VERSION 1.1

GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR ADHD

Teens 13-17

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GUIDED SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR ADHD

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INTRODUCTION

Teens with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, often have difficulty paying attention, sitting still, and/or acting impulsively. They can have trouble learning, getting along with their peers, and behaving appropriately at school or home. These challenges can impact teens' self-esteem and increase the likelihood they develop depression, anxiety, and/or disruptive behavior symptoms. If you have ADHD, some of these may be familiar to you. Working with your primary care team and your parents can help you manage your ADHD symptoms.

The most effective interventions for managing ADHD symptoms in teens typically involve a combination of medication, behavioral techniques, and educational strategies. In this guide, we focus on strengthening behavioral and educational skills by improving your ability to plan, organize, and solve problems, skills that are commonly referred to as executive functions.
There are tips and activities for you and advice for your parents. We find that the skills are most effective when used in order. The worksheets in this guide will explain the skills and help you try them at home. All of the skills included in our guide are *evidence-based*, meaning they are strategies that have been tested and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Many teens have found these strategies to be beneficial; we hope they will work for you, too.

SKILLS & EXERCISES

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

FOR TEENS
(WITH HELP FROM PARENTS)

Skill 1

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

Skill 2

How to Remember What I Need To Do
This technique helps you keep track of important information, such as deadlines for school assignments.

Skill 3

How to Get Things Done
This skill teaches you to plan ahead in order to start and complete tasks without getting sidetracked, such as doing homework assignments or chores.

Skill 4

How to Organize My Stuff
This strategy helps you establish organizational systems, such as organizing your bedroom, backpack, or schoolwork.

Skill 5

How to Manage My Time
These worksheets help you create schedules, stay on task, and meet deadlines.

Skill 6

How to Feel Good About Myself
These exercises provide ways to identify your strengths and boost your self-esteem.

TEEN HANDOUT:

PROBLEM SOLVING FOR ADHD

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ADHD Skill 1

What is Problem Solving for ADHD?

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

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

Everyone can use help solving problems. When our problems make us feel bad about ourselves or get us into trouble, we sometimes need strategies that make it easier to deal with challenges. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

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

The next section puts the Problem Solving Plan into a chart and shows you some examples. Go over them by yourself or with a parent. Try to solve the practice problems and then create a plan for one of your own problems.

TEEN WORKSHEET:

PROBLEM SOLVING

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ADHD Skill 1

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

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

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

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

TEEN WORKSHEET:

PROBLEM SOLVING

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ADHD Skill 1

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

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ADHD Skill 1

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.

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ADHD Skill 1

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

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

TEEN HANDOUT:

PROBLEM SOLVING TIPS

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ADHD Skill 1

How Can Problem Solving for ADHD Help Me?

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

Common Teen Concerns

I don't have problems that need solving.
It can be hard to notice which challenges or frustrations can benefit from problem solving skills. Go over past situations that caused you to feel sad, frustrated, stressed, or another negative emotion, or see if your parents or teachers can share their ideas. These are great opportunities to practice your problem solving. Let your supportive adults know that if they notice a situation where you can use these skills in daily life, they can point it out to you (e.g., "You told me you were frustrated at lunch because you forgot to bring your lunch with you even though you packed it last night. Do you think you can make a Problem Solving Plan to help plan for tomorrow?").

I can't think of any solutions.
Think about what might be getting in the way. You might be feeling overwhelmed and stuck. Ask a parent or friend for one example solution. Often, once you hear one idea, you can get creative and come up with solutions of your own. Try to be creative and think critically about how positive and beneficial each potential solution might be; however you don't need to think of the "perfect" solution because there is no such thing. You can make mistakes and ask your others for help as needed. Review our practice examples, both to remind yourself of some good options for common concerns as well as the fact that you came up with great solutions for the examples!

When I try to use my problem solving plan, I get really frustrated and upset. Sometimes problem solving can feel really overwhelming! Feeling upset is okay. Your emotions are giving you a message that you are having a tough time and need support. Take a break to do something relaxing or fun, then try again. You can also ask for support using your problem solving plan if you need it. If you are still having a hard time using problem solving skills, check in with your parents or primary care provider. They can connect you to a behavioral health specialist who can help.

TEEN HANDOUT:

REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO

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ADHD Skill 2

What is Remembering Things I Need to Do?

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

Here's How to Remember Things You Need to Do

Sometimes it's hard to remember all of the things we need to do. Here is a new way to keep track of the things you have to do and when you have to do them. This will help improve your memory and planning skills. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

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

Teen To Do List Examples

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ADHD Skill 2: Put your tasks on the To Do Lists below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

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

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

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

Teen To Do Lists

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ADHD Skill 2: Put your tasks on the To Do Lists below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

Things I Need to Do Today: George	Done?

Things I Need to Do This Week	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri

Things I Need to Do This Weekend	Saturday	Sunday

TEEN HANDOUT:

REMEMBERING THINGS I NEED TO DO TIPS

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ADHD Skill 2

How Can Remembering What I Need to Do Help Me?

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

Common Teen Concerns

I'm not sure what to put on my list.
If you're having a hard time remembering what you need to do, aren't sure what to put on your list, or find it challenging to use the worksheets, review our examples and/or ask for help. Your parents, teachers, and friends/classmates may have some good ideas based on what they know you need to do. The more you practice, the easier it will get.

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

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

I look at my lists and can't figure out what to do first.
One method is to start with the easiest task. Another is to start with the one with the earliest deadline. Tasks on the What I Need to Do Today checklist usually have to be completed before those on the What I Need to Do This Week or Weekend checklists.

My parents always bug me about making my lists and checking things off. It's annoying. Sometimes family members can be eager to participate in your skill-building. It may help to calmly explain to your family the best ways to help support your use of this memory tool. For example, you could ask that they can offer you some encouragement in the mornings before the school rush, or check in with you once or twice during homework time, but not ask you about the lists repeatedly or throughout the day. Decide what will help you get the support you need without being overwhelmed. And remember, as you successfully make and complete your "to do lists", you will show them you need fewer reminders to do this independently.

Even after I make my lists, it's hard for me to follow through on doing my tasks. Many teens with ADHD feel this way. Take a look at the handouts on How to Get Things Done (ADHD Skill 3), How to Organize My Stuff (ADHD Skill 4), and How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 5). Your parents can help you try them out. See if practicing these skills helps you improve your ability to start and complete tasks, get organized, and meet deadlines.

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

TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO GET THINGS DONE

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ADHD Skill 3

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.

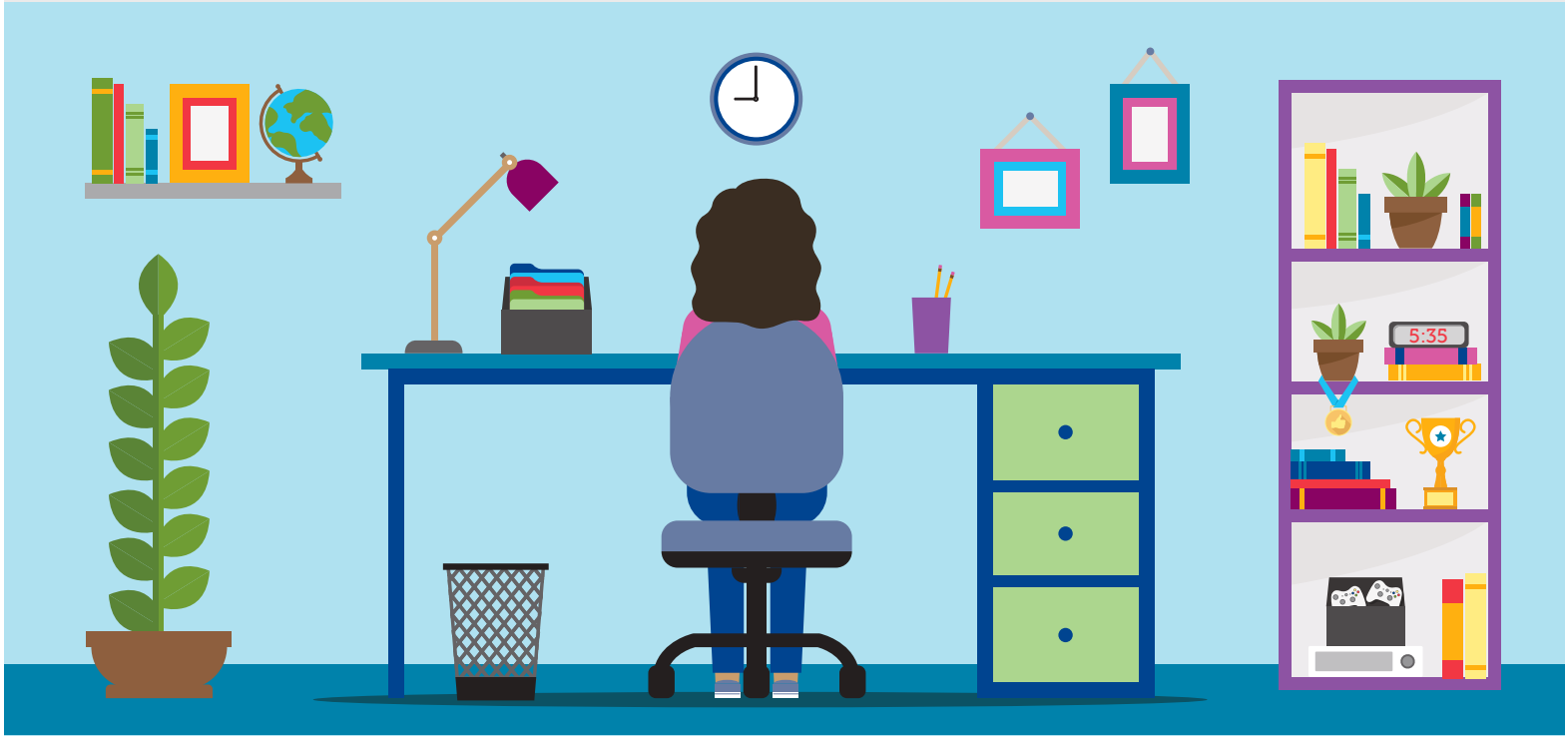
8 Plan **how to get help** if you need it. Identify who can provide extra support if you're not sure what to do or get stuck. The goal is to keep moving until you finish a task, so reach out for help if you're not sure what to do. Family, friends, teachers, and classmates can provide useful advice

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!



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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

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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	

TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO GET THINGS DONE TIPS

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ADHD Skill 3

How Can Getting Things Done Help Me?

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

Common Teen Concerns

I have a hard time figuring out how to break a task into smaller steps.
Ask yourself, what do I need to do first? That means you should think about what absolutely has to happen so that you can get started. Then ask, what do I need to do next to keep moving toward my goal of completing the task? You can also try thinking of all the steps you need to take, then going through and putting them in order. If you're still having a hard time, ask a parent, teacher, or friend for help.

It always takes me longer than I expect to finish something, so it's hard to stick to my plan.
Many tasks take longer to complete than we think! It can be challenging at first to know how much time you need to do a task, so your time estimates may be inaccurate. If you have multiple tasks to complete, it may help to split the time evenly between them, then use any extra time to finish any incomplete tasks. Use the tips in How to Manage My Time (ADHD Skill 5) to get a better sense of how much time you need to do things. This will help you make a more realistic schedule.

I know what I need to do and made my plan, but I don't have all the materials I need.
Many teens with ADHD have trouble keeping track of their things, especially their school assignments and belongings. It helps to think ahead of time about what you will need to do a task. You can also ask someone to double check that you've thought of everything. Write these materials down on your Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. If you need extra help with organization, the worksheets in ADHD Skill 4 (How to Organize My Stuff) can help.

I get distracted while trying to get things done.
Try to limit distractions (e.g., TV, phone, computer, etc.) and choose an environment that maximizes your focus and productivity. Ask your parents and teachers for suggestions based on what they've seen work well for you at home or school.

I made a plan, but I then forgot to follow it.
Good job making a plan! Remember to keep a copy of your Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet somewhere you'll easily see it. Try setting a timer or alarm for the start times you chose, or ask someone to give you a friendly reminder. You can also brush up on your memory skills (ADHD Skill 2, How to Remember What I Need to Do) and time management (ADHD Skill 5, How to Manage My Time). See if using these skills together helps you reach your goals.

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

TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF

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ADHD Skill 4

What is How to Organize My Stuff?

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

Here's How to Organize Your Stuff

Everyone has times when it's hard to get things done. Here is a new strategy you can try. Your goal here is to make a plan to complete a task and then follow your roadmap to finish it. As you do each of the steps below, fill in the Roadmap to Getting Things Done worksheet. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

1

Give everything a home.

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

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

2

Use a planner or agenda.

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

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

3

Try color-coding.

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

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

4

Set a deadline for getting tasks done.

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

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

5

Schedule "clean up time".

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

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

6

Ask your parent or teachers to support you.

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

7

Reward yourself.

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

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

TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO ORGANIZE MY STUFF TIPS

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ADHD Skill 4

How Can Organizing My Stuff Help Me?

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

Common Teen Concerns

Organizing is hard, and everything usually turns out okay in the end. Why should I bother?
It can take hard work and time to become more organized. Think about your goals and how disorganization may make it harder to achieve them. Do you wish you didn't lose as many assignments or possessions? Would it feel good to turn things in on time? What would it be like to know where your things are when you need them? Is there any benefit to your parents nagging you less about your messy room or lost belongings? Think about whether there are advantages to trying a new strategy or two. Then see if these new strategies help you to do well and feel better!

I start to organize my stuff, and then I get distracted. It's hard to finish anything.
Think about when you'll best be able to try new organizational strategies. For example, pick a time of day when you have the most energy or focus. Try to limit distractions by turning off the TV and putting away your phone and computer. Start with a smaller task, like cleaning out one drawer, one section of your backpack, or one side of your desk. Take frequent breaks so you don't get overwhelmed. Ask parents and teachers for more suggestions based on what they've seen work well for you at home or school.

It's too hard to do a big task like cleaning my room. It's so messy, I don't know where to start!
When tackling a big task, think of ways to break it down so it feels less overwhelming (see ADHD Skill 3 on How to Get Things Done for tips). For example, you can split your bedroom into four sections and clean one at a time. Once your room is clean, save a little time each day to straighten up. For example, each day you can spend five minutes putting things away, put away at least five things, or clean off one area, such as your nightstand. Remember to reward yourself for your hard work!

These strategies sound helpful, but it's hard to know which ones to use.
Learning new skills can be challenging! Remember you don't need to do all of these at once. Start by trying one of these strategies and see how it goes. Get support by asking your parents and teachers to help you try new skills. If possible, see if they can do them with you the first few times. They may have helpful ideas about which techniques are best for you and ways to improve your process.

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

TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO MANAGE MY TIME

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ADHD Skill 5

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

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

My Weekly Calendar

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	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

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ADHD Skill 5

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.

TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF

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ADHD Skill 6

What is How to Feel Good About Myself?

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

Here's How to Feel Good About Yourself

All teens have times when they feel down on themselves. When that happens, it's important to remember what makes you special. Feeling good about yourself can help you do better at school, home, and with friends. Walk through the steps below; your parent or support person can help you if you need it.

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

TEEN WORKSHEET:

HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF

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ADHD Skill 6

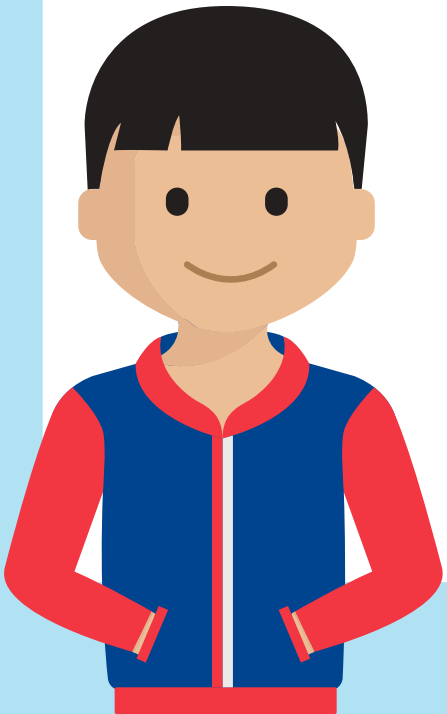
My Special Qualities

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

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

My Supporters

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



TEEN HANDOUT:

HOW TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF TIPS

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ADHD Skill 6

How Can Feeling Good About Myself Help Me?

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

Common Teen Concerns

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

Sometimes when I think negative thoughts about myself, I get "stuck" feeling badly.
This happens to almost everyone at some point. When you have ADHD, it can feel even harder to control your thoughts. Instead of beating yourself up, try to focus on your strengths and reset. Read over your list of 10 special qualities, do something fun or soothing, or talk to someone supportive to get a new perspective. If you find yourself thinking the same negative thoughts over and over, try to remember that you're working hard and trying your best.

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

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

If you're feeling badly about needing extra support, remember that getting help means you are doing everything you can to improve and succeed. This means you are committed to being the best "you" that you can be!

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