

# GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS **FOR ADHD**

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Parents of Teens 13-17





## GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT

# FOR ADHD



## INTRODUCTION

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

The most effective interventions for managing ADHD symptoms in teens typically involve a combination of medication, behavioral techniques, and educational strategies. In this guide, we focus on teaching parents how to increase structure at home and help with schoolwork. Our accompanying teen guide teaches teens ways to improve their ability to plan, organize, and solve problems, skills that are commonly referred to as executive functions. The worksheets in these guides will explain the skills and help you and your teen try them at home. All of the skills included in our guides are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many families have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

## SKILLS & EXERCISES

Each of the skill handouts includes an explanation of the skill, a description of how it will help your family, instructions for how to use the strategy at home, and a list of common questions and concerns parents or teens usually ask, along with our answers. Work through the guide with your teen and try out each new skill for about two weeks to see which fit your family best. Depending on your teen's age and ability, adjust how much support you offer as they learn each skill. Older teens and those who are more independent may want to try the skills on their own and just check in with you. Younger teens and those who are really struggling with managing their ADHD may need more support. We offer suggestions for how to discuss these strategies with your teen. See what's working and what's still challenging, then adjust as needed. Once you've found a set of skills that works for your family, keep at it until it the routine becomes second nature. It may be challenging at first, but the more you practice, the easier it will get to make these skills and exercises a part of your daily life. Let us know how things are going and be in touch if you and your teen need any additional support for management of ADHD symptoms. Good luck!

## FOR PARENTS OF TEENS



### Skill 1

#### Household Rules and Structure

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



### Skill 2

#### Homework Help

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

## FOR TEENS

(WITH HELP FROM PARENTS)



### Skill 3

#### How to Solve Problems

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



### Skill 4

#### How to Remember What I Need To Do

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



### Skill 5

#### How to Get Things Done

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



### Skill 6

#### How to Organize My Stuff

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



### Skill 7

#### How to Manage My Time

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



### Skill 8

#### How to Feel Good About Myself

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOUSEHOLD RULES AND STRUCTURE



ADHD Skill 1

## What Are Household Rules and Structure?

- ▶ Household Rules and Structure are strategies families use to organize their daily lives, create consistent routines, and set clear expectations at home.
- ▶ Applying rules and structure at home helps 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.

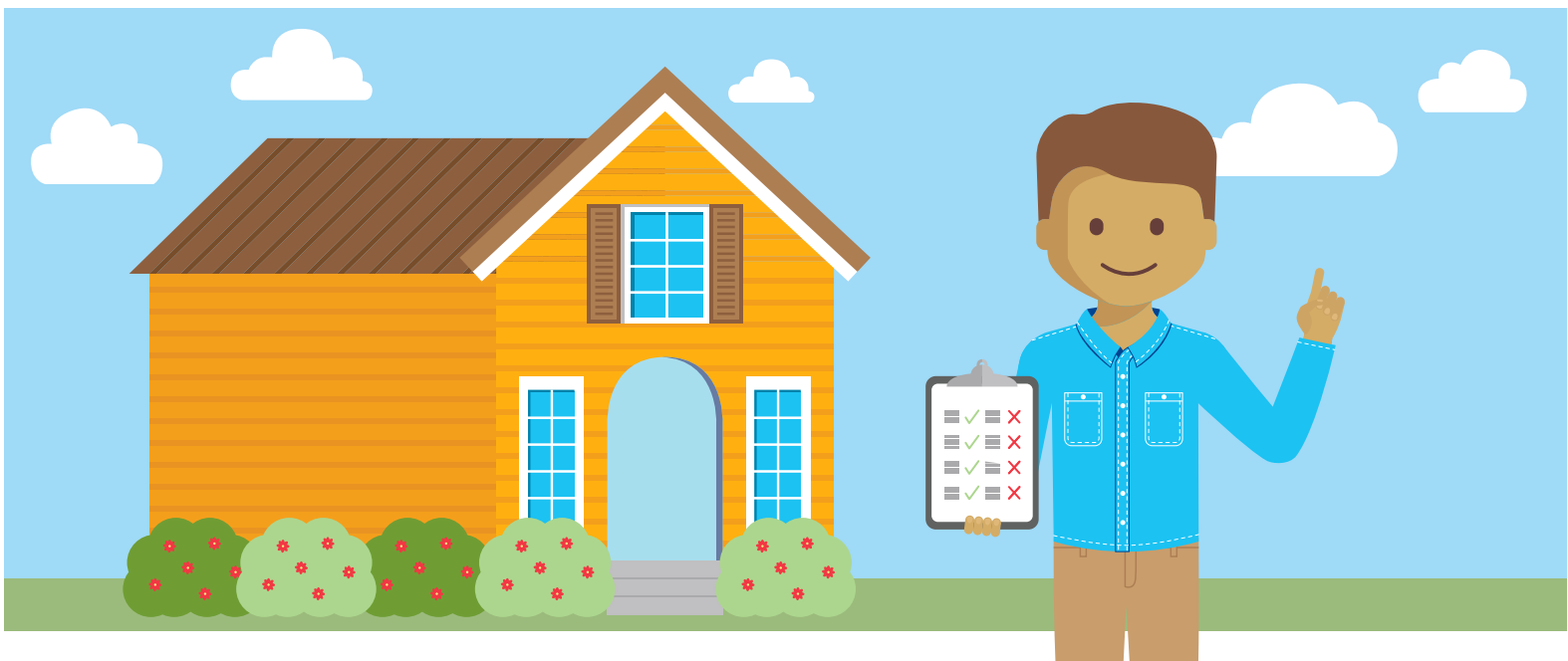
You can also create routines for those tasks your teen finds challenging, such as using relaxation skills to control their energy level or using the skills in this guide. Review our example routines and then create some of your own.

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



ADHD Skill 1

## 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.



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOMEWORK HELP



ADHD Skill 2

## What is Homework Help?

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

## Here's How to Provide Homework Help at Home

- 1 Use organizational tools to keep track of assignments, projects, and tests.**
  - ▶ Help your teen stay on top of their schoolwork, due dates, and daily activities by using planners, calendars, and "to do" lists. At the start of each school year, help your teen create a simple and clear system to keep track of important information. For example, your teen can write down each week's events in a planner, put new homework assignments in one section of their binder, and store finished assignments in another section.
  - ▶ Give your teen daily reminders to update their "to do" list and follow their schedule. For more tips, they can review the chapters in the teen guide on Remembering Things I Need to Do (ADHD Skill 2) and How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 4).
- 2 Create detailed homework routines.**
  - ▶ Tasks are easier to do when they are part of a regular routine. Help your teen create a daily homework routine, including where they will do it, what time they will do it, and how they will prioritize their assignments. See our example for ideas.
  - ▶ Think through the routine details together to make sure that you and your teen are on the same page. For example, is your teen's homework space quiet and distraction-free? Do they have access to the materials they need there (e.g., pens, pencils, calculator, etc.)? When scheduling homework time, do they need a break between when they get home from school and when they start working? If they get stuck or need help, what should they do?
  - ▶ Encourage your teen to stick to the routine every day. The more consistent the routine is, the easier it will be for them to get in the habit of doing homework every day and not waiting until the last minute.



### 3 Provide support and supervision.

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

### 4 Break bigger assignments or projects down into smaller steps.

- ▶ It can be overwhelming to tackle a difficult or big assignment, such as a school project or studying for a test. First, make sure your teen understands the assignment. If they don't, walk through it with them or help them problem solve how to figure out what they need to do.
- ▶ Then, help your teen turn a big assignment into smaller, more manageable assignments and accurately estimate how much time they need for each step (see ADHD Skill 3, How to Get Things Done, and ADHD Skill 5, How to Manage My Time, in the teen guide for tips). Encourage your teen to take short breaks as needed to stretch or do an in-place exercise (like jumping jacks) or have a small snack before going back to work.

### 5 Inspect and improve your routine

- ▶ Every few weeks, review your teen's homework routine to evaluate what's working well and what needs fine-tuning. Check in with your teen's teachers as needed. Work with your teen to identify ways to make homework time easier or more productive.

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

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

## Sofia's Homework Routine

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOMEWORK HELP TIPS



ADHD Skill 2

## How Can Homework Help Strategies Help My Family?

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

## Common Parent Concerns

### **My teen refuses to do homework!**

One way to motivate your teen to do homework is to allow them to do something they enjoy once they finish, such as talking to a friend or doing an activity they like. You may also want to incorporate consequences into your approach, such as the loss of a privilege for not following homework rules (e.g., if your teen does not do their homework, they lose the ability to use electronics that night).

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

### **My teen gets too much homework, and they can never finish it all.**

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

### **My teen doesn't like when I check their work or watch over their homework routines.**

Depending on how challenging they find organization and follow through, teens with ADHD vary in how much they need or want support completing homework. Some need more structure and guidance than others, and older teens can need and want less oversight than younger ones. If your teen wants to manage their homework more independently, try asking them to trial brief check-ins with you to let you know they've completed their assigned work. You can decide together how often they need to do this (e.g., 3 times a week to start). As they demonstrate they can do it on their own, you can check in less frequently, or only when they're stuck and could use help. Remind your teen that you are there to support them and know they can do it. You're trying to make it easier for them to remember what they need to do and support their independence, but don't want to argue about it or nag them if you don't need to! If their homework grade starts to drop or teachers report concerns, you can revisit the conversation.

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

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



## Common Parent Concerns (cont.)

**When my teen does homework, they sometimes get so frustrated that they start yelling or crying.**

Provide validation, empathy, and encouragement. Express understanding that homework can be difficult, help your teen label their emotions, and remind them that they have done challenging things in the past and can improve with practice and effort. Using a strategy like Problem Solving for ADHD (ADHD Skill 1 in the teen guide) can also help your teen get unstuck. Try not to do your teen's homework for them, as it can give the message that they can't do it on their own.

Encourage your teen to practice some of the strategies in our teen guide to improve their working memory, organization, planning, and time management abilities. Building these skills may make homework time easier for you and them.

Homework can be more challenging for some teens than others, and it can feel discouraging. Your teen can try out the strategies in the teen guide to improve their working memory, organization, planning, and time management abilities. Building these skills may make homework time easier for your teen, and using strategies to identify personal strengths (How to Feel Good About Myself, ADHD Skill 6) can shift their attention toward their positive qualities.

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.

## Nick's Backpack Checklist



## Planner



Assignments in progress  
(in first section of binder)



## Assignments to turn in (in second section of binder)

## Lunch

## Pencil case

## Textbooks

## Change of clothes for gym

## \_\_\_\_\_’s Backpack Checklist



# PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING FOR ADHD



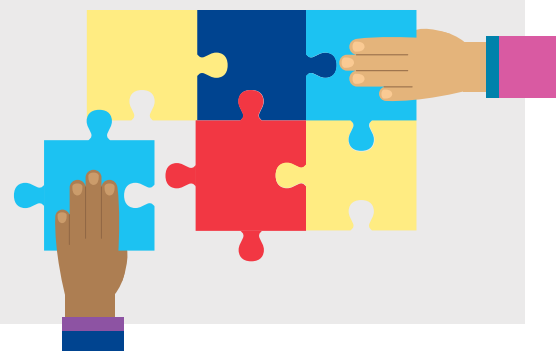
ADHD Skill 3

## What is Problem Solving for ADHD?

- ▶ If your teen is having a hard time paying attention, staying organized, or controlling their energy, they may experience problems because of these difficulties. Using a positive problem solving strategy can help them more effectively deal with their daily challenges and concerns.
- ▶ Your teen may be frustrated if they are having a hard time dealing with problems, big or small. This can make them feel bad about themselves or cause them to get in trouble with parents, friends or teachers. Problem solving strategies can help them change that!
- ▶ These worksheets teach your teen a simple plan for solving problems.

They will learn to:

1. Name the problem
2. Identify 3 possible solutions
3. Name one good thing and one bad thing about each solution
4. Pick one to try
5. Evaluate how things went after you implement the solution.



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

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

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

The next worksheet puts the **Problem Solving Plan** into a chart and shows you some examples. Go over them with your teen and offer support as needed. Encourage them to solve the practice problems and then create a plan for one of their own problems.



# TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



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

What's the Problem?

"I don't understand the homework assignment."

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

**Example 2:** My parents told me to start studying for my science test before going out with my friends. They kept reminding me, but I didn't remember to do it and failed the test. They're so mad. This keeps happening to me.

What's the Problem?

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



# TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



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

What's the Problem?

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

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

What's the Problem?

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



# TEEN WORKSHEET: PROBLEM SOLVING



**Example 5:** "I really like when we have a substitute teacher because class is really easy those days, but sometimes I goof off too much and get us all in trouble. My friends are starting to get mad, and now the principal is saying we have to have a meeting!"

What's the Problem?

One Good Thing

One Bad Thing

Solution 1

Solution 2

Solution 3

My Choice

How'd it go?



# BLANK PROBLEM SOLVING PLANS

Here are a couple Blank Problem Solving Plans. Make copies and use it to help guide your decision making when problems arise. Your parents can help you as needed.



**Boston  
Children's  
Hospital**  
Until every child is well™



**ADHD Skill 3**

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

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS



ADHD Skill 3

## How Can Problem Solving for ADHD Help My Family?

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

## Common Parent Concerns

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

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

### **When we try this, my teen can't think of any solutions.**

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

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO



ADHD Skill 4

## What is Remembering Things I Need to Do?

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

## Here's How to Remember Things You Need to Do

You can introduce this skill by saying, "Sometimes it's hard to remember all of the things we need to do. Here is a new way to keep track of the things you have to do and when you have to do them. This will help improve your memory and planning skills."

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

The next worksheet shows your teen some examples of **To Do Lists**. You can go over the examples together and then have your teen make their own lists.



# Teen To Do List Examples

**ADHD Skill 4:** Put your tasks on the To Do Lists below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

Things I Need to Do Today: George	Done?
Turn in English paper	✓
Give book back to Hannah	✓
Turn in Math homework	✓
Submit Biology project outline	
Find out where track tryouts are	
Go to band practice	

Things I Need to Do This Week: Molly	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Make my bed	✓	✓			
Eat breakfast	✓	✓			
Put homework in backpack	✓	✓			
Get lunch out of fridge	✓				
Bring homework assignments home	✓				
Do homework before watching TV	✓				

Things I Need to Do This Weekend: Sam	Saturday	Sunday
Make my bed	✓	
Eat breakfast	✓	
Do chores (take out trash, sweep up kitchen, clean my room)	✓	
Work on History project		
Do Science homework		
Get baseball equipment for practice (Saturday at 11)		
Movies with John and Hector (Saturday at 7)		



# Teen To Do Lists

**ADHD Skill 4:** Put your tasks on the To Do Lists below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



# PARENT HANDOUT: REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO TIPS



ADHD Skill 4

## How Can Remembering What I Need to Do Help My Family?

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

## Common Parent Concerns

### **My teen isn't sure what to put on their list.**

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

### **My teen makes all of their lists, but then forgets to look at them.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Many teens with ADHD feel this way. Take a look at the handouts on How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 5), How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 6), and How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 7) together, and see if practicing these skills helps your teen improve their ability to start and complete tasks, get organized, and meet deadlines.

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE



ADHD Skill 5

## What is How to Get Things Done?

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

## Here's How to Get Things Done

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

1

Look at your "to do" list(s) and **pick a specific task** to complete. If you need help making a "to-do" list, see ADHD Skill 2 (How to Remember What I Need to Do) to make checklists of your daily and weekly tasks.

2

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

*Example: Alicia split her paper up into 6 steps: 1) finding research articles on her topic, 2) reading and highlighting the articles, 3) developing an initial outline for the paper, 4) writing a first draft, 5) editing and writing the final draft, 6) creating her bibliography.*

3

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

*Example: Between arriving home after school and dinnertime, Lucas had 3 hours to do homework. With homework in 3 subjects, he split his time into 1 hour/subject. He took a 5-minute stretching break in between the subjects, leaving him 55 minutes per subject. He used any extra time at the end to finish up assignments that needed more time.*

4

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

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

5

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

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



6

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

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

7

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

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

8

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

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

9

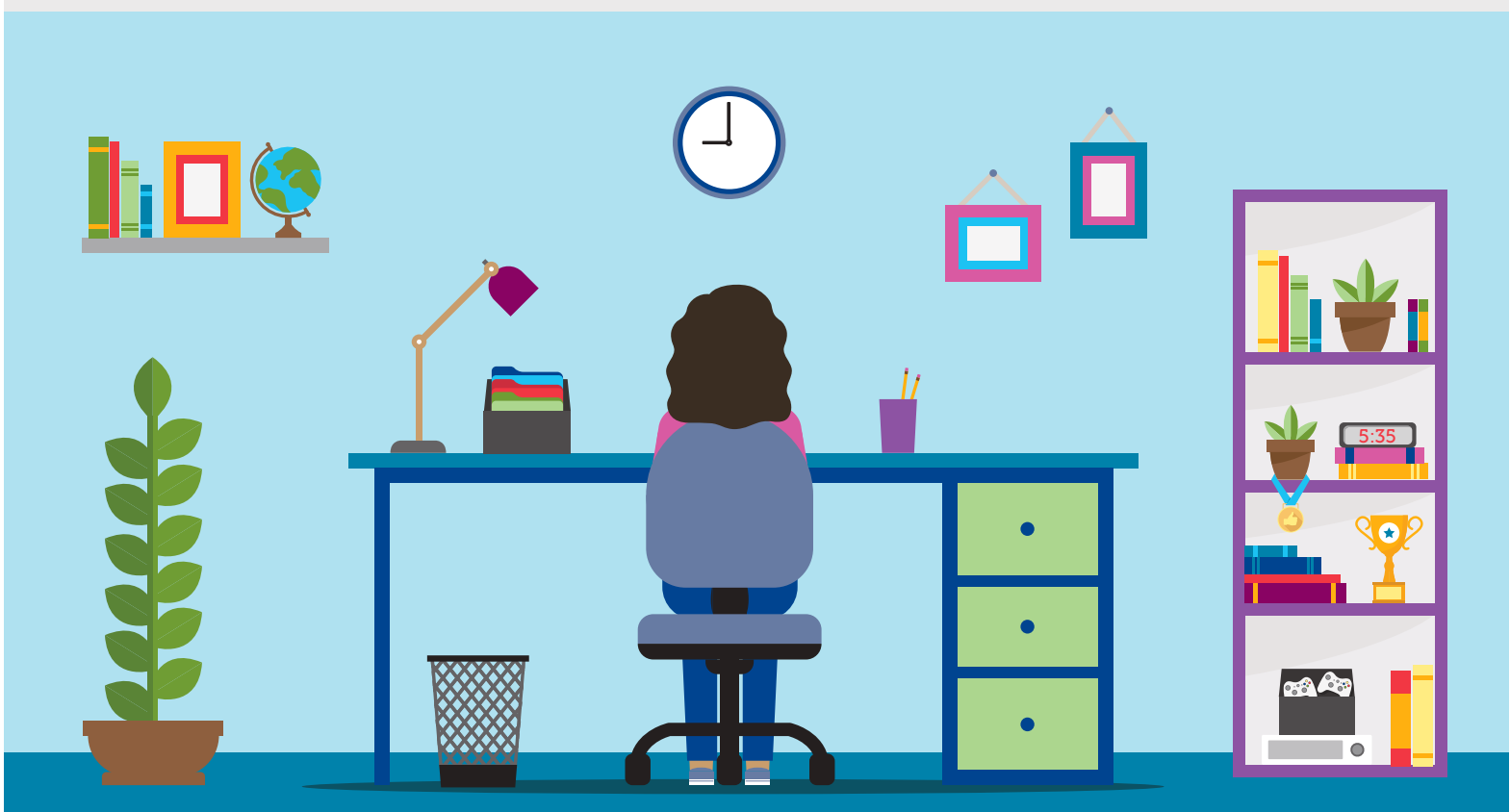
Pick a **reward** you will get for finishing this task. Choose something that you can get easily; it doesn't have to be big, fancy, or expensive. Something like a tasty treat, spending time outside, or watching a favorite show can feel great after reaching a goal. Ask your parents for ideas if you're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

10

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

11

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





# TEEN ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 5

Follow the steps below to create your roadmap; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

## 1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

Studying for my history test on Friday

## 2 Define Steps

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

Step 1	Read chapters 6 and 7 in my textbook
Step 2	Review my notes from class
Step 3	Memorize important dates in chapters 6 and 7
Step 4	Take practice quiz

## 3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?	2.5 hrs
How much time to I have per step/task?	2.5 hrs/4 tasks = ~38 min/task
Time I need for step 1	45 min
Time I need for step 2	30 min
Time I need for step 3	45 min
Time I need for step 4	20 min
Total Time	2 hrs, 20 min
Time Left Over	10 min

## 4 Create Schedule

	Day	Start Time	Stop Time	Short Break?
Step 1	Monday	3:00	4:00	5 min between chapters
Step 2	Tuesday	3:00	3:35	5 min if needed
Step 3	Wednesday	3:00	4:10	5 min between chapters
Step 4	Thursday	3:00	4:00	Try quiz without break

## 5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?	Textbook, notes, practice quiz, paper, pen, highlighter, timer
Where will I do it?	Dining room table after school
What distractions can I eliminate?	Put away electronics
What will I do if I need help?	Ask Silvia or Josh; check in with Mrs. Young; ask mom or dad to quiz me
What is my reward for working hard?	One episode of TV show on M/W; ice cream sandwich on T; video game on Th
Notes for next time	It was helpful to take a break in between reading chapters in the textbook



# TEEN ROADMAP TO GETTING THINGS DONE

ADHD Skill 5

Follow the steps below to create your roadmap; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

## 1 Choose Task

Task/Goal

## 2 Define Steps

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

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

## 3 Budget Time

How much time do I have?

How much time to I have per step/task?

Time I need for step 1

Time I need for step 2

Time I need for step 3

Time I need for step 4

Total Time

Time Left Over

## 4 Create Schedule

Day

Start Time

Stop Time

Short Break?

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

## 5 Overcome Obstacles

What materials do I need?

Where will I do it?

What distractions can I eliminate?

What will I do if I need help?

What is my reward for working hard?

Notes for next time



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO GET THINGS DONE TIPS



ADHD Skill 5

## How Can Getting Things Done Help My Family?

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

## How Can Getting Things Done Help My Family?

### **My teen has a hard time figuring out how to break a task into smaller steps.**

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

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

Many tasks take longer to complete than we think! It can be challenging at first to know how much time your teen needs to do a task, so their time estimates may be inaccurate. If they have multiple tasks to complete, it may help to split the time evenly between them, then use any extra time to finish any incomplete tasks. Use the tips in How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 5) to get a better sense of how much time your teen needs to do things. This will help them make a more realistic schedule.

**My teen knows what they need to do and made their plan, but then they said they don't have all the materials they need.** Many teens with ADHD have trouble keeping track of their things, especially their school assignments and belongings. It helps if they can think ahead of time about what they will need to do a task. You can offer to double check that they've thought of everything. Have your teen write the required materials down on their Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. If they need extra help with organization, the worksheets in ADHD Skill 6 (How to Organize My Stuff) can help too.

### **My teen gets distracted while trying to get things done.**

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

### **My teen made a plan, but then forgot to follow it.**

Be sure to tell your teen, "Good job making a plan!" Remind them to keep a copy of their Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet somewhere they'll easily see it. They can try setting a timer or alarm for the start times they chose, or ask someone to give them a friendly reminder. Your teen can also brush up on their memory skills (ADHD Skill 4, How to Remember What I Need to Do) and time management (ADHD Skill 7, How to Manage My Time) and see if using these skills together helps them reach their goals.

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF



ADHD Skill 6

## What is How to Organize My Stuff?

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



## Here's How to Organize Your Stuff

You can introduce this skill by saying, “Organizational strategies can help you keep track of your things. Let’s read through this list of strategies together and pick a few for you to try.” Go through the ideas below to help your teen get more organized. Depending on your teen’s age, some strategies may work better than others.

1

### Give everything a home.

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

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

2

### Use a planner or agenda.

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

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

3

### Try color-coding.

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

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



4

### Set a deadline for getting tasks done.

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

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

5

### Schedule “clean up time”.

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

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

6

### Ask your parents or teachers to support you.

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

7

### Reward yourself.

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

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





# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF TIPS



ADHD Skill 6

## How Can Organizing My Stuff Help My Family?

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

## Common Parent Concerns

**My teen says that organizing is hard, and everything usually turns out okay in the end. They want to know why they should bother.** It can take hard work and time to become more organized. Encourage your teen to think about their goals and how disorganization may make it harder to achieve them. For example, do they wish they didn't lose as many assignments or possessions? Would it feel good to turn things in on time? What would it be like to know where their things are when they need them? Is there any benefit to you nagging them less about their messy room or lost belongings? See if your teen can identify whether there are advantages to trying a new strategy or two. Then see if these new strategies help them to do well and feel better!

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

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

**When I ask my teen to organize their things, they say it's too hard to do a big task like cleaning their room. It's so messy, they don't know where to start!** When tackling a big task, help your teen think of ways to break it down so it feels less overwhelming (see ADHD Skill 5 on How to Get Things Done for tips). For example, they can split their bedroom into four sections and clean one at a time. Once their room is clean, have them save a little time each day to straighten up. For example, each day they can spend five minutes putting things away, put away at least five things, or clean off one area, such as their nightstand. Remind them to reward themselves for their hard work!

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

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

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



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME



## 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.



# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF



ADHD Skill 8

## What is How to Feel Good About Myself?

- ▶ The challenges teens with ADHD experience can make it easy to get down on themselves. How to Feel Good About Myself is a set of strategies to help your teen be their own cheerleader, feel better about tackling difficult tasks, and remember that everyone faces challenges. These techniques also help your teen notice if they are being hard on themselves and then take steps to feel better.
- ▶ By practicing this skill, your teen will remember what makes them great and special, even when they're having a hard time. Feeling good about themselves can help your teen do better at school, home, and with friends!

## Here's How to Feel Good About Yourself

You can introduce this skill by saying, "All teens have times when they feel down on themselves. When that happens, it's important to remember what makes you special. Feeling good about yourself can help you do better at school, home, and with friends. Let's go through this list of strategies together and see if they help you feel better."

- 1 Make a list of your special qualities.** Each person has traits that make them unique. Make a list of 10 talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your parents, teachers, and/or friends for more ideas based on what they like about you. Look at this list when you're feeling down or having a hard time remembering what's great about you.
- 2 Be kind to yourself.** If you find yourself feeling annoyed or frustrated, remember that having a positive attitude can make a big difference. Remind yourself that you can try to solve problems, improve the way you do things, and give your best effort each day. Everyone has things they are good at and things they find challenging. Try to focus on your strengths and treat yourself like you would treat a good friend.
- 3 Remember that your thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected.** How you think about a situation impacts how you feel about it, and how you feel about it effects how you act in that situation. You may not be able to control the way your brain works sometimes or change a challenging situation, but you can decide how you think about it in order to feel better and do better.
- 4 Give yourself a pep talk before starting a hard task.** When preparing to do something challenging, give yourself an encouraging pep talk. Follow the strategies in these worksheets, then remind yourself how hard you're working. Visualize yourself successfully completing your hard task. (E.g., Before Leah studies for her math tests, she tells herself, "I can do it! If I put my mind to it, I can do my best on this test!")
- 5 If a task feels too challenging, take a break.** Taking a short break from a difficult task can make it feel less frustrating or overwhelming. Take a few minutes to stretch, listen to some music, take some deep breaths, or have a light snack. See if you feel better and are ready to try again.
- 6 If you feel unsure or stuck, ask for help.** Remember you don't have to go it alone. Make a short list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed. This can include parents, teachers, friends, and other supportive people in your life. Turn to them for understanding and encouragement when things feel hard.
- 7 Don't give up!** Sometimes the first strategy we try doesn't work. If that happens, try another one (such as the other skills in this guide). Remind yourself not everyone gets it on the first try!
- 8 Track your progress.** As you work through the skills in this guide, be sure to notice if you are feeling and doing better. If so, give yourself credit for your effort and be proud of your hard work!



# TEEN WORKSHEET: HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF

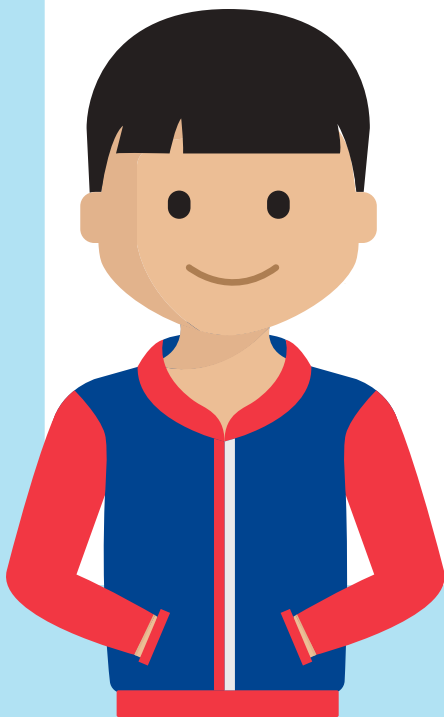
## My Special Qualities

Use this space to make a list of your special qualities. These can be talents, skills, or characteristics that make you great. Ask your caregivers, teachers, and friends for more ideas based on what they like about you!

1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

## My Supporters

Use this space to brainstorm a list of caring people you can talk to when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.





# PARENT HANDOUT: HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF TIPS



ADHD Skill 8

## How Can Feeling Good About Myself Help My Family?

- ▶ Sometimes teens with ADHD get frustrated with themselves for having a hard time paying attention, sitting still, doing homework, or getting along with others. This can lead them to think negative thoughts about themselves, avoid important tasks, or argue with family, friends, or teachers.
- ▶ Feeling Good About Myself provides strategies to help your teen improve their self-esteem and use coping strategies when they're feeling badly.

## Common Parent Concerns

### **When a task is hard, my teen gets overwhelmed and wants to give up.**

Completing difficult tasks can be challenging! When a task feels hard, encourage them to give themselves credit for the effort they've made so far. Then, they can take a short break to do something enjoyable, such as doing some light stretching, watching a short video, or getting a snack. They can also practice relaxation skills, which help calm both their body and their mind. See if these strategies help your teen get back on track and ready to try again. If you find that your teen is avoiding their work because it feels too hard, offer more help or talk to their teachers to get extra support.

### **Sometimes when my teen thinks negative thoughts about themselves, they get "stuck" feeling badly.**

This happens to almost everyone at some point. Teens with ADHD can find it even harder to control their thoughts. Remind them that instead of beating themselves up, they can try to focus on their strengths and reset. Have them read over their list of 10 special qualities, do something fun or soothing, or talk to someone supportive to get a new perspective. If you notice that they are thinking the same negative thoughts over and over, encourage them to remember that they're working hard and trying their best.

### **My teen says that they hate having ADHD! Everything feels harder for them.**

Remember that there are many teens and adults with ADHD, so your teen is not alone. A lot of people with ADHD are successful at reaching their goals. Using the strategies in this guide can make things easier and more manageable for your teen at school and home. The more they practice them, the easier the skills will be to use on a daily basis and the better they will feel!

School can be especially challenging for those with ADHD, but school is not the only thing one can be great at doing. Remind your teen that they can take steps to do better in school and that they also have their own special talents, interests and skills.

If your teen is feeling badly about needing extra support, remind them that getting help means they are doing everything they can to improve and succeed. This means they are committed to being the best "them" that they can be!

If feeling down about themselves gets in the way at school, home, or with friends, your teen may need additional support. Check in with your primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

