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Quick Guide to Clinical Techniques for Common Child and Adolescent Mental Health Problems

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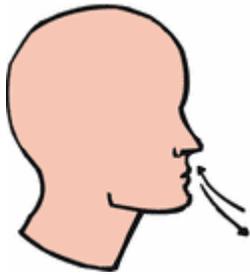


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Anxiety Skills



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Deep Breathing

⇒ Many students with anxiety need to rehearse deep breathing techniques. This process teaches the student to breathe from the stomach rather than from the lungs. Deep breathing techniques can be used in class without anyone noticing. They can be used during stressful moments such as taking an exam or while trying to relax at home.

- The student should be encouraged to close his/her eyes and focus solely on breathing.
- Breathe through the nose.
- Students should place one hand on their stomach and focus on the rising and falling of their stomach with each breath. As they take a breath and the stomach fills with air, the stomach should expand. As they release a breath, the stomach will fall.
- Focus on the rising and falling of the stomach. If the chest is rising and falling, the student is not yet engaged in deep breathing and needs to focus on inhaling air into the stomach.
- Encourage students to “count up” while breathing in (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) and to “count down” while breathing out (i.e., 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1).
- Mental imagery techniques can be helpful such as encouraging the student to think of inhaling new, clean air while releasing toxic, stressful air. Visualization techniques can also be utilized such as encouraging the students to picture the air as it goes in and out or visualize a balloon inside the stomach expanding and collapsing with each breath.
- Anxious students should practice this several times a day, rather than only when stressed in order to habituate the response.



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Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- ⇒ There are multiple forms of muscle relaxation. Some of the simpler techniques can take as little as five or ten minutes. Once students are taught how to do this, they should be encouraged to utilize this skill in the classroom or at home several times a day. It is especially helpful if a student is tense about an exam or is having difficulty falling asleep.
- ⇒ Alternating between states of muscle tension and relaxation helps the youth learn how to differentiate between the two states and helps habituate a process of relaxing muscles that are tensed. There are also many good tapes/c.d.'s available on relaxation. Progressive muscle relaxation is especially suited for middle and high school students.

Walk students through the following progressive relaxation practice session exercise.

- Sit in a comfortable position with both feet on the floor.
- Start with the toes and work up the body.
- Have student tense their feet and toes. Curl the toes towards the sole of the foot. Hold the tension for several seconds, and then relax.
- Move up to the legs. Have youth sit with legs outstretched and feet unencumbered. Tense the thighs, upper legs, calves, and knees. Have him/her visualize the release of tension from legs and feet. Hold the tension for several seconds. Then drop the legs and relax.
- Move up to the buttocks. Squeeze the buttocks tightly for several seconds. Relax.
- Stomach. Squeeze the stomach muscles tightly. Have student place his or her hands on the stomach and try to feel efforts to control these muscles. Let go.
- Tense the hands. Curl the hands into fists very tightly. Hold for a few seconds and then release.
- Stretch arms out to the sides rigidly. Create tension in the lower arms, elbows, biceps. Hold for a few seconds and then relax.
- Tense shoulders by pointing them up towards the head. Hold. Relax.



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- Tense the chest. Relax.
- Tense the back muscles and hold for a few seconds. Let go.
- Move to the muscles of the neck. Stretch neck tightly for several seconds. Relax.
- Tense the entire face. Include the jaw, the forehead, eyes. Hold for several seconds. Tell students to squeeze eyes shut, wrinkle foreheads. Release.
- Now tense the whole body. Tense every muscle that you just practiced tensing. Hold for several seconds and then release. Repeat this.
- Take a moment to sit in this relaxed state and focus on which muscles continue to feel tense. Return to those specific muscles that continue to feel tense and practice tensing and relaxing them.



The above process can be modified for younger children by adding a component of fantasy and play in order to attain age-appropriate understanding, interest, and skill. Suggested modifications include:

- Legs and feet (Squish your toes in a big mud puddle).
- Stomach (pretend a baby elephant steps on your stomach)
- Hands and arms (squeeze all of the juice from a lemon with each of your hands; shake the water off your arms).
- Neck and Shoulders (be a turtle pulling your head repeatedly inside your shell).

Adapted from: Walker, P.H. & Martinez, R. (Eds.) (2001) *Excellence in Mental Health: A school Health Curriculum - A Training Manual for Practicing School Nurses and Educators*. Funded by HRSA, Division of Nursing, printed by the University of Colorado School of Nursing. Also adapted from: Johnson, S. (1997). *Therapist's guide to clinical intervention: The 1-2-3's of treatment planning*. New York, NY: Academic Press.



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Mental Imagery/Visualization

➤ Mental imagery can enhance other relaxation techniques or be used on its own. It is useful to provide relief from troubling thoughts, emotions, or feelings. Health providers can help a student to develop the mental imagery, and can encourage the student to practice the skill on his/her own. Mental imagery/visualization can be used in multiple locations without drawing unwanted attention.

- First the student should practice deep breathing or brief progressive muscle relaxation techniques.
- The student then should decide what type of pleasing, calming mental image he/she would like to evoke. Some examples include the beach, park, forest, playing with a favorite pet.
- For the image to be created, the student should be assisted in developing images to address each of the senses (see, smell, hear, touch, taste). The student should have his/her eyes closed and feel relaxed while developing this image. Questions for the health provider to ask the student to create the image include: What types of things do you see at the beach? Name multiple objects you see. Are people playing or is it deserted? Is it high tide or low tide? What is the color of the water? What can you smell? Consider things like saltwater, funnel cake, etc...
- Interspersed with the creation of the place are reminders to the student that this is a special place, free of stress and harm, no worries.
- After the student has created this special, peaceful place, they are encouraged to recreate it in their mind whenever they need to.





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Cognitive Restructuring

The purpose of this technique is to change cognitive distortions (irrational negative thoughts and beliefs someone has about different situations) and to increase positive self talk. (See the chart below for the different types of distorted thoughts). Normally, there will be some type of event that will trigger the irrational thought. While the event cannot be changed, the way the child looks at the event can be. An example could be a child working hard on a project or test and not receiving as high of a grade as he or she expected. A child will see their efforts as useless and take on the thinking of, "I'm useless," or "There is no point to trying." Other irrational negative thoughts could include:

"I can't do anything well"
"There is no point in trying"
"Things never work out for me"
"Nobody likes me"
"I'm dumb"
"Something's wrong with me"
"I can't make any friends"
"I'm worthless"
"I can't make friends"

These thoughts need to be recognized and countered. Often the child will not even realize exactly what they are saying and how irrational these thoughts are. It is one of the main focuses of this technique to recognize the thoughts that will cause the anxiety. However, it is also important to not counter them with equally as irrational positive thoughts. For example, it would not be proper to counter, "Nobody likes me," with, "No, everyone *does* like you." It is important to be realistic with the replacement thought. "Well not EVERYONE likes you, but you know some people do, your mother and sister love you," would be a better approach.

It is important that these negative attitudes be removed from the child's thoughts. The child will begin to believe them fully and it leads to depression, feelings of worthlessness, and a loss of direction. It could also precipitate avoidance or even panic attacks in the child. Correct the student whenever you hear it as a part of his or her speech, and work to have them recognize it themselves. Encourage the student to recognize the good things they do instead. Make sure they know there is no shame in congratulating themselves for a job well done.



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This is not a problem that will occur only during therapy, so it is important to have parents/family members and teachers involved too, helping the student to notice their negative thoughts. Cognitive restructuring should almost always be a part of the treatment plan.

These are the important steps for students:

1. Recognize and get rid of negative self talk.
2. Counter the negative thoughts with realistic positive self talk.
3. Keep the focus on yourself.
4. Make sure you believe the positive self talk.



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Common Cognitive Distortions

| Type | Definition | Example |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Black or White | Viewing situations, people, or self as entirely bad or entirely good-nothing in between | Paul made an error while playing on the school's basketball team. He began thinking, "I'm a total failure. Nobody will like me. Everyone will hate me." |
| Exaggerating | Making self-critical or other critical statements that include terms like never, nothing, everything or always | Sharon was not asked on a date for the junior prom. She thought, "I'm never going to be asked on a date. Nobody cared about me. Boys will always ignore me." |
| Filtering | Ignoring the positive things that occur to and around self but focusing on and inflating the negative. | Kate had her hair cut short and styled differently. After receiving several complaints from friends and family, one person was mildly critical. Kate thought "I knew I shouldn't have gotten it cut short. I look like a freak. People are laughing at me." |
| Discounting | Rejecting positive experiences as not important or meaningful | Jose was complimented by his teacher for his interesting artistic drawing. He thought, "anybody could have drawn that. She doesn't care. I don't have any special ability." |
| Catastrophizing | Blowing expected consequences out of proportion in a negative direction. | Sierra did not make the cheer leading team after working hard in tryouts. She thought, "My life is over. I'll never have any friends or any fun. People will look down on me." |
| Judging | Being critical of self or others with a heavy emphasis on the use of "should have, ought to, must, have to, and should not have" | Malcolm finally got up enough courage to call a girl from school that he liked. In spite of the fact that they had a lively conversation for 20 minutes, John told his friend, "I shouldn't have laughed so much. I have to be more relaxed or she'll think I'm a jerk." |
| Mindreading | Making negative assumptions regarding other people's thoughts and motives | Aaron had a problem with acne. When he did not get the clothing sales job he wanted, he thought, "I know it's because the manager thinks I look bad. He said the position had been filled but I know better." |
| Forecasting | Predicting events will turn out badly | Kelly finished taking an important test. She immediately predicted that she failed. "I'll never get into college, because I blew it here." |
| Feelings are Facts | Because you feel a certain way, reality is seen as fitting that feeling | Jim did not have plans with his friends this weekend. He felt lonely and inferior. He thought, "no one likes me. I have a terrible personality." |
| Labeling | Calling self or others a bad name when displeased with a behavior | Brent had an argument with his parents about not cleaning his room. He thought, "my parents are dictators. They are always telling me what to do." |
| Self-blaming | Holding self responsible for an outcome that was not completely under one's control. | Lisa's parents separated after many months of arguing. She thought, "my parents argue so much because of me. If I acted better they wouldn't have to separate." |

Adapted from: Walker, P.H. & Martinez, R. (Eds.) (2001) *Excellence in Mental Health: A School Health Curriculum - A Training Manual for Practicing School Nurses and Educators*. Funded by HRSA, Division of Nursing, printed by the University of Colorado School of Nursing.



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Systematic Desensitization

↳ This is an anxiety reducing strategy involving exposure of the phobic child to the feared object or situation. The child learns to tolerate the feared object by means of a series of steps beginning with the least anxiety producing aspect of the process and ending with the most difficult step. The process begins with an anxiety hierarchy that lists each successive step the child must overcome.

Examples of anxiety producing situations in school-aged children:

- Fear of going to school
- Fear of being away from parents/family members
 - Fear of taking a test
 - Fear of dressing in gym
 - Fear of being bullied
 - Fear of riding the bus
- Fear that no one will be your friend

↳ After the hierarchy is composed, the process should begin an exposure process where he or she is asked to visualize the first step in the process. Discussion, positive self-talk, or any other means necessary are utilized until the child can visualize the step without anxiety. Then, the child is exposed to the situation portrayed in the first step of the hierarchy. The same techniques are used to alleviate anxiety. This process is repeated for subsequent levels of the hierarchy until it is determined at what level anxiety peaks. Relaxation should be practiced together with the feared object or activity.

This process should be part of the treatment plan for children with fears, phobias, and panic attacks. Although providers may design the desensitization process, it is important for teachers and parents/family members to become familiar with it and to get actively involved in the process with the child.

Example of a completed fear hierarchy for a fear of reading in class:

1. Parents/family members asking about progress on reading at school
2. Reading in bed before going to sleep
3. Looking at books in the library at school
4. Lesson before 'reading class' at school
5. Teacher explains nature of reading exercise
6. Teacher calls out name of someone else to read



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7. Listening to another child read in class
8. Teacher asking child to pronounce certain words
9. Teacher asking child questions about the text
10. Hearing own name being called out to read by teacher
11. Starting to read aloud in class
12. Encountering a word that is difficult to pronounce when reading aloud
13. Thinking that you have another half page of reading
14. Teacher asking you to pronounce certain words
15. Teacher asking you questions about the text

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It is important for the child to be well versed in stress reducing techniques before systematic desensitization can occur.

- Develop the hierarchy of fears, making sure to rank the fears from least to most distressing or anxiety producing.
- After the fear hierarchy is established the child should then spend time relaxing and becoming comfortable.
- A pre-arranged symbol should show when the student has become relaxed enough for the process to begin.
- Start with the least distressing situation for the child. Have the student imagine the situation, preferably with their eyes closed, in order to give it full attention and to remember the situation as vividly as possible.
- When the child begins to feel the slightest bit of anxiety it should be addressed by discussion, positive self talk, or other methods.
- The student should then be brought back into a state of relaxation.
- The situation should be re-introduced until the student is able to imagine fully without any anxiety or distress.
- Proceed up the hierarchy from there, getting through each step in the same way.
- In addition to “imaginal exposure”, the child should be encouraged to proceed through each situation “in vivo” (in real life). Again, begin



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with manageable, safe situations and work gradually up the fear hierarchy over the course of several sessions.



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Constructing the Anxiety Ladder

Give the attached worksheet to the students in order to create the hierarchy of fears.

*“The purpose of this worksheet is to figure out what makes you anxious or nervous, and then to help you cope with those things. Think of any situations you deal with in your everyday life that might cause some fear or make you uncomfortable. Think hard, no matter how much they affect you it is important to write them down. Try and think of at least ten situations and write them down in the spaces at the top of the paper. *These situations came be from anywhere, home, school, with your friends, or even on the bus.”*

*If you are trying to be more specific, you can create the hierarchy based around more specific fears or situations.

After the student completes the top half of the form, ask them to think about the situations that they just wrote down.

“Now look at what you have written. Take a little time and think about which one will give you the most fear, or make you the most uncomfortable. When you are ready, fill in the ladder. At the bottom put in the situation that makes you the least uncomfortable, working your way up to the top where you will put in the most fearful or uncomfortable situation you could think of.”

After the student fills out the worksheet it is important to give the student time to relax in order to reduce any stress created from thinking about their fears. This can be done by just giving the student time in a comfortable position, or maybe using one of the stress reducing techniques. After they relax, using their ladder, begin to go through the process of systematic desensitization.

“We’re now going to go through these situations one by one and hopefully figure out what makes them so scary or uncomfortable. Then we’ll work on making them manageable and eventually remove the fear.”

Trauma specific avoidance

Many students avoid situations/people/places after a traumatic event. To help a child create a fear hierarchy related to a traumatic experience, consider the following questions:

- Are there any things that you used to do regularly that you stopped doing after the trauma?
- Have you started avoiding things like being alone in certain places, being in the dark, or sleeping by yourself?
- Do you avoid talking to people about what happened?
 - Do you avoid certain objects that would make you nervous or upset because they were there when it happened?



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The Anxiety Ladder

When do I feel uncomfortable?



| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

| | |
|--|---|
| | I feel extremely uncomfortable and don't think I could even stand this situation. |
| | |
| | |
| | I feel very uncomfortable and would try to avoid this situation whenever I could. |
| | |
| | |
| | I feel uncomfortable but it is nothing I can not handle. |
| | |
| | |
| | I barely feel uncomfortable if anything. |



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General Stress Busters

Review with the student general ways he/she can relax. Here are some examples:



Go for a walk

Take a nap

Play with a pet

Take a bath

Listen to music

Talk to a friend



Exercise

Write in a journal

Write a letter that you never send

Do something creative - an art project, poem, write a rap

Watch television



Talk on the phone

Read





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Depression Skills



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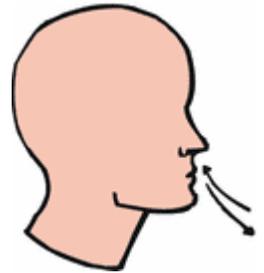
Many skills that are used to cope with Anxiety are also helpful in coping with Depression.

Cognitive Restructuring



Relaxation Techniques

- Deep breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Mental Imagery/Visualization





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Thought Stopping

This technique is useful with students who have “racing thoughts,” or who find it difficult to dismiss disturbing thoughts. The purpose is to interrupt unproductive and disturbing thoughts and, if possible, to replace these thoughts with a neutral thought. This technique takes a lot of practice before mastering.

- Help the student identify which cognitive distortions or disturbing thoughts they focus on a great deal.
- Develop a substitute thought to insert in place of the negative thought. Consider the neutral stimulus and develop a neutral response. Think of something positive and affirming such as the positive interactions you had with others during lunch or how relaxing a particular location is.

Practice:

- The student should close his/her eyes and imagine a situation where he/she is likely to have this unwanted or disturbing thought. Encourage the student to concentrate on the unwanted or disturbing thought, as well as the feelings that are created by these thoughts.
- Set a timer to go off in three minutes. When the timer goes off, have the student shout “stop!”. If shouting is inappropriate, the student instead could place a loose rubber band around the wrist to be snapped, or pinch his/herself. Once the thought is interrupted, the student should think about the neutral or relaxing situation. Try to have at least 30 seconds free of thinking of negative thoughts. If the thoughts return before the 30 seconds are up, the student should practice interrupting the thought again (i.e., shout “stop,” snap rubberband, etc.).
- When the thought is interrupted successfully several times, have the student try to say “stop” quietly to him/herself rather than shouting it or snapping a rubber band.

Adapted from: Johnson, S. (1997). Therapist’s guide to clinical intervention: The 1-2-3’s of treatment planning. New York, NY: Academic Press.



Activity Scheduling

Activity scheduling is scheduling enjoyable and goal-directed activities into the child's day. Often children experience a lack of interest in fun activities when depressed, as well as social withdrawal, so activity scheduling assists them in reengaging in pleasurable activities. Additionally, school grades may decline as the child feels a lack of energy or motivation to complete schoolwork. Activity scheduling provides the child with the opportunity to feel more effective as he or she completes tasks such as school projects. The child needs to be educated about the relationship between involvement in an activity and improvement in mood. Once the child can identify pleasurable activities you should look together at practical ways to implement some of the activities into the child's schedule. A schedule (see attached) could be useful for the child, though it can be adapted in many ways.

At first, the number of activities should be limited. It has to be realistic, in the sense that, gauging on the level of depression, it is not reasonable to expect a child to jump right into five fun activities every day when they are deeply depressed. It should start off slow, and then the number of fun activities should be increased as time goes by. Hopefully, as these activities are added to a child's every day life, he or she will become energized by them, and the good mood will carry over into other aspects of his or her life.

Activity planning steps:

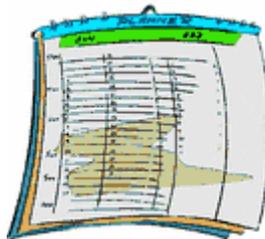
1. Figure out some pleasurable activities
 - ⇒ 2. See how they could fit into a student's day
 - ⇒ 3. Establish a schedule and include the activities
 - ⇒ 4. Make sure the activities are completed
 - ⇒ 5. Monitor mood closely
 - ⇒ 6. Increase the number of pleasurable activities over time 😊



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An important step, perhaps *the most* important, is making sure the child will complete the scheduled activities. For this, there could be several ways to be certain. One possibility is to have the child sign a contract or sign the activity schedule. Also, when possible, it would be helpful to have the parents/family members involved in the process of activity scheduling. Letting them know the reasoning behind this technique and asking for their help in monitoring might be the most effective way to make sure things get done. In the initial stages for more reluctant children, it could be as simple as “bribery” of sorts. Children might need that extra motivation just to get started. It could be tokens to be redeemed later, prizes, or whatever you might have available to give.

Using a technique like this, it could be important to monitor closely the mood of the student. If this is working correctly, the mood should get better and better as the weeks go by, though it may not be as noticeable at first. It could be important to make sure a child realizes that while these activities may be scheduled, there could be unforeseen circumstances that will interrupt the activities, and there really is not much they can do about it.





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My Schedule

| Day | Fun Activity What and When? | Who's involved? | How did it work out? |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |

I will try my best to make sure I complete all of the activities I have scheduled for myself.

Sign _____



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Problem Solving

Assist students in generating solutions to problems, particularly for those in crisis. Students need to be reminded to focus on the present problem and not how situations with this person or issue have gone in the past. They should also only focus on one problem at a time. The following steps should be implemented:

1. Define the problem.
2. Brainstorm all possible solutions.
3. Focus your energy and attention to be able to complete your task
4. Identify outcomes related to the various solutions, including who will be affected by the outcomes.
5. Make a decision and carry out.
6. Have a contingency plan in case the solution does not work out as planned.
7. Evaluate the outcome.

Use the attached sheet for students as a guide to problem- solving.



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The Road to Problem Solving



What exactly is the problem?

What are some possible solutions?



Now let's focus on the problem!!



What are the different possible outcomes?



So what's your decision?



What will you do if your plan does not work?

How did it work out?



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Sleep Disturbance



Depression can affect sleep patterns greatly. At the same time, the lack of sleep will not help the depression (it's a viscous cycle).

- Assess the student's sleep patterns.
- Educate the student about appropriate sleep patterns and amount of sleep needed.
- Develop a sleep schedule with the student including a "bedtime" and discourage daytime napping.

Here are some tips for a healthy sleep pattern:

- **AVOID CAFFEINE**

- **EXERCISE DAILY, BUT AVOID EXERCISING AFTER EARLY EVENING**

- **DEVELOP A BEDTIME ROUTINE SUCH AS:**
 - **PERFORMING RELAXATION EXERCISES**
 - **LISTENING TO MUSIC**
 - **TAKING A WARM BATH**
 - **DRINKING HERBAL TEA, WARM MILK, ETC.**
- **ONLY USE THE BED FOR SLEEPING.**





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- **ONE SHOULD NOT STAY IN BED FOR MORE THAN 15 MINUTES IF HE/SHE CANNOT SLEEP. INSTEAD, GET UP AND DO SOMETHING SUCH AS READ OR LISTEN TO MUSIC SOFTLY.**
- **WAKE UP AT THE SAME TIME EVERY MORNING REGARDLESS OF WHEN YOU GO TO SLEEP.**

Disruptive Behavior Disorder Skills



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All empirically-supported cognitive behavioral interventions for disruptive disorders involve the youth's key socialization agents:
parents and teachers

For additional resources on Disruptive Behavior Disorders:

The University of Buffalo
Center for Children and Families

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/adhd/>

- Parent handouts
- Teacher handouts
- Assessment tools
(*see attached*)





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Social Skills Training

All students can benefit from learning social skills. Social skills serve as a protective factor against mental health problems. Some basic skills that students may benefit from include:

- making eye contact when talking to someone
- listening
- giving and receiving compliments
- starting, making, and ending conversation
- conflict resolution skills.

Students also need to be reminded of their:

- body posture
- personal space
- gestures
- facial expressions
- tone and volume of voice
- timing of speech (e.g., interrupting others or speaking too fast or slow).

The most effective way for a clinician to work on these skills with students is

Role Playing!

Steps to working on a skill:

1. Modeling – Show the student the proper way of using the skill.
 2. Role Playing – Have the student act out a situation where the skill is needed.
 3. Feedback – Let the student know how they honestly did.
 4. Real World – Figure out situations where the skill can be used in real life.
- Remind the student that these skills are not going to work 100% of the time.



Asking Permission

Asking permission is an important skill that is used in many different parts of a child's life. Before you go over the skill, make sure the student understand why it is necessary to ask for permission, and how to go about in doing it.

- Think about **what you want** to do that you need permission for
- Figure out **who you should ask** for permission
- Think about exactly **what you are going to say** when asking
- Figure out **when it is okay** to ask
- Finally, **ask for permission**

1. Modeling

Create a basic situation where the student would have to ask for permission in order to get something they need or want. For this example we will use asking a teacher to use the bathroom.

“Now let's do some role playing. Asking permission for something in the right way is an important skill to know how to use. If you are able to ask for something in the right way, you have an increased chance of actually getting what you need. Now I am going to pretend to be you when you need to ask to use the bathroom in class. You are going to be the teacher. I will show you the right way to ask permission, and then you will give it a try.”

Complete the role playing activity. Make sure the student took special note to the specific things you have done, your words, the way you said them, body language and so on.



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2. Role Playing

Now it is time to have the student role play. Keep going over the activity until the student is able to do it right.

“Okay, now you are going to be yourself, and we will pretend that you have to leave the room to use the bathroom. I will be the teacher.”

Go through the activity as needed until the student is able to successfully complete the skill.

3. Feedback

As the activity progresses let the student know exactly how they are progressing. Make sure to take note of their body language as well as their words. It is important to praise the student along the way for what they are doing right.

4. Real World

Once the student has mastered the skill, congratulate them on a job well done. Now, work with student to think when else in their life will they need to use this skill. Think about how effective this skill can be in those situations, and encourage the student to use them whenever possible. One possible way to go about this is through a contract, like the one attached. Think of a particular situation, and ask the student to sign a contract saying that they will try the skill when it is appropriate. Have them record the result and then talk about why it may or may not have been effective.





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Contract

This week, I _____ am going to work on
the skill

of _____.

I am especially going to try and work on this skill when

Signature _____

Date _____



What happened after I used the skill?





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Listening

Listening is an essential part of having a normal conversation. Not only does good listening lead to better social interactions, it can be critical to a child's safety when related to following directions. Before role playing, review the basic skills involved in listening.

- **Look at the person** who is talking at the time.
- **Think about** what the person is saying
- **Wait until they are finished**, and it is your turn to speak
- Then **say what it is** you would like to say

1. Modeling

Create a basic situation where the student would have to be in a conversation and listen to what another person is saying. For this example we will use listening to another student about homework.

“Now let's do some role playing. It is important to be able to listen to someone you are having a conversation with. If you do not take the time to listen you might miss some very important information and not be able to respond in the right way. Let's pretend you need to find out what homework there is in one of your classes by asking another student. First I will pretend to be you, and show you the right way to do it, and then you will give it a try.”

Complete the role playing activity. Make sure the student took special note to the specific things you have done, your words, the way you said them, body language and so on.

2. Role Playing

Now it is time to have the student role play. Keep going over the activity until the student is able to do it right.



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“Okay, now you are going to be yourself, and we will pretend that you have to ask me about the homework. I will be the other student.”

Go through the activity as needed until the student is able to successfully complete the skill. This role playing activity in particular, you can ask the student to repeat what you said to make sure that they were actually listening.

3. Feedback

As the activity progresses let the student know exactly how they are progressing. Make sure to take note of their body language as well as their words. It is important to praise the student along the way for what they are doing right.

4. Real World

Once the student has mastered the skill, congratulate them on a job well done. Now, work with student to think when else in their life will they need to use this skill. Think about how effective this skill can be in those situations, and encourage the student to use them whenever possible. One possible way to go about this is through a contract, like the one attached. Think of a particular situation, and ask the student to sign a contract saying that they will try the skill when it is appropriate. Have them record the result and then talk about why it may or may not have been effective.





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Starting a



conversation

Conversation is an important skill to have; however, even more important might be the ability to start a conversation. When this skill is mastered, numerous other skills can then be taught. Review the basic elements in starting a conversation.

- **Say hello** to the other person
- **Say something** to the other person (small talk)
- Decide if **they are listening** to you
- If they are, bring up what **you wanted to talk about**

1. Modeling

Create a basic situation where the student would have to start a conversation with someone else. In this example you will start a conversation about after school activities. Otherwise think of a topic with the student that is relevant to them and then use it in your role playing.

“Now let’s do some role playing. It is important to be able to start a conversation with someone else if there is something you might want to talk about with them. We’ll pretend that you want to know what someone is doing after school. You will have to think about some sort of small talk to begin with and then ask your question. First I will pretend to be you, and show you the right way to do it, and then you will give it a try.”

Small talk to bring up could be a test or a class that the students have in common. Do not just stop at asking the main question, figure out how to extend the conversation to show the student how to do this. Complete the role playing activity. Make sure the student took special note to the specific things you have done, your words, the way you said them, body language and so on.



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2. Role Playing

Now it is time to have the student role play. Keep going over the activity until the student is able to do it right.

“Okay, now you are going to be yourself, and we will pretend that you want to talk to me about what I am doing after school. I will be the other student.”

Go through the activity as needed until the student is able to successfully complete the skill. Extend the conversation as long as you can and end it appropriately also.

3. Feedback

As the activity progresses let the student know exactly how they are progressing. Make sure to take note of their body language as well as their words. It is important to praise the student along the way for what they are doing right.

4. Real World

Once the student has mastered the skill, congratulate them on a job well done. Now, work with student to think when else in their life will they need to use this skill. Think about how effective this skill can be in those situations, and encourage the student to use them whenever possible. One possible way to go about this is through a contract, like the one attached. Think of a particular situation, and ask the student to sign a contract saying that they will try the skill when it is appropriate. Have them record the result and then talk about why it may or may not have been effective.





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Saying thank you

It is common courtesy to say thank you when someone does something for you. Still, many children do not say it, and are not even sure how to thank someone properly. Review the basic skills involved in saying thank you.

- Think if another person said or did something that **deserves a thank you** from you.
- Figure out a **good time and place** to say thank you to that person.
- Say thank you to the person in a **genuine, friendly way**.
- Make sure **the person knows why** you are thanking them.

1. Modeling

Create a basic situation where the student would have to say thank you to someone else. In this example you will start with something basic, like thanking someone for telling you your shoe is un-tied. Then, maybe role play again thanking someone for something more important, like somebody helping you with homework.

“Now let’s do some role playing. Saying thank you to someone is a very nice and easy way of telling someone you appreciate that they did something nice for you. Let’s start of by thanking someone for telling you your shoe is untied so you will not trip. First I will pretend to be you, and show you the right way to do it, and then you will give it a try.”

Complete the role playing activity. Make sure the student took special note to the specific things you have done, your words, the way you said them, body language and so on. Tone of voice is important for this activity. Make sure you make the student recognize that you are sounding genuine.



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2. Role Playing

Now it is time to have the student role play. Keep going over the activity until the student is able to do it right.

“Okay, now you are going to be yourself, and we will pretend that I just warned you about your shoe being untied and you want to thank me for that. I will be the other student.”

Go through the activity as needed until the student is able to successfully complete the skill. Make sure the student sounds genuine. If you want, use more complex situations next time that would warrant a thank you.

2. Feedback

As the activity progresses let the student know exactly how they are progressing. Make sure to take note of their body language as well as their words. It is important to praise the student along the way for what they are doing right.

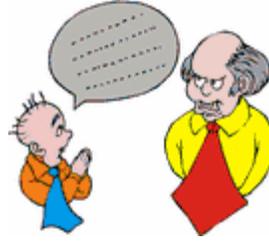
4. Real World

Once the student has mastered the skill, congratulate them on a job well done. Now, work with student to think when else in their life will they need to use this skill. Think about how effective this skill can be in those situations, and encourage the student to use them whenever possible. One possible way to go about this is through a contract, like the one attached. Think of a particular situation, and ask the student to sign a contract saying that they will try the skill when it is appropriate. Have them record the result and then talk about why it may or may not have been effective.





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Apologizing

At some point everyone will have to apologize for something. Saying sorry is not always something that is easy for everyone to do. It is important for the student to recognize that they do sometimes do or say things that they might have to say they are sorry about. Review with the student how to apologize.

- Think if it would be a good idea to apologize for something you did
- Think of different ways you might say that you are sorry
- Figure out when and where it would be good to apologize
- Finally, make your apology

1. Modeling

Create a basic situation where the student would have to apologize to someone else. For this example, create a situation where the student will have to apologize for something simple, like stepping on someone's foot by accident. It could also be appropriate to think with the student of something in their life where they may need to apologize to someone, and use that situation in order to make it easier for them later.

“Now let's do some role playing. It is important to apologize to someone if you believe that they deserve an apology. It does not have to be something you have done on purpose; it is still a nice thing to do. Let's pretend that you stepped on another student's shoe by accident. First I will pretend to be you, and show you the right way to do it, and then you will give it a try.”

Complete the role playing activity. Make sure the student took special note to the specific things you have done, your words, the way you said them, body language and so on. Tone of voice is important for this activity. Make sure you make the student recognize that you are sounding genuine.



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2. Role Playing

Now it is time to have the student role play. Keep going over the activity until the student is able to do it right.

“Okay, now you are going to be yourself, and we will pretend that you just stepped on my foot by accident, and you want to apologize to me for that. I will be the other student.”

Go through the activity as needed until the student is able to successfully complete the skill. Make sure the student sounds genuine. If you want, go back and use a real life situation.

2. Feedback

As the activity progresses let the student know exactly how they are progressing. Make sure to take note of their body language as well as their words. It is important to praise the student along the way for what they are doing right.

4. Real World

Once the student has mastered the skill, congratulate them on a job well done. Now, work with student to think when else in their life will they need to use this skill. Think about how effective this skill can be in those situations, and encourage the student to use them whenever possible. One possible way to go about this is through a contract, like the one attached. Think of a particular situation, and ask the student to sign a contract saying that they will try the skill when it is appropriate. Have them record the result and then talk about why it may or may not have been effective.



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Substance Use Skills



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REFUSAL SKILLS



Refusing substances can be very difficult for youth, particularly those who have low self-esteem, whose family members abuse drugs, who have a history of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, who have academic difficulties, or who have a strong need to fit in.

Encourage students to develop different ways to refuse substance use, and to practice these methods with you or with friends/family. Some examples of refusal techniques include:

- switching topic (“hey, did you hear about the game last night?”)
- using an excuse (“I can’t, I’m meeting a friend in 10 minutes)
- put the “blame” on parents (“my mom would kill me if she found out”)
- walk away
- state the facts (“no thanks, I’ve read about what drugs can do to your body”)



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Build Self-esteem



Children with low self-esteem and self-awareness are more likely to engage in substance abuse. Therefore, teaching students skills to enhance their self-esteem is appropriate.

TEACH STUDENTS TO:

- **THINK POSITIVELY**
- **ACCEPT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**
- **PRAISE HIM- OR HERSELF**



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Educate Students about Substance Use



Educating students about the harmful effects of substance use may equip them with the knowledge necessary to help them avoid abusing alcohol or drugs.

Provide students and families with information about:

- **Effects of substance**
- **Street names of substance**
- **Associated dangers**
- **Resources**