. Take your time and focus on the rhythm of your breathing. Try to make your belly balloon fill with air on the inhale and empty on the exhale. Great job. If other thoughts pop into your mind, that's okay. Just try to stay calm and start thinking about your breathing again. Now take three more slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth, making your stomach rise and fall three times. One. Two. Three. You can do this any time you need to relax. Great job! When you're ready, you can open your eyes."

Here's How to Use Deep Breathing at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your teen feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Go over the skills with your teen, then let them lead the way. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your teen times when you can use deep breathing in your own life (e.g., "I feel stressed when the grocery store is this busy, so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before we go in."). If you notice your teen looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try deep breathing to see if it makes them feel better.



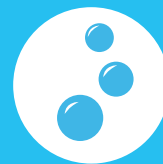
Check Your Form!

To make sure your teen is doing deep breathing properly for maximum anxiety relief, encourage them to check their form by placing their hand on their belly. When they breathe in, their hand should move up slightly as air flows in. When they breathe out, their hand should sink slightly as air flows out.



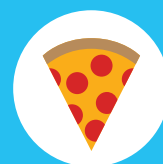
Number Breathing

Once your teen understands how to breathe more deeply, try variations such as 3-1-3. This involves breathing in for a count of three, holding it for one, and breathing out for a count of three. You can try other numbers and combinations and use whatever your child likes and finds comfortable.



Bubbles

Break out some bubbles and spend a few moments relaxing like a little kid! Notice that when you blow out slowly and calmly you can make bigger bubbles. Now try out some fast, anxious-style breathing: it doesn't work as well.



Pizza Imagery

A fun image that can help you or your teen practice this skill anytime, anywhere: Imagine you are breathing in the smell of a slice of hot, delicious pizza and then blowing out to cool the slice down. Or think of another hot food you love!

PARENT HANDOUT: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION



Depression Skill 3

What is Progressive Muscle Relaxation?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your teen and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **progressive muscle relaxation**.
- ▶ Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing different muscle groups one at a time and then releasing them. An example is flexing your arm muscle, then relaxing it.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your teen feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your teen feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Go over the skills you're your teen, then let them lead the way. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, when you can point out to your teen times when you can use progressive muscle relaxation in your own life (e.g., "I've been clenching the steering wheel the whole way home. I'm going to try to relax my muscles now to feel calmer."). If you notice your teen looking anxious before or during an activity, you can also suggest they try progressive muscle relaxation to see if it makes them feel better.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Practice

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

You can read this to your teen. Or they can record it on their phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. We are going to practice relaxing our muscles by squeezing them tight and then releasing them. Let's start with our legs. Stretch your legs out in front of you and point your toes. Hold your position and count to 5. Now relax your legs. Good job! Do that again. Stretch, hold for 5, and relax. Now make two fists like you are squeezing a lemon in each hand. Squeeze your lemons as tightly as you can to get the juice out for a count of 5. Now drop your lemons. Great job! Now repeat. Squeeze for 5 and drop. Let's next focus on our arms. Hold them out in front of you, stiff and straight for 5. Good. Now drop your arms to your sides like they are cooked, limp spaghetti. Now repeat. Stiff for 5 and then loose. Okay, now we're going to squeeze our stomach muscles as if we are trying to squeeze through a door. Hold them tight and count to 5! Now release. Great job. Repeat. Squeeze for 5 and release. Now we are going to scrunch up our faces like we are trying to get flies off our noses. Keep your face scrunched up for 5! Good. Release. Again, scrunch for 5 and release. For our last step we are going to hold our whole body as tight and scrunched up as we can. Tense all the parts and count to 5! Great job. Now release. Do that one last time. Tense for 5, now relax. Notice how good it feels to relax all your muscles. You can open your eyes."

Progressive Muscle Relaxation on Your Own

Time to get creative and have fun! Encourage your teen to come up with their own script or do an internet search for additional progressive muscle relaxation scripts. You don't have to stop there; they can create their own or search for other examples of all the relaxation skills in this guide! Find a bunch that suit your teen's personality and lifestyle.

PARENT HANDOUT: GUIDED IMAGERY



What is Guided Imagery?

- ▶ Relaxation skills are ways to help relax our bodies and minds and increase feelings of calm and well-being.
- ▶ Our guide includes three different types of relaxation skills that can help your teen and family. This handout provides an introduction to a skill called **guided imagery**.
- ▶ Guided imagery involves imagining a calm image or scene using all 5 senses (i.e., sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell), sometimes with the help of a script or recording.
- ▶ Try some of our strategies below and see if they help your teen feel calmer, more relaxed, and more in control.

Here's How to Use Guided Imagery at Home

- ▶ Making relaxation a family activity can help your teen feel more comfortable and use their relaxation skills more consistently. Go over the skills with your teen, then let them lead the way. Pick a time when family members can practice together (e.g., before saying goodnight and getting ready for bed).
- ▶ To set an example, you can point out to your teen times when you can use guided imagery in your own life to feel better (e.g., "What a busy day! I need to take a mini vacation to my relaxing place!").
- ▶ If you notice your teen looking down or stressed, you can also suggest they try guided imagery to see if it makes them feel better.

Guided Imagery Practice

Guided Imagery Script:

You can read this to your teen, or they can record it on their phone or tablet and play the recording!

"Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I want you to use your imagination to go on a vacation in your mind. Think of a calm and peaceful place. It can be some place you have been before or some place you would like to go. The place doesn't even have to be real; it can be imaginary. Spend a few moments picturing your peaceful place. Now think about the things you **see** in your special place. Notice the colors, shapes, and patterns. Think about how peaceful it is to see the details of your special place. Now think about the things you **hear** in your peaceful place. Do you hear music, animal sounds, or ocean waves? Or maybe you hear something different. Now think about the things you **feel** in your calm place. Warm sunshine on your face, grass under your feet, or something else? Notice how these feelings help you relax. Now think about what you **smell** in your relaxing place. The salty ocean, cookies baking, or something else? Take a deep breath of the amazing smells. Now think about what you **taste** in your calm place. A popsicle? Or a fresh cookie? Or something else? Think about how good it tastes. You can always take a trip back to your relaxing place if you need to feel calm. This is a tool you can always use to feel better. When you are ready, you can open your eyes."

Mini Vacation

Once you have practiced with the script above, encourage your teen to close their eyes briefly and go on a mini vacation to their calm place when they feel sad or down.

5-4-3-2-1 Relaxation

Help your teen relax at any time by prompting them to notice 5 things they see, 4 things they feel, 3 things they hear, 2 things they smell, and 1 thing they taste. This technique is a **grounding exercise** and can help your teen feel better in challenging moments. Here's an example of using this in the kitchen: "I see my plate, the table, my sister sitting across from me, the clock, and the wall. I feel the chair, the floor, the table, and the warmth from the heater. I hear water running in the sink, water boiling on the stove, and my sister's voice. I smell cookies in the oven and the pasta I am eating. I taste the pasta."

PARENT HANDOUT: RELAXATION SKILLS TIPS



How Can Relaxation Skills Help My Family?

- ▶ Relaxation techniques can be very important coping skills for teens having problems with sad feelings and low mood. These strategies can reduce stress by helping teens calm their bodies, take their mind off of their sad feelings, and focus more on positive thinking and feelings. Reducing stress also makes it easier to problem solve and use other coping skills.
- ▶ This is because the mind and the body are connected. When teens who are sad or feeling some other negative emotion learn to practice relaxation, they can change their moods, improve their sleep, and experience many other benefits.
- ▶ Your teen needs to practice relaxing regularly when they are in a good mood so that they are better able to use the skills when they are in a bad mood and need them. You can't use a skill well in "the game" if you don't practice!
- ▶ Relaxation skills are "portable." Your teen can do them at home, school, or in public. Most skills can be done without anyone noticing.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen thinks this is too hard.

Relaxation skills may feel uncomfortable or challenging at first. Practicing regularly helps make the skills feel easier and more comfortable. Figuring out which skills (and methods of practicing the skills) your teen prefers will also be helpful. Try out the different strategies we suggest, and see which ones work best for your family.

My teen doesn't want to practice regularly.

Relaxation practice should not be another chore but something short and simple that your teen can work into their daily routine. For example, can they practice for a few minutes on the way home from school or use an app on their phone before getting ready for bed? Together, set a specific goal for regular practice (e.g., three times a week to start) and think of a small but fun reward your teen can earn for reaching it. Remind your teen that this skill gets easier the more they do it, and that this is one way they can be in control of their mood.

My teen thinks relaxation practice is boring or strange.

Ask specific questions to find out what could make it more appealing. Do they prefer a certain skill over others? Do they want to use technology in their practice (e.g., relaxation phone apps, guided imagery videos, etc.)? Would they be more interested in an active practice like yoga? Encourage them to keep trying new things until they find something that is enjoyable and comfortable.

My teen can never use the skills in the moment to manage their mood.

If you are in a situation with your teen where they could use a relaxation skill but are not doing so, give a gentle reminder to encourage them and then model the skill yourself. Talk with your teen about times when relaxation skills can be helpful (e.g., academic stress is making them sad, so suggest progressive muscle relaxation before they start their homework) and set a goal with them regarding trying to use that skill in that specific situation for a reasonable amount of times for the next week.



PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS FOR TEENS



What Are Thinking Traps?

- ▶ **Thinking Traps** are ways of thinking that increase sadness, anger, and stress. They often involve jumping to conclusions, guessing that things will go badly in the future, and making connections that might not really make sense.
- ▶ Here are **4 Common Thinking Traps** that are often connected to sadness and depression. Discuss these with your teen and see if you can come up with more examples that apply to them.

How to Decrease Thinking Traps

Ask your teen these questions to help them think in more positive ways:

- 1 **What are the facts?** What is the likelihood that what you're worrying about will happen? Often there is very little evidence that the things we are stressed about will actually happen! Working with your teen to look at the facts will help them think more realistically and often empower them to notice that they are capable of facing their fears.
- 2 **What would you tell a friend in this situation?** Focusing on helping a peer may help your teen with perspective taking and problem solving. This strategy can help them feel calmer and more positive about their worry.
- 3 **What can you do to solve your problem or take your mind off it?** If possible, help your teen take concrete steps to solve their problem. If that's not possible, encourage them to use relaxation or other coping skills (Depression Skill 3) to reduce stress and take their mind off things.



FORTUNE TELLING

Predicting that bad things will happen in the future.

People who struggle with negative thinking often spend a lot of time imagining bad things happening in the future. People dealing with depression sometimes predict their sadness will continue.

Fortune Telling Example: "I've felt really sad for the past few weeks. I'm probably going to be sad forever."



CATASTROPHIZING

Making little problems or disappointments seem like big problems.

When we catastrophize, we make a big deal out of situations, even when they might not be that serious or bad.

Catastrophizing Example: "My best friend didn't text me at all today. I bet she hates me now and is going to ditch me."



OVERGENERALIZATION

Assuming that because we had a hard time in one situation, our same problem will happen again in a new one.

When we overgeneralize, we are ignoring the unique facts about a situation.

Overgeneralization Example: "I had a hard time with the essay questions on our English exam. I'm going to mess up the essay questions in History, too!"



ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Seeing things as "all good" or "all bad."

When we use all-or-nothing thinking, we ignore the fact that many situations are in the middle and have both positive *and* negative aspects.

All-or-Nothing Thinking Example: "Three of my friends said they like my sneakers, but Tim didn't say anything. I look stupid. I should have gotten a different pair."

TEEN WORKSHEET: THINKING TRAP PRACTICE



Depression
Skill 4

Here's an example of how to use your new skills to deal with a **Fortune Telling** Thinking Trap:

"I've felt really depressed for the past few weeks. I'm going to be depressed forever."



What are the Facts?	"I'm learning things that might help me start to feel better. I already feel happy sometimes after I do the stuff in Making Time for Fun. I've felt sad in the past, and it didn't last forever."
What Would I Say to a Friend?	"It's going to get better! You are working hard at being more positive."
What can I do to take my mind off things?	"I'm going to go for a run and try to forget about this thought for a little while."

CATASTROPHIZING

"My best friend didn't text me at all today. I bet she hates me now and is going to ditch me."

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

OVERGENERALIZATION

"I had a hard time with the essay questions on our English exam. I'm going to mess up the essay questions in History, too!"

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

"Three of my friends said they like my sneakers, but Tim didn't say anything. I look stupid. I should have gotten a different pair."

What are the facts?

What would I say to a friend?

What can I do to take my mind off things?

PARENT HANDOUT: THINKING TRAPS TIPS



Depression Skill 4

How Can Understanding Thinking Traps Help My Family?

- ▶ When people experience sadness or depression, they often think about the past, their present situation, and/or things that might happen in the future in negative ways. These negative thought patterns often make them feel worse and can lead to feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- ▶ By learning about thinking traps (i.e., ways of thinking that make us feel sad, stuck, or angry), your teen will learn to identify times they may be thinking in overly negative or unrealistic ways.
- ▶ Your family can also help each other pay attention to the ways you talk about feelings and problems. Once everyone has practiced noticing the thinking traps, you can help each other take those thinking trap statements and make them more positive and realistic.
- ▶ Learning how to discuss feelings and problems in realistic and self-esteem boosting ways can help your whole family feel more confident and capable when facing stressful situations.

Common Parent Concerns

Some of the thinking traps are hard for my teen to understand.

If a particular type of thinking trap is challenging for your teen, brainstorm additional examples that might make it clearer. Ask friends and family to help if needed. Examples that connect to your teen's interests (e.g., their favorite sport or movie) can be very useful. If your teen struggles to separate the thinking traps into different categories, just focus on noticing negative thoughts in general and changing them. For example, call them "sad thoughts," "negative thinking," or another name you come up with together. You can still improve thinking this way.

My teen says that thinking traps aren't a problem for them, but I know that they are.

It's hard for people of all ages to notice or acknowledge a harmful habit. Be a role model by pointing out thinking traps out in your own life (e.g., "I noticed the living room was messy and thought, 'This house is always a mess!', That made me feel sad and frustrated. Then I realized that was *all-or-nothing thinking* because the rest of the house is clean!"). Make similar connections in media you watch together (e.g., "Is that character using a thinking trap? Which one?"). Gently bring up times you notice your child using a thinking trap when the situation is calmer (e.g., "After you guys lost that tough game, you said that you wanted to quit basketball because it 'will always be this way'. I wonder if that was a thinking trap, maybe *overgeneralization*? Just because you lost that one game doesn't mean you will lose every game in the future and you've told me that you love playing basketball.").

Changing negative thinking is very hard for my teen.

Negative thoughts are often automatic, like a bad habit. Becoming a more positive thinker requires breaking this habit. It takes a lot of practice to make a change like this! Start with more fun and playful examples if jumping right into your teen's own thinking patterns feels overwhelming. Practice on a regular basis for a few minutes at a time (daily if you can manage it) to start forming a new habit of positive thinking. If your teen is still having a difficult time, talk to your teen's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is Problem Solving?

- ▶ Teens dealing with low mood and depression may be in particular need of targeted strategies to deal with daily challenges and concerns. Everyone can benefit from solving problems in their lives; these skills can help you and the rest of your family as well!
- ▶ Your teen may be frustrated that they are having a hard time dealing with problems. This can further increase their low mood and low motivation. You may be frustrated that they are not taking your advice or making good choices, creating conflict between the two of you.
- ▶ These worksheets teach a simple plan for solving problems. You will learn to:
 1. Name the problem
 2. Identify 3 possible solutions
 3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
 4. Pick one to try
 5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution



Here's How to Make a Problem Solving Plan at Home

You can introduce the plan by saying, "Everyone can use help solving problems. When people are sad, they sometimes need strategies that make it easier to deal with challenges. Here's the Problem Solving Plan we are going to start using." Introduce the 5 parts of the plan to your teen by going through them together and reading the explanations below:

- 1 **What's the problem?** "You may be feeling overwhelmed and not know exactly how to describe the issue you need to handle. Clearly stating the problem helps us both focus on what we need to do to solve it."
- 2 **What are 3 possible solutions?** "I want you to think of 3 possible solutions so you have some good options, but not so many that you are overwhelmed with choices. Let's not worry about how good or bad they are yet. We will evaluate them together in the next part."
- 3 **What's one good thing and one bad thing about each?** "This part means you will name one positive possibility and one negative possibility that could occur with each solution. This will help you consider the benefits and challenges of each choice."
- 4 **Pick one!** "This is your chance to take charge as you pick which solution you want to try out first."
- 5 **How did it go?** "After you follow through with a solution, we will evaluate it. This will help us both learn what the best options for different problems are and we can refer back to these tested solutions as needed. If the first solution isn't successful in solving the problem, we can try a different one or start a completely new solution brainstorming session."

The next section puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart. Go over the example together and then have your teen try to solve the practice problems. Come up with solutions for our example problems and then try it for one of their own.

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 1: "I am so sad and tired all time that I am not paying attention in math class. Now I don't understand today's homework."

What's the Problem?

"I don't understand the homework."

		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1	Don't do the homework.	I can play videogames tonight because I'll have less to do	I'll get a zero.
Soution 2	Text my friend for help.	She is good at math and can help me.	She might not respond.
Solution 3	Talk to my teacher tomorrow and ask for extra help.	My teacher will explain what I missed.	She might still give me a zero for today's homework.
My Choice	Text my friend for help.		
How'd it go?	My friend texted me back. She called and helped me. I understood and did the homework.		

Example 2: "I get mad really easily now. I have been mean to my little brother a lot. This morning I heard him crying and telling mom that he thinks I don't like him."

What's the Problem?

		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Depression Skill 5

Example 3: "I've known that we had a history project due for a while but I just couldn't focus on it because of how I'm feeling. Now it's due tomorrow."

What's the Problem?		
	One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1		
Solution 2		
Solution 3		
My Choice		
How'd it go?		

Example 4: "My friends have stopped inviting me places because I kept saying no. Now I'm ready to use my Making Time for Fun Skills and I want them to ask me to hang out again."

What's the Problem?		
	One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1		
Solution 2		
Solution 3		
My Choice		
How'd it go?		

BLANK PROBLEM SOLVING PLANS

Here are a couple Blank Problem Solving Plans. Make copies and use it to help guide your decision making when problems arise.



Depression Skill 5

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



Depression Skill 5

How Can Problem Solving Help My Family?

- ▶ Teens who are having a hard time with sadness or depression sometimes struggle to deal with challenges and solve everyday problems.
- ▶ These difficulties with problem solving can occur because they are more sad or irritable, more easily overwhelmed, not feeling motivated, and/or struggling with negative thinking due to depression. They may also try to solve a problem, but give up easily if they aren't successful right away.
- ▶ The problem solving skill described here can provide a concrete way to help your teen think through challenges, brainstorm options, notice what works and what doesn't, and keep trying if their first attempt doesn't work. Increasing positive outcomes through successful problem solving can help significantly improve your teen's mood and sense of control.
- ▶ In addition, making and following a problem solving plan can reduce frustration for both of you while increasing feelings of independence and mastery for your teen. You won't be telling your teen what to do, but instead supporting and guiding them in their plans to overcome challenges on their own.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen doesn't think they have problems that need solving.

It can be hard for teens to notice which challenges or frustrations in their lives can benefit from problem solving skills. You and your teen can identify potential problem solving opportunities by reviewing the situations they connected to their low mood and recorded on their How I Feel/Mood Tracker worksheets (review Mood Tracking, Depression Skill 1). Fill in the Problem Solving Plan for past situations that made your child feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion. In addition, if you notice a situation that is applicable to these skills in daily life, you can gently point this out to your child (e.g., "You told me you were sad because you didn't know who to sit with at lunch today. Do you think we can use the Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

My teen can't think of any solutions.

Talk to your teen about what might be getting in the way. They may be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Offer guidance without being demanding (e.g., "What if you tried [insert potential solution here]?"). Very often, once you give a teen one example, they are able to get creative with solutions of their own. Remind them that they don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. They can make mistakes and you will help them. Review the practice examples we provide, both to remind your teen of potential options for common concerns as well as the fact that they came up with great solutions for the examples!

All the solutions my teen comes up with are bad choices.

If the solutions are not harmful or unsafe, try not to dismiss them right away. Working through the different choices together will improve your teen's positive problem solving and ability to distinguish between solutions. Encourage your teen to focus on the one good thing and one bad thing step of the plan (step 3). If there is no "good" aspect to a solution or the good thing your teen identifies is actually detrimental, gently point this out. Encourage them to pick a choice with a positive outcome at the "pick one" stage (step 4). If they don't have a choice like that, gently suggest that you go back to the brainstorming solutions stage (step 2). Let them know that it's okay to go back to this step to think of additional options, because the goal is to solve the problem in a safe and positive way.

When I ask my teen to use their problem solving plan, they get upset and sometimes even cry.

Sometimes teens experiencing depression can feel overwhelmed when trying to problem solve. Remind yourself and your teen that feeling upset is okay and that their emotions are giving you both a message that they are having a tough time and need support. Some teens will benefit from using a relaxation skill to lower their stress levels before trying problem solving. For tips, review Relaxation Skills (Depression Skill 3). In addition, negative thinking can make problems seem huge and unsolvable. Review strategies from Thinking Traps (Depression Skill 4) to help encourage more realistic thinking. If you and your teen are still having a hard time using problem solving skills and this is impacting their depression, talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

Guided Self-Management Tools for **ADHD**

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR ADHD

Children 6-12



GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT

FOR ADHD



INTRODUCTION

Children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, often have difficulty paying attention, sitting still, and/or acting impulsively. They can have trouble learning, getting along with their peers, and behaving appropriately at school or home. These challenges can impact children's self-esteem and increase the likelihood they develop depression, anxiety, and/or disruptive behavior symptoms. Working with your child's primary care team can help you get ADHD symptoms under control.

The most effective interventions for managing ADHD symptoms in children and teens typically involve a combination of medication, behavioral techniques, and educational strategies. For children below age 6, experts usually recommend starting with behavioral interventions. In this guide, we focus on strengthening behavioral and educational skills by: 1) teaching parents how to increase structure at home and help with schoolwork; and 2) improving children's ability to plan, organize, and solve problems, skills that are commonly referred to as executive functions. The worksheets in this guide will explain the skills and help you and your child try them at home. All of the skills included in our guide are evidence-based, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, instructions for how to use the strategy at home, and a list of common questions and concerns parents and children usually have, along with our answers. The first 3 skills are for parents, and the next 6 skills are for children, with suggestions for ways parents can participate. You can read the scripts to younger children, and let older ones choose if they want to read it themselves or follow along with you. Work through the guide with your child and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for your family, keep at it until it the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will get to make these skills and exercises a part of your daily lives. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your child need any additional support for management of ADHD symptoms. Good luck!

FOR PARENTS



Skill 1

Household Rules and Structure

These worksheets help you create and apply rules and structure at home and set clear and consistent expectations for your child and family.



Skill 2

Homework Help

These worksheets provide ideas for helping your child complete homework in an easier and more organized way.



Skill 3

Daily School Check-In

These worksheets help you link your child's behavior at school with rewards they can earn at home for good behavior.

FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS



Skill 4

How to Solve Problems

This skill teaches your child to brainstorm different ways of solving a problem and, before taking action, evaluate which solutions are most likely to lead to success.



Skill 5

How to Remember What I Need To Do

This technique helps your child keep track of important information, such as deadlines for school assignments.



Skill 6

How to Get Things Done

This skill teaches your child to plan ahead in order to start and complete tasks without getting sidetracked, such as doing homework assignments or chores.



Skill 7

How to Organize My Stuff

This strategy helps your child establish organizational systems, such as organizing their bedroom, backpack, or schoolwork.



Skill 8

How to Manage My Time

These worksheets support your child in creating schedules, staying on task, and meeting deadlines.



Skill 9

How to Feel Good About Myself

These exercises provide ways to identify your child's strengths and boost their self-esteem.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE



ADHD Skill 1

WHAT ARE HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE?

- ▶ Household Rules and Structure are strategies families use to organize their daily lives, create consistent routines, and set clear expectations at home.
- ▶ Applying rules and structure at home helps children complete everyday tasks, such as sticking to a schedule, following family rules, getting ready for school or bedtime, and completing homework and chores. This helps with children's working memory, organization, and planning skills, which can be especially useful for children with ADHD. This can make life easier and happier for the whole family.
- ▶ Try some of the methods below to increase rules and structure at home and see how they work for your family.

HERE'S HOW TO USE RULES AND STRUCTURE AT HOME

- 1 Stay Organized.** Help your child organize their physical spaces by creating systems to keep things neat. For example, encourage your child to have an assigned place for every object in their room. Then, have them regularly spend a small amount of time cleaning up so that no one area ever gets too messy. Some ways to do this include spending 5-10 minutes each day straightening up their room or backpack, or going through their belongings every few months to donate or put away things that don't get much use.

Tools such as planners, "to do" lists, and calendars can also help children with ADHD. Encourage your child to use organizational aids like these to keep track of important information, such as homework assignments, due dates, and social activities. Offer a daily reminder for your child to use and check their planner. The more they write down, the less they (and you) have to remember! For ways to use these tools to help with your child's homework, see Homework Help (ADHD Skill 2).

You can also use a family planner and/or calendar to track family activities. Put important information where everyone can see it, such as on the refrigerator or near the front door.

- 2 Set Household Rules.** Decide on a short list of rules (3-5) that you want your child to follow. For example, Jack's family has these rules: "1) We keep our hands to ourselves and respect each other's personal space; 2) We speak to each other using kind and calm words; and 3) We focus on each other during meals and not our screens."

In the beginning, it may help to highlight the rules that matter the most to you (so pick your battles!). As your child demonstrates a stronger ability to follow rules, you can make them more challenging or add new ones to the list.

Review the rules as a family, then write them out and post them somewhere everyone can see them. This provides regular reminders about family expectations. Try giving your child directions, keeping the following tips in mind for maximum effectiveness: 1) give simple and clear instructions for one task at a time, 2) make sure you are giving directions when your child is undistracted, and 3) provide rewards for following the rules, and/or implement consequences if they don't. Talk to your child's primary care provider if you need more assistance with this.

HOW TO USE RULES AND STRUCTURE AT HOME (cont.)

- 3 Create routines.** Create detailed routines for your child's usual tasks, such as getting ready for school, doing homework, cleaning a bedroom, or getting ready for bed. List the steps you'd like your child to complete, in the order you'd like them done. This helps your child walk through a "checklist" to start and finish a routine. It also supports their working memory and planning skills and makes your expectations clear.

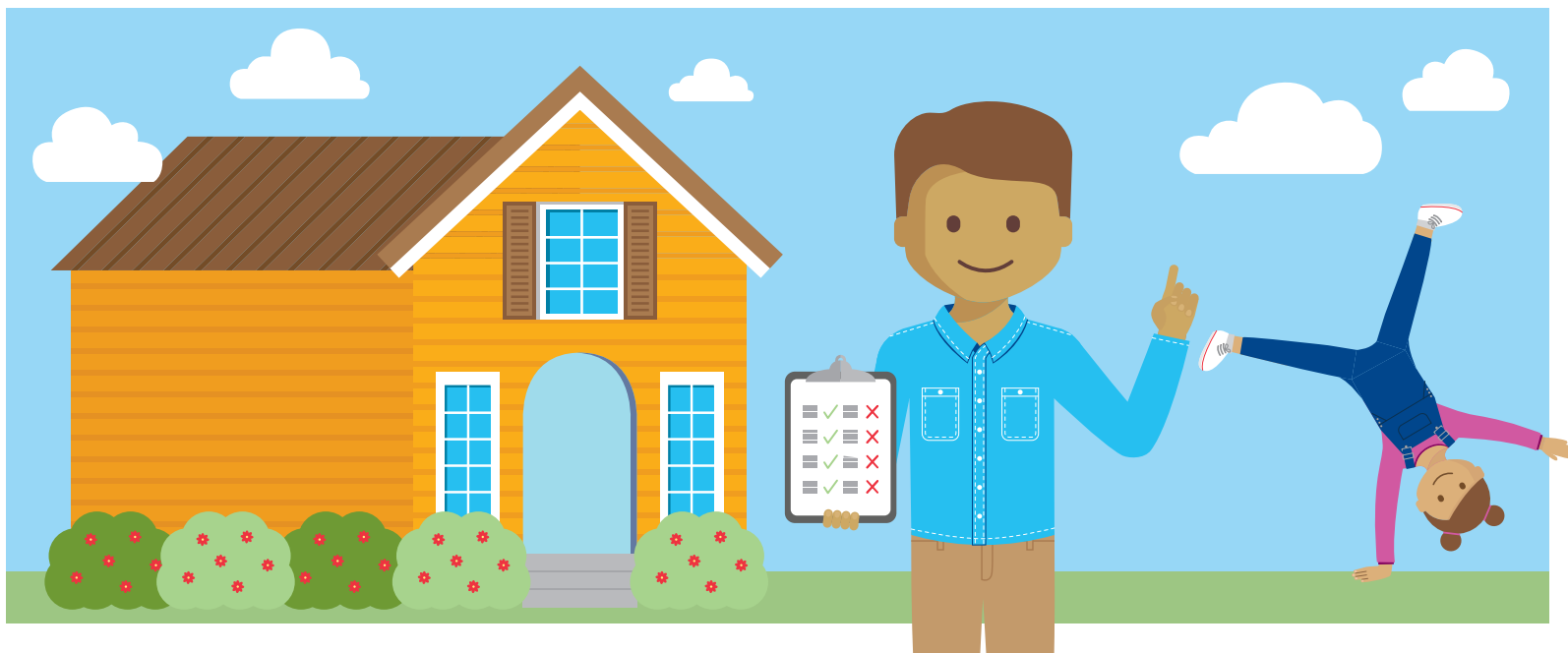
You can also create routines for those tasks your child finds challenging, such as using relaxation skills to control their energy around bedtime or using the skills in this guide. Review our example routines and then create some of your own.

The more consistent a routine is, the easier it is to follow. Once you create a routine that works, encourage your child to practice it and stick with it.

- 4 Discuss with your child.** Be sure to review any new household rules or changes in routines with your child. Go over each one to make sure you're on the same page. The clearer your expectations are, the better your child will be able to meet them.
- 5 Provide positive feedback.** Remember that it can be hard for children with ADHD to follow rules, complete daily routines, and stay organized. As you use the strategies in this packet, be sure to praise your child's efforts. Frequent encouragement will help your child feel good about working hard.

Some children benefit from an extra push to follow rules and routines, such as earning rewards or privileges for a job well done. Rewards that are free, easy, and simple are best (e.g., extra time on a fun activity). Many families use a behavior or sticker chart to track their children's progress toward earning a desired reward.

- 6 Evaluate and adjust as needed.** Every few weeks, review your household rules and structure to evaluate what's working well and what needs tweaking. Get your child's feedback and incorporate their ideas for improvement. They can provide valuable insight into how rules are working or suggestions for improving routines.
- 7 Be patient.** Remember it can take time to learn new habits. Your child may not be able to follow a routine or rule correctly every time, especially when it is new or challenging. Offer your child encouraging reminders until new routines and rules become easier. Be patient with your child and yourself, and show your child you are confident they can do it.





HOW CAN HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Children with ADHD can find it hard to control their attention, energy level, and/or desire to act on their urges. This can make it difficult to behave appropriately or get things done.
- ▶ Children with ADHD often respond more positively to environments that are structured (i.e., organized and predictable). Families who use consistent rules and structure at home often find that their children are better able to follow directions, stick to routines, and get along with others.
- ▶ Caregivers also frequently notice that as their children's skills and independence increase, they all feel less frustrated. When there are clear guidelines for behavior and regular household routines, children are better able to do things on their own. This leads to fewer arguments and can make your home more positive for the entire family.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

We completed the routine worksheet, but my child keeps forgetting to use it.

Try giving your child gentle reminders to help them remember routines. For instance, you can give verbal reminders, such as prompting your child when it's almost time to start a routine, or visual reminders, like putting notes around the house for them to see. You can also come up with creative ways for them to remember the steps in a routine, such as acronyms or rhymes. As your child makes progress toward memorizing their routines, be sure to offer lots of praise!

When my child breaks a family rule or can't complete a routine, they get frustrated or down on themselves.

Children can feel badly if they have a harder time than their siblings or peers. When your child gets discouraged, cheer them on by praising their effort and highlighting their successes. Go through the How to Feel Good About Myself worksheets (ADHD Skill 9) together, and see if those strategies help your child identify their strengths and feel better about themselves.

Your child may also benefit from practicing coping skills to manage negative thoughts and emotions. For example, they can try to problem solve, use relaxation skills, or challenge overly negative thoughts. Practicing skills like these can help children take active steps to feel better and more in control. Talk to your primary care provider if you would like more guidance in this area.

Even with a lot of structure and routine, my child has a hard time staying on task and getting things done.

Some children find organization and routine more challenging than others. Try some of the other strategies in this guide to improve your child's working memory, organization, planning, and time management. Building these skills may help your child respond better to structure and routine. Your child's teacher may also have suggestions based on what they've seen work well in the classroom.

My child doesn't like to follow rules!

Some children respond to rules by acting out, and this can occur more often when a child has ADHD. Try using some of your parenting "tricks", such as giving your child clear and simple directions and using rewards and/or consequences to motivate them to make better choices in response.

If your child's ADHD symptoms make it difficult for them to do the things they want or need to do, they may need additional support, such as medication and/or therapy. Check in with your child's primary care provider about medication and whether a referral to a behavioral health specialist could be helpful.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOMEWORK HELP



WHAT IS HOMEWORK HELP?

- ▶ Many families say that their children do not like doing homework. Homework can be extra challenging for children with ADHD, because they often have difficulty paying attention, sitting still, doing tasks they dislike, and/or managing negative feelings.
- ▶ Homework Help is a set of strategies parents can use to make homework time easier for the whole family. It includes tips for increasing organization, creating homework routines, providing support and supervision, and breaking assignments down into smaller steps. In combination with the other skills in this guide, Homework Help techniques can help you support your child and make homework time less frustrating and more productive.

HERE'S HOW TO PROVIDE HOMEWORK HELP AT HOME

- 1 Use organizational tools to keep track of assignments, projects, and tests.**
 - a** Help your child stay on top of their schoolwork, due dates, and daily activities by using planners, calendars, and "to do" lists. At the start of each school year, help your child create a simple and clear system to keep track of important information. For example, your child can write down each week's events in a planner, put new homework assignments in a red folder, and store finished assignments in a green folder.
 - b** Give your child daily reminders to update their "to do" list and follow their schedule. For more tips, review the chapters on Remembering Things I Need to Do (ADHD Skill 5) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 7).
- 2 Create detailed homework routines.**
 - a** Tasks are easier to do when they are part of a regular routine. Help your child create a daily homework routine, including where they will do it, what time they will do it, and how they will prioritize their assignments. See our example for ideas.
 - b** Think through the routine details together to make sure that you and your child are on the same page. For example, is your child's homework space quiet and distraction-free? Do they have access to the materials they need there (e.g., pens, pencils, calculator, etc.)? When scheduling homework time, do they need a break between when they get home from school and when they start working? If they get stuck or need help, what should they do?
 - c** Encourage your child to stick to the routine every day. The more consistent the routine is, the easier it will be for them to get in the habit of doing homework every day and not waiting until the last minute.

3 Provide support and supervision.

- a The younger your child is, the more homework support they will need. Younger children may do better if you keep them company while they work and walk through their assignments with them. Older children may be fine with having you nearby to answer any questions. Children of all ages benefit from check-ins and encouragement to stay on task.
- b If possible, look over your child's homework to be sure they are doing it correctly and did not skip any of it. This encourages your child to be thorough and decreases the chances they will put the work off until another time.
- c Make sure your child's routine includes turning in completed work. You can create a "Backpack Checklist" of what should go into your child's backpack each night before bed, which you can check as part of your child's bedtime routine. If your child has a hard time turning homework in, you can ask their teacher to monitor their performance and give feedback to you, or use the Daily School Check-In (ADHD Skill 3) to incorporate rewards and give your child an extra push. See our example, and then make your own routine.

4 Break bigger assignments or projects down into smaller steps.

- a It can be overwhelming to tackle a difficult or big assignment, such as a school project or studying for a test. First, make sure your child understands the assignment. If they don't, walk through it with them or help them problem solve how to figure out what they need to do.
- b Then, help your child turn a big assignment into smaller, more manageable assignments and accurately estimate how much time they need for each step (see ADHD Skill 6, How to Get Things Done, and ADHD Skill 8, How to Manage My Time, for tips). Encourage your child to take short breaks as needed to stretch or do an in-place exercise (like jumping jacks) or have a small snack before going back to work.

5 Inspect and improve your routine

- a Every few weeks, review your child's homework routine to evaluate what's working well and what needs fine-tuning. Work with your child to identify ways to make homework time easier.

6 Notice when your child is working hard and offer praise and encouragement.

- a Remember it can take time to build good homework skills and your child may not be able to do their homework independently right away. Your support can make a big difference. Offer encouraging reminders and praise until new strategies become easier to use. Be patient with your child and yourself, and show your child you are confident that they can get their homework done carefully and correctly!

Sofia's Homework Routine

- ▶ Routine starts when you get home from school around 3:30 pm.
- ▶ Take a 30-minute break for a snack and relaxation.
- ▶ Get your planner and homework materials. Ask dad if you're unsure what you need.
- ▶ Eliminate distractions. Turn off TV and music, put away phone.
- ▶ Sit down at your desk.
- ▶ Do homework until dinner at 5:30. If you need a stretch break, set the timer for 5 minutes, then start your homework again.
- ▶ After dinner, bring homework to dad for him to review.
- ▶ Put your finished homework in your homework folder.
- ▶ Put your planner and homework folder back into your backpack.
- ▶ Put your backpack by the front door.
- ▶ Great job! Do something you enjoy for 30 minutes.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOMEWORK HELP TIPS



HOW CAN HOMEWORK HELP STRATEGIES HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Many parents and children find that homework time is a stressful time. Homework is a task that can lead to frustration, annoyance, and even arguments at home. Doing schoolwork can be especially challenging for children with ADHD, as it requires using many different skills at the same time, such as working memory, organization, planning, and time management.
- ▶ By making homework time more structured, predictable, and organized, parents can help their children strengthen their own abilities. As children build skills and independence, they often feel better about school and themselves. This can make your child happier and make homework time easier for the whole family.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child refuses to do homework!

One way to motivate your child to do homework is to allow them to do something they enjoy once they finish, such as talking to a friend or spending individual time with you. You may also want to incorporate consequences into your approach, such as the loss of a privilege for not following homework rules (e.g., if your child does not do their homework, they lose the ability to watch TV that night).

Another approach involves creating a homework contract that you and your child create together. It can include what your child agrees to do (e.g., I will write my homework assignments in my planner before leaving class; If I don't understand what I need to do, I will ask my teacher) and what parents will agree to (e.g., We will provide you with the school supplies you need to do your work; If you are having a hard time, we will check in with your teacher).

My child gets too much homework, and they can never finish it all.

Different schools and teachers approach homework in different ways. Talk to your child's teacher(s) about your child's learning style and homework challenges. You can decide together how much homework is necessary and if there are ways to lower the amount while still reinforcing important concepts (e.g., completing part of a worksheet). You can then review these expectations with your child and problem solve together.

My child's homework is complicated, and I'm not sure how to help them with it.

This is something many parents say! It can be hard to keep up with all of the different topics children learn about in school, especially if they aren't subjects you've thought about lately or studied yourself. Start by seeing what your child's school provides. Many schools offer learning support, like homework club or after school tutoring, and teachers are often willing to spend extra time explaining tricky concepts to students. Your child's friends may also be able to help; many students find that their peers are a great resource for understanding what happened in class and how to tackle a hard assignment!



PARENT HANDOUT: DAILY SCHOOL CHECK-IN



ADHD Skill 3

WHAT IS A DAILY SCHOOL CHECK-IN?

- ▶ Children with ADHD can find the demands of school challenging. For example, they may have a hard sitting still or paying attention, talk when it's not their turn in class, or have difficulty getting along with their peers.
- ▶ A Daily School Check-In is a system parents and teachers use to identify, track, and change your child's problem behaviors at school.
- ▶ It involves:
 - 1) identifying the behaviors you and your child's teacher would like to change at school;
 - 2) working with your child's teacher(s) to monitor these behaviors;
 - 3) the teacher(s) giving you daily feedback on your child; and
 - 4) you providing specific rewards for your child when they engage in good behavior.
- ▶ These rewards increase your child's motivation to behave at school, encourage them to work toward their goals, and make it more likely they will continue behaving in the future.
- ▶ This strategy is effective at addressing a broad range of behavior problems at school. You can partner with one teacher or several to improve your child's behavior.

Daily School Check-In			
Date	Teacher		
Today, Daniel...	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	A Little/None of the Time
Stayed in his seat	😊	😐	😞
Kept his hands to himself	😊	😐	😞
Handed in his homework	😊	😐	😞
Followed directions	😊	😐	😞
Raised hand before talking	😊	😐	😞
Notes: _____			Total 😊

HERE'S HOW TO USE A DAILY SCHOOL CHECK-IN

1

Create a list of 3-5 problematic school behaviors.

Talk with your child's teacher to identify 3-5 behaviors that cause problems for your child at school (e.g., getting out of their seat, bothering other students, forgetting to turn in homework, breaking classroom rules). The list can include both academic and social behaviors, two areas that can be challenging for children with ADHD.

2

Create a list of your desired behaviors.

These should be the behaviors you and the teacher would like to see instead, stated in a positive way and focused on behaviors your child's teacher can observe (e.g., staying in seat, keeping hands to self, handing in homework, following classroom rules). Include 1-2 "easier" behaviors that you know your child is able to do in order to boost your child's confidence.

3

Make a daily report card.

Decide on a way for your child's teacher to track their behavior and share it with you. It should be clear, easy to use, and include the teacher's input. This can be as simple as a daily note home, but parents and teachers usually find that something like our examples work better.

HERE'S HOW TO USE A DAILY SCHOOL CHECK-IN (cont.)

4

Decide on check-in frequency.

When you first start using this strategy, it's best if the teacher can do it every day. As your child's behavior improves, you can gradually decrease how often this check-in occurs until you no longer need it. Teachers should make sure the card goes in your child's backpack (or gets sent to you electronically) at the end of the day whenever they complete it.

5

Create a list of at least 5-10 rewards to give at home.

Think of as many ideas as you can. Include a range of reward types (items, activities, privileges) and sizes/costs (free, small, medium, large). Have rewards you can give every day (e.g., extra screen or story time) and once a week (e.g., going out to eat), as well as some "big ticket" rewards that take longer to earn (e.g., going to a sporting event or movies once a month or less). Use our list of reward ideas to get started. Be sure to only include rewards you are willing and able to give if your child exhibits ideal behavior. If your child's teachers or school use rewards, add their ideas too. Get your child's input to be sure they are motivated to earn the rewards on your list.

6

Decide what your child needs to do to earn a reward.

Be specific about what your child needs to do to earn a reward (e.g., "5 smiley faces or checkmarks = a small reward"). Easier school behaviors or ones done correctly less of the time should earn smaller rewards and harder tasks, bigger rewards. An example of how to reward behaviors differently based on your child's individual strengths and challenges is the following: If your child is generally able to get along with their classmates, they can earn 5 extra minutes of screen time each day they're able to meet this goal. If they find doing work in class harder than positive social behavior, they can earn 15 extra minutes each day they work without issue. Younger children do best with rewards they earn daily, while older children may prefer to "bank" credit to earn bigger rewards over time.

7

Review the check-in card each day the teacher completes it.

Follow through and consistency are key here. This will show your child you take this seriously and provide opportunities to highlight progress and troubleshoot obstacles. If they have a harder day, remind your child that they have another chance to do well tomorrow.

8

Provide rewards as soon as possible.

When your child earns a reward, be sure to give it to them. Try to provide rewards as soon as possible after your child earns them (*but never before!*). This will help them connect their good behavior at school to the positive feeling of earning a reward.

9

Set realistic goals for improvement.

It's okay to start small to make sure your "bigger" goals are within reach. For example, if your child is running out of the classroom 10 times a day, staying in class all day may be too challenging at first. Work your way up to this by gradually increasing the amount of time your child needs to stay in class (e.g., aiming for a small but consistent improvement each week).

10

Remember to praise good behavior.

Praise your child whenever their school behavior earns them a reward. The more parents reliably praise and provide promised rewards for good behavior, the better children will feel and the faster behavior will improve.

11

Adjust the check-in card and rewards list over time.

As your child's school behavior improves or certain rewards lose their value, you can adjust your Daily School Check-In card and/or rewards chart to maintain your child's motivation and progress. For example, after your child is able to consistently speak appropriately to peers 2-3 days/week, you can increase the goal to 4-5 days/week. You can also adapt these if new problems develop.

Daily School Check-In



Date

Today, _____

Teacher

Most of the Time



Some of the Time



A Little/None of the Time



Notes: _____

Total 😊

Daily School Check-In



Date

Today, _____

Teacher

Most of the Time



Some of the Time



A Little/None of the Time



Notes: _____

Total 😊

Daily School Check-In



Date

Today, _____

Teacher

Most of the Time



Some of the Time



A Little/None of the Time



Notes: _____

Total 😊

Daily School Check-In



Date

Today, _____

Teacher

Most of the Time



Some of the Time



A Little/None of the Time



Notes: _____

Total 😊

Daily School Check-In



Date

Today, _____

Teacher

Most of the Time



Some of the Time



A Little/None of the Time



Notes: _____

Total 😊

PARENT HANDOUT: DAILY SCHOOL CHECK-IN TIPS



ADHD Skill 3

HOW CAN A DAILY SCHOOL CHECK-IN HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Having a Daily School Check-in helps parents, teachers, and children set clear goals for improving behavior. It helps you create an organized and fair system to track your child's school behavior and provide rewards. You decide together what your child needs to do to earn rewards, which helps your child focus on behaving.
- ▶ This strategy increases communication and consistency between home and your child's school. When parents and teachers are on the same page, children face predictable consequences and their behavior often improves.
- ▶ When used properly, the Daily School Check-In can be done simply, quickly, and easily. Using a Daily School Check-In and rewards system can give your child the extra nudge they need to do better in school. When rewards are carefully chosen and only given for good behavior, you may be surprised by how well your child will behave to earn what they want!

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

I wasn't raised with rewards and don't like the idea of "bribing" my child.

All children are different, and yours may need some extra motivation to behave the way you'd like. Your family may already have ways of informally "rewarding" your child, such as promising your child something when they do well in school or follow rules. Here, you're implementing a predetermined, clear, and consistent system to improve your child's school behavior, increasing your influence over your child's behavior and keeping both you and your child accountable.

Why should I reward my child for behaving the way they are supposed to at school?

Just as adults appreciate being rewarded for working hard, children respond well to tangible incentives for good behavior. The Daily School Check-In helps you and your child's teacher shift your attention toward the things your child does right. They provide another way to influence your child's behavior.

This seems like it will take a lot of time. I'm too busy!

A small time investment can lead to big improvements in your child's school behavior. This may take some time to set up at first, but eventually it becomes part of families' and schools' routines. Most parents and teachers actually gain time back, because they spend less time managing children's misbehavior. Over time, families often find children do not need rewards to behave.

My child's teacher thinks this will be too hard to do. They're busy!

We know teachers have very full schedules, so try to keep this system as simple as possible. Discuss what's possible for them and decide together what makes the most sense in the context of their day. Many teachers find that they can complete a simple behavior log in a few seconds! Over time, this will lead to improvement in your child's school behavior, decreasing the amount of time teachers have to respond to problem behaviors during the day. The more feedback the school provides, the better you'll be able to change your child's behavior.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS (CONTINUED)

My child keeps forgetting to bring their Daily School Check-In sheet home.

Children, especially those with ADHD, can be forgetful! Work with your child's teacher to get the sheet into your child's homework folder or backpack. When you first start using this technique, consider awarding your child some smiley faces or checkmarks on their rewards chart for simply returning their sheet to you. This will give them some extra motivation until this behavior becomes second nature. It also gives them a reason to bring the worksheet home even when they have a hard day at school. If paper sheets seem too challenging for your child or their teacher, emailing the sheet may help.

I thought rewards worked best when children get them immediately after good behavior. How does this work when their behavior is at school and rewards are at home?

Review your reward system with your child's teacher(s). Some teachers are able to give rewards for good behavior in school (e.g., extra time doing a fun activity, helping the teacher with a task, getting a small toy or prize). This could be done at a set time of the day or week so your child knows when their reward is coming. If you're giving the rewards at home, try to do so as soon after school as possible. You (or another caregiver doing pickup) can talk about it on the way home and then let your child collect rewards as soon as you get there. Or, if you won't be seeing your child directly after school, you can sometimes leave a fun note in their backpack reminding them that you will pick rewards for good behavior as soon as you all get back home.

My child is having a hard time earning rewards.

Be sure to include a range of goal behaviors on your list, including at least one or two that your child can do some of the time. Once they have some success, they will be even more motivated to earn rewards for all of the behaviors on the list. If you're unsure which behaviors are easier for your child to do, their teacher may be able to help.

If your child's ADHD symptoms make it difficult for them to do the things they want or need to do, they may need additional support, such as medication and/or therapy. Check in with your child's primary care provider about medication and whether a referral to a behavioral health specialist could be helpful.

REWARD IDEAS

Small Rewards

- Play with friends
- Spend time with caregivers without siblings
- Cook meal together
- Play cards
- Go to library
- Play video game
- Have extra treat after dinner
- Play game together
- Skip a chore
- Get screen time
- Pick small prize out at the store

Medium or Large Rewards

- Have a sleepover
- Go for a hike
- Go swimming, bowling, or biking
- Eat out
- Plan family outing
- Visit a museum
- Go to the movies
- Make craft together
- Take music or dance lessons
- Get a new piece of clothing
- Buy a book or game

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING FOR ADHD



ADHD Skill 4

WHAT IS PROBLEM SOLVING FOR ADHD?

- ▶ If your child is having a hard time paying attention, staying organized, or controlling their energy, they may experience problems because of these difficulties. A positive problem solving strategy can help them more effectively deal with their daily challenges and concerns.
- ▶ Your child may be frustrated if they are having a hard time dealing with problems, big or small. This can make them feel bad about themselves or cause them to get in trouble with parents, friends or teachers. Problem solving strategies can help them change that!
- ▶ These worksheets teach your child a simple plan for solving problems. They will learn to:
 1. Name the problem
 2. Identify 3 possible solutions
 3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
 4. Pick one to try
 5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution.

HERE'S HOW TO MAKE A PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN AT HOME

You can introduce the plan by saying, "Everyone can use help solving problems. When our problems make us feel bad about ourselves or get us into trouble, we sometimes need strategies that make it easier to deal with challenges. Here's the Problem Solving Plan we are going to start using." Introduce the 5 parts of the plan to your child by going through them together and reading the explanations below.

- 1 What's the problem?** You may be feeling overwhelmed and not know exactly how to describe the issue you need to handle. Clearly stating the problem as a first step helps you really focus on what it is so you can then figure out exactly what you need to do to solve it. Try to be as specific as possible (e.g., "My friend is being mean at recess and that's making me mad" is better than "My friend makes me mad" or "I'm mad").
- 2 What are 3 possible solutions?** Think of 3 possible solutions to your problem so you have some good options to pick from, but not so many that you are overwhelmed with choices. Don't worry about how good or bad they are yet. You will evaluate them in the next part.
- 3 What's one good thing and one bad thing about each solution?** This step requires you to name one positive outcome and one negative outcome that could occur if you choose each solution. This step will help you consider the benefits and challenges of each choice. This is an essential step because you are gathering important information for your plan!
- 4 Pick one!** This is your chance to take charge as you pick which solution you want to try out first.
- 5 How did it go?** After you follow through with applying a solution, it's time to evaluate it. This will help you learn what the best options for different problems are, and you can refer back to these tested solutions as needed. If your first solution isn't successful in solving the problem, you can try a different one or start a completely new solution brainstorming session. Don't give up!

The next worksheet puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart and shows you some examples. Go over the example together and then have your child try to solve the practice problems. Come up with solutions for our example problems and then try it for one of their own.



CHILD WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING

ADHD Skill 4



Example 1: I didn't pay attention in math class today because I was bored. Now I don't understand today's homework.

What's the Problem?	I don't understand my math homework assignment.		
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1	Don't do the homework.	I can play videogames earlier because I'll have less to do	I'll get a zero.
Solution 2	Text my friend for help.	She is good at math and can help me	She might not respond.
Solution 3	Talk to my teacher tomorrow and ask for help.	My teacher will explain what I missed.	She might still give me a zero for today's homework.
My Choice	Text my friend for help.		
How'd it go?	My friend texted me back. She called and helped me. I understood and did the homework.		

Example 2: My parents wanted me to clean my room before watching a movie. They reminded me about this two times, but I forgot and now they are upset with me again. This keeps happening to me.

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

CHILD WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 3: I've known that we had a history project due for a while, but I just couldn't get much done on it because I was so overwhelmed with all of the steps. Now it's due in three days and I don't know what to do.

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

Example 4: My friends stopped inviting me places because I was always grounded for bad grades. I've been working hard using my skills and my grades are improving. I have permission to hang out with them again, but I don't think they like me anymore.

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Soution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

CHILD WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 5: I get so excited when we line up for gym that sometimes I jump to the front of the line or accidentally bump into my classmates. My friends are getting mad and sometimes my teacher says I might lose my gym privileges!"

What's the Problem?

		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

Blank Problem Solving Plans

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



ADHD Skill 4

HOW CAN PROBLEM SOLVING FOR ADHD HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Your child's struggles with skills like attention, organization, memory, and/or energy level may get in the way of them dealing with challenges and solving everyday problems. Many children feel like this sometimes.
- ▶ Problems may feel too big to solve, they may not feel motivated to address them, or they may think that they aren't good at solving problems so they shouldn't even try. You may also notice that they try to solve a problem, but give up easily if they aren't successful right away. The good news is that having a strategy to solve problems can really help!
- ▶ The problem solving technique described here can provide a clear way to help your child think through challenges, brainstorm options, notice what works and what doesn't, and keep trying if their first attempt doesn't work. Using this method can help them solve problems, have more positive outcomes, and feel better about themselves.
- ▶ Making and following a problem solving plan can also reduce frustration for you and your child's teachers by helping them to be more independent. This plan ensures that the adults in their life are not just telling them what to do, but instead supporting and guiding them to overcome challenges on their own. Everyone can benefit from solving problems in their lives; these skills can help the rest of your family as well!

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child doesn't think they have problems that need solving.

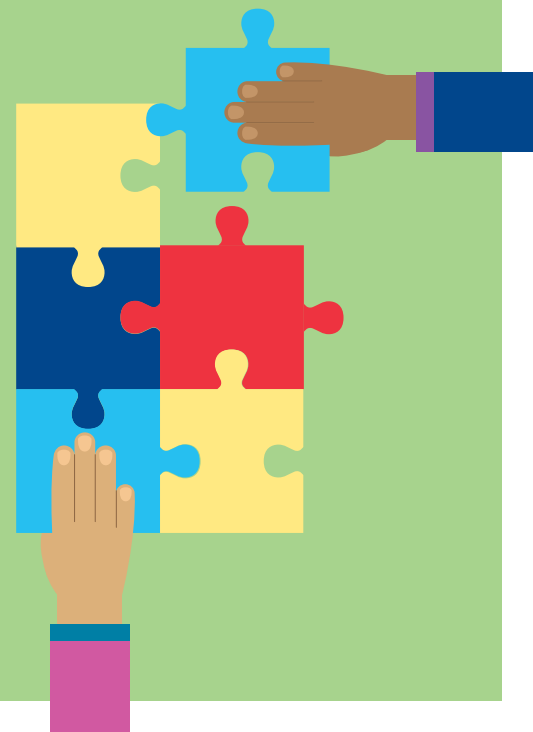
It can be hard to notice which challenges or frustrations can benefit from problem solving skills. Go over past situations with your child that caused them to feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion. These are great opportunities to practice their problem solving. If you notice a situation where your child can use these skills in daily life, gently point it out to them (e.g., "You told me you were frustrated at lunch because you forgot to bring your lunch with you even though you packed it the night before. Do you think we can use the Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

When we try this, my child can't think of any solutions.

Think about what might be getting in the way. They might be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Suggest one example solution to get them started. Often, once they hear one idea, they can get creative and come up with solutions of their own. Remind them that they don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. They can make mistakes and ask you and their teachers for help as needed. Review our practice examples to remind them of some good options for common concerns as well as the fact that they came up with great solutions for the examples!

When my child tries to use their problem solving plan, they get really frustrated and upset.

Sometimes problem solving can feel really overwhelming! Feeling upset is okay. Your child's emotions are giving you both a message that they are having a tough time and need support. Tell them to take a break to do something relaxing or fun, then try again. Remind them that they can ask a you or a teacher for support using the problem solving plan if they need it. If they are still having a hard time using problem solving skills, check in with your child's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



PARENT HANDOUT: REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO



ADHD Skill 5

WHAT IS REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO?

- ▶ Remembering Things I Need to Do is a skill that helps with your child's memory and planning. It involves making "to do lists" that help them remember what they need to do and when they need to do it.
- ▶ By developing a system for tracking tasks, assignments, and due dates, your child will improve their memory and get things done on time. Follow the instructions below to help your child make lists of what they need to do today, this week, and this weekend.

HERE'S HOW TO REMEMBER THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

You can introduce this skill by saying, "We are going to try a new way to keep track of the things you need to do and when you need to do them. This will help improve your memory and planning skills. Your goal is to **make checklists** of the things you need to do today, this week, and this weekend. As you make your lists, be specific about each task so you know exactly what you need to do. After you complete a task, be sure to check it off.

- 1 First, pull out a copy of these **three worksheets**:
 - Things I Need to Do Today
 - Things I Need to Do This Week
 - Things I Need to Do This Weekend
- 2 Start by filling in the "**Things I Need to Do Today**" worksheet. Include tasks that are time-sensitive or must be done today. Look at George's list for an example.
- 3 Next, use the "**Things I Need to Do This Week**" worksheet to make a list of the things you have to do this week. Include tasks you have to complete on a regular basis, such as making your bed or bringing your homework assignments home. Look at Molly's list for an example.
- 4 Now, use the "**Things I Need to Do This Weekend**" worksheet to make a list of the things you need to do over the weekend. It can be harder to remember weekend tasks when you're not in the usual routine of a school day. Making a list for these days can be just as important. Look at Sam's list for an example.
- 5 **Set reminders to check your lists a few times a day.** Set reminders to see what you still need to do. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask parents/teachers to remind you, and/or stick a note where you will see it, like in your locker or planner.
- 6 **Keep copies of your lists where you will see them.** For example, having copies in your backpack and on your refrigerator will give you multiple reminders. You can also keep these lists in a planner, notebook, or on your phone. Be sure to put the lists where you can easily access them and look at them throughout the day.
- 7 **If it's hard to remember everything you need to do, ask for help.** If you're not sure what to include on your list or are having a hard time using the worksheets, ask your caregivers, teachers, or friends/classmates for support.
- 8 **Notice when you're doing a good job.** Take a moment to feel proud of your effort to stay on top of what you need to do. Give yourself a pat on the back for getting things done!

The next worksheet shows you some examples of **To Do Lists**. Go over the examples together and then have your child make their own lists.

Things I Need to Do Today: George

	Done?
Turn in English paper	✓
Give book back to Hannah	✓
Turn in Math homework	✓
Submit field trip permission slip	
Find out where track tryouts are	
Go to band practice	

Things I Need to Do This Week: Molly

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Make my bed	✓	✓			
Eat breakfast	✓	✓			
Put homework in backpack	✓	✓			
Get lunch out of fridge	✓				
Bring homework assignments home	✓				
Eat snack after school	✓				

Things I Need to Do This Weekend: Sam

	Saturday	Sunday
Make my bed	✓	
Eat breakfast	✓	
Do chores (take out trash, sweep up kitchen)	✓	
Work on History project		
Do Science homework		
Get baseball equipment for practice (Saturday at 11)		
Movies with John and Hector (Saturday at 7)		



HOW CAN REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When your child has symptoms of ADHD, it can be harder for them to keep track of important information, such as what they need to do to get ready for school or the due dates for their assignments.
- ▶ This makes it challenging for them to do things when they're supposed to. They may notice that adults are frequently reminding them what they need to do, or asking them if they've completed different tasks. This can feel discouraging and be frustrating for everyone.
- ▶ Remembering Things I Need to Do helps your child make a system to stay on top of their daily and weekly tasks. Over time, they will need fewer reminders from other people, and you will all feel good about them staying more on top of things.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child isn't sure what to put on their list.

If your child is having a hard time remembering what they need to do, aren't sure what to put on their list, or finds it challenging to use the worksheets, review our examples and/or get some extra support. Your child's teachers and friends/classmates may have some good ideas based on what they know your child needs to do. Remind your child that the more they practice, the easier it will get!

My child makes all of their lists, but then forgets to look at them.

At first it can be challenging for your child to remember they made lists and need to refer back to them! It can help for them to set reminders to look at their lists and see what they still need to do. They can set alarms on their phone or watch, ask parents or teachers to remind them, and/or leave reminder notes for themselves somewhere they will see them, like in their locker or planner.

It also helps if they make copies of their lists and keep them somewhere they tend to go to or look during the day. For instance, they can keep a copy in their backpack, on their phone, and in their notebook.

My child looks at their lists and can't figure out what to do first.

One method your child can try is to start with the easiest task. Another is to start with the one with the earliest deadline. Remind them that Tasks on the What I Need to Do Today checklist usually have to be completed before those on the What I Need to Do This Week or Weekend checklists.

My child complains that I'm always bugging them about making lists and checking things off. They say that I'm annoying, but I'm trying to help!

Sometimes family members' eagerness to participate in skill-building can be frustrating to children. See if you can have a calm discussion about the best ways to support their use of this new memory tool. For example, you can see if your child is comfortable with you offering some encouragement in the mornings before the school rush, or checking in with them once or twice during homework time, but not asking them about the lists repeatedly or throughout the day. Decide together what will help your child get the support they need without being overwhelmed. Kindly remind your child that as they successfully make and complete their "to do lists", they will show you they need fewer reminders to do this on their own.

Even after my child makes their lists, it's hard for them to follow through on doing their tasks.

Many kids with ADHD feel this way. Take a look at the handouts on How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 6), How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 7), and How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 8) together, and see if practicing these skills helps your child improve their ability to start and complete tasks, get organized, and meet deadlines. If their difficulty with memory and organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, your child may need additional support. Check in with your child's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE



ADHD Skill 6

WHAT IS HOW TO GET THINGS DONE?

- ▶ How to Get Things Done is a skill that helps your child plan, start, and finish assignments and tasks. It involves looking over their "to do" list(s), choosing a task, making a schedule, and overcoming obstacles to reach their goals.
- ▶ By making a careful plan to tackle a task, your child can improve their organization, attention, and follow through skills. Use the guide below to help your child make their plan and get things done!
- ▶ This skill is most useful for older children.

HERE'S HOW TO GET THINGS DONE

You can introduce this skill by saying, "We are going to try a new way to help you get things done. Your goal here is to **make a plan** to complete a task and then **follow your roadmap** to finish it. As you do each of the steps below, fill in the **Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet**. Let's try it together." Go through the steps below to help your child make their own Roadmap, and create your own examples that fit your child's school and social activities.

1

First, look at your "to do" list(s) and **pick a specific task** to complete. If you need help making a "to-do" list, see ADHD Skill 5 (How to Remember What I Need to Do) to make checklists of your daily and weekly tasks.

2

If possible, **break your task up into "mini tasks."** Many goals can feel less difficult or overwhelming if you approach them one step at a time. Think of all the steps you need to take to reach your goal, then split your task up into smaller, more manageable "mini tasks". Be sure to decide what **order** the steps go in.

Example: Alicia split her math homework up into 5 steps: reading the assignment, reading the textbook chapter, and then doing 5 problems at a time.

3

Calculate **how long it will take** you to complete each step. Be sure to consider how much time you have. If you have trouble paying attention, it can help to **take short breaks** (5 minutes or less) after you complete each step.

Example: Between arriving home after school and dinnertime, Lucas had 2 hours to do homework. With homework in 3 subjects, he split his time into 35 minutes/subject. He took a 5-minute stretching break in between the subjects, leaving him 40 minutes per subject. He used any extra time at the end to finish up assignments that needed more time.

4

Based on this, choose what time you plan to **start and stop** each step. Be sure to leave wiggle room and set realistic deadlines so you don't get discouraged.

Example: It usually takes Olivia at least 30 minutes to practice the piano, so she schedules 40 minutes to complete the task just in case she needs more time.

5

Identify what **materials you need**. Use a **timer** to stay on schedule and keep track of time.

Example: Alex needs her textbook, assignment outline, paper, pencil, and calculator to do her math homework. She also sets up a kitchen timer.

6

Think of **where** you will do this task. Choose a place where you can think clearly and focus.

Example: Jordan finds that when he has music or the TV on in the background, it takes him twice as long to finish his homework. He also puts his phone away so texts and social media don't distract him.

7

Choose **when** you will do your tasks. Think about your schedule and when you'll fit this in. If possible, it helps to do harder tasks during the time of day when you're most alert and clear-headed.

Example: Lily does her homework as soon as she gets home from school, before she gets too tired or hungry.

8

Plan **how to get help** if you need it. Identify who can provide extra support if you're not sure what to do or get stuck. The goal is to keep moving until you finish a task, so reach out for help if you're not sure what to do. Family, friends, teachers, and classmates can provide useful advice

Example: Ben finds homework easiest to do if he does it at his after school program, where there are tutors available.

9

Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're not sure what to choose or what is allowed.

10

Follow your roadmap. Now that you've made a great plan, be sure to follow it. Keep your Roadmap worksheet where you will see it, then follow it until you've completed your task. **Make notes** on what went well, or any adjustments you want to make so your next task goes even more smoothly.

11

Pat yourself on the back for getting something done. Be sure to take a moment to notice how hard you're working!





NOAH'S ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 6



1 Choose Task

Task/Goal Studying for Friday's spelling test

2 Define Steps

3 Budget Time

What steps do I have to take? Write them in order.

Step 1	Review word list
Step 2	Practice with flash cards
Step 3	Take practice test #1
Step 4	Take practice test #2

How much time do I have?	2 hrs
How much time to I have per step/task?	2 hrs/4 tasks = ~40 min/task
Time I need for step 1	15 min
Time I need for step 2	25 min
Time I need for step 3	25 min
Time I need for step 4	25 min
Total Time	90 min
Time Left Over	30 min

4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1	Monday	3:00	3:30	10 min if needed
Step 2	Tuesday	3:00	3:30	5 min if needed
Step 3	Wednesday	3:00	3:30	Test without break
Step 4	Thursday	3:00	3:30	Test without break

5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	Word list, practice tests, pencil, timer
Where will I do it?	Dining room table after school
What distractions can I eliminate?	Put away electronics
What will I do if I need help?	Ask mom or dad, check in with Mrs. Young
What is my reward for working hard?	One episode of TV show on M/W; ice cream sandwich on T; game with family Th
Notes for next time	It was helpful to take more than one practice test



CHILD ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 6



1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

2 Define Steps

What steps do I have to take? Write them in order.

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	

3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?	
How much time to I have per step/task?	
Time I need for step 1	
Time I need for step 2	
Time I need for step 3	
Time I need for step 4	
Total Time	
Time Left Over	

4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1				
Step 2				
Step 3				
Step 4				

5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	
Where will I do it?	
What distractions can I eliminate?	
What will I do if I need help?	
What is my reward for working hard?	
Notes for next time	

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE TIPS



ADHD Skill 6

HOW CAN GETTING THINGS DONE HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When your child has ADHD, it can be challenging to get things done. For example, they may have a hard time getting started on a task, figuring out what to focus on, or staying on track once they get going. Your child may notice that they miss important deadlines, or take a long time to complete an assignment, only to do things partway.
- ▶ This makes it difficult to check tasks off their “to do lists”, even when they know what they need to do. This can be frustrating and make it harder for them to enjoy school and feel good about themselves.
- ▶ How to Get Things Done helps your child make a plan to complete a task and then follow that plan. By practicing this skill, they can develop better habits, get things done more easily, and feel proud of reaching their goals.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child has a hard time figuring out how to break a task into smaller steps.

Encourage your child to ask themselves, what do I need to do first? Help them think about what absolutely has to happen so that they can get started. Then ask, what do you need to do next to keep moving toward your goal of completing the task? Your child can also try thinking of all the steps they need to take, then going through and putting them in order. If they're still having a hard time, see if help from you, a teacher, or a friend gets them going.

It always takes my child longer than they expect to finish something, so it's hard to stick to their plan.

Many tasks take longer to complete than we think! It can be challenging at first to know how much time your child needs to do a task, so their time estimates may be inaccurate. If they have multiple tasks to complete, it may help if they split the time evenly between them, then use any extra time to finish any incomplete tasks. Use the tips in How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 8) to get a better sense of how much time your child needs to do things. This will help them make a more realistic schedule.

My child knows what they need to do and made their plan, but then they said they don't have all the materials they need. Many kids with ADHD have trouble keeping track of their things, especially school assignments and papers. It helps if they can think ahead of time about what they will need to do a task. You can offer to double check that they've thought of everything. Have your child write the required materials down on their Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. If they need extra help with organization, the worksheets in ADHD Skill 7 (How to Organize My Stuff) can help too.

My child gets distracted while trying to get things done.

Try to limit your child's distractions (e.g., TV, phone, etc.) and help create an environment that maximizes their focus and productivity. You or teachers can offer suggestions based on what you've seen work well for your child at home or school.

My child made a plan but then forgot to follow it.

Be sure to tell your child, “Good job making a plan!”. Remind them to keep a copy of their Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet somewhere they'll easily see it. They can try setting a timer or alarm for the start times they chose, or ask you to give them a friendly reminder. Your child can also brush up on their memory skills (ADHD Skill 5, How to Remember What I Need to Do) and time management (ADHD Skill 8, How to Manage My Time) and see if using these skills together helps them reach their goals.

If your child's difficulty with planning and organization gets in their way at school, home, or with friends, they may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help

WHAT IS HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF?

- ▶ How to Organize My Stuff is a set of strategies to help your child arrange their belongings and environment in an orderly way. This can help them do everyday things more easily like keep their room clean, organize their backpack or desk, and keep track of their homework assignments and school papers.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, your child will get better at staying organized in their daily life and spend less time looking for things or playing "catch up". Being organized can help your child do better at school and home and feel good about themself.



HERE'S HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR STUFF

You can introduce this skill by saying, "We are going to try a new way to help you organize your stuff. Let's read through this list of strategies together and pick a few for you to try." Go through the ideas below to help your child get more organized. Depending on your child's age, some strategies may work better than others.

1

Give everything a home.

If you find that your room or belongings are usually messy or your things end up in piles, give each item a specific storage spot or "home" (e.g., clothes in closet or dresser, toys on shelf, backpack on hook). Use organizational tools if you can, such as boxes/bins, drawers, files, trays, or shelves. If possible, label your spaces so you remember where things go (e.g., drawer labeled "school supplies"). After you use an object, put it back in its "home" so you don't create clutter.

Example: When she gets home from school, Annie puts her shoes and coat in the hallway closet and her lunch bag on the kitchen counter. Before bed, she places her backpack by the front door so she remembers to take it to school.

2

Use a planner or agenda.

If you forget what homework you have or tend to turn assignments in late, using a planner can help. Keep track of important dates, homework assignments, social events, and extracurricular activities by writing them down in one place.

Example: At the end of each class, Jacob writes his homework assignment and its due date down in his planner.

3

Try color-coding.

If it's hard to distinguish between different groups of belongings, try sorting them by color. You can use different color notebooks and folders for each subject, or write assignments for each subject in a different color pen.

Example: Sophia always puts new/unfinished homework assignments in her red folder, completed homework in her blue folder, and papers for her parents in her green folder.

4

Set a deadline for getting tasks done.

If tasks often feel rushed or “last minute”, set deadlines to reduce your stress. You can use due dates (e.g., school assignment due on Monday), a deadline you or your parents choose (e.g., clean room by dinnertime), or blocks of time (e.g., do task A for 20 minutes, then move on to task B for 10 minutes). Being creative can help: for instance, try putting away as many clothes as you can before 3 songs are over.

Example: Jeff set a timer for 15 minutes, then put away as many of his toys as he could before the timer buzzed. He took a 5-minute break, then used the same strategy to sort his art supplies for another 15 minutes.

5

Schedule “clean up time”.

If your backpack, desk, or locker are often full and it’s hard to find what you need, work with your parents and teachers to set regular times to clean out those spaces so they don’t get too cluttered or

Example: Every Friday, Kiera’s teacher spends a few minutes helping her clear out her desk by throwing away unnecessary papers and trash. Every Sunday, her parents help her clean out her backpack to get ready for the next week.

6

Ask your parents or teachers to support you.

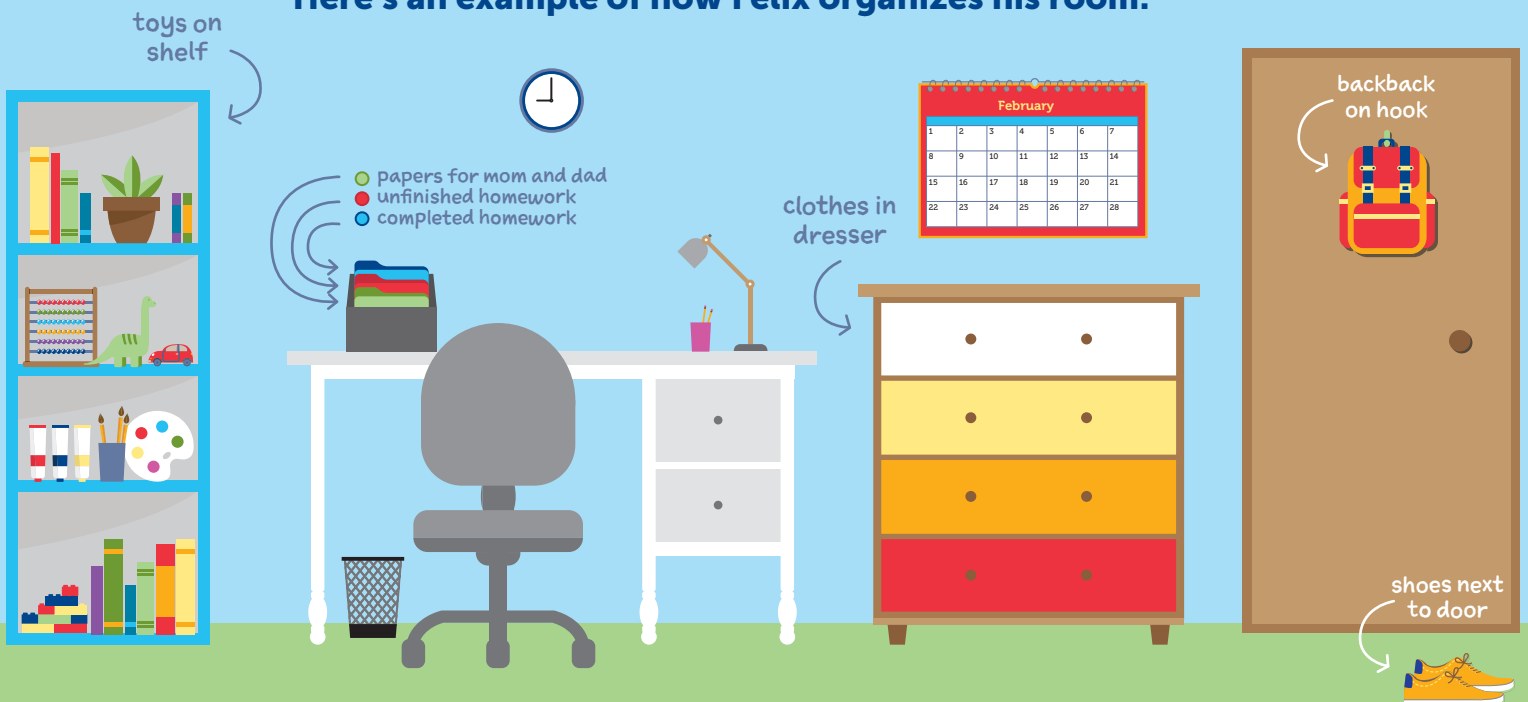
When first trying these strategies, share them with your parent and teacher so they can help you practice. For example, a parent can go through your backpack with you and check that everything you need is in there (and also help you clear out whatever you no longer need!). Similarly, your teacher can remind you to write assignments in your planner, check that you wrote them down correctly, and ensure that you are taking home everything you need that day. Your parents and teachers can also give you suggestions for new strategies, help you improve ones that aren’t working, and support you in becoming more independent.

7

Reward yourself.

If you’re working hard to stay organized, choose how you will treat yourself. If you’re not sure what is allowed or appropriate, ask your parents. Be sure to give yourself a pat on the back for working hard and doing more on your own!

Here’s an example of how Felix organizes his room:



PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF TIPS



ADHD Skill 7

HOW CAN ORGANIZING MY STUFF HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When your child has ADHD, it can be harder to stay organized. For instance, your child may have a messy bedroom, lose track of assignments or belongings, or forget to bring home important papers. You may find that there are piles of clothes around their room, their backpack is full of papers, or it's hard for them to find a pen or notebook to use in class.
- ▶ This can mean they take a long time to complete easy tasks, or it is challenging to do the things they need to do, like homework or chores. Your child, your family, and/or your child's teachers may find this frustrating or annoying.
- ▶ How to Organize My Stuff gives your child helpful strategies to improve their organization. By practicing this skill, your child can establish better routines and feel successful at home and school.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

Organizing is hard, and everything usually turns out okay in the end. They want to know why they should bother?

It can take hard work and time to become more organized. Encourage your child to think about their goals and how disorganization may make it harder to achieve them. For example, do they wish they didn't lose as many papers or possessions? Would it feel good to turn things in on time? What would it be like to know where their things are when they need them? Is there any benefit to you nagging them less about their messy room or losing things? See if your child can identify whether there are advantages to trying a new strategy or two. Then see if these new strategies help them to do well and feel better!

My child starts to organize their stuff, and then they get distracted. It's hard for them to finish anything.

Think about when your child will best be able to try new organizational strategies. For example, pick a time of day when they have the most energy or focus. Try to limit their distractions by turning off the TV and putting away their phone. They can start with a smaller task, like cleaning out one drawer, one section of their backpack, or one side of their desk. Check in on them in case they need help, and encourage them to take breaks as needed so they don't get overwhelmed. You and your child's teachers can offer more suggestions based on what you've seen work well for them at home or school.

When I ask my child to organize their things, they say it's too hard to do a big task like cleaning their room. It's so messy, they don't know where to start! When tackling a big task, help your child think of ways to break it down so it feels less overwhelming (see ADHD Skill 6 on How to Get Things Done for tips). For example, they can split their bedroom into four sections and clean one at a time. Once their room is clean, have them save a little time each day to straighten up. For example, each day they can spend five minutes putting things away, put away at least five things, or clean off one area, such as their nightstand. Remind them to reward themselves for their hard work!

These strategies sound helpful, but it's hard to know which ones my child should use.

Learning new skills can be challenging for any child! Remember they don't need to do all of these at once. Your child can start by trying one of these strategies and seeing how it goes. If possible, you or your child's teachers can try the new skills out with them the first few times. Kindly offer helpful ideas about which techniques are best for your child and ways to improve their process.

If your child's difficulty with organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, they may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



ADHD Skill 8

WHAT IS HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME?

- ▶ How to Manage My Time helps you make calculate how much time you need to do tasks and do them on time. Practicing this skill can help you stay on schedule, complete your daily routines, and meet your goals.
- ▶ The strategies below help you 1) figure out how long it takes you to complete tasks, and 2) organize your time in order to get them done. Try them out to improve your time management!
- ▶ Depending on your child's age, some strategies may work better than others. Try them out to improve your child's time management!

HERE'S HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

You can introduce this skill by saying, "It can be hard to know how much time we need to do things. Let's read through this list of strategies together and see if they help you manage your time."

- 1 Understand Your Timing.** To manage your time, you first need to know how long it takes you to do different tasks.
 - a If you're unsure or find that your guesses are usually wrong, play our **Check Your Time game**. Using our list of quick activities, write down how long you think each task will take, time yourself doing each one, and then compare your predicted time with your actual time. Add your own activity ideas to the game, focusing on those tasks where you often need more time than you expect, or where you find yourself running out of time to finish.
 - b As you do tasks in the future, **time yourself** to continue improving your awareness of how long it takes you to do things.
- 2 Plan for Homework.** Before starting your homework, do some **quick calculations** to plan your time.
 - a For example, if you have 3 hours to complete your homework after dinner and 3 classes with homework assignments, you have about 1 hour to spend on each subject. If you finish any assignments ahead of schedule, you can use your extra time to check your work or start the next one.
 - b If you have trouble paying attention or doing a task for a long time, remember to schedule in **short breaks** (e.g., a 5-minute break after completing each homework assignment).
- 3 Make Schedules.** Use a **calendar** to keep track of your homework assignments, extracurricular activities, and social events. You can color code to match each type of activity or use separate calendars.
 - a At the beginning of each school year, **write important dates** in your calendar (e.g., first and last day of school, breaks and vacations, school dance, etc.). Review these with your parents and/or teachers so you're all on the same page.
 - b Make a **weekly schedule** at the beginning of each week. Include the times you have to wake up, leave for school, get home, and go to bed. Add that week's appointments, activities, and social commitments. **Review your schedule** every day to see what's coming next. See our example and fill in the blank one for yourself.

- 4 Increase Your Motivation.** Identify a small way to **reward yourself** for managing your time well. This can be a challenging skill to master, so be sure to acknowledge your hard work.
- a** You can also increase your motivation to stay on schedule by considering the **consequences** of not managing time well. For instance, if you fall behind in the morning, you may end up getting marked tardy, which can lead to getting a detention!
- 5 Anticipate Challenges.** Think about **obstacles** that may keep you from following your schedule or plan. For example, if you tend to forget your planner at home, you may need a reminder to put it in your backpack at night. Or, if you have the hardest time staying on schedule in the morning, you may need to leave extra time to complete your tasks before school. Your parents and teachers may have ideas too, so talk this over with them.
- a** **Set reminders** to help you stick to your schedule. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask others to help you, or use a calendar app that sends automatic reminders when something is coming up in your schedule. Some families find that sharing their calendars makes it easier to keep track of everyone's activities.
 - b** At the end of the day, review your schedule and **cross off** everything you were able to do. Notice where you successfully managed your time, and give yourself a pat on the back! For those things you weren't able to do, try to identify why. See if there is anything you can change to get them done next time.
 - c** Don't be shy about **asking for help** when you need it. Everyone can use support with challenging tasks. Your family, teachers, or friends can play an important role in helping you practice the strategies above. Together, you can work hard to improve your time management and reach your goals.

You can do it! Let's review the 5 simple steps to Managing Your Time:

1. Understand your timing
2. Plan for homework
3. Make schedules
4. Increase your motivation
5. Anticipate challenges

CHECK YOUR TIME GAME

Predict how long it will take you to do each of these short tasks, then time yourself doing them. To make it more fun, you can also ask others what their predictions are. Add your own activity ideas too!

Task	How long do I think this will take?	How long did it actually take?
Brush your teeth		
Read 2 pages in a textbook		
Choose clothes for tomorrow		
Eat breakfast		
Write your address 5 times		
Take a shower		
Put on your shoes		
Do 10 jumping jacks		
Vacuum a room		
Sing the alphabet		
Pack your lunch		

JESSICA'S WEEKLY CALENDAR

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up	6:30	6:30	6:30	6:30	6:30	8:30	8:30
Leave for school	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30		
Get home	3:00	4:30	3:00	4:30	3:00		
Bedtime	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30		
Appointments						dentist at 11:00	
Activities	band tryouts 4th period	softball practice 3-5		softball practice 3-5			dinner at grandma's 6-8
Fun							movies with melissa and Alicia 1-3

MY WEEKLY CALENDAR

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME TIPS



HOW CAN MANAGING MY TIME HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When your child has ADHD, it can be challenging for them to pay attention, focus on one task at a time, and keep track of their time. Assignments or chores may take longer than they expect, it may be hard to get things done when they're supposed to, or they may find that they're always behind schedule, even if they wear a watch.
- ▶ This can lead your child to feel frustrated at school, get into arguments at home, or miss out on fun activities. Using the strategies on these worksheets, they can become better at using and controlling their time, which will help them be more independent. Over time, practicing these skills can help your child stress less and succeed more!



COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

My child tries to set aside enough time, but it always takes them longer than they expect to do things.

This happens to many people with ADHD, so your child is not alone! Have them play the Check Your Time game to learn how much time they need for small tasks, and then have them time themselves completing a task that usually takes them longer than they predict. This will give you both valuable information about how accurate their time estimates are. You can also offer guidance or ask their teachers for ideas based on how much time you've seen your child need to do things. Your child can use this information to improve their future planning.

Some of the other strategies in this packet can also help your child get better at managing time, such as How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 6) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 7). If these ideas are new to your family, they may be challenging for your child at first, but with practice children find that these skills become easier and easier to use!

My child says they have no idea how long it takes them to do things, and nothing ever feels urgent. But, we are always fighting about them taking too long or not taking things seriously.

It can be frustrating to have trouble keeping track of time. Many people, even those without ADHD, find this hard to do. See if your child is willing to try some of the strategies we suggest here. Encourage them to notice if changing the way they manage their time helps them understand how long it takes to do things, follow a schedule, and complete tasks.

My child now sets up their schedule and plans their time well, but they aren't motivated to get any of it done.

It can be hard to stay motivated to do hard or boring things! Help your child identify what they'll gain from being better at time management. For example, can it help them get their homework done faster so they have more time for fun? Will it decrease how often they argue with you about your schedule? It can also help to identify the reward they'll earn when they're able to follow their schedule (step 4, reward yourself). Even a short break to do something they enjoy can feel great after working hard!



WHAT IS HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF?

- ▶ The challenges children with ADHD experience can make it easy for them to get down on themselves. How to Feel Good About Myself is a set of strategies to help your child be their own cheerleader, feel better about tackling difficult tasks, and remember that everyone faces challenges. These techniques also help your child notice if they are being hard on themselves and then take steps to feel better.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, your child will remember what makes them wonderful and special, even when they're having a hard time.

HERE'S HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF

You can introduce this skill by saying, "All kids have times when they feel down on themselves. When that happens, it's important to remember what makes you special. Feeling good about yourself can help you do better at school, home, and with friends! Let's go through this list of strategies together and see if they help you feel better."

- 1 Make a list of your special qualities.** Each person has traits that make them unique. Make a list of 10 talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your parents, teachers, and friends for more ideas based on what they like about you. Look at this list when you're feeling down or having a hard time remembering what's great about you.
- 2 Be kind to yourself.** If you find yourself feeling annoyed or frustrated, remember that having a positive attitude can make a big difference. Remind yourself that you can try to solve problems, improve the way you do things, and give your best effort each day. Everyone has things they are good at and things they find challenging. Try to focus on your strengths and treat yourself like you would treat a good friend.
- 3 Remember that your thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected.** How you think about a situation impacts how you feel about it, and how you feel about it effects how you act in that situation. You may not be able to control the way your brain works sometimes or change a challenging situation, but you can decide how you think about it in order to feel better and do better.
- 4 Give yourself a pep talk before starting a hard task.** When preparing to do something challenging, give yourself an encouraging pep talk. Follow the strategies in these worksheets, then remind yourself how hard you're working. Visualize yourself successfully completing your hard task. (E.g., Before Leah studies for her math tests, she tells herself, "I can do it! If I put my mind to it, I can do my best on this test!".)
- 5 If a task feels too challenging, take a break.** Taking a short break from a difficult task can make it feel less frustrating or overwhelming. Take a few minutes to stretch, listen to some music, take some deep breaths, or have a light snack. See if you feel better and are ready to try again.
- 6 If you feel unsure or stuck, ask for help.** Remember you don't have to go it alone. Make a short list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed. This can include parents, teachers, friends, and other supportive people in your life. Turn to them for understanding and encouragement when things feel hard.
- 7 Don't give up!** Sometimes the first strategy we try doesn't work. If that happens, try another one (such as the other skills in this guide). Remind yourself not everyone gets it on the first try!
- 8 Track your progress.** As you work through the skills in this guide, be sure to notice if you are feeling and doing better. If so, give yourself credit for your effort and be proud of your hard work!

CHILD WORKSHEET: HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF



I'm a good older sister

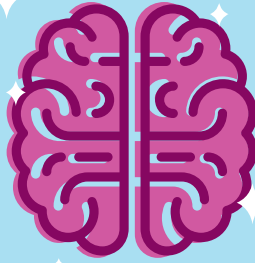
I'm good at science!

I love my family

I'm great at Minecraft

I take care of my dog

I try hard at soccer



MY SPECIAL QUALITIES

Use this space to make a list of your special qualities. These can be talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your caregivers, teachers, and friends for more ideas based on what they like about you!

1

6

2

7

3

8

4

9

5

10

MY SUPPORTERS

Use this space to brainstorm a list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.





HOW CAN FEELING GOOD ABOUT MYSELF HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Sometimes children with ADHD get frustrated with themselves for having a hard time paying attention, sitting still, doing homework, or getting along with others. This can lead them to think negative thoughts about themselves, avoid important tasks, or argue with family, friends, or teachers.
- ▶ Feeling Good About Myself provides strategies to increase your child's self-esteem and help them use coping strategies when they're feeling badly.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

When a task is hard, my child gets overwhelmed and wants to give up.

Completing difficult tasks can be challenging! When a task feels hard, encourage them to give themselves credit for the effort they've made so far. Then, they can take a short break to do something enjoyable, such as doing some light stretching, watching a short video, or getting a snack. They can also practice relaxation skills, which can help them calm both their body and their mind. See if these strategies help your child get back on track and ready to try again. If you find that your child is avoiding their work because it feels too hard, offer more help or talk to their teachers to get extra support.

Sometimes when my child thinks negative thoughts about themselves, they get "stuck" feeling badly.

This happens to almost everyone at some point. Children with ADHD can find it even harder to control their thoughts. Remind them that instead of beating themselves up, they can try to focus on their strengths and reset. Have them to read over their list of 10 special qualities, do something fun or soothing, or talk to someone supportive to get a new perspective. If you notice that they are thinking the same negative thoughts over and over, encourage them to remember that they're working hard and trying their best.

My child says they hate having ADHD! Everything feels harder for them.

Remember that there are many kids and adults with ADHD, so your child is not alone. A lot of people with ADHD are successful at reaching their goals. Using the strategies in this guide can make things easier and more manageable for your child at school and home. The more they practice them, the easier the skills will be to use on a daily basis and the better they will feel!

School can be especially challenging for those with ADHD, but school is not the only thing one can be great at doing. Remind your child that they can take steps to do better in school and that they also have their own special talents and skills.

If your child is feeling badly about needing extra support, remind them that getting help means they are doing everything they can to improve and succeed. This means they are committed to being the best "them" that they can be!

If feeling down about themselves gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, your child may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS **FOR ADHD**

Teens 13-17



GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT

FOR ADHD



INTRODUCTION

Teens with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, often have difficulty paying attention, sitting still, and/or acting impulsively. They can have trouble learning, getting along with their peers, and behaving appropriately at school or home. These challenges can impact teens' self-esteem and increase the likelihood they develop depression, anxiety, and/or disruptive behavior symptoms. If you have ADHD, some of these may be familiar to you. Working with your primary care team and your parents can help you manage your ADHD symptoms.

The most effective interventions for managing ADHD symptoms in teens typically involve a combination of medication, behavioral techniques, and educational strategies. In this guide, we focus on strengthening behavioral and educational skills by improving your ability to plan, organize, and solve problems, skills that are commonly referred to as executive functions.

There are tips and activities for you and advice for your parents. We find that the skills are most effective when used in order. The worksheets in this guide will explain the skills and help you try them at home. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many teens have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help you and your family, instructions for how to use the strategy at home, and a list of common questions and concerns teens usually ask, along with our answers. Work through the guide along with your parents and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit you best. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for you, keep at it until it the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will get to make these skills and exercises a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you need any additional support for management of ADHD symptoms. Good luck!

FOR TEENS (WITH HELP FROM PARENTS)



Skill 1

How to Solve Problems

This skill teaches you to brainstorm different ways of solving a problem and, before taking action, evaluate which solutions are most likely to lead to success.



Skill 2

How to Remember What I Need To Do

This technique helps you keep track of important information, such as deadlines for school assignments.



Skill 3

How to Get Things Done

This skill teaches you to plan ahead in order to start and complete tasks without getting sidetracked, such as doing homework assignments or chores.



Skill 4

How to Organize My Stuff

This strategy helps you establish organizational systems, such as organizing your bedroom, backpack, or schoolwork.



Skill 5

How to Manage My Time

These worksheets help you create schedules, stay on task, and meet deadlines.



Skill 6

How to Feel Good About Myself

These exercises provide ways to identify your strengths and boost your self-esteem.



What is Problem Solving for ADHD?

- ▶ If you are having a hard time paying attention, staying organized, or controlling your energy, you may experience problems because of these difficulties. Using a positive problem solving strategy can help you more effectively deal with your daily challenges and concerns.
- ▶ You may be frustrated if you are having a hard time dealing with problems, big or small. This can make you feel bad about yourself or cause you to get in trouble with your parents or teachers. Problem solving strategies can help you change that!
- ▶ These worksheets teach a simple plan for solving problems. You will learn to:
 1. Name the problem
 2. Identify 3 possible solutions
 3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
 4. Pick one to try
 5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution.



Here's How to Make a Problem Solving Plan at Home

Everyone can use help solving problems. When our problems make us feel bad about ourselves or get us into trouble, we sometimes need strategies that make it easier to deal with challenges. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

- 1 What's the problem?** You may be feeling overwhelmed and not know exactly how to describe the issue you need to handle. Clearly stating the problem as a first step helps you really focus on what it is so you can then figure out exactly what you need to do to solve it. Try to be as specific as possible (e.g., "My friend is being rude to me and that's making me mad" is better than "My friend makes me mad" or "I'm mad").
- 2 What are 3 possible solutions?** Think of 3 possible solutions to your problem so you have some good options to pick from, but not so many that you are overwhelmed with choices. Don't worry about how good or bad they are yet. You will evaluate them in the next part.
- 3 What are one good thing and one bad thing about each solution?** This step requires you to name one positive outcome and one negative outcome that could occur if you choose each solution. This step will help you consider the benefits and challenges of each choice. This is an essential step because you are gathering important information for your plan!
- 4 Pick one!** This is your chance to take charge as you pick which solution you want to try out first.
- 5 How did it go?** After you follow through with applying a solution, it's time to evaluate it. This will help you learn what the best options for different problems are, and you can refer back to these tested solutions as needed. If your first solution isn't successful in solving the problem, you can try a different one or start a completely new solution brainstorming session. Don't give up!

The next section puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart and shows you some examples. Go over them by yourself or with a parent. Try to solve the practice problems and then create a plan for one of your own problems.

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 1: I didn't pay attention in math class today because I was bored. Now I don't understand today's homework.

What's the Problem?	"I don't understand the homework."		
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1	Don't do the homework.	I can play videogames tonight because I'll have less to do	I'll get a zero.
Solution 2	Text my friend for help.	She is good at math and can help me.	She might not respond.
Solution 3	Talk to my teacher tomorrow and ask for extra help.	My teacher will explain what I missed.	She might still give me a zero for today's homework.
My Choice	Text my friend for help.		
How'd it go?	My friend texted me back. She called and helped me. I understood and did the homework.		

Example 2: My parents told me to start studying for my science test before going out with my friends. They kept reminding me, but I didn't remember to do it and failed the test. They're so mad. This keeps happening to me.

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 3: "I've known that we had an English project due for a while, but I just couldn't get much done on it because I was so overwhelmed by all of the steps. Now it's due in three days and I don't know what to do."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

Example 4: "My friends stopped inviting me places because I was always getting grounded for bad grades. I've been working hard on using my skills and my grades are improving. I have permission to hang out with them again, but I don't think they like me anymore."

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 5: "I really like when we have a substitute teacher because class is really easy those days, but sometimes I goof off too much and get us all in trouble. My friends are starting to get mad, and now the principal is saying we have to have a meeting!"

What's the Problem?			
	One Good Thing	One Bad Thing	
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

BLANK PROBLEM SOLVING PLANS

Here are a couple Blank Problem Solving Plans. Make copies and use it to help guide your decision making when problems arise. Your parents can help you as needed.



Boston Children's Hospital
Until every child is well™



ADHD Skill 1

What's the Problem?		
	One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1		
Solution 2		
Solution 3		
My Choice		
How'd it go?		

What's the Problem?		
	One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1		
Solution 2		
Solution 3		
My Choice		
How'd it go?		

TEEN HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



ADHD Skill 1

How Can Problem Solving for ADHD Help Me?

- ▶ Your difficulty with skills like attention, organization, memory, and/or energy level may get in the way of you dealing with challenges and solving everyday problems. Many teens feel like this sometimes.
- ▶ Problems may feel too big to solve, you may not feel motivated to address them, or you may think that you aren't good at solving problems so you shouldn't even try. You may also find that you try to solve a problem, but give up easily if you aren't successful right away. The good news is that having a strategy to solve problems can really help!
- ▶ The problem solving technique described here can provide a clear way to help you think through challenges, brainstorm options, notice what works and what doesn't, and keep trying if your first attempt doesn't work. Using this method can help you solve problems, have more positive outcomes, and feel better about yourself.
- ▶ Making and following a problem solving plan can also reduce frustration for you and your parents and teachers by helping you to be more independent. This plan ensures that the adults in your life are not just telling you what to do, but instead supporting and guiding you to overcome challenges on your own. Everyone can benefit from solving problems in their lives; these skills can help you and the rest of your family as well!

Common Teen Concerns

I don't have problems that need solving.

It can be hard to notice which challenges or frustrations can benefit from problem solving skills. Go over past situations that caused you to feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion, or see if your parents or teachers can share their ideas. These are great opportunities to practice your problem solving. Let your supportive adults know that if they notice a situation where you can use these skills in daily life, they can point it out to you (e.g., "You told me you were frustrated at lunch because you forgot to bring your lunch with you even though you packed it last night. Do you think you can make a Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

I can't think of any solutions.

Think about what might be getting in the way. You might be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Ask a parent or friend for one example solution. Often, once you hear one idea, you can get creative and come up with solutions of your own. Try to be creative and think critically about how positive and beneficial each potential solution might be; however you don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. You can make mistakes and ask your others for help as needed. Review our practice examples, both to remind yourself of some good options for common concerns as well as the fact that you came up with great solutions for the examples!

When I try to use my problem solving plan, I get really frustrated and upset. Sometimes problem solving can feel really overwhelming! Feeling upset is okay. Your emotions are giving you a message that you are having a tough time and need support. Take a break to do something relaxing or fun, then try again. You can also ask for support using your problem solving plan if you need it. If you are still having a hard time using problem solving skills, check in with your parents or primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is Remembering Things I Need to Do?

- ▶ Remembering Things I Need to Do is a skill that helps with your memory and planning. It involves making “to do lists” that help you remember what you need to do and when you need to do it.
- ▶ By developing a system for tracking tasks, assignments, and due dates, you will improve your memory and get things done on time. Follow the instructions below to make lists of what you need to do today, this week, and this weekend.

Here's How to Remember Things You Need to Do

Sometimes it's hard to remember all of the things we need to do. Here is a new way to keep track of the things you have to do and when you have to do them. This will help improve your memory and planning skills. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

- 1 Your goal is to **make checklists** of the things you need to do today, this week, and this weekend. As you make your lists, be specific about each task so you know exactly what you need to do. After you complete a task, be sure to check it off.
- 2 First, pull out a copy of these **three worksheets**:
 - Things I Need to Do Today
 - Things I Need to Do This Week
 - Things I Need to Do This Weekend
- 3 Start by filling in the “**Things I Need to Do Today**” worksheet. Include tasks that are time-sensitive or must be done today. Look at George’s list for an example.
- 4 Next, use the “**Things I Need to Do This Week**” worksheet to make a list of the things you have to do this week. Include tasks you have to complete on a regular basis, such as making your bed or bringing your homework assignments home. Look at Molly’s list for an example.
- 5 Now, use the “**Things I Need to Do This Weekend**” worksheet to make a list of the things you need to do over the weekend. It can be harder to remember weekend tasks when you’re not in the usual routine of a school day. Making a list for these days can be just as important. Look at Sam’s list for an example.
- 6 **Set reminders to check your lists a few times a day.** Set reminders to see what you still need to do. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask parents/teachers to remind you, and/or stick a note where you will see it, like in your locker or planner.
- 7 **Keep copies of your lists where you will see them.** For example, having copies in your backpack and on your refrigerator will give you multiple reminders. You can also keep these lists in a planner, notebook, or on your phone. Be sure to put the lists where you can easily access them and look at them throughout the day.
- 8 **If it's hard to remember everything you need to do, ask for help.** If you're not sure what to include on your list or are having a hard time using the worksheets, ask your caregivers, teachers, or friends/classmates for support.
- 9 **Notice when you're doing a good job.** Take a moment to feel proud of your effort to stay on top of what you need to do. Give yourself some praise for getting things done!

Teen To Do List Examples

ADHD Skill 2: Put your tasks on the To Do Lists below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

Things I Need to Do Today: George	Done?
Turn in English paper	✓
Give book back to Hannah	✓
Turn in Math homework	✓
Submit Biology project outline	
Find out where track tryouts are	
Go to band practice	

Things I Need to Do This Week: Molly	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Make my bed	✓	✓			
Eat breakfast	✓	✓			
Put homework in backpack	✓	✓			
Get lunch out of fridge	✓				
Bring homework assignments home	✓				
Do homework before watching TV	✓				

Things I Need to Do This Weekend: Sam	Saturday	Sunday
Make my bed	✓	
Eat breakfast	✓	
Do chores (take out trash, sweep up kitchen, clean my room)	✓	
Work on History project		
Do Science homework		
Get baseball equipment for practice (Saturday at 11)		
Movies with John and Hector (Saturday at 7)		



How Can Remembering What I Need to Do Help Me?

- ▶ When you have symptoms of ADHD, it can be hard to keep track of important information, such as what you need to do to get ready for school or the due dates for your assignments.
- ▶ This makes it challenging to do things when you're supposed to. You may notice that adults are frequently reminding you what you need to do, or asking you if you've completed different tasks. This can feel discouraging and be frustrating for everyone.
- ▶ Remembering Things I Need to Do helps you make a system to stay on top of your daily and weekly tasks. Over time, you will need fewer reminders from other people and feel good about staying on top of things.

Common Teen Concerns

I'm not sure what to put on my list.

If you're having a hard time remembering what you need to do, aren't sure what to put on your list, or find it challenging to use the worksheets, review our examples and/or ask for help. Your parents, teachers, and friends/classmates may have some good ideas based on what they know you need to do. The more you practice, the easier it will get.

I make all of my lists, but then I forget to look at them.

At first it can be challenging to remember you made lists and need to refer back to them! It can help to set reminders for yourself to look at your lists and see what you still need to do. Set alarms on your phone or watch, ask others to remind you, and/or leave reminder notes for yourself somewhere you will see them, like in your locker or planner.

It also helps to make copies of your list and keep them somewhere you tend to go to or look during the day. For instance, you can keep a copy in your backpack, on your phone, and in your notebook.

I look at my lists and can't figure out what to do first.

One method is to start with the easiest task. Another is to start with the one with the earliest deadline. Tasks on the What I Need to Do Today checklist usually have to be completed before those on the What I Need to Do This Week or Weekend checklists.

My parents always bug me about making my lists and checking things off. It's annoying. Sometimes family members can be eager to participate in your skill-building. It may help to calmly explain to your family the best ways to help support your use of this memory tool. For example, you could ask that they can offer you some encouragement in the mornings before the school rush, or check in with you once or twice during homework time, but not ask you about the lists repeatedly or throughout the day. Decide what will help you get the support you need without being overwhelmed. And remember, as you successfully make and complete your "to do lists", you will show them you need fewer reminders to do this independently.

Even after I make my lists, it's hard for me to follow through on doing my tasks. Many teens with ADHD feel this way. Take a look at the handouts on How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 3), How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 4), and How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 5). Your parents can help you try them out. See if practicing these skills helps you improve your ability to start and complete tasks, get organized, and meet deadlines.

If your difficulty with memory and organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, you may need additional support. Check in with your parents or talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is How to Get Things Done?

- ▶ How to Get Things Done is a skill that helps you plan, start, and finish assignments and tasks. It involves looking over your “to do” list, choosing a task, making a schedule, and overcoming obstacles to reach your goals.
- ▶ By making a careful plan to tackle a task, you can improve your organization, attention, and follow through skills. Use the guide below to make your plan and get things done!

Here's How to Get Things Done

Everyone has times when it's hard to get things done. Here is a new strategy you can try. Your goal here is to make a plan to complete a task and then follow your roadmap to finish it. As you do each of the steps below, fill in the Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. Your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1

Look at your “to do” list(s) and **pick a specific task** to complete. If you need help making a “to-do” list, see ADHD Skill 2 (How to Remember What I Need to Do) to make checklists of your daily and weekly tasks.

2

If possible, **break your task up into “mini tasks”**. Many goals can feel less difficult or overwhelming if you approach them one step at a time. Think of all the steps you need to take to reach your goal, then split your task up into smaller, more manageable “mini tasks”. Be sure to decide what **order** the steps go in.

Example: Alicia split her paper up into 6 steps: 1) finding research articles on her topic, 2) reading and highlighting the articles, 3) developing an initial outline for the paper, 4) writing a first draft, 5) editing and writing the final draft, 6) creating her bibliography.

3

Calculate **how long it will take** you to complete each step. Be sure to consider how much time you have. If you have trouble paying attention, it can help to **take short breaks** (5 minutes or less) after you complete each step.

Example: Between arriving home after school and dinnertime, Lucas had 3 hours to do homework. With homework in 3 subjects, he split his time into 1 hour/subject. He took a 5-minute stretching break in between the subjects, leaving him 55 minutes per subject. He used any extra time at the end to finish up assignments that needed more time.

4

Based on this, choose what time you plan to **start and stop** each step. Be sure to leave wiggle room and set realistic deadlines so you don't get discouraged.

Example: It usually takes Olivia at least 30 minutes to practice the piano, so she schedules 40 minutes to complete the task just in case she needs more time.

5

Identify what **materials you need**. Use a **timer** to stay on schedule and keep track of time.

Example: Alex needs her textbook, assignment outline, paper, pencil, and calculator to do her math homework. She also sets up a kitchen timer.

6

Think of **where** you will do this task. Choose a place where you can think clearly and focus.

Example: Jordan finds that when he has music or the TV on in the background, it takes him twice as long to finish his homework. He also puts his phone away so texts and social media don't distract him.

7

Choose **when** you will do your tasks. Think about your schedule and when you'll fit this in. If possible, it helps to do harder tasks during the time of day when you're most alert and clear-headed.

Example: Lily does her homework as soon as she gets home from school, before she gets too tired or hungry.

8

Plan **how to get help** if you need it. Identify who can provide extra support if you're not sure what to do or get stuck. The goal is to keep moving until you finish a task, so reach out for help if you're not sure what to do. Family, friends, teachers, and classmates can provide useful advice

Example: Ben finds homework easiest to do if he does it at his after school program, where there are tutors available.

9

Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're not sure what to choose or what is allowed.

10

Follow your roadmap. Now that you've made a great plan, be sure to follow it. Keep your Roadmap worksheet where you will see it, then follow it until you've completed your task. **Make notes** on what went well, or any adjustments you want to make so your next task goes even more smoothly.

11

Pat yourself on the back for getting something done. Be sure to take a moment to notice how hard you're working!



TEEN ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 5

Follow the steps below to create your roadmap; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

Studying for my history test on Friday

2 Define Steps

What steps do I have to take? Write them in order.

Step 1	Read chapters 6 and 7 in my textbook
Step 2	Review my notes from class
Step 3	Memorize important dates in chapters 6 and 7
Step 4	Take practice quiz

3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?	2.5 hrs
How much time to I have per step/task?	2.5 hrs/4 tasks = ~38 min/task
Time I need for step 1	45 min
Time I need for step 2	30 min
Time I need for step 3	45 min
Time I need for step 4	20 min
Total Time	2 hrs, 20 min
Time Left Over	10 min

4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1	Monday	3:00	4:00	5 min between chapters
Step 2	Tuesday	3:00	3:35	5 min if needed
Step 3	Wednesday	3:00	4:10	5 min between chapters
Step 4	Thursday	3:00	4:00	Try quiz without break

5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	Textbook, notes, practice quiz, paper, pen, highlighter, timer
Where will I do it?	Dining room table after school
What distractions can I eliminate?	Put away electronics
What will I do if I need help?	Ask Silvia or Josh; check in with Mrs. Young; ask mom or dad to quiz me
What is my reward for working hard?	One episode of TV show on M/W; ice cream sandwich on T; video game on Th
Notes for next time	It was helpful to take a break in between reading chapters in the textbook

TEEN ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 5

Follow the steps below to create your roadmap; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

2 Define Steps

What steps do I have to take? Write them in order.

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	

3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?	
How much time to I have per step/task?	
Time I need for step 1	
Time I need for step 2	
Time I need for step 3	
Time I need for step 4	
Total Time	
Time Left Over	

4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1				
Step 2				
Step 3				
Step 4				

5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	
Where will I do it?	
What distractions can I eliminate?	
What will I do if I need help?	
What is my reward for working hard?	
Notes for next time	



How Can Getting Things Done Help Me?

- ▶ When you have ADHD, it can be challenging to get things done. For example, you may have a hard time getting started on a task, figuring out what to focus on, or staying on track once you get going. You may notice that you miss important deadlines, or take a long time to complete an assignment, only to do things partway.
- ▶ This makes it difficult to check tasks off your “to do” list, even when you know what you need to do. This can be frustrating and make it harder for you to enjoy school and feel good about yourself.
- ▶ How to Get Things Done helps you make a plan to complete a task and then follow that plan. By practicing this skill, you can develop better habits, get things done more easily, and feel proud of reaching your goals.

Common Teen Concerns

I have a hard time figuring out how to break a task into smaller steps.

Ask yourself, what do I need to do first? That means you should think about what absolutely has to happen so that you can get started. Then ask, what do I need to do next to keep moving toward my goal of completing the task? You can also try thinking of all the steps you need to take, then going through and putting them in order. If you're still having a hard time, ask a parent, teacher, or friend for help.

It always takes me longer than I expect to finish something, so it's hard to stick to my plan.

Many tasks take longer to complete than we think! It can be challenging at first to know how much time you need to do a task, so your time estimates may be inaccurate. If you have multiple tasks to complete, it may help to split the time evenly between them, then use any extra time to finish any incomplete tasks. Use the tips in How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 5) to get a better sense of how much time you need to do things. This will help you make a more realistic schedule.

I know what I need to do and made my plan, but I don't have all the materials I need.

Many teens with ADHD have trouble keeping track of their things, especially their school assignments and belongings. It helps to think ahead of time about what you will need to do a task. You can also ask someone to double check that you've thought of everything. Write these materials down on your Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. If you need extra help with organization, the worksheets in ADHD Skill 4 (How to Organize My Stuff) can help.

I get distracted while trying to get things done.

Try to limit distractions (e.g., TV, phone, computer, etc.) and choose an environment that maximizes your focus and productivity. Ask your parents and teachers for suggestions based on what they've seen work well for you at home or school.

I made a plan, but I then forgot to follow it.

Good job making a plan! Remember to keep a copy of your Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet somewhere you'll easily see it. Try setting a timer or alarm for the start times you chose, or ask someone to give you a friendly reminder. You can also brush up on your memory skills (ADHD Skill 2, How to Remember What I Need to Do) and time management (ADHD Skill 5, How to Manage My Time). See if using these skills together helps you reach your goals.

If your difficulty with planning and organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, you may need additional support. Check in with your parents or talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

TEEN HANDOUT: HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF



What is How to Organize My Stuff?

- ▶ How to Organize My Stuff is a set of strategies to help you arrange your belongings and environment in an orderly way. This can help you do things more easily like keep your room clean, organize your backpack or desk, and keep track of your homework assignments and belongings.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, you will get better at staying organized in your daily life and spend less time looking for things or playing “catch up”. Being organized can help you do better at school and home and feel good about yourself. Use the strategies below to get more organized!



Here's How to Organize Your Stuff

Everyone has times when it's hard to get things done. Here is a new strategy you can try. Your goal here is to make a plan to complete a task and then follow your roadmap to finish it. As you do each of the steps below, fill in the Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1

Give everything a home.

If you find that your room or belongings are usually messy or your things end up in piles, give each item a specific storage spot or “home” (e.g., clothes in closet or dresser, books on shelf, backpack on hook). Use organizational tools if you can, such as boxes/bins, drawers, files, trays, or shelves. If possible, label your spaces so you remember where things go (e.g., drawer labeled “school supplies”). After you use something, put it back in its “home” so you don't create clutter.

Example: When she gets home from school, Annie puts her shoes and coat in the hallway closet and her lunch bag on the kitchen counter. Before bed, she places her keys and backpack by the front door so she remembers to take them in the morning.

2

Use a planner or agenda.

If you forget what homework you have or tend to turn assignments in late, using a planner can help. Keep track of important dates, homework assignments, social events, and extracurricular activities by writing them down in one place.

Example: At the end of each class, Jacob writes his homework assignment and its due date down in his planner.

3

Try color-coding.

If it's hard to distinguish between different groups of belongings, try sorting them by color or space. You can use different color notebooks and folders for each subject, write assignments for each subject in a different color pen, or put papers for different subjects in different sections of a binder.

Example: Sophia always puts new/unfinished homework assignments in her red folder, completed homework in her blue folder, and papers for her parents in her green folder.

4

Set a deadline for getting tasks done.

If tasks often feel rushed or “last minute”, set deadlines to reduce your stress. You can use due dates (e.g., school assignment due on Monday), a deadline you or your parents choose (e.g., clean room by dinnertime), or blocks of time (e.g., do task A for 20 minutes, then move on to task B for 10 minutes). Being creative can help: for instance, try putting away as many clothes as you can before 3 songs are over.

Example: Jeff set a timer for 15 minutes, then put away as many of his toys as he could before the timer buzzed. He took a 5-minute break, then used the same strategy to sort his art supplies for another 15 minutes.

5

Schedule “clean up time”.

If your backpack, desk, or locker are often full and it’s hard to find what you need, work with your parents and teachers to set regular times to clean out those spaces so they don’t get too cluttered or

Example: Every Friday, Kiera’s teacher spends a few minutes helping her clear out her desk by throwing away unnecessary papers and trash. Every Sunday, her parents help her clean out her backpack to get ready for the next week.

6

Ask your parent or teachers to support you.

When first trying these strategies, share them with your parent and teacher so they can help you practice. For example, a parent can go through your backpack with you and check that everything you need is in there (and also help you clear out whatever you no longer need!). Similarly, your teacher can remind you to write assignments in your planner, check that you wrote them down correctly, and ensure that you are taking home everything you need that day. Your parents and teachers can also give you suggestions for new strategies, help you improve ones that aren’t working, and support you in becoming more independent.

7

Reward yourself.

If you’re working hard to stay organized, choose how you will treat yourself. If you’re not sure what is allowed or appropriate, ask your parents. Be sure to give yourself a pat on the back for working hard and doing more on your own!

Here’s an example of how Felix organizes his room:





How Can Organizing My Stuff Help Me?

- ▶ When you have ADHD, it can be hard to stay organized. For instance, you may have a messy bedroom, lose track of assignments or belongings, or forget to bring home important papers. You may find that there are piles of clothes around your room, your backpack is full of papers, or it's hard to find a pen or notebook to use in class.
- ▶ This can mean you take a long time to complete easy tasks, or it is challenging to do the things you need to do, like homework or chores. You, your family, and/or your teachers may find this frustrating or annoying.
- ▶ How to Organize My Stuff gives you helpful strategies to improve your organization. By practicing this skill, you can establish better routines and feel successful at home and school.

Common Teen Concerns

Organizing is hard, and everything usually turns out okay in the end. Why should I bother?

It can take hard work and time to become more organized. Think about your goals and how disorganization may make it harder to achieve them. Do you wish you didn't lose as many assignments or possessions? Would it feel good to turn things in on time? What would it be like to know where your things are when you need them? Is there any benefit to your parents nagging you less about your messy room or lost belongings? Think about whether there are advantages to trying a new strategy or two. Then see if these new strategies help you to do well and feel better!

I start to organize my stuff, and then I get distracted. It's hard to finish anything.

Think about when you'll best be able to try new organizational strategies. For example, pick a time of day when you have the most energy or focus. Try to limit distractions by turning off the TV and putting away your phone and computer. Start with a smaller task, like cleaning out one drawer, one section of your backpack, or one side of your desk. Take frequent breaks so you don't get overwhelmed. Ask parents and teachers for more suggestions based on what they've seen work well for you at home or school.

It's too hard to do a big task like cleaning my room. It's so messy, I don't know where to start!

When tackling a big task, think of ways to break it down so it feels less overwhelming (see ADHD Skill 3 on How to Get Things Done for tips). For example, you can split your bedroom into four sections and clean one at a time. Once your room is clean, save a little time each day to straighten up. For example, each day you can spend five minutes putting things away, put away at least five things, or clean off one area, such as your nightstand. Remember to reward yourself for your hard work!

These strategies sound helpful, but it's hard to know which ones to use.

Learning new skills can be challenging! Remember you don't need to do all of these at once. Start by trying one of these strategies and see how it goes. Get support by asking your parents and teachers to help you try new skills. If possible, see if they can do them with you the first few times. They may have helpful ideas about which techniques are best for you and ways to improve your process.

If your difficulty with organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, you may need additional support. Check in with your parents or talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

TEEN HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



What is How to Manage My Time?

- ▶ How to Manage My Time helps you calculate how much time you need to do tasks and do them on time. Practicing this skill can help you stay on schedule, complete your daily routines, and meet your goals.
- ▶ The strategies below help you 1) figure out how long it takes you to complete tasks, and 2) organize your time in order to get them done. Try them out to improve your time management!

Here's How to Manage Your Time

It can be hard to know how much time we need to do things. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

- 1 Understand Your Timing.** To manage your time, you first need to know how long it takes you to do different tasks.
 - ▶ If you're unsure or find that your guesses are usually wrong, play our [Check Your Time game](#). Using our list of quick activities, write down how long you think each task will take, time yourself doing each one, and then compare your predicted time with your actual time. Add your own activity ideas to the game, focusing on those tasks where you often need more time than you expect, or where you find yourself running out of time to finish.
 - ▶ As you do tasks in the future, time yourself to continue improving your awareness of how long it takes you to do things.
- 2 Plan for Homework.** Before starting your homework, do some [quick calculations](#) to plan your time.
 - ▶ For example, if you have 3 hours to complete your homework after dinner and 3 classes with homework assignments, you have about 1 hour to spend on each subject. If you finish any assignments ahead of schedule, you can use your extra time to check your work or start the next one.
 - ▶ If you have trouble paying attention or doing a task for a long time, remember to schedule in [short breaks](#) (e.g., a 5-minute break after completing each assignment).
- 3 Make Schedules.** Use a [calendar](#) to keep track of your homework assignments, extracurricular activities, and social events. You can color code to match each type of activity or use separate calendars.
 - ▶ At the beginning of each school year, [write important dates](#) in your calendar (e.g., first and last day of school, breaks and vacations, school dance, sports tournaments, etc.). Review these with your parents and/or teachers so you're all on the same page.
 - ▶ Make a [weekly schedule](#) at the beginning of each week. Include the times you have to wake up, leave for school, get home, and go to bed. Add that week's appointments, activities, and social commitments. [Review your schedule](#) every day to see what's coming next. See our example and fill in the blank one for yourself.
- 4 Increase Your Motivation.** Identify a small way to [reward yourself](#) for managing your time well. This can be a challenging skill to master, so be sure to acknowledge your hard work.
 - ▶ You can also increase your motivation to stay on schedule by considering the [consequences](#) of not managing time well. For instance, if you fall behind in the morning, you may end up getting marked tardy, which can lead to getting a detention!

5 Anticipate Challenges. Think about **obstacles** that may keep you from following your schedule or plan. For example, if you tend to forget your planner at home, you may need a reminder to put it in your backpack at night. Or, if you have the hardest time staying on schedule in the morning, you may need to leave extra time to complete your tasks before school. Your parents and teachers may have ideas too, so consider talking this over with them.

- ▶ Set reminders to help you stick to your schedule. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask others to help you, or use a calendar app that sends automatic reminders when something is coming up in your schedule. Some families find that sharing their calendars makes it easier to keep track of everyone’s activities.
- ▶ At the end of the day, review your schedule and cross off everything you were able to do. Notice where you successfully managed your time, and give yourself a pat on the back! For those things you weren’t able to do, try to identify why. See if there is anything you can change to get them done next time.
- ▶ Don’t be shy about asking for help when you need it. Everyone can use support with challenging tasks. Your family, teachers, or friends can play an important role in helping you practice the strategies above. Together, you can work hard to improve your time management and reach your goals.

You can do it! Let’s review the 5 simple steps to Managing Your Time:

1. Understand your timing
2. Plan for homework
3. Make schedules
4. Increase your motivation
5. Anticipate challenges

CHECK YOUR TIME CHALLENGE

Predict how long it will take you to do each of these short tasks, then time yourself doing them. To make it more fun, you can also ask others what their predictions are. Add your own activity ideas too!

Task	How long do I think this will take?	How long did it actually take?
Brush your teeth		
Read 3 pages in a textbook		
Pick out clothes for tomorrow		
Eat breakfast		
Write your address 5 times		
Take a shower		
Put on your sneakers		
Do 10 jumping jacks		
Vacuum a room		
Sing the chorus to your favorite song		
Pack your lunch		
Slowly say your phone number 5 times		

My Weekly Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

My Weekly Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

TEEN HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME TIPS



How Can Managing My Time Help Me?

- ▶ When you have ADHD, it can be challenging to pay attention, focus on one task at a time, and keep track of your time. Assignments or chores may take longer than you expect, it may be hard to get things done when you're supposed to, or you may find that you're always behind schedule, even if you wear a watch.
- ▶ This can lead you to feel frustrated at school, get into arguments at home, or miss out on fun activities. Using the strategies on these worksheets, you can become better at using and controlling your time, which will help you be more independent. Over time, practicing these skills can help you stress less and succeed more!



Common Teen Concerns

I try to set aside enough time, but it always takes me longer than I expect to do things.

This happens to many people with ADHD, so you are not alone! Play the Check Your Time game to learn how much time you need for small tasks, and then time yourself completing a task that usually takes you longer than you predict. This will give you valuable information about how accurate your time estimates are. You can also ask your parents, teachers or friends for ideas based on how much time they've seen you need to do things. Use the information you collect to improve your future planning.

Some of the other strategies in this packet can also help you get better at managing time, such as How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 3) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 4). If these ideas are new to you, they may be challenging at first, but with practice teens find that these skills become easier and easier to use!

I have no idea how long it takes me to do things, and nothing ever feels urgent. But, my parents and teachers are always yelling at me for taking too long or not taking things seriously.

It can be frustrating to have trouble keeping track of time. Many people, even those without ADHD, find this hard to do. Try some of the strategies we suggest here. See if changing the way you manage your time helps you understand how long it takes to do things, follow a schedule, and complete tasks.

I set up my schedule and plan my time well, but I don't feel motivated to get any of it done.

It can be hard to stay motivated to do hard or boring things! Identify what you'll gain from being better at time management. For example, can it help you get your homework done faster so you have more time for activities you like? Will it decrease how often you argue with your parents about your schedule? It can also help to identify a reward you'll earn when you're able to follow your schedule (step 4). Even a short break to do something you enjoy can feel great after working hard!

If your difficulty with time management or motivation gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, you may need additional support. Check in with your parents or talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is How to Feel Good About Myself?

- ▶ When you have ADHD, the challenges you experience can make it easy to get down on yourself. How to Feel Good About Myself is a set of strategies to help you be your own cheerleader, feel better about tackling difficult tasks, and remember that everyone faces challenges. These techniques also help you notice if you are being hard on yourself and then take steps to feel better.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, you will remember what makes you great and special, even when you're having a hard time. Feeling good about yourself can help you do better at school, home, and with friends!

Here's How to Feel Good About Yourself

All teens have times when they feel down on themselves. When that happens, it's important to remember what makes you special. Feeling good about yourself can help you do better at school, home, and with friends. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

- 1 Make a list of your special qualities.** Each person has traits that make them unique. Make a list of 10 talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your parents, teachers, and/or friends for more ideas based on what they like about you. Look at this list when you're feeling down or having a hard time remembering what's great about you.
- 2 Be kind to yourself.** If you find yourself feeling annoyed or frustrated, remember that having a positive attitude can make a big difference. Remind yourself that you can try to solve problems, improve the way you do things, and give your best effort each day. Everyone has things they are good at and things they find challenging. Try to focus on your strengths and treat yourself like you would treat a good friend.
- 3 Remember that your thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected.** How you think about a situation impacts how you feel about it, and how you feel about it effects how you act in that situation. You may not be able to control the way your brain works sometimes or change a challenging situation, but you can decide how you think about it in order to feel better and do better.
- 4 Give yourself a pep talk before starting a hard task.** When preparing to do something challenging, give yourself an encouraging pep talk. Follow the strategies in these worksheets, then remind yourself how hard you're working. Visualize yourself successfully completing your hard task. (E.g., Before Leah studies for her math tests, she tells herself, "I can do it! If I put my mind to it, I can do my best on this test!".)
- 5 If a task feels too challenging, take a break.** Taking a short break from a difficult task can make it feel less frustrating or overwhelming. Take a few minutes to stretch, listen to some music, take some deep breaths, or have a light snack. See if you feel better and are ready to try again.
- 6 If you feel unsure or stuck, ask for help.** Remember you don't have to go it alone. Make a short list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed. This can include parents, teachers, friends, and other supportive people in your life. Turn to them for understanding and encouragement when things feel hard.
- 7 Don't give up!** Sometimes the first strategy we try doesn't work. If that happens, try another one (such as the other skills in this guide). Remind yourself not everyone gets it on the first try!
- 8 Track your progress.** As you work through the skills in this guide, be sure to notice if you are feeling and doing better. If so, give yourself credit for your effort and be proud of your hard work!

TEEN WORKSHEET: HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF



My Special Qualities

Use this space to make a list of your special qualities. These can be talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your caregivers, teachers, and friends for more ideas based on what they like about you!

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

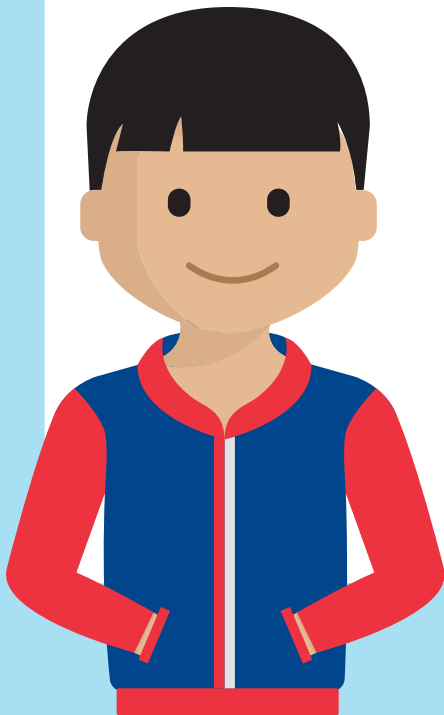
8

9

10

My Supporters

Use this space to brainstorm a list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.





How Can Feeling Good About Myself Help Me?

- ▶ Sometimes people with ADHD get frustrated with themselves for having a hard time paying attention, sitting still, doing homework, or getting along with others. This can lead you to think negative thoughts about yourself, avoid important tasks, or argue with family, friends, or teachers.
- ▶ Feeling Good About Myself provides strategies to help you improve your self-esteem and use coping strategies when you're feeling badly.

Common Teen Concerns

When a task is hard, I get overwhelmed and want to give up.

Completing difficult tasks can be challenging! When a task feels hard, give yourself credit for the effort you've made so far. Then, take a short break to do something enjoyable, such as doing some light stretching, watching a short video, or getting a snack. You can also practice relaxation skills, which help you calm both your body and your mind. See if these strategies help you get back on track and ready to try again. If you find that you're avoiding your work because it feels too hard, talk to your parents, teachers or friends to get extra support.

Sometimes when I think negative thoughts about myself, I get "stuck" feeling badly.

This happens to almost everyone at some point. When you have ADHD, it can feel even harder to control your thoughts. Instead of beating yourself up, try to focus on your strengths and reset. Read over your list of 10 special qualities, do something fun or soothing, or talk to someone supportive to get a new perspective. If you find yourself thinking the same negative thoughts over and over, try to remember that you're working hard and trying your best.

I hate having ADHD! Everything feels harder for me.

Remember that there are many teens and adults with ADHD, so you are not alone. A lot of people with ADHD are successful at reaching their goals. Using the strategies in this guide can make things easier and more manageable for you at school and home. The more you practice them, the easier the skills will be to use on a daily basis and the better you will feel!

School can be especially challenging for those with ADHD, but remember that school is not the only thing one can be great at doing. Remind yourself that you can take steps to do better in school and that you also have your own special talents, interests and skills.

If you're feeling badly about needing extra support, remember that getting help means you are doing everything you can to improve and succeed. This means you are committed to being the best "you" that you can be!

If feeling down about yourself gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, you may need additional support. Check in with your parents or talk to your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS **FOR ADHD**

Parents of Teens 13-17



GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT

FOR ADHD



INTRODUCTION

Teens with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, often have difficulty paying attention, sitting still, and/or acting impulsively. They can have trouble learning, getting along with their peers, and behaving appropriately at school or home. These challenges can impact teens' self-esteem and increase the likelihood they develop depression, anxiety, and/or disruptive behavior symptoms. Working with your teen's primary care team can help you get ADHD symptoms under control.

The most effective interventions for managing ADHD symptoms in teens typically involve a combination of medication, behavioral techniques, and educational strategies. In this guide, we focus on teaching parents how to increase structure at home and help with schoolwork. Our accompanying teen guide teaches teens ways to improve their ability to plan, organize, and solve problems, skills that are commonly referred to as executive functions. The worksheets in these guides will explain the skills and help you and your teen try them at home. All of the skills included in our guides are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, instructions for how to use the strategy at home, and a list of common questions and concerns parents or teens usually ask, along with our answers. Work through the guide with your teen and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. Depending on your teen's age and ability, adjust how much support you offer as they learn each skill. Older teens and those who are more independent may want to try the skills on their own and just check in with you. Younger teens and those who are really struggling with managing their ADHD may need more support. We offer suggestions for how to discuss these strategies with your teen. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for your family, keep at it until it the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will get to make these skills and exercises a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your teen need any additional support for management of ADHD symptoms. Good luck!

FOR PARENTS OF TEENS



Skill 1

Household Rules and Structure

These worksheets help you create and apply rules and structure at home and set clear and consistent expectations for your teen and family.



Skill 2

Homework Help

These worksheets provide ideas for helping your teen complete homework in an easier and more organized way.

FOR TEENS

(WITH HELP FROM PARENTS)



Skill 3

How to Solve Problems

This skill teaches your teen to brainstorm different ways of solving a problem and, before taking action, evaluate which solutions are most likely to lead to success.



Skill 4

How to Remember What I Need To Do

This technique helps your teen keep track of important information, such as deadlines for school assignments.



Skill 5

How to Get Things Done

This skill teaches your teen to plan ahead in order to start and complete tasks without getting sidetracked, such as doing homework assignments or chores.



Skill 6

How to Organize My Stuff

This strategy helps your teen establish organizational systems, such as organizing their bedroom, backpack, or schoolwork.



Skill 7

How to Manage My Time

These worksheets support your teen in creating schedules, staying on task, and meeting deadlines.



Skill 8

How to Feel Good About Myself

These exercises provide ways to identify your teen's strengths and boost their self-esteem.



What Are Household Rules and Structure?

- ▶ Household Rules and Structure are strategies families use to organize their daily lives, create consistent routines, and set clear expectations at home.
- ▶ Applying rules and structure at home helps teens complete everyday tasks, such as sticking to a schedule, following family rules, getting ready for school or an activity, and completing homework and chores. This helps with teens' working memory, organization, and planning skills, which can be especially useful for teens with ADHD. This can make life easier and happier for the whole family.
- ▶ Try some of the methods below to increase rules and structure at home and see how they work for your family.
- ▶ These strategies can be effective for teens of all ages.

Here's How to Use Rules and Structure at Home

- 1 Stay Organized.** Help your teen organize their physical spaces by creating systems to keep things neat. For example, encourage your teen to have an assigned place for every object in their room. Then, have them regularly spend a small amount of time cleaning up so that no one area ever gets too messy. Some ways to do this include spending 5-10 minutes each day straightening up their room or backpack, or going through their belongings every few months to donate or put away things that don't get much use.

Tools such as planners, "to do" lists, and calendars can also help teens with ADHD. Encourage your teen to use organizational aids like these to keep track of important information, such as homework assignments, due dates, and social activities. Offer a daily reminder for your teen to use and check their planner. The more they write down, the less they (and you) have to remember! For ways to use these tools to help with your teen's homework, see Homework Help (ADHD Skill 2).

You can also use a family planner and/or calendar to track family activities. Put important information where everyone can see it, such as on the refrigerator or near the front door.

- 2 Set Household Rules.** Decide on a short list of important rules (3-5) that you want your teen to follow. For example, Jack's family has these rules: "1) We finish our homework before we can hang out with our friends; 2) We speak to each other using respectful and calm words; and 3) We focus on each other during meals and not our screens."

If your teen has difficulty following rules, it may help to highlight the rules that matter the most to you (so pick your battles!). As your teen demonstrates a stronger ability to follow rules, you can make them more challenging or add new ones to the list.

Review the rules as a family, then write them out and post them somewhere everyone can see them. This provides regular reminders about family expectations. Try giving your teen directions, keeping in mind the following tips for maximum effectiveness: 1) give simple and clear instructions for one task at a time, 2) make sure you are giving directions when your teen is undistracted, and 3) provide incentives for following the rules and/or implement consequences if they don't. Talk to your primary care provider if you need more assistance with this.

Here's How to Use Rules and Structure at Home (cont.)

- 3 Create routines.** Create detailed routines for your teen's usual tasks or those where they tend to have difficulty, such as getting ready for school, doing homework, cleaning up, going to sports practice, or getting ready for bed. List the steps you'd like your teen to complete, in the order you'd like them done. This helps your teen walk through a "checklist" to start and finish a routine. It also supports their working memory and planning skills and makes your expectations clear.

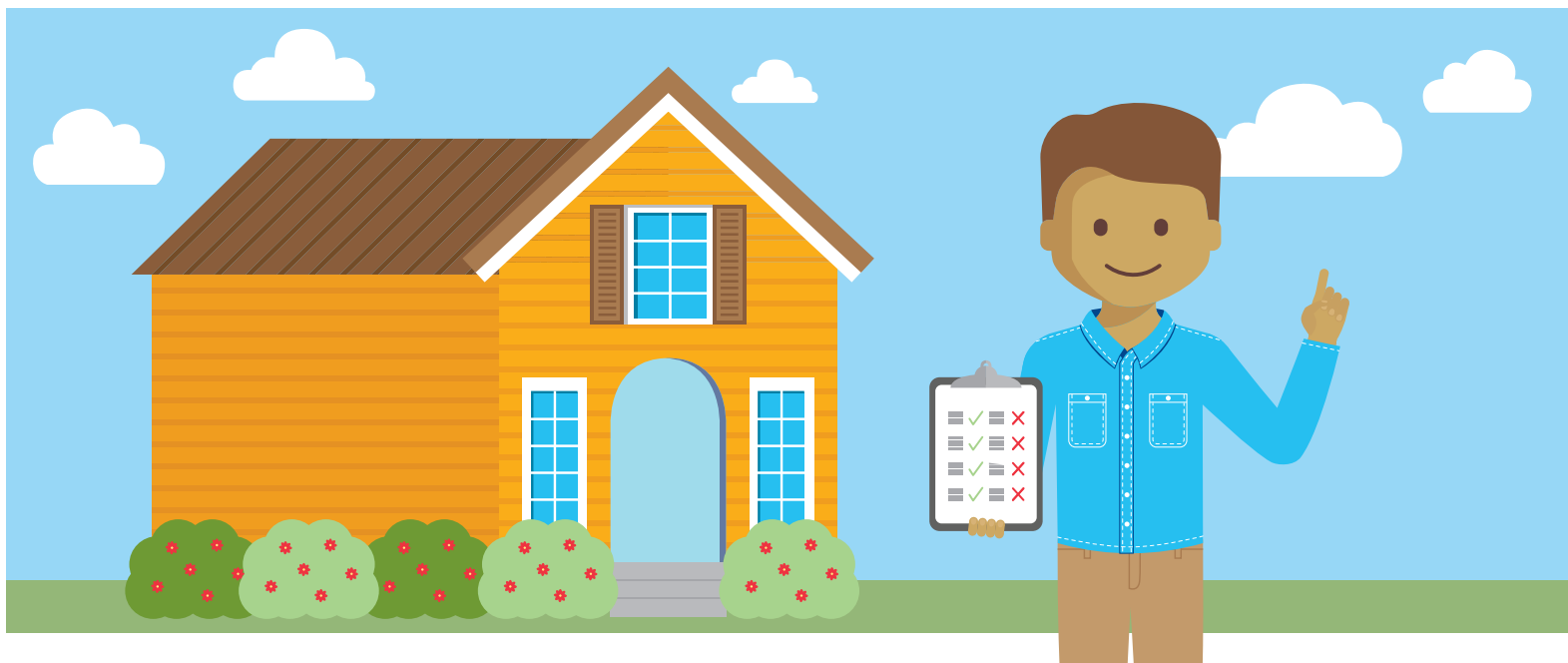
You can also create routines for those tasks your teen finds challenging, such as using relaxation skills to control their energy level or using the skills in this guide. Review our example routines and then create some of your own.

The more consistent a routine is, the easier it is to follow. Once you create a routine that works, encourage your teen to practice it and stick with it.

- 4 Review with your teen.** Be sure to discuss any new household rules or changes in routines with your teen. Go over each one to make sure you're on the same page. The clearer your expectations are, the better your teen will be able to meet them.
- 5 Provide positive feedback.** Remember that it can be hard for teens with ADHD to follow rules, complete daily routines, and stay organized. As you use the strategies in this packet, be sure to praise your teen's efforts. Frequent encouragement will help your teen feel good about working hard.

Some teens benefit from an extra push to follow rules and routines, such as earning rewards or privileges for a job well done. Rewards that are free, easy, and simple are best (e.g., extra time on an activity they like). Some families use a behavior contract to keep both teens and parents accountable, where a teen agrees to specific actions, with rewards for meeting expectations and consequences for missing them.

- 6 Evaluate and adjust as needed.** Every few weeks, review your household rules and structure to evaluate what's working well and what needs tweaking. Get your teen's feedback and incorporate their ideas for improvement. They can provide valuable insight into how rules are working or suggestions for improving routines.
- 7 Be patient.** Remember it can take time to learn new habits. Your teen may not be able to follow a routine or rule correctly every time, especially when it is new or challenging. Offer your teen encouraging reminders until new routines and rules become easier. Be patient with your teen and yourself, and show your teen you are confident they can do a good job.





How Can Household Rules and Structure Help My Family?

- ▶ Teens with ADHD can find it hard to control their attention, energy level, and/or desire to act on their urges. This can make it difficult to behave appropriately or get things done.
- ▶ Teens with ADHD often respond more positively to environments that are structured (i.e., organized and predictable). Families who use consistent rules and structure at home often find that their teens are better able to follow directions, stick to routines, and get along with others.
- ▶ Parents also frequently notice that as their teens' skills and independence increase, they all feel less frustrated. When there are clear guidelines for behavior and regular household routines, teens are better able to do things on their own. This leads to fewer arguments and can make your home more positive for the entire family.

Common Parent Concerns

We completed the routine worksheet, but my teen keeps forgetting to use it.

Try giving your teen gentle reminders to help them remember routines. For instance, you can give verbal reminders, such as prompting your teen when it's almost time to start a routine, or visual reminders, like putting notes around the house for them to see. You can also come up with creative ways for them to remember the steps in a routine, such as using acronyms. As your teen makes progress toward memorizing their routines, be sure to offer lots of praise!

My teen doesn't like to follow rules!

Some teens respond to rules by acting out, and this can occur more often when a teen has ADHD. Try using some tried and true parenting strategies to motivate your teen to act in ways you like. For example, give clear directions that are tied to rewards or privileges and give consequences if instructions are not followed. These techniques can help your teen make better choices. Be sure to discuss these privileges and consequences with your teen, so they know what's at stake.

When my teen breaks a family rule or can't complete a routine, they get frustrated or down on themselves.

Teens can feel badly if they have a harder time than their siblings or peers. When your teen gets discouraged, cheer them on by praising their effort and highlighting their successes. Go through the How to Feel Good About Myself worksheets in the teen ADHD guide (ADHD Skill 6) together, and see if those strategies help your teen identify their strengths and feel better about themselves.

Your teen may also benefit from practicing coping skills to manage negative thoughts and emotions. For example, they can try to problem solve, use relaxation skills, or challenge overly negative thoughts. Practicing skills like these can help teens take active steps to feel better and more in control. AT a time when they are feeling calm, brainstorm about strategies that could help them in difficult moments, and talk to your primary care provider if you would like more guidance in this area.

Even with a lot of structure and routine, my teen has a hard time staying on task and getting things done. Some teens find organization and routine more challenging than others. They can try some of the strategies in the teen guide to improve their working memory, organization, planning, and time management. Building these skills may help your teen respond better to structure and routine. Your teen's teacher may also have suggestions based on what they've seen work well in the classroom.

If your teen's ADHD symptoms make it difficult for them to do the things they want or need to do, they may need additional support, such as medication and/or therapy. Check in with your teen's primary care provider about medication and whether a referral to a behavioral health specialist could be helpful.



What is Homework Help?

- ▶ Many families say that their teens do not like doing homework. Homework can be extra challenging for teens with ADHD, because they often have difficulty concentrating, sitting still, doing tasks they dislike, and/or managing negative feelings.
- ▶ Homework Help is a set of strategies parents can use to make homework time easier for the whole family. It includes tips for increasing organization, creating homework routines, providing support and supervision, and breaking assignments down into smaller steps. In combination with the other skills in this guide and the teen guide, Homework Help techniques can help you support your teen and make homework time less frustrating and more productive.

Here's How to Provide Homework Help at Home

- 1 Use organizational tools to keep track of assignments, projects, and tests.**
 - ▶ Help your teen stay on top of their schoolwork, due dates, and daily activities by using planners, calendars, and "to do" lists. At the start of each school year, help your teen create a simple and clear system to keep track of important information. For example, your teen can write down each week's events in a planner, put new homework assignments in one section of their binder, and store finished assignments in another section.
 - ▶ Give your teen daily reminders to update their "to do" list and follow their schedule. For more tips, they can review the chapters in the teen guide on Remembering Things I Need to Do (ADHD Skill 2) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill4).
- 2 Create detailed homework routines.**
 - ▶ Tasks are easier to do when they are part of a regular routine. Help your teen create a daily homework routine, including where they will do it, what time they will do it, and how they will prioritize their assignments. See our example for ideas.
 - ▶ Think through the routine details together to make sure that you and your teen are on the same page. For example, is your teen's homework space quiet and distraction-free? Do they have access to the materials they need there (e.g., pens, pencils, calculator, etc.)? When scheduling homework time, do they need a break between when they get home from school and when they start working? If they get stuck or need help, what should they do?
 - ▶ Encourage your teen to stick to the routine every day. The more consistent the routine is, the easier it will be for them to get in the habit of doing homework every day and not waiting until the last minute.

3 Provide support and supervision.

- ▶ The younger your teen is, the more homework support they will need. Younger teens may do better if you keep them company while they work and walk through their assignments with them. Older teens may be fine with having you nearby to answer any questions. Teens of all ages benefit from check-ins and encouragement to stay on task.
- ▶ If possible, look over your teen's homework to be sure they are doing it correctly and did not skip any of it. This encourages your teen to be thorough and decreases the chances they will put the work off until another time.
- ▶ Make sure your teen's routine includes turning in completed work. You can create a "Backpack Checklist" of what should go into your teen's bag each night before bed, which you can check as part of your teen's evening routine. If your teen has a hard time turning homework in, you can ask their teacher to monitor their performance and give feedback to you, or use a skill from our disruptive behavior guide, Rewarding Good Behavior (Disruptive Behavior Skill 3) to incorporate rewards and give your teen an extra push to do well. See our example, and then create your own routine.

4 Break bigger assignments or projects down into smaller steps.

- ▶ It can be overwhelming to tackle a difficult or big assignment, such as a school project or studying for a test. First, make sure your teen understands the assignment. If they don't, walk through it with them or help them problem solve how to figure out what they need to do.
- ▶ Then, help your teen turn a big assignment into smaller, more manageable assignments and accurately estimate how much time they need for each step (see ADHD Skill 3, How to Get Things Done, and ADHD Skill 5, How to Manage My Time, in the teen guide for tips). Encourage your teen to take short breaks as needed to stretch or do an in-place exercise (like jumping jacks) or have a small snack before going back to work.

5 Inspect and improve your routine

- ▶ Every few weeks, review your teen's homework routine to evaluate what's working well and what needs fine-tuning. Check in with your teen's teachers as needed. Work with your teen to identify ways to make homework time easier or more productive.

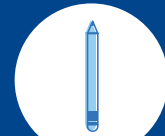
6 Notice when your child is working hard and offer praise and encouragement.

- ▶ Remember it can take time to build good homework skills and your teen may feel frustrated or not be able to do their homework independently. Your support can make a big difference. Offer encouraging reminders and praise until new strategies become easier to use. Be patient with your teen and yourself, and show your teen you are confident that they can get their homework done carefully and correctly!

Sofia's Homework Routine

- ▶ Routine starts when you get home from school around 3:30 pm.
- ▶ Take a 30-minute break for a snack and relaxation.
- ▶ Get your planner and homework materials. Ask dad if you're unsure what you need.
- ▶ Eliminate distractions. Turn off TV and music, put away phone.
- ▶ Sit down at your desk.
- ▶ Do homework until dinner at 5:30. If you need a stretch break, set the timer for 5 minutes, then start your homework again.
- ▶ After dinner, bring homework to dad for him to review if needed. Otherwise, just let him know you finished.
- ▶ Put your finished homework in your homework folder.
- ▶ Put your planner and homework folder back into your backpack. Put your backpack by the front door.
- ▶ Great job! Do something you enjoy for 30 minutes.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOMEWORK HELP TIPS



ADHD Skill 2

How Can Homework Help Strategies Help My Family?

- ▶ Many parents and teens find that homework time is a stressful time. Homework is a task that can lead to frustration, annoyance, and even arguments at home. Doing schoolwork can be especially challenging for teens with ADHD, as it requires using many different skills at the same time, such as working memory, organization, planning, and time management.
- ▶ By making homework time more structured, predictable, and organized, parents can help their teens strengthen their own abilities. As teens build skills and more independence, they often feel better about school and themselves. This can make your teen happier and make homework time easier for the whole family.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen refuses to do homework!

One way to motivate your teen to do homework is to allow them to do something they enjoy once they finish, such as talking to a friend or doing an activity they like. You may also want to incorporate consequences into your approach, such as the loss of a privilege for not following homework rules (e.g., if your teen does not do their homework, they lose the ability to use electronics that night).

Another approach involves creating a homework contract that you and your teen create together. It can include what your teen agrees to do (e.g., I will write my homework assignments in my planner before leaving class; If I don't understand what I need to do, I will ask my teacher) and what parents will agree to (e.g., We will provide you with the school supplies you need to do your work; If you are having a hard time, we will try to help and/or check in with your teacher).

My teen gets too much homework, and they can never finish it all.

Different schools and teachers approach homework in different ways. Talk to your teen's teacher(s) about your teen's learning style and homework challenges. You can decide together how much homework is necessary and if there are ways to lower the amount while still reinforcing important concepts (e.g., completing part of a problem set). You can then review these expectations with your teen and problem solve together.

My teen doesn't like when I check their work or watch over their homework routines.

Depending on how challenging they find organization and follow through, teens with ADHD vary in how much they need or want support completing homework. Some need more structure and guidance than others, and older teens can need and want less oversight than younger ones. If your teen wants to manage their homework more independently, try asking them to trial brief check-ins with you to let you know they've completed their assigned work. You can decide together how often they need to do this (e.g., 3 times a week to start). As they demonstrate they can do it on their own, you can check in less frequently, or only when they're stuck and could use help. Remind your teen that you are there to support them and know they can do it. You're trying to make it easier for them to remember what they need to do and support their independence, but don't want to argue about it or nag them if you don't need to! If their homework grade starts to drop or teachers report concerns, you can revisit the conversation.

My teen's homework is complicated, and I'm not sure how to help them with it.

This is something many parents say! It can be hard to keep up with all of the different topics teens learn about in school, especially if they aren't subjects you've thought about lately or studied yourself. Start by seeing what your teen's school provides. Many schools offer learning support, like homework help or after school tutoring, and teachers are often willing to spend extra time explaining tricky concepts to students. Your teen's friends may also be able to help; many students find that their peers are a great resource for understanding what happened in class and how to tackle a hard assignment!



What is Problem Solving for ADHD?

- ▶ If your teen is having a hard time paying attention, staying organized, or controlling their energy, they may experience problems because of these difficulties. Using a positive problem solving strategy can help them more effectively deal with their daily challenges and concerns.
- ▶ Your teen may be frustrated if they are having a hard time dealing with problems, big or small. This can make them feel bad about themselves or cause them to get in trouble with parents, friends or teachers. Problem solving strategies can help them change that!

- ▶ These worksheets teach your teen a simple plan for solving problems.

They will learn to:

1. Name the problem
2. Identify 3 possible solutions
3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
4. Pick one to try
5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution.



Here's How to Make a Problem Solving Plan at Home

You can introduce the plan by saying, "Everyone can use help solving problems. When our problems make us feel bad about ourselves or get us into trouble, we sometimes need strategies that make it easier to deal with challenges. Here's the Problem Solving Plan we are going to start using." Introduce the 5 parts of the plan to your teen by going through them together and reading the explanations below.

- 1 What's the problem?** You may be feeling overwhelmed and not know exactly how to describe the issue you need to handle. Clearly stating the problem as a first step helps you really focus on what it is so you can then figure out exactly what you need to do to solve it. Try to be as specific as possible (e.g., "My friend is being rude to me and that's making me mad" is better than "My friend makes me mad" or "I'm mad").
- 2 What are 3 possible solutions?** Think of 3 possible solutions to your problem so you have some good options to pick from, but not so many that you are overwhelmed with choices. Don't worry about how good or bad they are yet. You will evaluate them in the next part.
- 3 What are one good thing and one bad thing about each solution?** This step requires you to name one positive outcome and one negative outcome that could occur if you choose each solution. This step will help you consider the benefits and challenges of each choice. This is an essential step because you are gathering important information for your plan!
- 4 Pick one!** This is your chance to take charge as you pick which solution you want to try out first.
- 5 How did it go?** After you follow through with applying a solution, it's time to evaluate it. This will help you learn what the best options for different problems are, and you can refer back to these tested solutions as needed. If your first solution isn't successful in solving the problem, you can try a different one or start a completely new solution brainstorming session. Don't give up!

The next worksheet puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart and shows you some examples. Go over them with your teen and offer support as needed. Encourage them to solve the practice problems and then create a plan for one of their own problems.

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 1: I didn't pay attention in math class today because I was bored. Now I don't understand today's homework.

What's the Problem?	"I don't understand the homework assignment."		
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1	Don't do the homework.	I can play videogames tonight because I'll have less to do	I'll get a zero.
Solution 2	Text my friend for help.	She is good at math and can help me.	She might not respond.
Solution 3	Talk to my teacher tomorrow and ask for extra help.	My teacher will explain what I missed.	She might still give me a zero for today's homework.
My Choice	Text my friend for help.		
How'd it go?	My friend texted me back. She called and helped me. I understood and did the homework.		

Example 2: My parents told me to start studying for my science test before going out with my friends. They kept reminding me, but I didn't remember to do it and failed the test. They're so mad. This keeps happening to me.

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 3: "I've known that we had an English project due for a while, but I just couldn't get much done on it because I was so overwhelmed by all of the steps. Now it's due in three days and I don't know what to do."

What's the Problem?		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

Example 4: "My friends stopped inviting me places because I was always getting grounded for bad grades. I've been working hard on using my skills and my grades are improving. I have permission to hang out with them again, but I don't think they like me anymore."

What's the Problem?		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



Example 5: "I really like when we have a substitute teacher because class is really easy those days, but sometimes I goof off too much and get us all in trouble. My friends are starting to get mad, and now the principal is saying we have to have a meeting!"

What's the Problem?			
	One Good Thing	One Bad Thing	
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

BLANK PROBLEM SOLVING PLANS

Here are a couple Blank Problem Solving Plans. Make copies and use it to help guide your decision making when problems arise. Your parents can help you as needed.



Boston Children's Hospital

Until every child is well



ADHD Skill 3

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

What's the Problem?			
		One Good Thing	One Bad Thing
Solution 1			
Solution 2			
Solution 3			
My Choice			
How'd it go?			

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



ADHD Skill 3

How Can Problem Solving for ADHD Help My Family?

- ▶ Your teen's struggles with skills like attention, organization, memory, and/or energy level may get in the way of them dealing with challenges and solving everyday problems. Many teens feel like this sometimes.
- ▶ Problems may feel too big to solve, they may not feel motivated to address them, or they may think that they aren't good at solving problems so they shouldn't even try. You may also find that they try to solve a problem, but give up easily if they aren't successful right away. The good news is that having a strategy to solve problems can really help!
- ▶ The problem solving technique described here can provide a clear way to help your teen think through challenges, brainstorm options, notice what works and what doesn't, and keep trying if their first attempt doesn't work. Using this method can help your teen solve problems, have more positive outcomes, and feel better about themselves.
- ▶ Making and following a problem solving plan can also reduce frustration for you and your teen's teachers by helping them to be more independent. This plan ensures that the adults in their life are not just telling them what to do, but instead supporting and guiding them to overcome challenges on their own. Everyone can benefit from solving problems in their lives; these skills can help the rest of your family as well!

Common Parent Concerns

My teen doesn't think they have problems that need solving.

It can be hard to notice which challenges or frustrations can benefit from problem solving skills. Go over past situations with your teen that caused them to feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion. These are great opportunities to practice their problem solving. If you notice a situation where your teen can use these skills in daily life, gently point it out to them (e.g., "You told me you were frustrated at lunch because you forgot to bring your lunch with you even though you packed it last night. Do you think you can make a Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

When we try this, my teen can't think of any solutions.

Think about what might be getting in the way. They might be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Suggest one example solution. Often, once they hear one idea, they can get creative and come up with solutions of their own. Encourage them to think critically about how positive and beneficial each potential solution might be; however remind them they don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. They can make mistakes and ask you and their teachers for help as needed. Review our practice examples to remind them of some good options for common concerns as well as the fact that you came up with great solutions for the examples!

When my teen tries to use their problem solving plan, they get really frustrated and upset. Sometimes problem solving can feel really overwhelming! Feeling upset is okay. Your teen's emotions are giving you both a message that they are having a tough time and need support. Tell them to take a break to do something relaxing or fun, then try again. Remind them that they can ask you or a teacher for support using the problem solving plan if you need it. If they are still having a hard time using problem solving skills, check in with your teen's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

PARENT HANDOUT: REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO



ADHD Skill 4

What is Remembering Things I Need to Do?

- ▶ Remembering Things I Need to Do is a skill that helps with your teen's memory and planning. It involves making "to do lists" that help them remember *what* they need to do and *when* they need to do it.
- ▶ By developing a system for tracking tasks, assignments, and due dates, your teen will improve their memory and get things done on time. Follow the instructions below to help your teen make lists of what they need to do today, this week, and this weekend.

Here's How to Remember Things You Need to Do

You can introduce this skill by saying, "Sometimes it's hard to remember all of the things we need to do. Here is a new way to keep track of the things you have to do and when you have to do them. This will help improve your memory and planning skills."

- 1 Your goal is to **make checklists** of the things you need to do today, this week, and this weekend. As you make your lists, be specific about each task so you know exactly what you need to do. After you complete a task, be sure to check it off.
- 2 First, pull out a copy of these **three worksheets**:
 - Things I Need to Do Today
 - Things I Need to Do This Week
 - Things I Need to Do This Weekend
- 3 Start by filling in the "**Things I Need to Do Today**" worksheet. Include tasks that are time-sensitive or must be done today. Look at George's list for an example.
- 4 Next, use the "**Things I Need to Do This Week**" worksheet to make a list of the things you have to do this week. Include tasks you have to complete on a regular basis, such as making your bed or bringing your homework assignments home. Look at Molly's list for an example.
- 5 Now, use the "**Things I Need to Do This Weekend**" worksheet to make a list of the things you need to do over the weekend. It can be harder to remember weekend tasks when you're not in the usual routine of a school day. Making a list for these days can be just as important. Look at Sam's list for an example.
- 6 **Set reminders to check your lists a few times a day.** Set reminders to see what you still need to do. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask parents/teachers to remind you, and/or stick a note where you will see it, like in your locker or planner.
- 7 **Keep copies of your lists where you will see them.** For example, having copies in your backpack and on your refrigerator will give you multiple reminders. You can also keep these lists in a planner, notebook, or on your phone. Be sure to put the lists where you can easily access them and look at them throughout the day.
- 8 **If it's hard to remember everything you need to do, ask for help.** If you're not sure what to include on your list or are having a hard time using the worksheets, ask your caregivers, teachers, or friends/classmates for support.
- 9 **Notice when you're doing a good job.** Take a moment to feel proud of your effort to stay on top of what you need to do. Give yourself some praise for getting things done!

The next worksheet shows your teen some examples of **To Do Lists**. You can go over the examples together and then have your teen make their own lists.

Teen To Do List Examples

ADHD Skill 4: Put your tasks on the To Do Lists below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

Things I Need to Do Today: George	Done?
Turn in English paper	✓
Give book back to Hannah	✓
Turn in Math homework	✓
Submit Biology project outline	
Find out where track tryouts are	
Go to band practice	

Things I Need to Do This Week: Molly	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Make my bed	✓	✓			
Eat breakfast	✓	✓			
Put homework in backpack	✓	✓			
Get lunch out of fridge	✓				
Bring homework assignments home	✓				
Do homework before watching TV	✓				

Things I Need to Do This Weekend: Sam	Saturday	Sunday
Make my bed	✓	
Eat breakfast	✓	
Do chores (take out trash, sweep up kitchen, clean my room)	✓	
Work on History project		
Do Science homework		
Get baseball equipment for practice (Saturday at 11)		
Movies with John and Hector (Saturday at 7)		



How Can Remembering What I Need to Do Help My Family?

- ▶ When your teen has symptoms of ADHD, it can be hard for them to keep track of important information, such as what they need to do to get ready for school or the due dates for their assignments.
- ▶ This makes it challenging to do things when they're supposed to. They may notice that adults are frequently reminding them what you need to do, or asking them if they've completed different tasks. This can feel discouraging and be frustrating for everyone.
- ▶ Remembering Things I Need to Do helps your teen make a system to stay on top of their daily and weekly tasks. Over time, they will need fewer reminders from other people, and you will all feel good about them staying on top of things.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen isn't sure what to put on their list.

If your teen is having a hard time remembering what they need to do, aren't sure what to put on their list, or find it challenging to use the worksheets, review our examples with them and/or get some extra support. Your teen's, teachers and friends/classmates may have some good ideas based on what they know your teen needs to do. Remind your teen that the more they practice, the easier it will get.

My teen makes all of their lists, but then forgets to look at them.

At first it can be challenging to remember you made lists and need to refer back to them! It can help to set reminders for yourself to look at your lists and see what you still need to do. Set alarms on your phone or watch, ask others to remind you, and/or leave reminder notes for yourself somewhere you will see them, like in your locker or planner.

It also helps to make copies of your list and keep them somewhere you tend to go to or look during the day. For instance, you can keep a copy in your backpack, on your phone, and in your notebook.

My teen looks at their lists and can't figure out what to do first.

One method is to start with the easiest task. Another is to start with the one with the earliest deadline. Remind them that tasks on the What I Need to Do Today checklist usually have to be completed before those on the What I Need to Do This Week or Weekend checklists.

My teen complains that I'm always bugging them about making my lists and checking things off. They say that I'm annoying, but I'm trying to help. Sometimes family members' eagerness to participate in skill-building can be frustrating to teens. See if you can have a calm discussion about the best ways to help support their use of this new memory tool. For example, you can see if your teen is comfortable with you offering some encouragement in the mornings before the school rush, or checking in with you once or twice during homework time, but not asking them about the lists repeatedly or throughout the day. Decide together what will help your teen get the support they need without being overwhelmed. Kindly remind your teen that as they successfully make and complete their "to do lists", they will show them they need fewer reminders to do this on their own.

Even after my teen makes their lists, it's hard for them to follow through on doing their tasks.

Many teens with ADHD feel this way. Take a look at the handouts on How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 5), How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 6), and How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 7) together, and see if practicing these skills helps your teen improve their ability to start and complete tasks, get organized, and meet deadlines.

If their difficulty with memory and organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, they may need additional support. Check in with your teen's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is How to Get Things Done?

- ▶ How to Get Things Done is a skill that helps your teen plan, start, and finish assignments and tasks. It involves looking over their “to do” list, choosing a task, making a schedule, and overcoming obstacles to reach their goals.
- ▶ By making a careful plan to tackle a task, your teen can improve their organization, attention, and follow through skills. Use the guide below to help your teen make their plan and get things done!

Here's How to Get Things Done

You can introduce this skill by saying, “Everyone has times when it’s hard to get things done. Here is a new strategy you can try. Your goal here is to make a plan to complete a task and then follow your roadmap to finish it. As you do each of the steps below, fill in the Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. Let’s try it together.” Go through the steps below to help your teen make their own Roadmap and create their own examples that fit their school and social activities.

1

Look at your “to do” list(s) and **pick a specific task** to complete. If you need help making a “to-do” list, see ADHD Skill 2 (How to Remember What I Need to Do) to make checklists of your daily and weekly tasks.

2

If possible, **break your task up into “mini tasks”**. Many goals can feel less difficult or overwhelming if you approach them one step at a time. Think of all the steps you need to take to reach your goal, then split your task up into smaller, more manageable “mini tasks”. Be sure to decide what **order** the steps go in.

Example: Alicia split her paper up into 6 steps: 1) finding research articles on her topic, 2) reading and highlighting the articles, 3) developing an initial outline for the paper, 4) writing a first draft, 5) editing and writing the final draft, 6) creating her bibliography.

3

Calculate **how long it will take** you to complete each step. Be sure to consider how much time you have. If you have trouble paying attention, it can help to **take short breaks** (5 minutes or less) after you complete each step.

Example: Between arriving home after school and dinnertime, Lucas had 3 hours to do homework. With homework in 3 subjects, he split his time into 1 hour/subject. He took a 5-minute stretching break in between the subjects, leaving him 55 minutes per subject. He used any extra time at the end to finish up assignments that needed more time.

4

Based on this, choose what time you plan to **start and stop** each step. Be sure to leave wiggle room and set realistic deadlines so you don’t get discouraged.

Example: It usually takes Olivia at least 30 minutes to practice the piano, so she schedules 40 minutes to complete the task just in case she needs more time.

5

Identify what **materials you need**. Use a **timer** to stay on schedule and keep track of time.

Example: Alex needs her textbook, assignment outline, paper, pencil, and calculator to do her math homework. She also sets up a kitchen timer.

6

Think of **where** you will do this task. Choose a place where you can think clearly and focus.

Example: Jordan finds that when he has music or the TV on in the background, it takes him twice as long to finish his homework. He also puts his phone away so texts and social media don't distract him.

7

Choose **when** you will do your tasks. Think about your schedule and when you'll fit this in. If possible, it helps to do harder tasks during the time of day when you're most alert and clear-headed.

Example: Lily does her homework as soon as she gets home from school, before she gets too tired or hungry.

8

Plan **how to get help** if you need it. Identify who can provide extra support if you're not sure what to do or get stuck. The goal is to keep moving until you finish a task, so reach out for help if you're not sure what to do. Family, friends, teachers, and classmates can provide useful advice

Example: Ben finds homework easiest to do if he does it at his after school program, where there are tutors available.

9

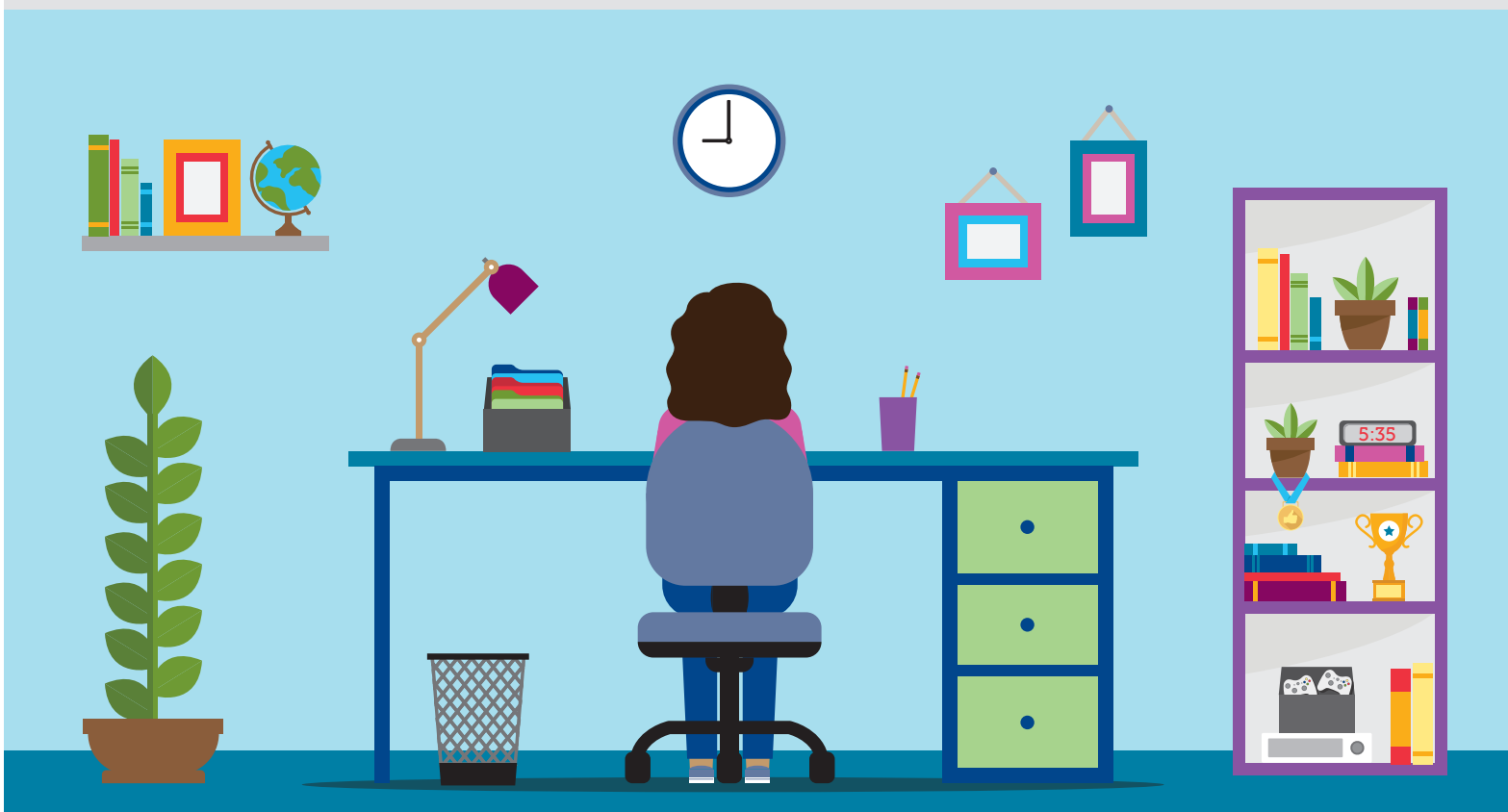
Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're not sure what to choose or what is allowed.

10

Follow your roadmap. Now that you've made a great plan, be sure to follow it. Keep your Roadmap worksheet where you will see it, then follow it until you've completed your task. **Make notes** on what went well, or any adjustments you want to make so your next task goes even more smoothly.

11

Pat yourself on the back for getting something done. Be sure to take a moment to notice how hard you're working!



TEEN ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 5

Follow the steps below to create your roadmap; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

Studying for my history test on Friday

2 Define Steps

What steps do I have to take? Write them in order.

Step 1	Read chapters 6 and 7 in my textbook
Step 2	Review my notes from class
Step 3	Memorize important dates in chapters 6 and 7
Step 4	Take practice quiz

3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?	2.5 hrs
How much time to I have per step/task?	2.5 hrs/4 tasks = ~38 min/task
Time I need for step 1	45 min
Time I need for step 2	30 min
Time I need for step 3	45 min
Time I need for step 4	20 min
Total Time	2 hrs, 20 min
Time Left Over	10 min

4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1	Monday	3:00	4:00	5 min between chapters
Step 2	Tuesday	3:00	3:35	5 min if needed
Step 3	Wednesday	3:00	4:10	5 min between chapters
Step 4	Thursday	3:00	4:00	Try quiz without break

5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	Textbook, notes, practice quiz, paper, pen, highlighter, timer
Where will I do it?	Dining room table after school
What distractions can I eliminate?	Put away electronics
What will I do if I need help?	Ask Silvia or Josh; check in with Mrs. Young; ask mom or dad to quiz me
What is my reward for working hard?	One episode of TV show on M/W; ice cream sandwich on T; video game on Th
Notes for next time	It was helpful to take a break in between reading chapters in the textbook

TEEN ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 5

Follow the steps below to create your roadmap; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

2 Define Steps

What steps do I have to take? Write them in order.

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	

3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?	
How much time to I have per step/task?	
Time I need for step 1	
Time I need for step 2	
Time I need for step 3	
Time I need for step 4	
Total Time	
Time Left Over	

4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1				
Step 2				
Step 3				
Step 4				

5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	
Where will I do it?	
What distractions can I eliminate?	
What will I do if I need help?	
What is my reward for working hard?	
Notes for next time	

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE TIPS



ADHD Skill 5

How Can Getting Things Done Help My Family?

- ▶ When your teen has ADHD, it can be challenging for them to get things done. For example, they may have a hard time getting started on a task, figuring out what to focus on, or staying on track once they get going. Your teen may notice that they miss important deadlines, or take a long time to complete an assignment, only to do things partway.
- ▶ This makes it difficult to check tasks off their "to do" list, even when they know what they need to do. This can be frustrating and make it harder for them to enjoy school and feel good about themselves.
- ▶ How to Get Things Done helps your teen make a plan to complete a task and then follow that plan. By practicing this skill, they can develop better habits, get things done more easily, and feel proud of reaching their goals.

How Can Getting Things Done Help My Family?

My teen has a hard time figuring out how to break a task into smaller steps.

Encourage your teen to ask themselves, what do I need to do first? Help them think about what absolutely has to happen so that they can get started. Then ask, what do you need to do next to keep moving toward your goal of completing the task? Your teen can also try thinking of all the steps they need to take, then going through and putting them in order. If they're still having a hard time, see if help from you, a teacher, or a friend gets them going.

It always takes my teen longer than they expect to finish something, so it's hard to stick to their plan.

Many tasks take longer to complete than we think! It can be challenging at first to know how much time your teen needs to do a task, so their time estimates may be inaccurate. If they have multiple tasks to complete, it may help to split the time evenly between them, then use any extra time to finish any incomplete tasks. Use the tips in How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 5) to get a better sense of how much time your teen needs to do things. This will help them make a more realistic schedule.

My teen knows what they need to do and made their plan, but then they said they don't have all the materials they need.

Many teens with ADHD have trouble keeping track of their things, especially their school assignments and belongings. It helps if they can think ahead of time about what they will need to do a task. You can offer to double check that they've thought of everything. Have your teen write the required materials down on their Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. If they need extra help with organization, the worksheets in ADHD Skill 6 (How to Organize My Stuff) can help too.

My teen gets distracted while trying to get things done.

Try to limit your teen's distractions (e.g., TV, phone, computer, etc.) and choose an environment that maximizes their focus and productivity. You or teachers can offer suggestions based on what you've seen work well for them at home or school.

My teen made a plan, but then forgot to follow it.

Be sure to tell your teen, "Good job making a plan!" Remind them to keep a copy of their Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet somewhere they'll easily see it. They can try setting a timer or alarm for the start times they chose, or ask someone to give them a friendly reminder. Your teen can also brush up on their memory skills (ADHD Skill 4, How to Remember What I Need to Do) and time management (ADHD Skill 7, How to Manage My Time) and see if using these skills together helps them reach their goals.

If your teen's difficulty with planning and organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, they may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF



What is How to Organize My Stuff?

- ▶ How to Organize My Stuff is a set of strategies to help your teen arrange their belongings and environment in an orderly way. This can help them do everyday things more easily like keep their room clean, organize their backpack or desk, and keep track of their homework assignments and belongings.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, your teen will get better at staying organized in their daily life and spend less time looking for things or playing “catch up”. Being organized can help your teen do better at school and home and feel good about themselves.



Here's How to Organize Your Stuff

You can introduce this skill by saying, “Organizational strategies can help you keep track of your things. Let’s read through this list of strategies together and pick a few for you to try.” Go through the ideas below to help your teen get more organized. Depending on your teen’s age, some strategies may work better than others.

1

Give everything a home.

If you find that your room or belongings are usually messy or your things end up in piles, give each item a specific storage spot or “home” (e.g., clothes in closet or dresser, books on shelf, backpack on hook). Use organizational tools if you can, such as boxes/bins, drawers, files, trays, or shelves. If possible, label your spaces so you remember where things go (e.g., drawer labeled “school supplies”). After you use something, put it back in its “home” so you don’t create clutter.

Example: When she gets home from school, Annie puts her shoes and coat in the hallway closet and her lunch bag on the kitchen counter. Before bed, she places her keys and backpack by the front door so she remembers to take them in the morning.

2

Use a planner or agenda.

If you forget what homework you have or tend to turn assignments in late, using a planner can help. Keep track of important dates, homework assignments, social events, and extracurricular activities by writing them down in one place.

Example: At the end of each class, Jacob writes his homework assignment and its due date down in his planner.

3

Try color-coding.

If it’s hard to distinguish between different groups of belongings, try sorting them by color or space. You can use different color notebooks and folders for each subject, write assignments for each subject in a different color pen, or put papers for different subjects in different sections of a binder.

Example: Sophia always puts new/unfinished homework assignments in her red folder, completed homework in her blue folder, and papers for her parents in her green folder.

4

Set a deadline for getting tasks done.

If tasks often feel rushed or “last minute”, set deadlines to reduce your stress. You can use due dates (e.g., school assignment due on Monday), a deadline you or your parents choose (e.g., clean room by dinnertime), or blocks of time (e.g., do task A for 20 minutes, then move on to task B for 10 minutes). Being creative can help: for instance, try putting away as many clothes as you can before 3 songs are over.

Example: Jeff set a timer for 15 minutes, then put away as many of his toys as he could before the timer buzzed. He took a 5-minute break, then used the same strategy to sort his art supplies for another 15 minutes.

5

Schedule “clean up time”.

If your backpack, desk, or locker are often full and it’s hard to find what you need, work with your parents and teachers to set regular times to clean out those spaces so they don’t get too cluttered or

Example: Every Friday, Kiera’s teacher spends a few minutes helping her clear out her desk by throwing away unnecessary papers and trash. Every Sunday, her parents help her clean out her backpack to get ready for the next week.

6

Ask your parents or teachers to support you.

When first trying these strategies, share them with your parent and teacher so they can help you practice. For example, a parent can go through your backpack with you and check that everything you need is in there (and also help you clear out whatever you no longer need!). Similarly, your teacher can remind you to write assignments in your planner, check that you wrote them down correctly, and ensure that you are taking home everything you need that day. Your parents and teachers can also give you suggestions for new strategies, help you improve ones that aren’t working, and support you in becoming more independent.

7

Reward yourself.

If you’re working hard to stay organized, choose how you will treat yourself. If you’re not sure what is allowed or appropriate, ask your parents. Be sure to give yourself a pat on the back for working hard and doing more on your own!

Here’s an example of how Felix organizes his room:



PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF TIPS



ADHD Skill 6

How Can Organizing My Stuff Help My Family?

- ▶ When your teen has ADHD, it can be hard for them to stay organized. For instance, your teen may have a messy bedroom, lose track of assignments or belongings, or forget to bring home important papers. You may find that there are piles of clothes around their room, their backpack is full of papers, or it's hard for them to find a pen or notebook to use in class.
- ▶ This can mean they take a long time to complete easy tasks, or it is challenging to do the things they need to do, like homework or chores. Your teen, your family, and/or your teen's teachers may find this frustrating or annoying.
- ▶ How to Organize My Stuff gives your teen helpful strategies to improve their organization. By practicing this skill, your teen can establish better routines and feel successful at home and school.

Common Parent Concerns

My teen says that organizing is hard, and everything usually turns out okay in the end. They want to know why they should bother. It can take hard work and time to become more organized. Encourage your teen to think about their goals and how disorganization may make it harder to achieve them. For example, do they wish they didn't lose as many assignments or possessions? Would it feel good to turn things in on time? What would it be like to know where their things are when they need them? Is there any benefit to you nagging them less about their messy room or lost belongings? See if your teen can identify whether there are advantages to trying a new strategy or two. Then see if these new strategies help them to do well and feel better!

My teen starts to organize their stuff, and then they get distracted. It's hard for them to finish anything.

Think about when your teen will best be able to try new organizational strategies. For example, pick a time of day when they have the most energy or focus. Try to limit their distractions by turning off the TV and putting away their phone and computer. They can start with a smaller task, like cleaning out one drawer, one section of their backpack, or one side of their desk. Check in on them in case they need help, and encourage them to take breaks as needed so they don't get overwhelmed. You and your teen's teachers can offer more suggestions based on what you've seen work well for them at home or school.

When I ask my teen to organize their things, they say it's too hard to do a big task like cleaning their room. It's so messy, they don't know where to start! When tackling a big task, help your teen think of ways to break it down so it feels less overwhelming (see ADHD Skill 5 on How to Get Things Done for tips). For example, they can split their bedroom into four sections and clean one at a time. Once their room is clean, have them save a little time each day to straighten up. For example, each day they can spend five minutes putting things away, put away at least five things, or clean off one area, such as their nightstand. Remind them to reward themselves for their hard work!

These strategies sound helpful, but it's hard to know which ones my teen should use.

Learning new skills can be challenging for any teen! Remember they don't need to do all of these at once. Your teen can start by trying one of these strategies and seeing how it goes. If possible, you or your teen's teachers can try the new skills out with them the first few times. Kindly offer helpful ideas about which techniques are best for your teen and ways to improve their process.

If your teen's difficulty with organization gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, they may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



ADHD Skill 7

What is How to Manage My Time?

- ▶ How to Manage My Time helps your teen calculate how much time they need to do tasks and do them on time. Practicing this skill can help your teen stay on schedule, complete their daily routines, and meet their goals.
- ▶ The strategies below help your teen 1) figure out how long it takes them to complete tasks, and 2) organize their time in order to get them done.
- ▶ Depending on your teen's age, some of these strategies may work better than others. See which ones improve your teen's time management!

Here's How to Manage Your Time

You can introduce this skill by saying, "It can be hard to know how much time we need to do things. Let's read through this list of strategies together and see if you can choose a few to manage your time."

- 1 Understand Your Timing.** To manage your time, you first need to know how long it takes you to do different tasks.
 - ▶ If you're unsure or find that your guesses are usually wrong, play our **Check Your Time game**. Using our list of quick activities, write down how long you think each task will take, time yourself doing each one, and then compare your predicted time with your actual time. Add your own activity ideas to the game, focusing on those tasks where you often need more time than you expect, or where you find yourself running out of time to finish.
 - ▶ As you do tasks in the future, time yourself to continue improving your awareness of how long it takes you to do things.
- 2 Plan for Homework.** Before starting your homework, do some **quick calculations** to plan your time.
 - ▶ For example, if you have 3 hours to complete your homework after dinner and 3 classes with homework assignments, you have about 1 hour to spend on each subject. If you finish any assignments ahead of schedule, you can use your extra time to check your work or start the next one.
 - ▶ If you have trouble paying attention or doing a task for a long time, remember to schedule in **short breaks** (e.g., a 5-minute break after completing each assignment).
- 3 Make Schedules.** Use a **calendar** to keep track of your homework assignments, extracurricular activities, and social events. You can color code to match each type of activity or use separate calendars.
 - ▶ At the beginning of each school year, **write important dates** in your calendar (e.g., first and last day of school, breaks and vacations, school dance, sports tournaments, etc.). Review these with your parents and/or teachers so you're all on the same page.
 - ▶ Make a **weekly schedule** at the beginning of each week. Include the times you have to wake up, leave for school, get home, and go to bed. Add that week's appointments, activities, and social commitments. **Review your schedule** every day to see what's coming next. See our example and fill in the blank one for yourself.

4 Increase Your Motivation. Identify a small way to **reward yourself** for managing your time well. This can be a challenging skill to master, so be sure to acknowledge your hard work.

▶ You can also increase your motivation to stay on schedule by considering the **consequences** of not managing time well. For instance, if you fall behind in the morning, you may end up getting marked tardy, which can lead to getting a detention!

5 Anticipate Challenges. Think about **obstacles** that may keep you from following your schedule or plan. For example, if you tend to forget your planner at home, you may need a reminder to put it in your backpack at night. Or, if you have the hardest time staying on schedule in the morning, you may need to leave extra time to complete your tasks before school. Your parents and teachers may have ideas too, so consider talking this over with them.

▶ Set reminders to help you stick to your schedule. You can set alarms on your phone or watch, ask others to help you, or use a calendar app that sends automatic reminders when something is coming up in your schedule. Some families find that sharing their calendars makes it easier to keep track of everyone's activities.

▶ At the end of the day, review your schedule and cross off everything you were able to do. Notice where you successfully managed your time, and give yourself a pat on the back! For those things you weren't able to do, try to identify why. See if there is anything you can change to get them done next time.

▶ Don't be shy about asking for help when you need it. Everyone can use support with challenging tasks. Your family, teachers, or friends can play an important role in helping you practice the strategies above. Together, you can work hard to improve your time management and reach your goals.

You can do it! Let's review the 5 simple steps to Managing Your Time:

1. Understand your timing
2. Plan for homework
3. Make schedules
4. Increase your motivation
5. Anticipate challenges

CHECK YOUR TIME CHALLENGE

Predict how long it will take you to do each of these short tasks, then time yourself doing them. To make it more fun, you can also ask others what their predictions are. Add your own activity ideas too!

Task	How long do I think this will take?	How long did it actually take?
Brush your teeth		
Read 3 pages in a textbook		
Pick out clothes for tomorrow		
Eat breakfast		
Write your address 5 times		
Take a shower		
Put on your sneakers		
Do 10 jumping jacks		
Vacuum a room		
Sing the chorus to your favorite song		
Pack your lunch		
Slowly say your phone number 5 times		

My Weekly Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

My Weekly Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME TIPS



How Can Managing My Time Help My Family?

- ▶ When your teen has ADHD, it can be challenging for them to pay attention, focus on one task at a time, and keep track of their time. Assignments or chores may take longer than they expect, it may be hard to get things done when they're supposed to, or they may find that they're always behind schedule, even if they wear a watch.
- ▶ This can lead your teen to feel frustrated at school, get into arguments at home, or miss out on fun activities. Using the strategies on these worksheets, they can become better at using and controlling their time, which will help them be more independent. Over time, practicing these skills can help your teen stress less and succeed more!



Common Parent Concerns

My teen tries to set aside enough time, but it always takes them longer than they expect to do things.

This happens to many people with ADHD, so your teen is not alone! Have them play the Check Your Time game to learn how much time they need for small tasks, and then have them time themselves completing a task that usually takes them longer than they predict. This will give you both valuable information about how accurate their time estimates are. You can also offer guidance or ask their teachers or friends for ideas based on how much time they've seen your teen need to do things. Your teen can use this information to improve their future planning.

Some of the other strategies in this packet can also help your teen get better at managing time, such as How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 5) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 6). If these ideas are new to your family, they may be challenging for your teen at first, but with practice teens find that these skills become easier and easier to use!

My teen says they have no idea how long it takes them to do things, and nothing ever feels urgent. But, we are always fighting about them taking too long or not taking things seriously.

It can be frustrating to have trouble keeping track of time. Many people, even those without ADHD, find this hard to do. See if your teen is willing to try some of the strategies we suggest here. Encourage them to notice if changing the way they manage their time helps them understand how long it takes to do things, follow a schedule, and complete tasks.

My teen sets up their schedule and plans their time well, but they aren't motivated to get any of it done.

It can be hard to stay motivated to do hard or boring things! Help your teen identify what they'll gain from being better at time management. For example, can it help them get your homework done faster so they have more time for activities they like? Will it decrease how often they argue with you about their schedule? It can also help to identify the reward they'll earn when they're able to follow their schedule (step 4). Even a short break to do something they enjoy can feel great after working hard!

If your teen's difficulty with time management or motivation gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, they may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



What is How to Feel Good About Myself?

- ▶ The challenges teens with ADHD experience can make it easy to get down on themselves. How to Feel Good About Myself is a set of strategies to help your teen be their own cheerleader, feel better about tackling difficult tasks, and remember that everyone faces challenges. These techniques also help your teen notice if they are being hard on themselves and then take steps to feel better.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, your teen will remember what makes them great and special, even when they're having a hard time. Feeling good about themselves can help your teen do better at school, home, and with friends!

Here's How to Feel Good About Yourself

You can introduce this skill by saying, "All teens have times when they feel down on themselves. When that happens, it's important to remember what makes you special. Feeling good about yourself can help you do better at school, home, and with friends. Let's go through this list of strategies together and see if they help you feel better."

- 1 Make a list of your special qualities.** Each person has traits that make them unique. Make a list of 10 talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your parents, teachers, and/or friends for more ideas based on what they like about you. Look at this list when you're feeling down or having a hard time remembering what's great about you.
- 2 Be kind to yourself.** If you find yourself feeling annoyed or frustrated, remember that having a positive attitude can make a big difference. Remind yourself that you can try to solve problems, improve the way you do things, and give your best effort each day. Everyone has things they are good at and things they find challenging. Try to focus on your strengths and treat yourself like you would treat a good friend.
- 3 Remember that your thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected.** How you think about a situation impacts how you feel about it, and how you feel about it effects how you act in that situation. You may not be able to control the way your brain works sometimes or change a challenging situation, but you can decide how you think about it in order to feel better and do better.
- 4 Give yourself a pep talk before starting a hard task.** When preparing to do something challenging, give yourself an encouraging pep talk. Follow the strategies in these worksheets, then remind yourself how hard you're working. Visualize yourself successfully completing your hard task. (E.g., Before Leah studies for her math tests, she tells herself, "I can do it! If I put my mind to it, I can do my best on this test!")
- 5 If a task feels too challenging, take a break.** Taking a short break from a difficult task can make it feel less frustrating or overwhelming. Take a few minutes to stretch, listen to some music, take some deep breaths, or have a light snack. See if you feel better and are ready to try again.
- 6 If you feel unsure or stuck, ask for help.** Remember you don't have to go it alone. Make a short list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed. This can include parents, teachers, friends, and other supportive people in your life. Turn to them for understanding and encouragement when things feel hard.
- 7 Don't give up!** Sometimes the first strategy we try doesn't work. If that happens, try another one (such as the other skills in this guide). Remind yourself not everyone gets it on the first try!
- 8 Track your progress.** As you work through the skills in this guide, be sure to notice if you are feeling and doing better. If so, give yourself credit for your effort and be proud of your hard work!

TEEN WORKSHEET: HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF



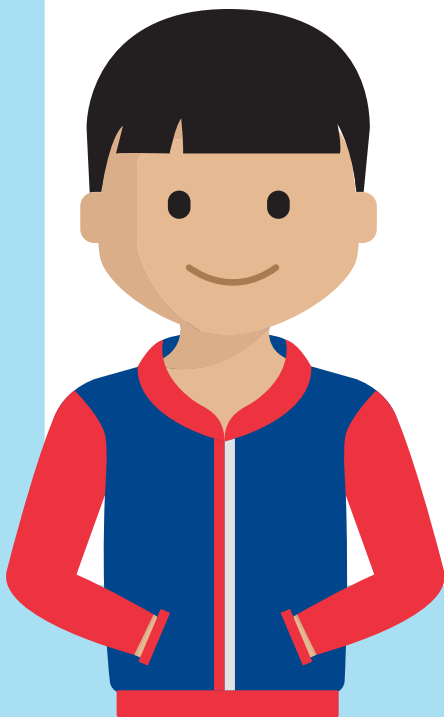
My Special Qualities

Use this space to make a list of your special qualities. These can be talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your caregivers, teachers, and friends for more ideas based on what they like about you!

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

My Supporters

Use this space to brainstorm a list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.



How Can Feeling Good About Myself Help My Family?

- ▶ Sometimes teens with ADHD get frustrated with themselves for having a hard time paying attention, sitting still, doing homework, or getting along with others. This can lead them to think negative thoughts about themselves, avoid important tasks, or argue with family, friends, or teachers.
- ▶ Feeling Good About Myself provides strategies to help your teen improve their self-esteem and use coping strategies when they're feeling badly.

Common Parent Concerns

When a task is hard, my teen gets overwhelmed and wants to give up.

Completing difficult tasks can be challenging! When a task feels hard, encourage them to give themselves credit for the effort they've made so far. Then, they can take a short break to do something enjoyable, such as doing some light stretching, watching a short video, or getting a snack. They can also practice relaxation skills, which help calm both their body and their mind. See if these strategies help your teen get back on track and ready to try again. If you find that your teen is avoiding their work because it feels too hard, offer more help or talk to their teachers to get extra support.

Sometimes when my teen thinks negative thoughts about themselves, they get "stuck" feeling badly.

This happens to almost everyone at some point. Teens with ADHD can find it even harder to control their thoughts. Remind them that instead of beating themselves up, they can try to focus on their strengths and reset. Have them read over their list of 10 special qualities, do something fun or soothing, or talk to someone supportive to get a new perspective. If you notice that they are thinking the same negative thoughts over and over, encourage them to remember that they're working hard and trying their best.

My teen says that they hate having ADHD! Everything feels harder for them.

Remember that there are many teens and adults with ADHD, so your teen is not alone. A lot of people with ADHD are successful at reaching their goals. Using the strategies in this guide can make things easier and more manageable for your teen at school and home. The more they practice them, the easier the skills will be to use on a daily basis and the better they will feel!

School can be especially challenging for those with ADHD, but school is not the only thing one can be great at doing. Remind your teen that they can take steps to do better in school and that they also have their own special talents, interests and skills.

If your teen is feeling badly about needing extra support, remind them that getting help means they are doing everything they can to improve and succeed. This means they are committed to being the best "them" that they can be!

If feeling down about themselves gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, your teen may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



Guided Self-Management Tools for Disruptive Behavior

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR Disruptive Behavior

Parents of Children 3-12



BEHAVIORAL PARENT TRAINING

FOR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS



INTRODUCTION

Most children have times when they don't follow rules, can't control their temper, or have an emotional outburst or tantrum. These disruptive behaviors are more likely to occur when a child is worried, angry, or stressed. However, when these behaviors become frequent and lead to difficulty at home, school, and/or with friends, working with your child's primary care team can help you get these behaviors under control.

The most effective interventions for decreasing children's behavior problems focus on teaching parents how to best use parenting strategies to consistently manage and respond to misbehavior. This is commonly referred to as Behavioral Parent Training, or BPT. You may have heard of some of these skills before. The worksheets in this packet will explain the skills and help you use BPT strategies at home. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found that these parenting strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, instructions for how to use the strategy at home, and a list of common questions and concerns parents usually ask, along with our answers. We also include worksheets you can use with your child. Work through the guide with your child and make these exercises and techniques a part of your daily life. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your child need any additional support for management of disruptive behavior problems. Good luck!



Skill 1

Bonding Time

This practice helps increase your child's motivation to behave by improving the parent-child relationship through daily periods of uninterrupted and positive time together.



Skill 2

Praising Good Behavior

This strategy helps you increase how often your child engages in appropriate behavior by consistently and quickly showing your approval and appreciation of positive behaviors, such as following rules.



Skill 3

Shifting Attention

This skill helps you decrease how often your child engages in irritating or annoying behaviors, such as arguing or whining, by ignoring those behaviors and then praising your child when their behavior improves.



Skill 4

Effective Directions

This technique increases the chances your child will follow instructions by giving clear, calm, and simple directions.



Skill 5

Rewarding Good Behavior

These worksheets help you increase your child's interest in behaving appropriately by creating a program of rewards they can earn for good behaviors.



Skill 6

Reasonable Consequences

This skill helps you create a structured and predictable home environment by setting and delivering clear consequences for misbehavior, such as breaking rules or engaging in destructive behavior.



Skill 7

Planning Ahead

These worksheets help you plan how you will manage your child's misbehavior in places and times where your child is likely to act up (e.g., when in public, at the grocery store).

PARENT HANDOUT: BONDING TIME



Disruptive Behavior Skill 1

WHAT IS BONDING TIME?

- ▶ Bonding Time is reserving 5-20 minutes a day to connect with your child in an uninterrupted and focused way, like playing a game or sport together, in order to strengthen your relationship.
- ▶ During this time, your child gets to choose and lead the activity, ideally an interactive one you can engage in together. Your goal is to focus on what your child is doing and respond to their actions in an attentive, enthusiastic, and positive way.
- ▶ Some ideas for Bonding Time activities include playing with toys or a game, drawing or crafting, and throwing a ball back and forth. Older children tend to prefer more interactive activities, such as playing a sport, making a meal together, going for a walk or to the coffee shop, or having a conversation about things they enjoy, such as music, movies, sports, or their hobbies.
- ▶ Less interactive activities like watching TV are not as effective, because they provide fewer opportunities for you to participate in your child's play and give positive feedback.
- ▶ This practice can lead to positive results for children of all ages, but is often most effective with younger children.

HERE'S HOW TO USE BONDING TIME AT HOME

- 1 Schedule a regular time** for Bonding Time, or join when your child is doing an activity you where can participate. Try to do this at least 3-5 times per week.
- 2 Ask what your child would like to do together.** Encourage them to choose an interactive activity, and let them lead it.
- 3 Put on your enthusiastic hat and attitude!** Pay attention to your child's actions and show eagerness and interest. For younger children, you can provide a detailed, running commentary of what you see ("I see you're putting the blue car on top of the red block"; "Now you're drawing a big castle!"). For older children, focus on being attentive and enthusiastic about your child's actions or interests while doing an activity they enjoy together ("I like the way you tried to dunk the ball"; "Tell me more about that band"; or saying "Wow, that's such a great strategy" while playing a game with your child).
- 4 Provide positive feedback.** Let your child know you are interested in them, show approval for good behavior ("Nice job taking turns"; "I like when we spend time together like this"), and show affection in ways that are comfortable for you (give a hug, high five, or pat on the head or shoulder). Be specific about what you like in your child's actions ("I like it when you show me how to draw these animals"; "I love how good you are at playing soccer").
- 5 Try not to criticize your child, ask questions, or give directions.** Avoid using words like "don't," "no," "stop," and "quit." Bonding Time is not the time to scold your child or teach new skills.
- 6 It is important that your child have your undivided attention.** Don't start Bonding Time when you're cooking a meal, on the phone, or about to leave for a meeting or errand. If you have other children, Bonding Time works best when they are doing other activities. Some parents like to have Bonding Time with each of their children.
- 7 Remember to relax and have fun!** This is a great opportunity to spend positive time together and feel closer to your child.

PARENT HANDOUT: BONDING TIME TIPS



HOW CAN BONDING TIME HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ When children misbehave, we want to increase their motivation to behave. Bonding Time teaches children to enjoy getting attention from parents for good behavior.
- ▶ We are all affected by the attention we receive. When you do well at work, it feels good to have your boss praise your efforts, even though you may simply be “doing your job”. Children respond well to attention for good behavior too, even if they are doing what they are “supposed to do”.
- ▶ It may seem counterintuitive, but giving children attention for misbehavior (like scolding) can still be rewarding. For many children, any attention is “good attention”. In fact, parents often pay more attention to children when they act out than when they are behaving!
- ▶ Your relationship with your child may sometimes feel less positive if you are dealing with a lot of misbehavior. Bonding Time provides your family with opportunities to repair and improve the parent-child relationship. It gives you time each day that is conflict-free and increases the effectiveness of other parenting skills. With this, you can “reset” your relationship.



COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

I'm busy! How will I fit this in?

A small investment of time now can lead to big rewards later. You likely spend a lot of time now managing your child's misbehavior. Putting aside even 5 minutes a day to bond can help you spend less time arguing and more time enjoying your child. If needed, parents can take turns.

Why am I the one doing something different when my child is the one misbehaving?

We all do better when we receive encouragement and appreciation from others. It is hard for us to keep working when our good behavior goes unnoticed, even if we aren't always on our “best” behavior. This skill will help motivate your child to get attention by behaving in ways you like.

This is hard!

Many families find this challenging at first. It gets easier (and more fun!) with practice. If it doesn't go as well as you want, you can always try again. Many families choose to continue doing this even after their children's behavior problems get better.

Can my partner or other child(ren) join in?

Bonding Time is most effective with one parent and one child. This allows you to devote all of your attention to your child. If possible, each parent can have their own Bonding Time.

What if my child misbehaves during Bonding Time?

Try to ignore mild misbehavior like whining or complaining. Handle serious misbehavior by ending Bonding Time and saying you look forward to doing it again when your child acts more appropriately. Once your child acts in a way you like, praise it (“Thank you for playing nicely”; “I like it when you talk to me in a polite way”).

What if my child misbehaves during the day? Can I take Bonding Time away?

Do not take Bonding Time away as a punishment. Ideally, it becomes part of your daily routine. When children have a bad day, they usually need more soothing and positive time with parents, not less. Over time, this special time will help decrease your child's misbehavior.

PARENT HANDOUT: PRAISING GOOD BEHAVIOR



Disruptive Behavior Skill 2

WHAT IS PRAISING GOOD BEHAVIOR?

- ▶ Praising Good Behavior is noticing when your child is acting in ways you like and showing your immediate approval and appreciation for those behaviors. This encourages your child to act appropriately, teaches them it feels good to get attention for positive behaviors, and shifts your attention from your child's misbehavior to desired behaviors.
- ▶ The best praise is very specific and direct, or what is called "labeled praise." That is, you let your child know in a clear and straightforward way what you liked about what they did. For example, saying "great job putting your clothes away" is better than saying "great job".
- ▶ Praise is also most effective when it comes directly after good behavior. Giving instant feedback helps your child connect their good behavior with your affection.
- ▶ While most praise is verbal, many children also like physical praise, such as a hug, high five, or pat on the back that shows your approval.
- ▶ This skill is effective with children of all ages, as well as for many different kinds of misbehavior.

HERE'S HOW TO PRAISE GOOD BEHAVIOR AT HOME

- 1 Pay close attention** to what your child is doing so that when your child exhibits a good behavior, you see it! You are trying to "catch your child being good". Consistently paying attention to your child when they are behaving appropriately will make good behavior more rewarding for them. One way to do this is to **set aside short periods of time** each day to observe your child and practice Praising Good Behavior. Another is to **set an alarm to take a break** from your own tasks, check in on your child, and then praise good behaviors you see.
- 2 Offer praise as soon as possible** after you see good behavior. If you delay telling your child that you like something they did, you will have less control over their future behavior.
- 3 Be specific** about what you like (e.g., "It's awesome how you're working hard on your homework").
- 4 Be enthusiastic and genuine** in your tone of voice. If common in your family, you can also give your child a hug, smile, or high five.
- 5 Be consistent.** Start by giving praise every time your child follows an instruction. This gets you in the habit of spotting good behavior and your child in the habit of being noticed when behaving well.
- 6 Avoid mixing praise with criticism** (e.g., "I love how you got ready for school on time today. Why can't you always do that?"). Focus instead on praising good behavior enthusiastically without any negative statements in order to increase the behavior you want to see (e.g., "I love how you got ready for school on time today!").

Some great times to Praise Good Behavior include when your child...

- a. Follows your instructions or requests** (e.g., "Thank you for sitting down for dinner when I called you; "I appreciate you getting off the phone when your five minutes were up").
- b. Does the opposite of a behavior you dislike** (e.g., "Great job keeping your hands to yourself"; "Thank you for not interrupting while I was talking"; "It makes me happy when you share with your sister").
- c. Shows spontaneous good behavior**, such as following house rules or doing chores without being asked (e.g., "I love it when you clean your room without me telling you to").
- d. Begins to follow a direction they usually don't follow**, or follow inconsistently (e.g., "Wow! It's awesome when you are able to play quietly on your own"; "You did a great job being nice to your brother).

PARENT HANDOUT: PRAISING GOOD BEHAVIOR TIPS



HOW CAN PRAISING GOOD BEHAVIOR HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Many parents say their children misbehave to “get attention”. This is often true, because the more disruptive children are, the more attention people usually give them!
- ▶ When a child gets attention for a behavior, *good or bad*, it increases the chances of that behavior occurring again. You can encourage your child to behave by giving them more attention after a good behavior. For instance, if you show your child approval after they follow an instruction (“Thank you for doing as I asked”), your child will be more likely to do so in the future. Similarly, if you scold your child for whining (“Stop it!”), the whining will likely increase.
- ▶ Praising Good Behavior shows your child that you notice when they behave, increasing their motivation to do things you like. This helps you shift your focus toward times your child behaves, instead of times they misbehave. You can then use the power of your attention to its best potential.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

Why should I praise my child for behaving the way I expect them to?

We are all motivated by the type of attention we receive and what we gain for our efforts. Think of giving your child praise like “paying” them for doing their “job”. Even if they just do the minimum expected, they still want to be compensated for being “good enough”, just as adults get paid for going to work even when they don’t go “above and beyond”.

I’m busy, and it’s hard to pay attention to my child’s behavior this much.

Paying attention to your child’s good behaviors more than their misbehaviors is challenging and perhaps different from what you’re used to doing. With practice, your child should be able to act more appropriately and spend more time independently. Investing in short periods of time now will give you more time for yourself and more positive time with your child in the future.

I was not raised with praise, so this is uncomfortable. Children should do what they are told!

You are right that you should not “have to” praise good behavior. However, all children are different, and yours may respond better to positive attention than other strategies. Consider trying this skill and seeing if it helps motivate your child to behave better.

I already tried this, and my child does not respond to praise.

Many parents praise children, but not in the ways we suggest here. All praise is good, but little tweaks like looking out for good behavior, being specific about what you like, and giving praise immediately after good behavior can make it a more effective tool for you. Over time, gaining your praise and approval for good behavior will motivate your child and increase their self-esteem.

If I pay attention to my children when they behave the way I want them to, won’t they act out more when I’m not paying attention?

Everyone likes to be recognized for their efforts, especially when a relationship has conflict. This skill helps you and your child shift your focus to better behavior and how good it feels for both of you. Over time, as your child’s misbehavior decreases, they will become more motivated to behave in ways you like and to help maintain your improved relationship without as much praise.



PARENT HANDOUT: SHIFTING ATTENTION



WHAT IS SHIFTING ATTENTION?

- ▶ Shifting Attention is choosing to ignore *mild* misbehavior from your child, such as whining, sulking, complaining, or arguing, and to instead show your child approval for appropriate behaviors, such as following directions or rules.
- ▶ If you take your attention away from your child when they act in unwanted or inappropriate ways, they will learn these behaviors do not get a response, making them less rewarding. Over time, your child will engage in these behaviors less.
- ▶ At the same time, if you give your attention to your child when they act in appropriate or desired ways, your child will engage in these behaviors more.
- ▶ By Shifting Attention, your child learns that some behaviors consistently get attention (ones you like and are appropriate), while other behaviors consistently do not (ones you dislike and are inappropriate). This strategy works well when paired with the Praising Good Behavior strategy.
- ▶ This skill is effective with children of all ages when addressing mild misbehavior.

HERE'S HOW TO SHIFT ATTENTION AT HOME

- 1 Choose the unwanted behaviors you want to ignore.** Shifting Attention works best with *mildly* inappropriate behaviors, such as when your child whines, sulks, complains, argues, talks back, asks the same question repeatedly, or does other things to get your attention.
- 2** When your child exhibits these behaviors, try to **intentionally shift your attention**. Ignore the behavior and avoid eye contact, look elsewhere for a few moments, start doing something else, or even leave the room for a few moments. This shows your child you are uninterested and unaffected by their misbehavior.
- 3** Be sure that when you shift attention, you still **pay close attention** to your child's behavior (so don't leave the room without returning!). That way, when your child stops misbehaving or begins behaving in ways you like, you notice it.
- 4** **Once your child behaves appropriately, show your immediate approval** by making eye contact, smiling, and telling your child what behavior you like (e.g., "It makes me happy when you sit quietly"; "I appreciate when you follow my instructions"). This encourages your child to do these things in the future. Look at Praising Good Behavior (Disruptive Behavior Skill 2) for more tips.
- 5** Some things **not to do** while Shifting Attention:
 - a** Do not get pulled into talking, debating, or yelling at your child when unwanted behaviors occur. Re-explaining or justifying your behavior is still a way to give your child attention.
 - b** Do not look or act upset. Do your best to hide your reaction so you appear calm and uninterested.
 - c** Do not ignore moderate or severely inappropriate behaviors. Shifting Attention is not an effective response for hitting, kicking, cursing, threatening, throwing or breaking things, disobeying directions, or doing anything that is dangerous.
 - d** Do not give up! When children don't get attention or stop getting attention, they often try harder to get it. This means what you're doing is working and your child is noticing the shift in your attention, so keep trying!



PARENT HANDOUT: SHIFTING ATTENTION TIPS



Disruptive Behavior Skill 3

HOW CAN SHIFTING ATTENTION HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Parents often find it frustrating when children argue, complain, whine, or talk back. But, the more children act this way, the more attention parents usually give them.
- ▶ When a child gets attention for an unwanted behavior, it increases the chances of that behavior occurring again. If your child gets a toy after whining, she is more likely to whine in the future. If your child complains or argues with you until you clean up his mess or leave him alone, he is more likely to complain or argue to get out of other chores.
- ▶ Shifting Attention helps you pay less attention to mild misbehavior such as whining, complaining, sulking, talking back, or arguing. By ignoring these behaviors instead of responding to them, your child learns that these behaviors do not get your attention or lead to anything rewarding. Over time, your child will engage in these behaviors less.
- ▶ Shifting Attention helps you respond to your child's misbehavior in a more consistent and less frustrated or angry way. Using the power of your attention to its greatest potential is one of the most important and effective parenting tools you have at your disposal.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

This is hard! My child is stubborn and acting out more!

This usually means it's working, so don't give up! Children are smart and know that if they continue to misbehave, parents usually give in. When children are used to getting attention for certain behaviors and that attention goes away, it is normal for them to try harder. This is usually temporary and a sign to you to keep at it.

I feel guilty or uncomfortable ignoring my child.

With Shifting Attention, you are ignoring your child's *misbehavior*, not your *child*. You should keep a close eye on your child, and when they behave more appropriately, return to giving them attention and praise. This way you focus on giving your child attention for good behavior, increasing the chances of good behavior occurring more in the future.

What if my child really needs my attention?

You know your child best. There will be times your child has a genuine need that they may be expressing in an inappropriate way, like complaining about not feeling well. You will usually be able to tell if you need to respond to your child more strongly, or if you have an opportunity to teach your child to cope and seek attention in better ways.

If my child misbehaves, how long do I ignore the behavior?

Remember, the goal is to pay *less* attention to *mild* misbehavior and *more* attention to *good* behavior. When your child complains or whines, shift your attention in another direction. As soon as you see your child behaving in a way you like, shift your attention back to show your approval. If you can do this consistently, your child will quickly learn the difference between behaviors that get your attention (appropriate behavior) and those that *don't* (inappropriate or irritating behavior).

PARENT HANDOUT: EFFECTIVE DIRECTIONS



WHAT IS GIVING EFFECTIVE DIRECTIONS?

- ▶ Effective Directions are instructions you give your child that are simple, clear, and direct. They are given when your child's response is important to you and when you are willing to see that your directions are followed.
- ▶ This skill is effective with children of all ages, as well as for many different kinds of misbehavior.

HOW TO GIVE EFFECTIVE DIRECTIONS AT HOME

- 1 Only give directions if you are willing to see them through.** Don't give an instruction you don't care much about or don't intend to back up with consequences if your child does not follow it.
- 2 Reduce distractions before giving directions.** Turn off the TV, stop video games, put away toys, etc. before giving instructions. You may need to help your child transition from one activity to another to reduce distraction (e.g., "In five minutes, it is time to put the phone down"). This is especially helpful if your child is engaged in a task they really enjoy, like screen time.
- 3 Make statements instead of asking questions.** You are not asking your child for a favor or letting them choose to do what you want. Instead, clearly and directly state what you would like your child to do (e.g., "Please do your homework"; "Please put your phone away"). Try to focus on the behavior you want your child to *do*, instead of what you want them to avoid doing (e.g., say, "Please use a quiet voice" instead of "Don't yell"). Asking your child to do something provides an opportunity for them to say no.
- 4 Give simple and specific commands.** Younger children or those with attention challenges often have difficulty remembering "to do lists". Wait until one instruction has been followed, then give another one. Older children may be better able to keep multiple or multi-step directions in mind.
- 5 Make eye contact while talking.** This will ensure that your child heard your directions and is giving you their undivided attention when you are talking.
- 6 Speak in a calm, business-like voice.** Let your child know you are serious about the instruction(s), but don't let your frustration show. This helps both you and your child stay calm and decreases your child's chances of getting upset in response to your directions.
- 7 Have your child repeat back your directions.** This lets you know they heard you correctly and helps them remember what to do. This is especially helpful for children who have difficulty paying attention, or for older children if you give multiple instructions at once.
- 8 Set a time limit.** Tell your child *when* they need to follow through on your instructions, as well as the *consequences* they will receive if they do not meet that time limit.

You should also **avoid less effective ways of giving directions**, such as:

- 9 a. Giving *multiple instructions*** at a time (e.g., "Get out of bed, brush your teeth, and eat breakfast").
- b. *Repeating instructions***, which may make your child more likely to tune you out. Give a direction one time, then give a warning about the consequences for not listening.
- c. *Not giving consequences*** like you said you would. If your child knows you don't mean it, they are less likely to follow the rules.

PARENT HANDOUT: EFFECTIVE DIRECTIONS TIPS



HOW CAN GIVING EFFECTIVE DIRECTIONS HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Parents often find it frustrating when their children do not follow directions. In fact, children who misbehave typically get *more* directions a day than the average child. This means they may be used to “tuning them out”.
- ▶ Giving Effective Directions teaches you new ways of giving instructions that maximize the chances your child will follow them.
- ▶ This strategy is one of the easiest and most powerful ways to improve your child’s behavior. By making simple changes in the way you give your child directions, you can significantly improve your child’s behavior.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

This doesn’t work! My child just doesn’t listen.

Some children may not respond to Effective Directions right away. Keep trying! Over time, children often notice that parents are telling them to do things in a different way, which will make them more likely to respond the way you’d like. You can also combine this skill with other strategies in this guide like Praising Good Behavior (Disruptive Behavior Skill 2) and Shifting Attention (Disruptive Behavior Skill 3) to increase the chances your child will behave.

I feel uncomfortable telling my child what to do instead of asking. It seems rude.

Some parents find this method of giving instructions different or awkward. Remember that you are trying to give directions in a way that makes it clear you are telling your child to do something, not asking or giving them the option to say no. Start your sentences with “please” and use a calm tone of voice. You can be kind but firm!

What if I need my child to complete a bigger or longer task and can’t give directions one at a time?

Ask your child to repeat your directions back to you, which will ensure they heard and understood you correctly. Some children benefit from having a “chore card” that lists the steps involved in a multi-step task. For example, your child can carry around a card that lists the steps to cleaning a room.

When I give my child instructions, they act out in serious ways. What should I do?

If your child’s misbehavior feels uncontrollable or extreme, you may need additional support to manage and change their behaviors. Talk to your child’s primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

Anna's Chore Card	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make bed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Put laundry in hamper
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Put toys in toy bin
<input type="checkbox"/>	Place clean clothes in drawers

PARENT HANDOUT: REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR

WHAT IS REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR?

- ▶ Rewarding Good Behavior involves tracking your child's behavior and providing specific rewards for good behavior. Rewards encourage your child to follow rules and directions by increasing your child's motivation to act in ways you like.
- ▶ This strategy helps parents and children set clear goals. Parents typically use a chart to track their child's progress, which also provides children with a visual representation of their accomplishments.
- ▶ Families do best with rewards that are simple, sustainable, and desirable to their children. Rewards can be easy and free, extra time with you, playing a game, or screen time. What matters is that you work together to choose rewards you are willing to give and that your child is motivated to earn.
- ▶ This skill is effective with children of all ages, as well as for many different kinds of misbehavior.



HERE'S HOW TO REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR AT HOME

1

Create a list of 3-5 desired behaviors to start. Be specific about what your child needs to do to earn a reward (e.g., "make bed before breakfast"). Include behaviors with a range of difficulty: some your child already does most of the time (speak nicely to sister") and some your child struggles to do (do homework from 3:00-4:00").

2

Create a list of at least 5-10 rewards. Think of as many ideas as you can. Include a range of reward types (items, activities, privileges) and sizes/costs (free, small, medium, large). Have rewards you can give every day (e.g., extra screen or story time) and once a week (e.g., going out to eat), as well as some "big ticket" rewards that take longer to earn (e.g., going to a sporting event or movies once a month). Use our list of reward ideas to get started. Be sure to only include rewards you are willing and able to provide if your child displays ideal behavior. Get your child's input to be sure they are motivated to earn the rewards on your list.

3

Link behaviors to rewards. Decide which behaviors earn which rewards, with easier tasks earning smaller rewards and harder tasks, bigger rewards (e.g., If your child makes their bed, they can earn 5 extra minutes of screen time that day. If they help do dishes after dinner, they can earn 15 extra minutes. If they do their chores for a full month, they can earn a trip to the amusement park.). Younger children do best with rewards they earn daily, while older children may prefer to "bank" points to earn bigger rewards over time. With older children, you can also use simple "behavior contracts", where completing a desired behavior earns a reward and not completing it means no reward (e.g., If Liam completes his chores without arguing, he earns 20 minutes of video game time; if he argues, he cannot have video game time and must still complete his chores).

4

Make a rewards or behavior tracking chart. Make a chart to track your child's behavior each day, including which rewards they can earn and how often they can earn them. Younger children often like earning stickers for each good behavior, while older children may prefer a checkmark or point system. With younger children, you can make the chart together, which is an opportunity to bond and praise any positive behaviors you see. Be creative and make it a fun project. Use our examples for inspiration.

HOW TO REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR AT HOME (continued)

5

Provide rewards as soon as possible. When your child earns a reward, be sure to give it to them. Try to provide rewards as soon as possible after your child earns them (*but never before!*). This will help your child connect their good behavior to the positive feeling of earning a reward.

6

Post the chart somewhere you and your child will see it regularly. Putting your chart in a busy place in your home, like on the refrigerator, will help you remember to update it every day.

7

Be consistent and remember to praise good behavior. Praise your child whenever their behavior is good or earns them a reward. The more parents reliably praise good behavior and provide promised rewards, the better children will feel and the faster behavior will improve. See Disruptive Behavior Skill 2 for tips (Praising Good Behavior).

8

Adjust the rewards list over time. As your child's behavior improves or certain rewards lose their value, you can adjust your rewards chart to maintain your child's motivation and progress. For example, after your child is able to consistently do chores 2-3 times/week, you can increase the goal to 4-5 times/week.

Maya's Behavior Chart

Goal Behavior	Rewards	Frequency	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
Make the bed before breakfast	5 extra minutes of screen time	Can earn once per day	★	★	★			★	
Put homework in backpack before school	Extra bedtime story	Can earn once per day	★	★	★	★			
Do 1 hour of homework without complaining	Cook meal together	Can earn once per day			★			★	
Speak politely to parents for entire day	Have a friend over for dinner	Can earn once per week				★			



PARENT HANDOUT: REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR TIPS



HOW CAN REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ Rewarding Good Behavior involves systematically giving your child a reward when they do things you want, such as clean their room, do homework, or use good manners. Rewards incentivize your child to behave and make it more likely that they will do so in the future.
- ▶ This technique helps you create a clear, organized, and fair system to track your child's behaviors and provide rewards. You and your child decide together what they need to do to earn rewards, which will help them focus on behaving and decrease opportunities for arguments between you.
- ▶ While many children behave better when parents use skills in our Disruptive Behavior guide, such as Bonding Time (Skill 1), Praising Good Behavior (Skill 2), and Shifting Attention (Skill 3), other children may need a bigger push. Rewarding Good Behavior can give them that extra nudge. When rewards are carefully chosen and only given for good behavior, you may be surprised how well your child will behave to earn what they want!

REWARD IDEAS

	Daily/Small Rewards	Weekly or Monthly/Bigger Rewards
Ages 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to park Read extra bedtime story Play game or do puzzle Watch short video Play with bubbles Take photos Play dress up Have a dance party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have play date with friend Do art project Go out to eat Take trip to the zoo Camp in the backyard Go to the library Choose dinner for the family Bake treat together

	Daily/Small Rewards	Weekly or Monthly/Bigger Rewards
Ages 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with friends Spend time with just parents Cook meal together Play cards Go to library Play video game Have extra treat after dinner Make craft together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a sleepover Go for a hike Go swimming, bowling, or biking Go out to eat Plan family outing Visit a museum Go to the movies Decorate bedroom

PARENT HANDOUT: REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR TIPS



COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

I wasn't raised with rewards and don't like the idea of "bribing" my child.

All children are different, and yours may need some extra motivation to behave the way you want. Your family may already have ways of informally "rewarding" your child, such as promising your child something when they do well in school or follow rules. Here, you're implementing a predetermined, clear, and consistent system to improve your child's behavior, increasing your influence over your child's behavior and keeping you both accountable.

Why should I reward my child for behaving the way they're supposed to?

Just as adults appreciate being rewarded for their hard work, children respond well to tangible incentives for good behavior. Rewarding Good Behavior helps you shift your attention toward the things your child does right. They provide another way to bond with your child and increase positive time together.

This seems like it will take a lot of time. I'm too busy!

This may take more time at first, but eventually it becomes part of families' routines. Most parents actually gain time back, because they spend less time managing their children's misbehavior. Over time, parents often find children do not need rewards to behave.

I started giving rewards, and now my child constantly bugs me about them.

Remember that the goal here is to reward good behavior. This means that if your child is not completing one of the behaviors on your list, they do not earn the associated reward. Do not give in to whining, complaining, or tantruming about rewards. Do not give rewards for behaviors not on the list. Set clear expectations with your rewards chart and stick to it.

I tried this, and it didn't work. My child isn't motivated by rewards.

Be patient. It may take time for your child to adjust. Using the strategies we suggest, most parents find that they are able to use rewards much more effectively at home.

Here are some common mistakes parents make when using rewards.

- 1** Giving your child what they want without having to work for it (e.g., Will gets screen time whether he does his homework or not. Sometimes, his parents even let him watch TV first as long as he promises to do his homework afterward. He usually doesn't.)
- 2** Making the goal behavior too challenging or setting reward "bar" too high (e.g., Maria is late to school almost every day. In order for her to earn a reward, she must be on time to school every day for a month. After a few days, she is late again. She gives up trying, because she has already "lost" her chance at that month's reward.)
- 3** Choosing the wrong rewards (e.g., Anna can stay up 20 minutes past her bedtime whenever she is able to express herself calmly instead of arguing or swearing; however, Anna would actually rather earn some time with friends after school, so she doesn't bother to work on her attitude or language.)
- 4** Choosing reward options that are too big or too expensive (e.g., At first, Mark gets a new video game every time he does his chores. Soon his parents are unable to afford new games, and he stops doing chores.)
- 5** Waiting too long to give rewards (e.g., Jenny only gets her rewards at the end of the week, no matter when she behaves well. It's too hard for her to delay gratification for that long, so she doesn't try that hard.)



PARENT HANDOUT: REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES



Disruptive Behavior Skill 6

WHAT ARE REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES?

- ▶ Children sometimes act in ways that are disobedient, disrespectful, destructive, or dangerous. You can respond with Reasonable Consequences, which can take two forms: 1) your child makes up for their misbehavior (e.g., cleans up the mess they made), or 2) loses a privilege (e.g., time away from a current preferred activity). Removing your child from enjoyable activities and/or attention discourages them from these behaviors.
- ▶ To use this strategy, you first discuss with your child which behaviors are unacceptable in your family and what their associated consequences will be. By making your expectations and the predictable penalties of misbehavior clear, your child learns to think before acting and to make better choices.
- ▶ This skill is effective with children of all ages when addressing moderate to severe misbehavior.

HERE'S HOW TO USE REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES AT HOME

- 1 Decide which behaviors lead to a Reasonable Consequence.** Consequences work well for unsafe behavior (e.g., hitting, kicking, running away), destruction of property (e.g., throwing things, punching a wall), and breaking house rules (e.g., not completing homework, refusing to do chores, swearing, being mean or rude). If your child struggles with more mild misbehavior, such as whining, complaining, or having a bad attitude, using other skills in this guide like Praising Good Behavior (Skill 2) and Shifting Attention (Skill 3) can be enough.
- 2 Choose Reasonable Consequences.** Pick the consequences your child will face for the misbehaviors you listed above (review our list of examples for ideas). It helps to tie consequences to misbehaviors (e.g., if your child refuses to turn off the TV, losing TV time may be more effective than sending them to their room). Next, decide how long a consequence will last. For younger children, an immediate and brief break from an activity can be very effective (e.g., if Nina throws her video game controller when she loses a game, she instantly loses access to the device for 15 minutes). For older children, you can require the completion of a task before a privilege is restored (e.g., if Sam shouts at his mother while doing homework, he must help her clean the bathroom before he can ride his bike after dinner like he wants).
- 3 Discuss with your child ahead of time.** Be sure to review the plan with your child. If they know which misbehaviors lead to which consequences, they will not be surprised in the moment and cannot claim you are being unfair.
- 4 When your child begins to misbehave, remind them of the consequences.** Remind your child that engaging in X behavior leads to Y consequence (e.g., "Remember Thomas, it is not okay to call your brother names. If you say mean things to him, you won't be able to play for 15 minutes.").
- 5 Try to deliver Reasonable Consequences immediately after misbehavior happens.** Consequences are most powerful when delivered as soon as possible after misbehavior occurs. If your child throws a tantrum today, they will change their behavior faster if they lose screen time right afterward, rather than the next day.
- 6 Be firm, calm, and consistent.** When delivering a Reasonable Consequence, calmly and clearly remind your child of the connection between their misbehavior and the consequence (e.g., "As we talked about, swearing is not allowed. Because you cursed at me, you will now lose your phone for 10 minutes."). Do not get pulled into arguing or negotiating with your child. The calmer you are, the calmer your child will be. The more consistently you deliver Reasonable Consequences, the faster your child's behavior will improve.

PARENT HANDOUT: REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES TIPS



Disruptive Behavior Skill 6

HOW CAN REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ With Reasonable Consequences, you choose predictable consequences your child will face for moderate to severe misbehavior. When children know the penalties for acting in unacceptable ways, they are more motivated to make better choices and take responsibility for their actions. Over time, using Reasonable Consequences results in less misbehavior.
- ▶ This technique increases the consistency of your responses to poor behavior, helps you stay calm when your child misbehaves, and decreases arguments between the two of you. It also lessens the chances that you will turn to a harsh or ineffective form of discipline to manage your child's behavior.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

I tried to use consequences at home and my child's behavior got worse!

Parents often find that when they start giving consequences, children act out even more. It's common to feel upset if your child's behavior worsens. Remember that if you give in to your child's tantrum or pouting, your child will learn that those are effective ways to get out of facing consequences. In fact, the worse children's behavior is in response to consequences, the more their behavior may improve afterward.

When I take a privilege away, my child argues with me or refuses to listen. What do I do?

This is a typical reaction to consequences. Try to stay calm and firm. Reasonable Consequences are only effective when your child learns that you mean what you say and rules must be followed. Remind your child of the pre-decided consequences for poor behavior and ignore attempts to argue or negotiate. Over time, your child will follow your instructions to avoid facing consequences they do not like.

I'm not sure which kinds of behaviors warrant Reasonable Consequences.

Consequences are most effective in response to moderate to severe misbehavior, such as when children destroy property (e.g., break or throw things), are aggressive or act in unsafe ways (e.g., hit, kick, punch, run away), or violate household rules (e.g., lie, steal, curse, are mean or rude, refuse to do homework or chores). Look at our list of examples for ideas from other families.

You can also use Reasonable Consequences if your child has difficulty with more mild misbehaviors, such as whining, annoying you, or having a bad attitude. However, skills in this guide like Praising Good Behavior (Skill 2) and Shifting Attention (Skill 3) can be even more effective. You can look at these sections of the packet to learn more.

If your child's misbehavior feels uncontrollable, extreme, or constant, you may need additional support to manage and improve their behaviors. Check in with your child's primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.



PARENT HANDOUT: REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES TIPS



EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE CONSEQUENCES FAMILIES USE AT HOME

Younger Children

- ▶ When Monica is done playing, she leaves her toys around the room instead of putting them away. She cannot play with her toys again until she cleans up.
- ▶ Instead of eating his vegetables, Alex throws them on the floor. He cannot have dessert, which he loves.
- ▶ Carmen gets glue and marker on the table, breaking a house rule. She must help clean the table before she can do any more arts and crafts.
- ▶ Henry refuses to share toys with his sister and brother. The next time they play, he has to wait until both his siblings have picked to choose his toys.
- ▶ When it is time for bed, Tracy refuses to turn off the TV. She loses her TV time for the next day.
- ▶ Jordan is frustrated and kicks his sister. He is moved to a separate room and can't play with his sister or toys for 20 minutes.
- ▶ When Nicole calls her parents names, they will not talk to her until she can speak in a respectful way.
- ▶ On the way home, Connor runs into the street. He must hold his parent's hand the rest of the way.

Older Children

- ▶ Allison is frustrated with her homework and refuses to do it. She cannot use her tablet until her homework is done.
- ▶ While running around the house, Jonathan breaks a lamp. He has to complete household chores to earn enough money to buy a new one.
- ▶ Angela rides her bike outside the part of her neighborhood her parents allow her to ride. She cannot use her bike for the rest of the week.
- ▶ Christopher dislikes his curfew and comes home late. His curfew gets moved up by 30 minutes.
- ▶ Instead of going to the library like she said, Hannah goes to the mall with her friends. She loses her phone and social media access for one week.
- ▶ Anthony leaves his clothes on the floor of his room instead of hanging them up in his closet. Now he only has wrinkled clothes for school.
- ▶ Natalie spends time on her computer instead of completing her assigned chores to clean her room and do the dishes. In addition to her regular chores, she must do an extra chore that week.
- ▶ James and Ben dislike taking turns sharing their video games. Whoever argues or fights loses their turn.

PARENT HANDOUT: PLANNING AHEAD



WHAT IS PLANNING AHEAD?

- ▶ Planning Ahead is a skill that helps you anticipate when your child may act up and then take steps to decrease the chances that will occur. Planning Ahead involves:
 1. **Identifying the times, places, and/or situations** where your child is likely to misbehave
 2. **Putting strategies in place** to decrease the chances your child will act up (e.g., rewards they can earn for good behavior)
 3. Deciding on **reasonable consequences** your child will face if they exhibit poor behavior (e.g., loses access to electronics for a short period of time)
 4. **Reviewing the plan** with your child ahead of time
- ▶ Planning Ahead focuses your attention on potentially challenging situations, decreases the chances you will feel angry or embarrassed, and supports you in responding to any misbehavior quickly and carefully. Making a plan reduces the chances your child will behave poorly and sets you and your child up for success.
- ▶ This skill is most effective with younger children.

HERE'S HOW TO PLAN AHEAD AT HOME

1

Identify situations that are difficult for your child. Think of the times, places, and/or situations where your child tends to act up. Do they have a harder time when they are hungry, tired, doing a task they dislike, or transitioning between activities? How do they act in public places, such as grocery stores, parks, restaurants, or shopping centers? Do they whine after being in the car for more than 20 minutes? Do they tend to be more difficult to manage right before or after school?

2

When one of these situations is coming up, use the **Planning Ahead worksheet** to create your plan. We have included an example for you.

3

Brainstorm ways you can make the situation easier for your child. For example, will your child be...

- a. **Tired?** Ensure adequate sleep before an event or reschedule if needed (e.g., if your child tends to be well-rested and happy in the morning, schedule doctor's appointments early in the day).
- b. **Hungry?** Schedule activities after meal times or bring snacks along (e.g., take your child to the shopping center after lunch and pack snacks for the trip).
- c. **Bored?** Provide distractions (e.g., give your child a "to do list", like calculating how many different types of cereal there are at the grocery store or playing "I spy" at the post office; bring books or toys to a meal out or on a long drive).
- d. **Overstimulated?** Try to reduce noise, crowds, and factors that make the situation worse (e.g., if your child tends to fight with their siblings over toys, bring a calming toy for each of your children when you visit your neighbor's home and visit at a time when there are less people at home).

4

Pick up to 3 rules you'd like your child to follow. Focus on the rules most important to you during your activity, and don't give more than 3. This maximizes the chances your child will remember and follow them.

5

Choose a reward your child can earn for following these rules. Review the steps in Rewarding Good Behavior (Disruptive Behavior Skill 5). Remember that many rewards can be free, simple, and easy to provide (e.g., stickers, screen time, time outside). Refer to our list of reward ideas for suggestions.

6

Choose a reasonable consequence your child will face if they do not follow these rules. Review the steps in Reasonable Consequences (Disruptive Behavior Skill 6) and refer to our list of examples. Be sure to follow through on delivering consequences if your child does not behave.

7

Discuss the plan with your child before entering the challenging situation. Let your child know what is expected of them (the rules), what they can earn for behaving well (the reward), and what will happen if they misbehave (the consequence). Ask your child to repeat the plan back to you to make sure they understand.

8

Execute your plan, then tweak it for next time. Remember that children who misbehave may act out more when you implement new rules and limits. This may be challenging at first, but as they adapt to new routines and learn that you mean what you say, their behavior will improve. Keep at it. And when your child does well, be sure to praise them for their great behavior! Review Praising Good Behavior (Disruptive Behavior Skill 2) for tips.

Planning Ahead for Ella

Challenging Situation:

Going out to eat

I will prepare for this situation by:

Scheduling meal at her regular dinnertime;
bringing books and a toy from home to keep her busy

I expect my child to follow these rules:

- 1 Sit quietly at the table
- 2 Keep her hands to herself
- 3 Eat with utensils

If my child follows the rules, they can earn this Reward:

15 minutes on computer or tablet

If my child does not follow the rules, they will get this Reasonable Consequence:

Leave the restaurant early and no dessert

Planning Ahead

Challenging Situation (e.g., time, place, event):

I will prepare for this situation (e.g. provide distraction, give a snack, reduce stimulation, do task at different time) by:

I expect my child to follow these rules:

- 1
- 2
- 3

If my child follows the rules, they can earn this Reward:

If my child does not follow the rules, they will get this Reasonable Consequence:

PARENT HANDOUT: PLANNING AHEAD TIPS



Disruptive Behavior Skill 7

HOW CAN PLANNING AHEAD HELP MY FAMILY?

- ▶ One of the most effective ways to reduce children's misbehavior is to anticipate when behavior problems are likely to occur and try to prevent them from happening in the first place.
- ▶ Thinking ahead about when your child's behavior may be particularly challenging allows you to 1) make a plan to decrease the likelihood of misbehavior occurring in those situations, and 2) be ready to respond effectively if your child does misbehave.
- ▶ Without having a plan in place, parents can find themselves responding to bad behavior "on the fly". It can feel stressful, embarrassing, or frustrating to manage children's disruptive behavior in front of other people. This can lead parents to use ineffective discipline strategies that reinforce bad behavior or are too harsh.
- ▶ By Planning Ahead, you have a strategy in place for managing your child in challenging situations. This increases your confidence in handling misbehavior and helps set you and your child up for success.

COMMON PARENT CONCERNS

It's embarrassing when my child acts out in public. I always give in. Sometimes I even end up giving them privileges I don't normally allow!

This is normal! Parents often feel uncomfortable when their child misbehaves in front of others. They usually respond by giving their child what they want so they stop acting out (e.g., allowing candy or electronics to stop tantruming in a store). The problem is, this teaches the child that bad behavior leads to good outcomes, making it more likely they will misbehave in the future. Try to remember that all parents have likely faced this situation, and stick to your plan. If you follow the steps in Planning Ahead, your child will learn it is not okay to act out in those situations and will be less likely to embarrass you in the future.

Behavior problems also occur less often when parents use other effective parenting skills in the Disruptive Behavior guide, such as Praising Good Behavior (Skill 2), Shifting Attention (Skill 3), and Effective Directions (Skill 4). Over time, using skills in this packet will help your child exhibit fewer bad behaviors and more appropriate behaviors. At the same time, you will learn to respond to misbehavior more quickly and effectively.

When my child acts up and I use my plan, they talk back to me or continue misbehaving.

Follow through on your plan. Remind your child what the rules are in a clear and calm manner, what the reward is for good behavior, and what the consequence is for bad behavior. Do your best not to give your child more attention if they are talking back. Try to shift your attention (Shifting Attention, Skill 3).

What should I do if my child acts up and I don't have a plan in place?

This happens to the best of us! Sometimes you don't have time to make a plan, you forget that you're going into a challenging situation, or something happens that you couldn't anticipate. If this happens, use your skills as best as you can. Don't forget that you have other skills in this guide that you can use when your child misbehaves (e.g., Skill 3, Shifting Attention, or Skill 6, Reasonable Consequences).

Appendix I



Information About
Behavioral Health Diagnoses
for Parents



The Anxiety Disorders are a group of behavioral health problems in children and adolescents characterized by scared or worried feelings. The Anxiety Disorders are quite common, with nearly 20 out of 100 youths, more girls than boys, estimated to have one of the disorders in this group.

TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is characterized by excessive worry occurring on more days than not about a number of things, such as school performance, friendships, family, health/safety, natural disasters, and world events. The youth finds it difficult to control the worry. The worry can be accompanied by feeling “on edge”, tired, tense, or irritable; having difficulty concentrating; and having trouble falling or staying asleep. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the problems must have been present for at least 6 months, and must cause distress and/or impair the youth’s function at home, at school, or with peers.

SEPARATION ANXIETY DISORDER

Separation Anxiety Disorder is characterized by excessive fear of being separated from those to whom the child is emotionally attached (e.g., parents). This fear can be shown by the youth feeling very upset about leaving home to go to school, about being separated from the parent even in the home, about sleeping alone in his or her own bedroom, about something bad happening to the parent, and about something bad happening to the youth that will separate him or her from the parent. The youth may refuse to go to school, or may develop physical problems (headaches, nausea) before going to school or when at school. The youth also may have bad dreams about being separated from the parent. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the problems must have been present for at least 1 month, and must cause distress and/or impair the youth’s function at home, at school, or with peers.

SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

Social Anxiety Disorder is characterized by excessive fear about social or performance situations in which the youth feels scrutinized or judged by peers. This fear can arise when meeting new people or performing in front of others (such as speaking up in the classroom or performing musically or athletically), and is out of proportion to the actual threat. The youth fears that he or she will act in a way that will cause him or her to be humiliated or embarrassed and the behavior will lead to rejection by peers. The fear can become so severe that it causes panic, so that a pattern can arise where the youth avoids social or performance situations. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the problems must have been present for at least 6 months, and must cause distress and/or impair the youth’s function at home, at school, or with peers.

UNSPECIFIED ANXIETY DISORDER

If some of the above problems are present, but enough to diagnose a specific psychiatric disorder, or if the clinician does not have enough information to be certain about the specific diagnosis, the disorder is called **Unspecified Anxiety Disorder**.



DIAGNOSIS

Qualified behavioral health professionals experienced with children (child and adolescent psychiatrists, child psychologists, child-trained social workers, counselors and clinical nurse specialists) are best trained to accurately diagnose the Anxiety Disorders. The evaluation for these diagnoses typically takes several hours, and requires input from multiple people who know the child. The diagnosis is based upon the findings from interviews, questionnaires, and a mental status examination. There are no blood tests or other medical tests to diagnose these disorders.



CAUSE

In simple terms, Anxiety Disorders are caused by a difference in the structure or function of the brain that controls worries and fears. Vulnerability to the development of Anxiety Disorders can be inherited from members of the family tree. Children also can learn to be anxious from parents who are anxious, and parents who are overprotective or overcontrolling are more likely to have anxious children. Sometimes there is an event in the environment that triggers an Anxiety Disorder. For example, Separation Anxiety Disorder can be caused by exposure to frightening events, such as sudden serious illness of a parent or domestic violence.



TREATMENT

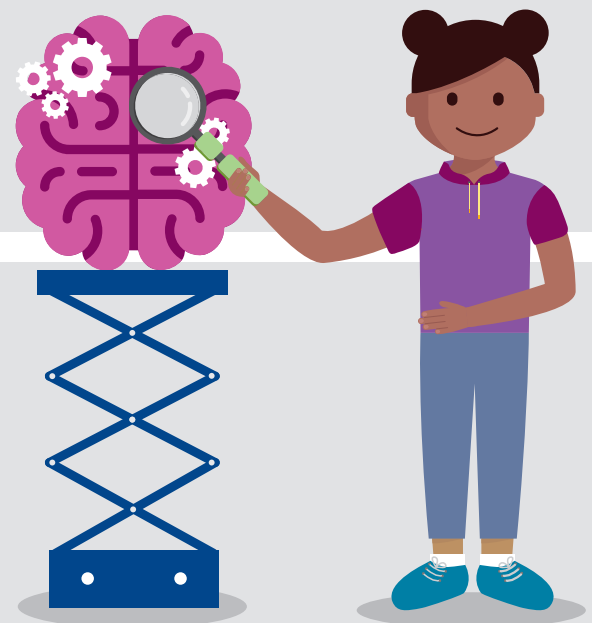
An effective treatment for the Anxiety Disorders is cognitive behavioral *psychotherapy* to help the youth learn how to cope with worry and fear. These coping strategies include learning how to identify and talk about feelings, how to stop thinking automatic negative thoughts, how to relax the mind and body, and how to slowly become accustomed to the feared situation. If the Anxiety Disorder has not responded to therapy or is more severe, then medication (typically *selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors* or SSRIs) may be used as an additional treatment. Medication may help the youth feel more relaxed and in control when working on coping skills in therapy.

If the child has another behavioral health problem in addition to an Anxiety Disorder, treatment must include treatment of the other disorder at the same time



COURSE

The Anxiety Disorders respond well to the above treatments when delivered by qualified behavioral health professionals. If left untreated, the Anxiety Disorders can cause long-standing distress and problems with social relationships and school performance.





UNDERSTANDING Depressive Disorders

The Depressive Disorders are a group of behavioral health problems in children and adolescents characterized by a sad or irritable mood.

TYPES OF DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

The most severe of these problems – *Major Depressive Disorder* – is characterized by a period of at least 2 weeks in which there is a sad or irritable mood for most of the day nearly every day, and/or loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities most of the day nearly every day. The sad or irritable mood represents a distinct change from previous functioning. There also can be frequent problems with eating, sleeping, energy, and concentration, feelings of worthlessness or extreme guilt, and loss of the desire to live. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the problems must cause distress and/or impair the youth's function at home, at school, or with peers. It is estimated that around 5 out of 100 youths have this disorder, more girls than boys after puberty.

PERSISTENT DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

The less severe but longer lasting of these problems – *Persistent Depressive Disorder* – is characterized by a depressed or irritable mood for most of the day, more days than not, for at least 1 year. There also are problems with eating, sleeping, energy, and concentration, feelings of hopelessness, and low self-esteem. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the problems must cause distress and/or impair the youth's function at home, at school, or with peers. It is estimated that around 1 out of 100 youths have this disorder, equal in boys and girls.

DISRUPTIVE MOOD DYSREGULATION DISORDER

A newly identified type of depressive problems is called *Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder*. This problem is characterized by persistent angry or irritable mood most of the day, nearly every day. The angry/irritable mood is punctuated by severe, repeated temper outbursts involving verbal and/or physical aggression that are greatly out of proportion to the precipitating situation, are not typical of other same-age children, and occur at least 3 times a week. The angry/irritable mood and temper outbursts must be present for at least 1 year, and must occur in at least 2 of 3 settings (e.g., at home, at school, with peers). In at least 1 of these settings, the outbursts must be severe. It is estimated that around 3 of 100 youths have this disorder, more boys than girls.

UNSPECIFIED DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

If some of the above problems are present, but not enough to diagnose a specific psychiatric disorder, or if the clinician does not have enough information to be certain about the specific diagnosis, the disorder is called *Unspecified Depressive Disorder*.



DIAGNOSIS

Qualified mental health professionals experienced with children (child and adolescent psychiatrists, child psychologists, child-trained social workers, counselors, clinical nurse specialists) are best trained to accurately diagnose the depressive disorders. The evaluation for these diagnoses typically takes several hours, and requires input from multiple people who know the child. The diagnosis is based upon the findings from interviews, questionnaires, and a mental status examination. There are no blood tests or other medical tests to diagnose these disorders.



CAUSE

In simple terms, Depressive Disorders are caused by a difference in the structure and function of the brain that controls the intensity of sad and angry moods. Vulnerability to the development of Depressive Disorders can be inherited from members of the family tree. Often there is something in the youth's environment that triggers the sad or angry feelings, such as a poor relationship with a parent or loss of loved ones.



TREATMENT

An effective treatment for the Depressive Disorders is cognitive behavioral *psychotherapy* to help the youth learn how to cope with sad and angry feelings. These coping skills include learning how to identify and talk about feelings, how to stop thinking automatic negative thoughts, how to find activities that are soothing and comforting, how to discover and appreciate good things about themselves, and how to build hope for the future.

If environmental (e.g., parental, family, school) circumstances are triggering the sad or angry feelings, it also is important to improve these circumstances if at all possible, to increase the chance of a successful treatment. Positive parenting training or family therapy are good ways of improving parent-child and family relationships, which in turn can lessen the youth's sad or angry feelings.

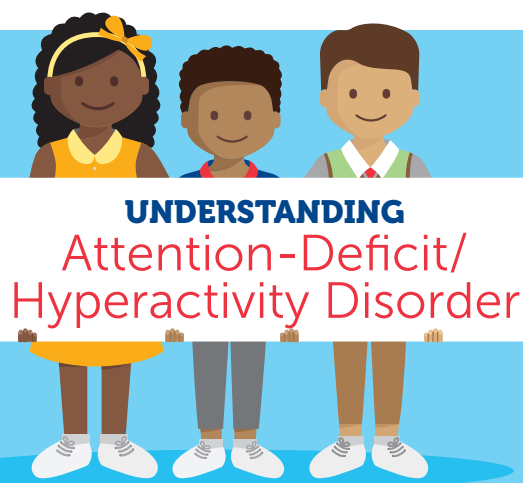
If the Depressive Disorder has not responded to therapy or is more severe (for example, if the youth is thinking about wanting to die or has lost most ability to function), then antidepressant medication (typically *selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors* or SSRIs) may be used as an additional treatment. Antidepressant medication may help the youth feel more motivated to work on coping skills in therapy.

If the child has another behavioral health problem in addition to a Depressive Disorder, treatment must include treatment of the other disorder at the same time.



COURSE

The Depressive Disorders respond well to the above treatments when delivered by qualified behavioral health professionals. The most serious outcome of untreated Depressive Disorders is death by suicide. Untreated Depressive Disorders also can cause disrupted relationships with parents and other adults and with peers, failure in school and involvement in risky behaviors. In adulthood, untreated Depressive Disorders can lead to difficulties with relationships and employment, substance use, anxiety, and physical illness.



Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a behavioral health problem in children and adolescents characterized by difficulty controlling attention, motivation, and behavioral impulses.

TYPES OF ADHD

This problem includes four different presentations. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the problems must be more frequent and more severe than children normally exhibit, must have started before age 12, must be present for at least 6 months in 2 or more settings, and must impair the youth's function at home, at school, or with peers. It is estimated that around 5 out of 100 youths have ADHD, more boys than girls.

ADHD, PREDOMINANTLY INATTENTIVE PRESENTATION

ADHD, Predominantly Inattentive Presentation is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and lack of motivation, particularly when sustained mental effort is required (such as for schoolwork or homework).

ADHD, PREDOMINANTLY HYPERACTIVE /IMPULSIVE PRESENTATION

ADHD, Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive Presentation is characterized by a persistent pattern of overactive behavior when it is important to behave quietly, and impulsive behavior, such as being impatient or not stopping to think before acting.

ADHD, COMBINED PRESENTATION

ADHD, Combined Presentation is characterized by both inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity.

UNSPECIFIED ATTENTION-DEFICIT /HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

If some of the above problems are present, but not enough to diagnose a specific psychiatric disorder, or if the clinician does not have enough information to be certain about the specific diagnosis, the disorder is called *Unspecified Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*.



DIAGNOSIS

Qualified behavioral health and medical professionals experienced with children (child and adolescent psychiatrists, pediatric neurologists, pediatricians, developmental behavioral pediatricians, child psychologists, child-trained social workers, counselors, clinical nurse specialists) are best trained to accurately diagnose ADHD. The evaluation for this diagnosis typically takes several hours, and requires input from multiple people who know the child, especially teachers. The diagnosis is based upon the findings from interviews, questionnaires, and a mental status examination. There are no blood tests or other medical tests to diagnose this disorder.



CAUSE

In simple terms, ADHD is caused by a delay in maturation, or a difference in the structure or function, of the part of the brain that controls attention, motivation and behavioral impulses. Vulnerability to the development of ADHD can be inherited from members of the family tree. ADHD also can be caused by certain exposures in the womb (such as cigarette smoking), other chemical or physical injury to the brain, or by low birth weight. It can be made worse by an unstructured, unpredictable environment.



TREATMENT

The most effective treatment for ADHD is medication, typically *stimulant medication*. Stimulant medication works by “stimulating” the part of the brain that controls attention, motivation, and behavioral impulses. Another type of medication that can be helpful is *alpha adrenergic medication* which calms an overactive brain. Tutoring the child in effective *study skills* (such as setting goals, planning ahead, self-rewarding) also can be helpful. At school, accommodations for inattention can be requested, such as frequent reminders to stay on task; reducing distractions; rewarding persistence; providing reminders to double-check work, to complete assignment books, and to turn in homework; and giving extra time to complete work. School *accommodations* for hyperactive/impulsive behavior also can be requested, such as providing opportunities for physical activity or “boredom breaks” during the day, providing a variety of interesting approaches to learning, giving rewards for control of behavioral impulses, and giving consequences for failing to control behavioral impulses.

Other strategies that can be useful are providing a predictable, structured environment at home (such as creating household rules and schedules) and a supportive environment for homework, such as providing a quiet place for homework, breaking homework tasks into small chunks, and providing small rewards for completing each chunk).

If the child has another behavioral health problem in addition to ADHD, treatment must include treatment of the other problem at the same time. About 1/3 of youths with ADHD also have learning and/or language disabilities that can be identified through psychoeducational testing and remediated with tutoring and/or speech therapy. Testing (and remediation if needed) should be requested from the school.



COURSE

ADHD responds well to the above treatments when delivered by qualified behavioral health or medical professionals. About one-third of children grow out of ADHD in the teen or early adult years. Another one-third does well with appropriate home, school, and work supports. The remaining one-third of children may continue to need ongoing use of medication as well as formal accommodations at school and at work. If untreated, ADHD can lead to significant problems, including failure at school, injuries and accidents, involvement in risky behaviors, difficult relationships with parents and peers, and poor self-esteem.



UNDERSTANDING Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders

The Disruptive Behavior Disorders are a group of behavioral health problems in children and adolescents characterized by out-of-control feelings and behavior.

TYPES OF DISRUPTIVE, IMPULSE-CONTROL, AND CONDUCT DISORDERS

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER

The less severe of these problems – *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* – is characterized by a persistent pattern of angry outbursts (temper tantrums), arguing and disobedience, and spitefulness which is directed at authority figures (such as parents and teachers). To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, these behaviors must be more frequent and more severe than most children normally exhibit (especially when hungry, tired, or under stress), must be present at least 6 months, and must occur at least once a week (for school age children) or on most days (for preschool children). In addition, these behaviors must distress the youth or others in his/her environment and/or impair the youth's function at home, at school, or with peers. It is estimated that around 3 out of 100 youths have this disorder, more boys than girls.

CONDUCT DISORDER

The more severe of these problems – *Conduct Disorder* – is characterized by a persistent pattern of serious rule-violating behavior, including behaviors that harm (or have the potential to harm) others. Behaviors included in Conduct Disorder are physical aggression to people and animals, destruction of property, lying or stealing, staying out late at night, running away from home, and truancy. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, these behaviors must be present at least one year, and must impair the youth's function at home, at school, or with peers. It is estimated that around 4 out of 100 youths have this disorder, more boys than girls.

INTERMITTENT EXPLOSIVE DISORDER

A problem that is intermediate in severity – *Intermittent Explosive Disorder* – is characterized by repeated behavioral outbursts involving either 1) verbal or physical aggression (not causing injury or property destruction) occurring at least twice a week for at least 3 months, or 2) at least 3 outbursts involving injury or property destruction within 1 year. To be diagnosed as a *psychiatric disorder*, the behavioral outbursts must be greatly out of proportion to the precipitating situation, and must be impulsive (not planned). In addition, these behaviors must distress the youth and/or impair the youth's function at home, at school, or with peers. It is estimated that around 3 out of 100 youths have this diagnosis.

UNSPECIFIED DISRUPTIVE, IMPULSIVE- CONTROL, AND CONDUCT DISORDER

If some of the above problems are present, but not enough to diagnose a specific psychiatric disorder, or if the clinician does not have enough information to be certain about the specific diagnosis, the disorder is called *Unspecified Disruptive, Impulsive-Control, and Conduct Disorder*.



DIAGNOSIS

Qualified behavioral health professionals experienced with children (child and adolescent psychiatrists, child psychologists, child-trained social workers, counselors, clinical nurse specialists) are best trained to accurately diagnose the Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders. The evaluation for these diagnoses typically takes several hours, and requires input from multiple people who know the child. The diagnosis is based upon findings from interviews, questionnaires, and a mental status examination. There are no blood tests or other medical tests to diagnose these disorders.



CAUSE

The Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders usually develop when the parent uses ineffective parenting strategies with a difficult-to-manage child. Difficult-to-manage children tend to be strong-willed and rigid and to have intense, negative feelings, which makes parenting very challenging. The child may be difficult because of personality characteristics that he or she inherited from members of the family tree. He or she also may be difficult because of certain exposures in the womb (such as cigarette smoking), because he or she does not have a positive attachment to a parent, or because he or she is reacting to a lot of stress or a lack of predictable structure in the home or community environment.

In simple terms, ineffective parenting strategies include authoritarian parenting, in which the parent may show too much anger or be too harsh, permissive parenting, in which the parent may give in to the demands of the child, and neglectful parenting, in which the parent is too busy or preoccupied to pay enough attention to the child. Parents with a difficult-to-manage child often use these ineffective strategies because those are the strategies their parents used, or because they are overwhelmed with their own difficulties, or because they haven't learned more effective strategies. Even though parents may use them unintentionally, these ineffective parenting strategies increase the risk of the child developing a Disruptive, Impulse-Control, or Conduct Disorder.



TREATMENT

The best treatment for Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Intermittent Explosive Disorder is helping the parent learn effective **parenting strategies**. These strategies include developing a warm, loving relationship between parent and child; providing a predictable, structured household environment; setting clear and simple household rules; consistently praising and rewarding positive behaviors (such as ready for school and bed on time); consistently ignoring annoying behaviors (such as whining), followed by praise when the annoying behavior ceases; and consistently giving consequences (such as time out or loss of privileges) for dangerous or destructive behaviors (such as physical aggression or destroying things). Another treatment that can be helpful is **social-emotional skills training** for the child, which helps the child develop skills to identify and manage feelings, get along with others, and be able to make good decisions based on thinking rather than feeling.

Because Conduct Disorder is more serious, treatment must be more intensive and extensive, sometimes involving other child-serving agencies (such as juvenile justice and child welfare). If physically aggressive, dangerous behavior is prominent in conduct disorder, medication can be helpful.

If the child has another behavioral health problem (like ADHD) in addition to a Disruptive, Impulse-Control, or Conduct Disorder, treatment must include treatment of the other disorder at the same time.



COURSE

Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder, and to a lesser extent, Conduct Disorder respond well to the above treatments when delivered by qualified behavioral health professionals. Although some children grow out of the Disruptive, Impulse-Control, and Conduct Disorders, if untreated, the disorders can go on to cause significant problems, including disrupted relationships with parents and other adults and with peers, failure at school, and delinquency, and in adulthood, antisocial or criminal behavior, loss of employment, legal problems, marital instability, impulse-control problems, substance abuse, anxiety, and depression.