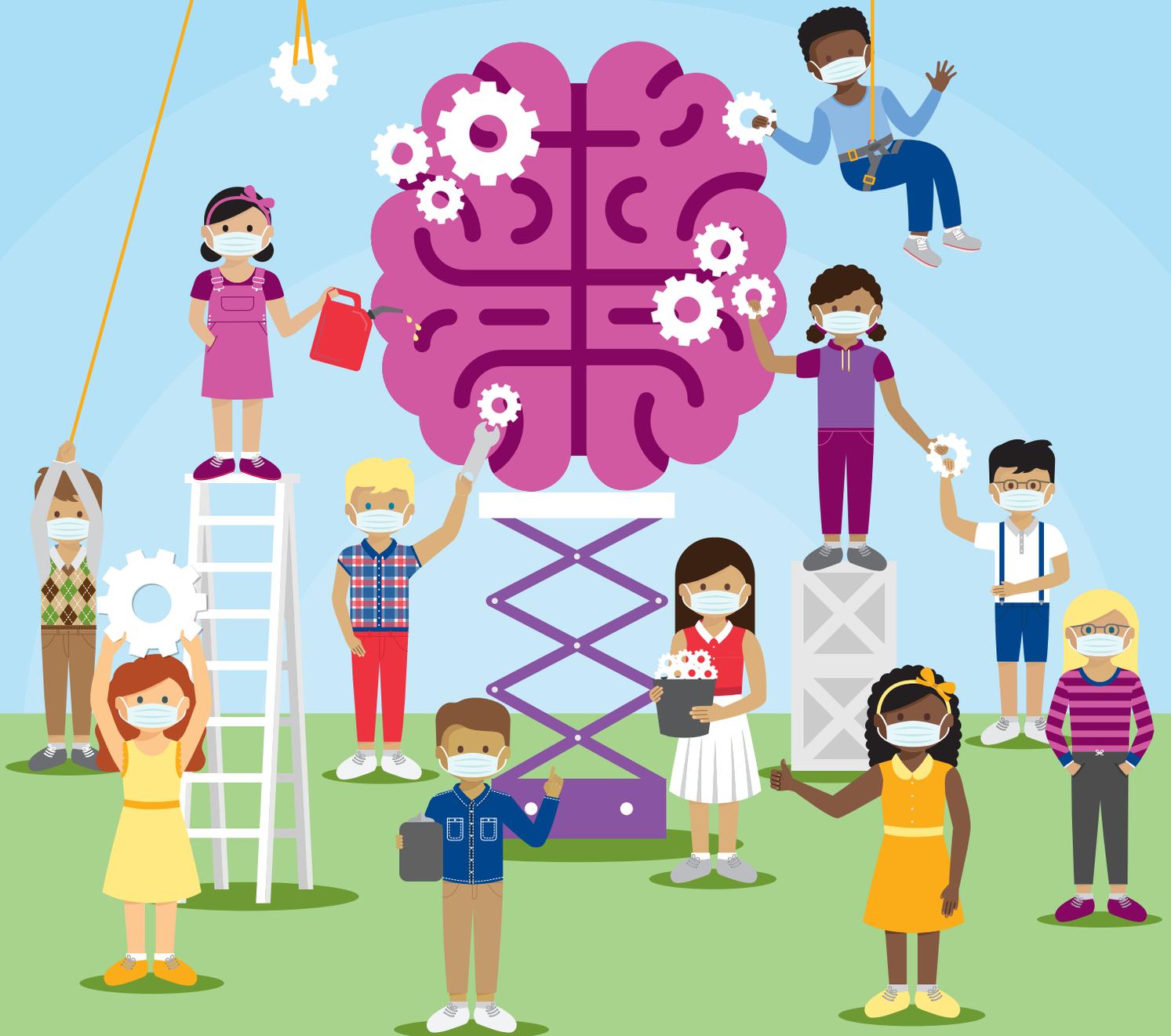


COPING SKILLS FOR FAMILIES

During COVID-19 and Beyond



» AUTHORS

Erica Lee, PhD* (Clinical Psychology)
Boston Children's Hospital
Harvard Medical School
*Equal Author with Keneisha Sinclair-McBride, PhD

Keneisha Sinclair-McBride, PhD* (Clinical Psychology)
Boston Children's Hospital
Harvard Medical School
*Equal Author with Erica Lee, PhD

» GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Zoë Judd
Boston Children's Hospital

***Funding for this Toolkit was provided
by Boston Children's Hospital***

COPING SKILLS FOR FAMILIES

DURING COVID-19 AND BEYOND



INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has the potential to profoundly affect the mental health of children and adolescents through its myriad of physical, economic, and psychosocial effects. These guided self-management tools are designed to teach children, teens and parents strategies to effectively manage the new stresses inflicted by COVID-19.

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 these 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, along with our answers. There are three different versions of these skill handouts: skill handouts for *children and their parents* to work through together, skill handouts for *teens*, and skill handouts for *parents of teens*

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. Stay safe and be well!



Relaxation Skills

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



Mood Tracking

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



Making Time for Fun

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



Problem Solving

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



Household Rules and Structure

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



How to Get Things Done

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



How to Manage My Time

These worksheets support children and teens in creating schedules, staying on task, and meeting deadlines.



Bonding Time

This practice helps increase childrens' motivation to behave by improving the parent-child relationship through daily periods of uninterrupted and positive time together.



Rewarding Good Behavior

These worksheets help increase childrens' interest in behaving appropriately by creating a program of rewards they can earn for good behaviors.

Relaxation Skills



1-4	Child & Parent
5-8	Teen
9-12	Parent of Teen

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



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.



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.



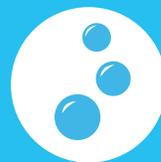
Check Your Form!

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.



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



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



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



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.



Mood Tracking



1-4	Child & Parent
5-8	Teen
9-12	Parent of Teen

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



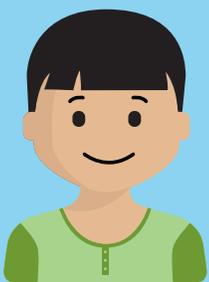
- 1 Make copies of this worksheet so you can continue this practice beyond the first week.
- 2 Keep the master list of emotions you made with your child near the mood tracking worksheets for easy reference. Adolescents and older children with electronic devices may want to keep the list on their device.
- 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?							

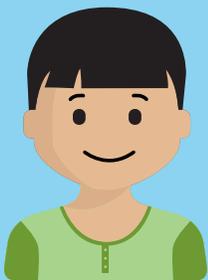
Week: _____

	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



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.

TEEN HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING



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



- 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



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



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.

PARENT HANDOUT: MOOD TRACKING



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



- 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



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



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.

Making Time for Fun



1-3	Child & Parent
4-6	Teen
7-9	Parent of Teen

PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN



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			



PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN TIPS



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.



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



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.

PARENT HANDOUT: MAKING TIME FOR FUN



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



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



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.

Problem Solving



1-5	Child & Parent
6-10	Teen
11-15	Parent of Teen

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING FOR DEPRESSION



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



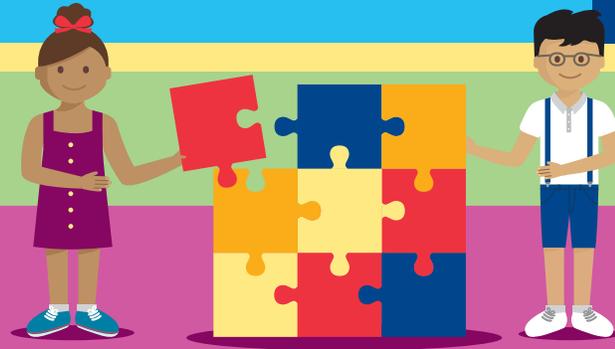
HERE'S HOW TO MAKE A PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN AT HOME

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			
Soution 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			
Soution 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



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.



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



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.



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?			

TEEN HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



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.

PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING FOR DEPRESSION



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



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		
Soution 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		
Soution 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.



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



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.

Household Rules and Structure



1-4 Child & Parent
5-8 Parent of Teen

PARENT HANDOUT: HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE



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.

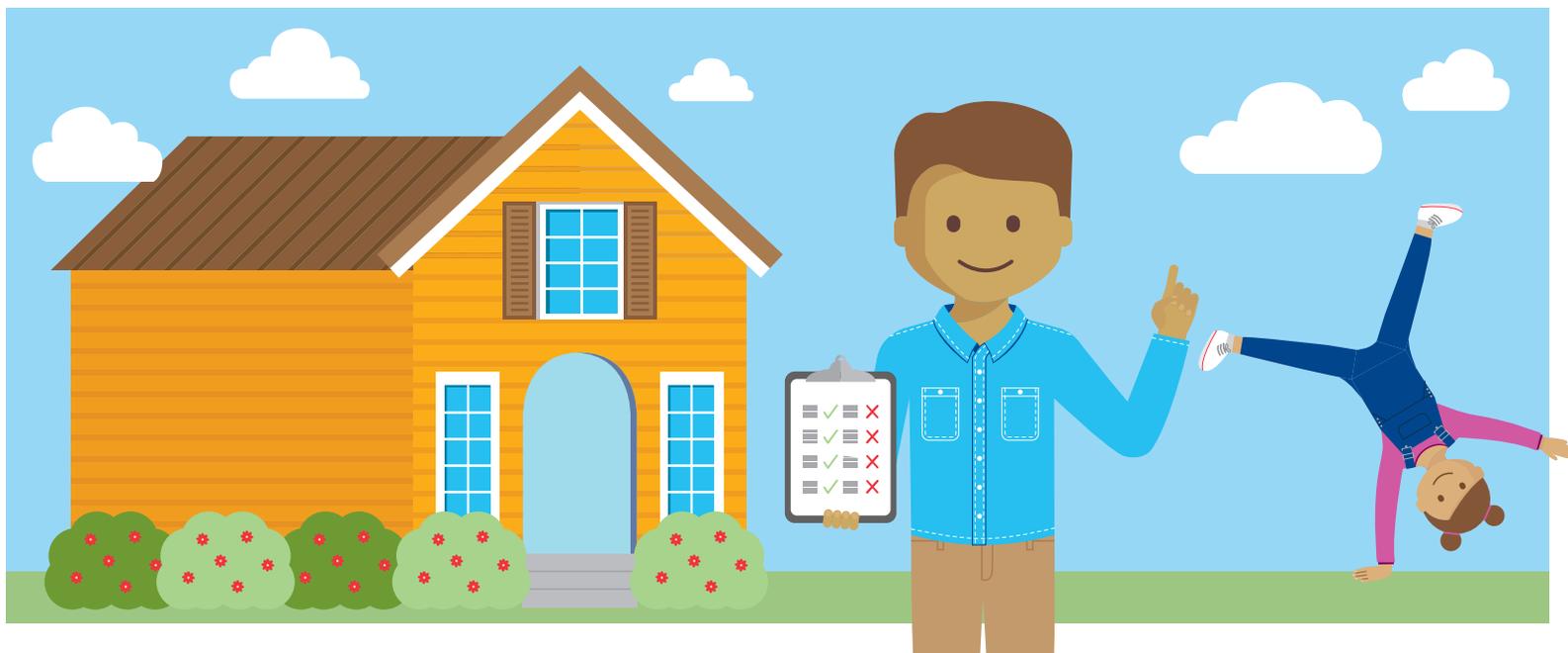
You can also create routines for those tasks your child finds challenging, such as using relaxation skills to control their energy around bedtime or using the skills in this guide. Review our example routines and then create some of your own.

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.



PARENT HANDOUT:

HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE TIPS



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.



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.

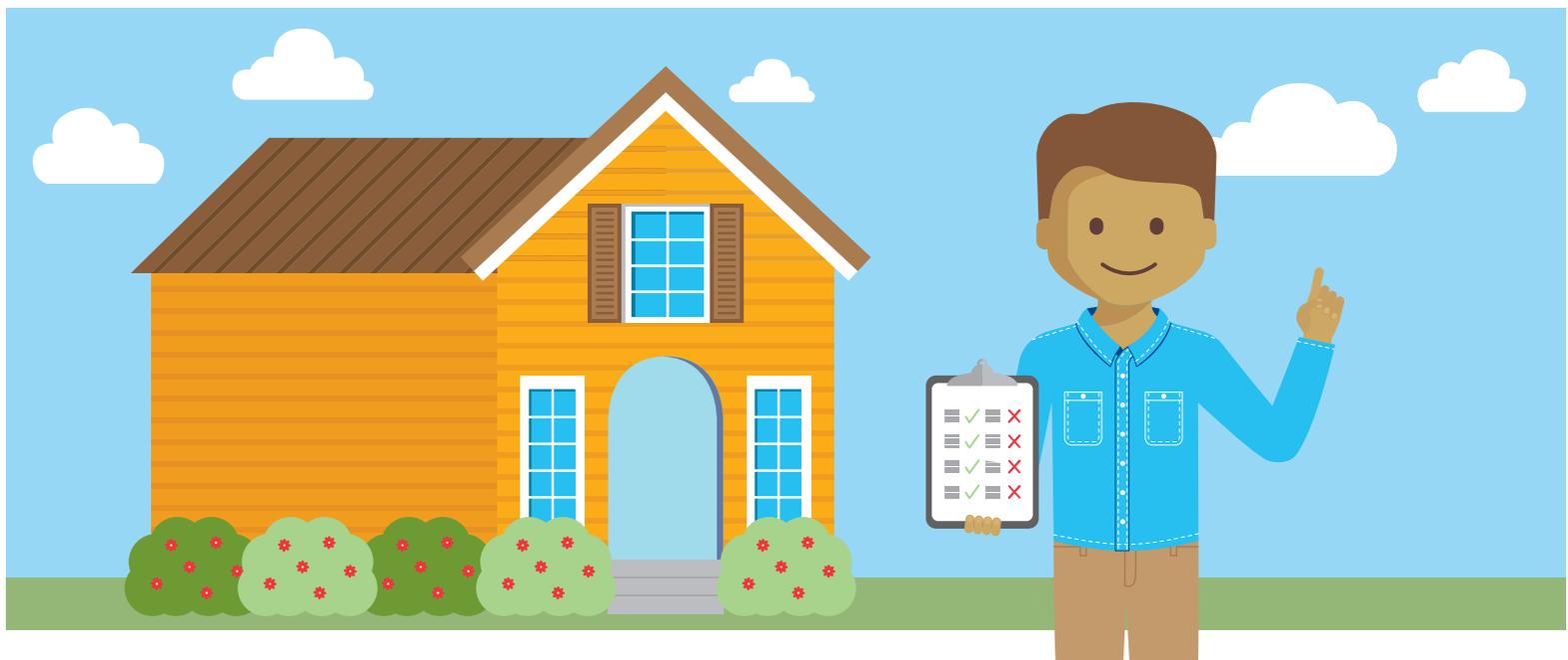
You can also create routines for those tasks your teen finds challenging, such as using relaxation skills to control their energy level or using the skills in this guide. Review our example routines and then create some of your own.

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.



PARENT HANDOUT: HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE TIPS



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.

How to Get Things Done



1-5	Child & Parent
6-10	Teen
11-15	Parent of Teen

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE



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

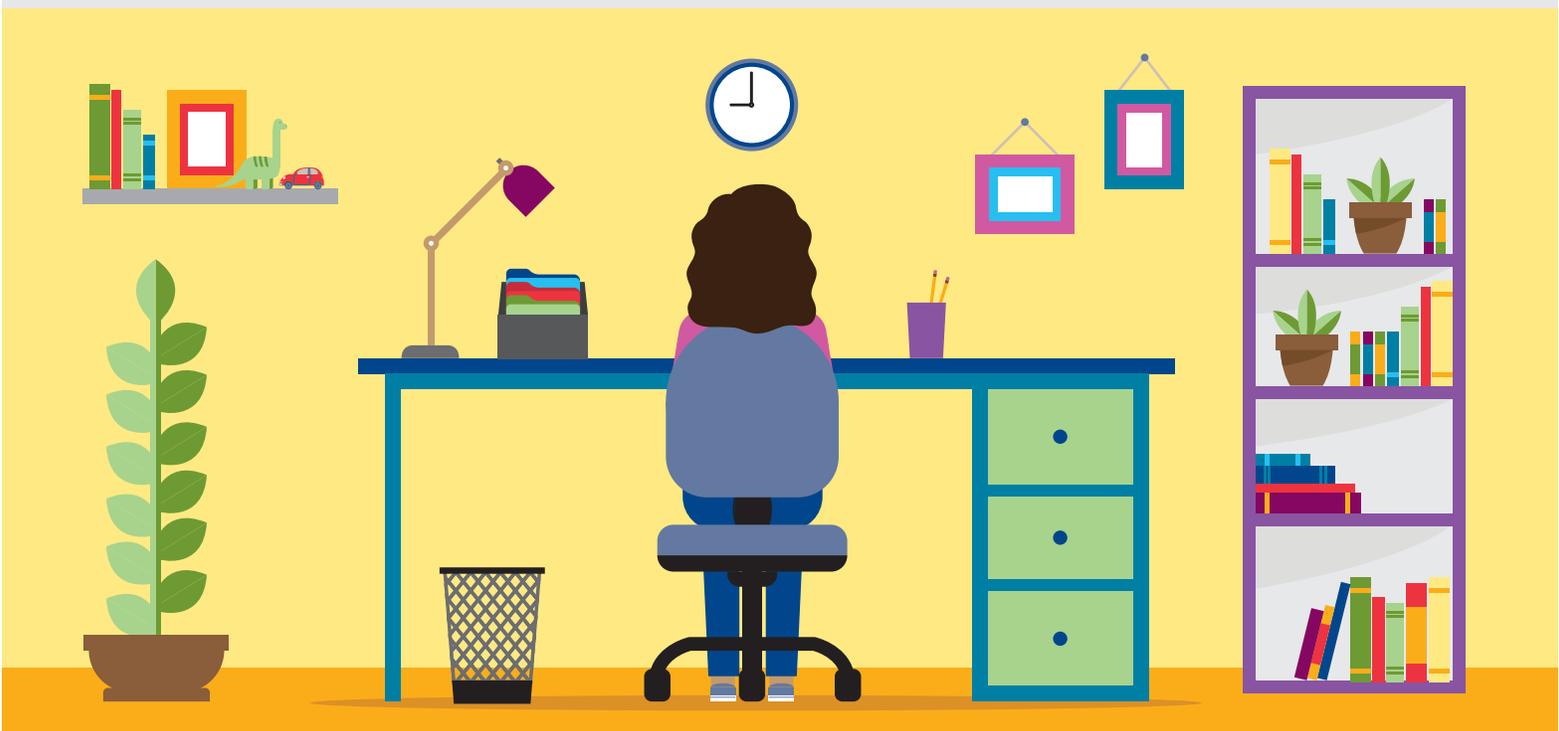
Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're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



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

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 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 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

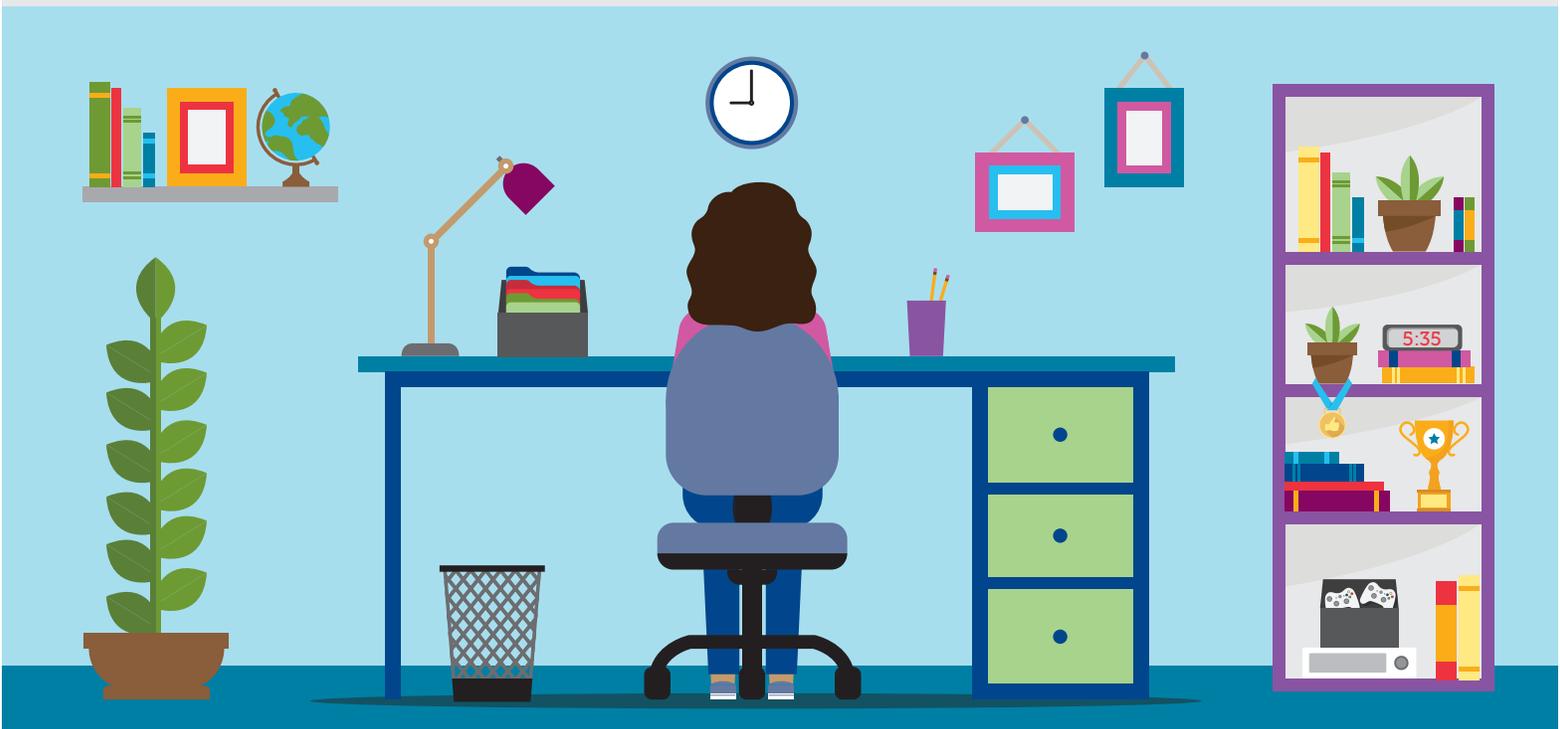
Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're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

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

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

3 Budget Time

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

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	

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	

TEEN HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE TIPS



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.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE



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

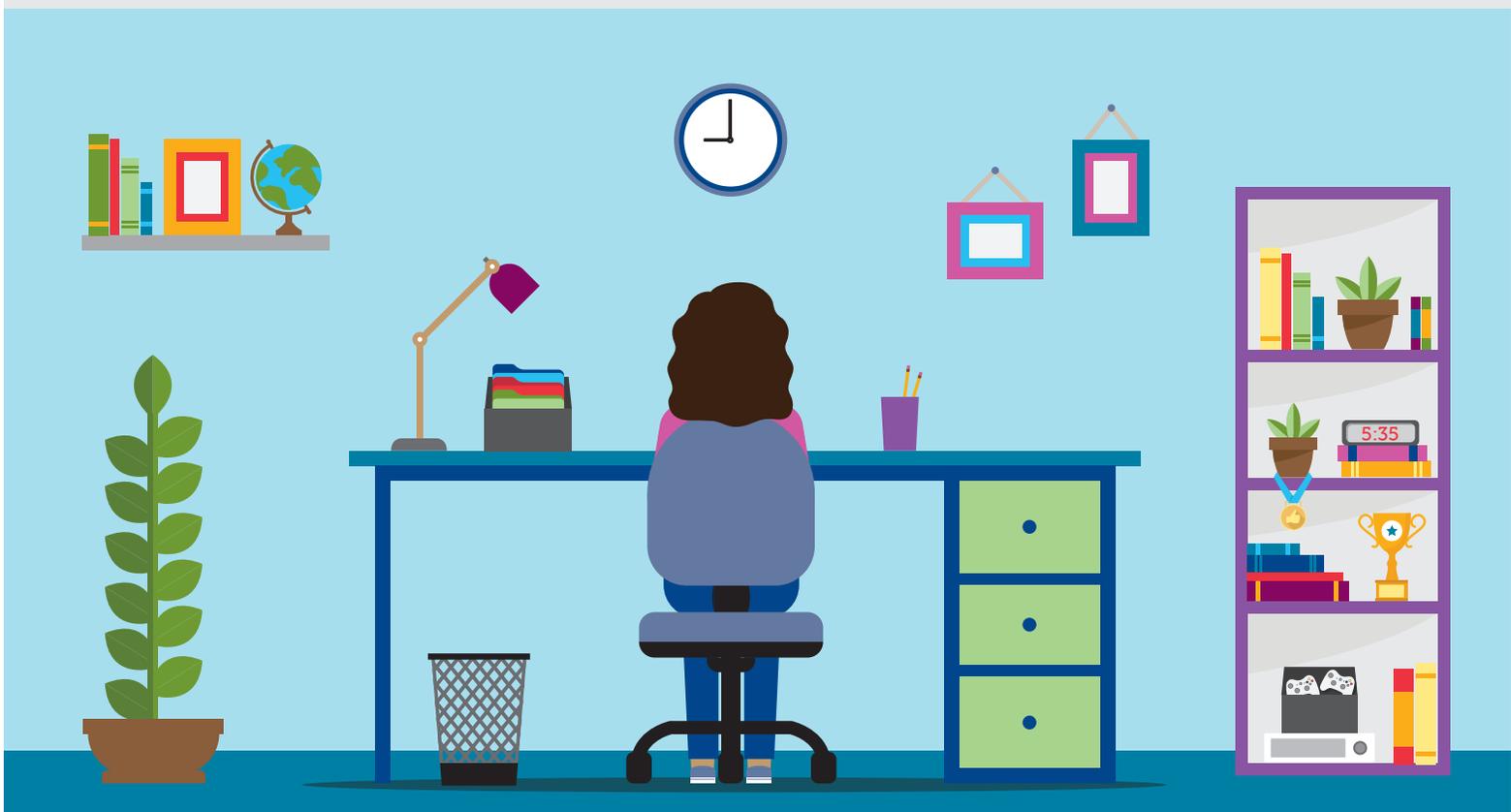
Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're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

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

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

3 Budget Time

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

Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	

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



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.

How to Manage My Time



1-4	Child & Parent
5-8	Teen
9-12	Parent of Teen

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



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		

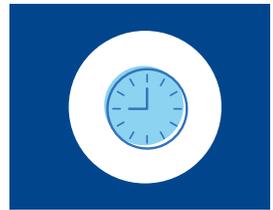
JESSICA'S WEEKLY CALENDAR

	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

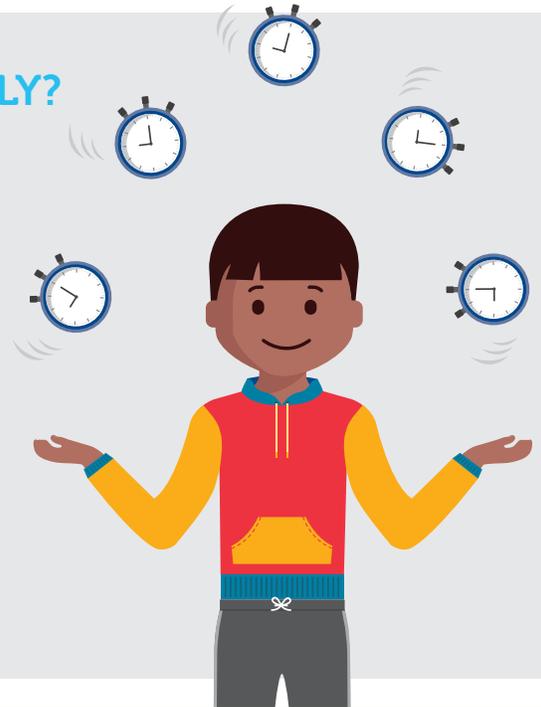
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wake Up							
Leave for school							
Get home							
Bedtime							
Appointments							
Activities							
Fun							

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!

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.

PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



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.

Bonding Time



1-2 Child & Parent

PARENT HANDOUT: BONDING TIME



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?

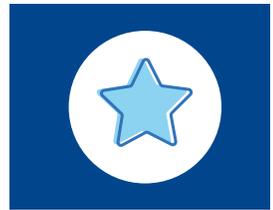
Do not take Bonding Time away as a punishment. Ideally, it becomes part of your daily routine. When children have a bad day, they usually need more soothing and positive time with parents, not less. Over time, this special time will help decrease your child's misbehavior.

Rewarding Good Behavior



1-5 Child & Parent

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

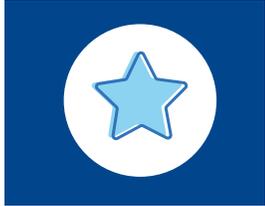
Adjust the rewards list over time. As your child's behavior improves or certain rewards lose their value, you can adjust your rewards chart to maintain your child's motivation and progress. For example, after your child is able to consistently do chores 2-3 times/week, you can increase the goal to 4-5 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 parkRead extra bedtime storyPlay game or do puzzleWatch short videoPlay with bubblesTake photosPlay dress upHave a dance party	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have play date with friendDo art projectGo out to eatTake trip to the zooCamp in the backyardGo to the libraryChoose dinner for the familyBake treat together

	Daily/Small Rewards	Weekly or Monthly/Bigger Rewards
Ages 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Play with friendsSpend time with just parentsCook meal togetherPlay cardsGo to libraryPlay video gameHave extra treat after dinnerMake craft together	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have a sleepoverGo for a hikeGo swimming, bowling, or bikingGo out to eatPlan family outingVisit a museumGo to the moviesDecorate 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.)

