



**Strengthening Families
Program** by Dr. Karol Kumpfer

HANDOUTS & WORKSHEETS



11 SESSION
DVD PROGRAM

AGES 7–17

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The Happy Family— Healthy Brain Connection



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



- **Stomp the ANTs (Automatic Negative Talk) and believe in your ability to create a strong, loving family**
- **Eat family dinner (or any meal) together 3–5 times a week**
- **Spend 10–15 minutes of one-on-one play time with each child**

FAMILY GOALS:

1. Stomp the ANTs and practice positive self-talk. Believe in your ability to create a strong, loving family using these lessons.
2. Eat family dinner (or any meal) together 3–5 times a week using a Conversation Jar.
3. Have 10–15 minutes of one-on-one time every day with each child using the “My Time” concept. Allow the child to choose the activity; praise as you play.
4. *Choose a set day and time for the coming weeks to watch all ten DVD lessons together and practice the skills you’ve learned using pretend situations. (For example, every Monday evening.)

FAMILY FUN:

Make a family Conversation Jar using the handout. While eating together, share what you like about each other or nice things you have done and discuss a topic from the jar.

***Day & time we will watch:**

POWER PHRASE:

“Daily playing one-on-one with each child and eating pleasant family meals together helps build strong and loving families.”

Strengthening Families Program Essential Skills



INTRODUCTION

- Do “My Time”—10 to 15 minutes of one-on-one play time daily
- Use Mindfulness to squash ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts)
- Eat healthy food and have family dinners



LESSON 1

- Look for the good; give compliments daily
- Ignore minor annoying behavior; praise the positive opposite
- Stop criticizing family members
- Use instant stress busters



LESSON 2

- LUV-Listen (Listen, Understand, Validate)
- Use respectful “I-Messages”
- Learn the difference between being assertive and being offensive
- Banish communication boulders



LESSON 3

- Make and obey family rules
- Set up a rewards program to practice and learn new skills
- Teach responsibilities and assign chores
- Set up positive routines



LESSON 4

- Use positive discipline to teach and reward behaviors you want
- Give fair, mild, known-ahead consequences consistently
- Express love afterwards



LESSON 5

- Use good problem-solving skills
- Use win-win negotiation
- Teach kids pre-problem solving
- Teach the 5 Cs refusal skills



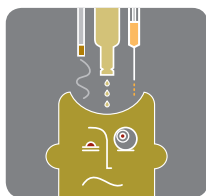
LESSON 6

- Use effective ways to reduce stress
- Track anger triggers, and re-program your brain with Step Out of Anger technique
- Use deep, slow breathing to trigger a relaxation response



LESSON 7

- Teach kids goal setting for success
- Make contracts for change
- Give positive criticism; deliver difficult feedback kindly and respectfully



LESSON 8

- Alcohol and drugs harm the developing teen brain and hijack the brain's pleasure motivation system
- Use bonding, boundaries and monitoring skills to keep kids from alcohol and drugs



LESSON 9

- Help kids make good friends; share “no alcohol or drugs” rule with their parents
- Monitor all kids' activities and emotional well-being; trust but verify
- Help organize good healthy fun for kids



LESSON 10

- Make family traditions and loving rituals
- Share family's pro-social values
- Appreciate the benefits you get from society; give service
- Be a positive agent for change

Keeping Your Family Safe and Happy

Bonding, boundaries, and monitoring help keep kids safe and healthy



Below are bonding, boundaries, and monitoring strategies that help protect kids from alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and risky behavior. Put an "X" by the ones you already do; circle the ones you'd like to work on. Make a plan and start out small. Add new ones as the old ones become a habit.

BONDING: Creating Warm, Loving Relationships

- 1. We tell our children we love them and make a point to look for and compliment the good in each family member. We avoid harsh criticism.
- 2. We spend 10-15 minutes of one-on-one "My Time" with each child almost every day.
- 3. We eat a meal together as a family at least three times a week, and make our time together pleasant.
- 4. We hold a weekly family meeting.
- 5. We spend time together as a family laughing and doing fun things.
- 6. We talk often to our children about their dreams and goals, ask if they are happy, and ask how we can be supportive.
- 7. We have positive family customs and traditions.
- 8. We try to go to school activities such as games and performances as a family.

BOUNDARIES: Setting Clear, Firm Rules

- 1. We have clear, firm family rules that are fair and consistently enforced.
- 2. We talk about our rules on no alcohol, tobacco, or drug use; if alcohol or drugs show up at a party, kids are to call us and come home.
- 3. We encourage and support school work; and we have set times for kids to do homework.
- 4. We divide household chores among family members.
- 5. We have rules (curfew) for each kid about what time to be home.
- 6. We encourage our kids to participate in activities that promote a positive sense of self.
- 7. We help our children develop skills in goal-setting, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

MONITORING: Knowing where your kids are, who they are with, and what they are doing

- 1. We find out where our children are going, who they'll be with, what they'll be doing, and when they'll be home before they leave.
- 2. We get to know our kids' friends' parents and share our rules about no alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- 3. We see that our kids stay in an alcohol- and drug-free social environment.
- 4. We make sure our children don't have access to our alcohol, tobacco, or prescription drugs.
- 5. We promote fun, positive alternative activities to teen alcohol and drug use.

Family Conversation Jar

Encourage family talks with this fun and insightful activity



Having conversations with your kids is an effective way to help prevent underage drinking. The following activity can help. Cut out the questions found below, place in a jar, and put it in the center of the dinner table. During the family meal, take turns drawing questions from the jar. Some questions are specifically for parents to answer (marked on the side with a "P"), but make sure everyone gets a chance to answer each of the other questions.



Family Fun: Have your kids decorate a jar. The following items can be helpful:

- Colored paper, cloth, or paint
- Family photos
- Pictures cut out from magazines
- Ribbon, string, raffia, straw, cotton balls, etc.
- Glue, tape, scissors, markers

Questions for Parents:

What beliefs give you strength?
What was your first job? Did you like it?
Did you have any pets growing up? If so, tell me about them.
What was one thing your parents made you do that you hated?
What kind of food did you hate as a kid but love now?
Why is being honest so important to building a stable society?
What was your least favorite subject in school? What was your favorite?
When you were my age, what did you want to be when you grew up?
What was one thing you did when you were a kid that made you the happiest?
What was one thing you did when you were a kid that made your parents proud of you?
Did you take family vacations when you were a kid? Where did you go? How did you get there?
Who was your best friend growing up? Tell us one of your favorite stories about things you did together.

Questions for Everyone:

If you could have anything for dinner, what would you have?
What is your favorite place in the world and why?
If you could be on any television show, what would it be?
What is the best present you've ever received?
If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live and why?
If you had three wishes, what would they be?
What would you do if you were President?
If you won a million dollars, what would you do with it?
If you could have any job, what job would it be and why do you think you would like it?
If you could invite three famous people (present or past) to dinner, who would they be and why?
What is the one thing you think should be invented to make your life easier or more enjoyable?
If you could go anywhere for your next vacation, where would you go and what would you do?

What do you like best about life?
Tell us about your favorite memory.
Tell us one thing that is really important to you.
Tell us one thing that is nice about yourself.
Tell us about something that makes you laugh.
Tell us whom you admire most and why.
What was the hardest choice you ever made?
Tell us one way you want to improve your life.
What holds you back from doing what you really want to do?
What is one thing you could do to help our family?
Tell us what things make you feel loved.
(Fill in the blank) When I feel sad, I need....

Who is your best friend and why?
What could you do to make the world a better place?
If you could have any animal as a pet, what would it be?
If you could pick a new first name, what would it be?
What was the very best thing that happened to you today?
If you could add one item to your bedroom, what would it be?
If you could visit any city, where would you visit?
Why is driving drunk so costly and harmful to society?
If you could be any animal, what animal would you be?
If you had to leave the earth on a space ship and take 4 friends with you, who would you take?
If you were allowed to stop doing one chore around the house, what would it be?
How can using drugs or alcohol underage limit your possibilities?

Planning for Family Dinners

Make mealtime fun, healthy, and easy



Pleasant family dinners are a good way to share values and help kids bond with family. A little advanced planning will make dinner time easy. Fill out this menu with favorite, brain-healthy meals and repeat them every 30 days. Pre-teach table manners and make mealtime pleasant by complimenting those who use them; don't allow criticism at the dinner table. Use a Conversation Jar, and share kind deeds you've done.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____	Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____	Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____	Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____	Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____	Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____	Veg _____ Fruit _____ Grain _____ Protein _____ Cook _____ Helper _____ Dishes _____
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FOODS THAT PROMOTE BRAIN HEALTH

This list of food will help your family have healthy bodies and brain. Watch out for common food allergies, such as eggs, dairy, gluten, nuts, etc. The brain must have healthy, nutritious food with plenty of vitamins, minerals, and micro-nutrients found in whole foods to operate properly. Plus, there are millions of microbes in our guts that help us process food. They need good nutrition to survive.

- Eat whole grains, not refined flours
- Eat leafy green vegetables every day
- Use frozen vegetables, if fresh is too expensive
- Eat fresh fruit every day (oranges, apples, bananas, blueberries, etc.)
- Eat low-fat cottage cheese as a good source of protein
- Eat eggs often (good for all meals)
- Eat all kinds of beans (dry is cheaper)
- Eat fish weekly (tuna is cheap) or take fish oil capsules
- Drink water or fat-free milk, not soda
- Use healthy spices: cinnamon, curry, garlic, sage, and turmeric
- Eat all kinds of nuts
- Eat red or white potatoes with the skins on, or sweet potatoes

Stomping the ANTs

Getting rid of pesky Automatic Negative Thoughts



Automatic Negative Thoughts or “ANTs” as Dr. Daniel Amen calls them, often tell you lies like: “You’re no good,” “Nobody likes you,” or “These kids are driving me crazy!” This negative self-talk can dramatically affect your mood. Here’s why: Whenever you think a thought, your brain releases neurochemicals that create feelings. Positive thoughts release positive chemicals and you feel happier. Negative thoughts release chemicals that make you feel angry, sad, or stressed.

You can stomp the ANTs by re-stating negative thoughts in a more truthful way. Instead of thinking “I never do anything right,” replace it with: “I may make some mistakes but I have a lot to offer.” Or when you’re feeling overwhelmed think, “I can do this!” You can change your self-talk to be more hopeful, positive, and accurate. You’ll feel happier and more confident.

For more information, read **The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook by Edmund Bourne.*

Below are 10 “species” of ANTs that creep into our thoughts and ruin our day. Put a check next to the type of A.N.T. that bothers you and write an example in the blank space. Then stomp them by writing a more hopeful, accurate, and positive way of viewing each situation.

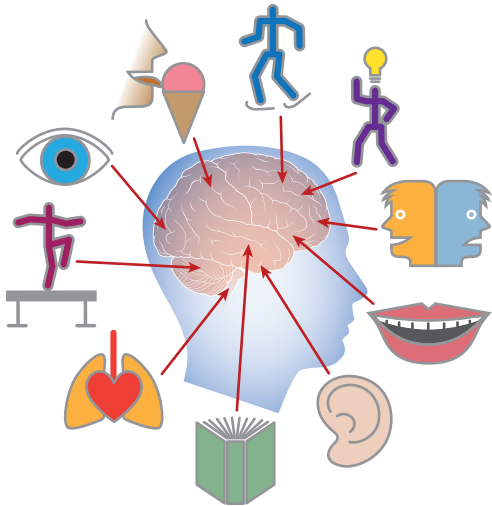
SPECIES	A.N.T.	SQUASH ANTs WITH TRUTH
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. All or Nothing Thinking	“There’s nothing to do.”	“There are probably lots of things to do if I think about it.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Always Thinking	“No one ever plays with me.”	“That’s silly. I have played with lots of kids.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Mind Reading	“The teacher doesn’t like me.”	“I don’t know that. Maybe she is just having a hard day.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Fortune Telling	“The whole class will laugh at me.”	“I don’t know that. Maybe they will like my speech.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Labeling	“I am stupid.”	“Sometimes I make mistakes but I am not stupid.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Focusing on the Negative	“My whole party was ruined by his teasing.”	“My party was fun except for the few minutes he was teasing.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Thinking with Your Feelings	“I feel like such a loser. How can anyone like me?”	“I may need to change a few things but I’m a good person.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Magnifying and Minimizing	“I got a terrible report card.”	“I may have gotten one ‘C’ but my other grades were good.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Blame	“It’s the teacher’s fault.”	“I need to look at my part of the problem.”
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Guilt Beatings	“It is all my fault and I’m a horrible person.”	“It was just an accident and I can do things to make it better.”

THE PENNY GAME

To become more aware of your ANTs, use this kid’s game by Richard Brozovich, Ph.D. and Linda Chase in *Say Goodbye to Being Shy*. Put ten pennies in your pocket every morning for a month. Every time you think a positive thought about yourself, move a penny to your “good” pocket. If you give mind-space to any ANTs, move a penny back to the holding pocket. Try to get all ten pennies in your “good” pocket each day. Note of how many you got each night. At the end of the month, reward yourself according to how well you met your goal.

Understanding Brain Development

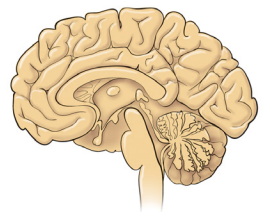
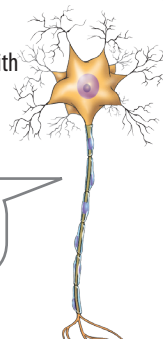
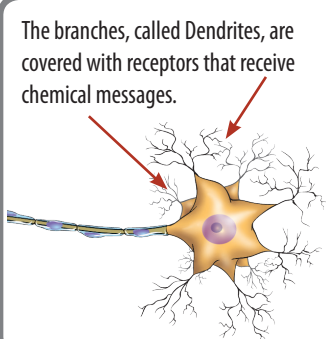
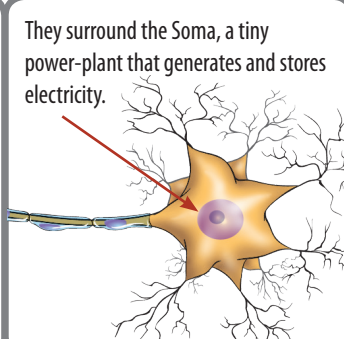
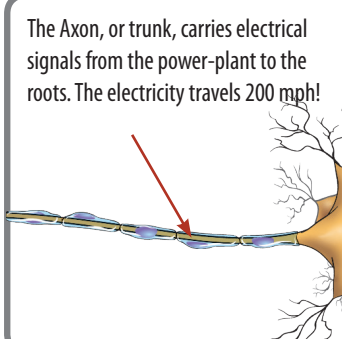
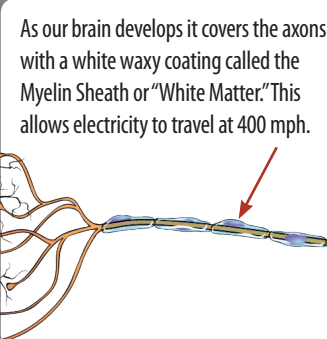
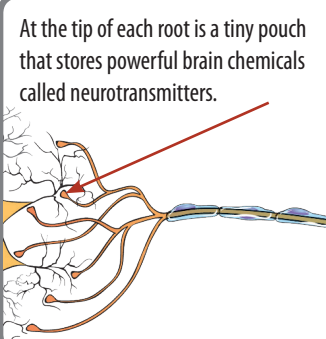
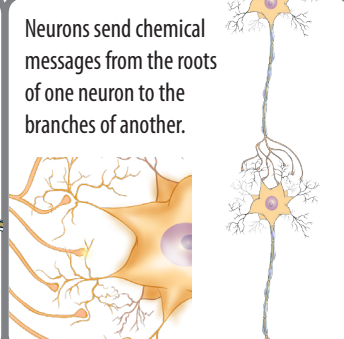
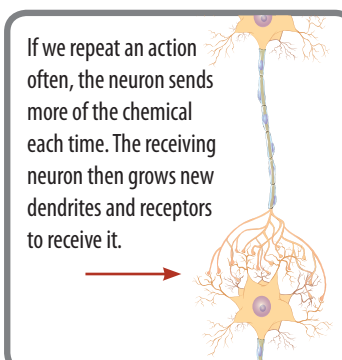
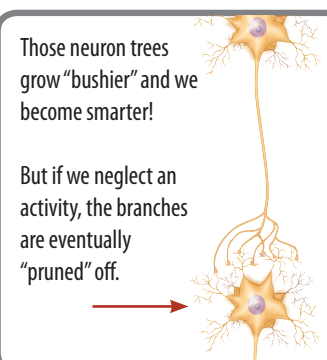
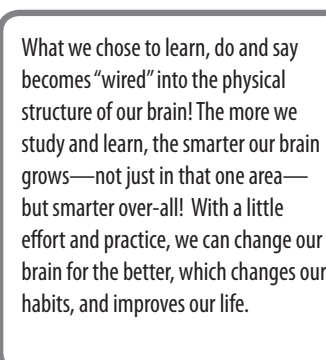

How the choices we make change our brain and make us who we are



Our brain is the most amazing “computer” that has ever been created. It has billions of neurons that make connections and control hundreds of body functions—including everything we think, feel, say, or do—all at the same time! Forty percent of our neurons are “wired” or connected at birth. The other 60 percent are waiting to be wired by our learning and experiences. Everything we think, say, or do causes new neural growth which changes our brain structure. This means that teens can direct the development of their own brains. The ages between 12–25 is a critical time of brain development. Important connections are being made that link brain areas together, helping us become smarter and make better decisions. Alcohol suppresses brain activity, harming its development. It is essential to protect it from alcohol and drugs during this critical “wiring” period.

“Teens, through their choices and actions, have the power to direct the development of their own brains. . . . [They are] laying the neural foundations that will serve them for the rest of their lives.”

- Dr. Jay Giedd, MD, Chief of Brain Imaging, National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH)

<p>Your amazing brain has over 100 billion neurons that communicate with each other—and the rest of your body!</p> 	<p>A neuron looks a little like a tree, with branches, a trunk, and roots.</p> <p>Hi! I'm a neuron.</p> 	<p>The branches, called Dendrites, are covered with receptors that receive chemical messages.</p> 	<p>They surround the Soma, a tiny power-plant that generates and stores electricity.</p> 
<p>The Axon, or trunk, carries electrical signals from the power-plant to the roots. The electricity travels 200 mph!</p> 	<p>As our brain develops it covers the axons with a white waxy coating called the Myelin Sheath or “White Matter.” This allows electricity to travel at 400 mph.</p> 	<p>At the tip of each root is a tiny pouch that stores powerful brain chemicals called neurotransmitters.</p> 	<p>Neurons send chemical messages from the roots of one neuron to the branches of another.</p> 
<p>If we repeat an action often, the neuron sends more of the chemical each time. The receiving neuron then grows new dendrites and receptors to receive it.</p> 	<p>Those neuron trees grow “bushier” and we become smarter!</p> <p>But if we neglect an activity, the branches are eventually “pruned” off.</p> 	<p>What we chose to learn, do and say becomes “wired” into the physical structure of our brain! The more we study and learn, the smarter our brain grows—not just in that one area—but smarter over-all! With a little effort and practice, we can change our brain for the better, which changes our habits, and improves our life.</p> 	<p>Alcohol before age 21 slows down brain development. It damages White Matter, and can quickly create addiction.</p> 

How to Have a Healthy Brain

8 brain-healthy tips to be smarter and feel better



Your brain is the most important organ of your body and directs everything you think, say, or do. It makes you who you are! If your brain works well, you're happier and more successful. If it doesn't, you'll have a hard time in life. So follow these tips to have a healthy, happy brain!

1. Protect your brain

from **neurotoxic chemicals** like **alcohol**, **drugs** (even marijuana), **nicotine**, excessive **caffeine**, and breathing toxic fumes, which can damage brain function.

Protect your brain from falls, injuries, big bumps: Always wear a seat belt; use a helmet when you blade, board, bike, or do contact sports. Your brain is like soft butter; your skull has hard ridges.

4. Engage in aerobic exercise

that gets your heart pumping (sports, dance, brisk walks, etc.) at least 5 times a week. It improves learning and memory by increasing blood flow to the brain, and it generates an essential brain growth hormone called BDNF in the hippocampus. Exercise helps protect brain cells against stress and increases feel-good chemicals that improves mood. For a quick mental boost, stand and rise quickly up and down on your toes 20 times.

6. Use Mindfulness

to correct the Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) that put your brain at risk for anxiety, depression, relationship problems, etc. (See Intro handout #7.) When you feel angry, sad, or anxious, write down the thoughts going through your head. If they are negative, question and replace them with a more hopeful way of thinking.*

2. Eat brain-healthy food

like **whole grains**; **fruits and vegetables** such as dark green lettuces, berries, broccoli, apples, oranges, bananas, pumpkin, spinach, and tomatoes; **nuts and legumes** such as walnuts, almonds, peanut butter, and beans; and **healthy, low-fat protein** found in food like Greek yogurt, non-fat cottage cheese, eggs, fish, and poultry. Begin each day with a glass of water to hydrate your brain, a healthy breakfast with low-fat protein, and a multi-vitamin. Studies show children learn better when they have excellent nutrition.

Avoid junk food, sugary drinks and cereals, drinks with caffeine, highly processed foods with artificial ingredients, foods high in sugars and syrups (including high-fructose corn syrup), and hydrogenated oils. *For more information on healthy eating, visit ChooseMyPlate.gov*



3. Get enough sleep

each night. Getting less than seven hours of sleep at night decreases blood flow to the brain. It also contributes to depression and suicidal thoughts. In one study, teens who slept five hours or less a night were 71 percent more likely to suffer depression and 48 percent more at risk of becoming suicidal.

5. De-stress your brain and think positive thoughts.

Chronic stress reduces brain cell growth, affecting memory and mood. Take a few moments several times a day to breathe slowly and deeply through your nose, tense and relax your muscles, and clear your mind with a peaceful thought.

7. Avoid too much "screen time"

and junk culture. Teens who play violent video games show increased activity in the emotional arousal part of the brain and decreased response in the area governing self-control. Students who spent ten hours a day online developed less gray matter in the thinking part of the brain, compared to those who spent less than two hours a day online.

8. Study, read, and learn.

Your brain is like a muscle—the more you use it, the stronger it becomes.

Four Family Fun

Four areas to have fun as a family



Sometimes families can get bogged down in stress and contention. Often what is needed is some humor and light-hearted family fun. Take a few moments as a family to list what the kids find fun and write it on this sheet. Make sure everyone is represented, including you as parents. Then make sure to schedule specific times every week to have fun.



1

FUN

THAT'S FREE



2

FUN

OUTSIDE



3

FUN

INSIDE



4

FUN

THAT COSTS

A fun family activity we will do next week:

Ideas for family fun with exercise:

1. Bean Bag Tag: One person is "it" and has a small bean bag. On the count of three, family members scatter and the person "it" runs after them, throwing the bean bag to try to hit someone. When a person is hit, he or she is the next one "it." (Make a bean bag by putting dried beans into the toe of a sock and tying the end with a double knot.)

2. Simon Says Dance: Play some fun dance music and take turns being "Simon the Leader." Whenever the dance leader calls out "Simon says. . ." and does a move, family members have to imitate that move. If "Simon" only demonstrates but doesn't call it out loud, whoever imitates the dance move is the next "Simon."

3. Find-a-Ball: The goal is to collect newspaper "balls" and be the first to place them in a circle drawn on the floor. Each family member wads 1/2 sheets of newspaper into five "balls" and puts a piece of tape on each ball with his/her name on it. The person who is "it" puts the balls around the house in different rooms. At the count of three all players race to find and gather their balls and be the first one to put all five balls in the circle.

4. Capture the Towel: Unroll three (joined) sheets of a paper towel. Cut it into four long strips forming "tails." Each person tucks the end of the paper towel strip in the back waist of his or her pants or belt. At a given signal, family members run, with each trying to capture the towel of another while trying to keep his or her's safe. Blow a whistle at the end of three minutes. The person with the most towels wins.

Mindfulness

Page 1—Brain exercises to increase focus, reduce stress, and improve relationships



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the skill of training your brain to pay keen attention—in a calm, compassionate, and curious way—to what is currently happening to and around you, so you can focus on the present moment instead of being distracted by disturbing thoughts, regrets over the past, or worries about the future.

Mindfulness helps you become more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and actions—and the effect they have on others—so you can react wisely and peacefully in every situation.

You can train your brain to be mindful by doing a few simple exercises every day to improve your mental focus. Even kids can learn to do them! The most important exercise is the “Breath Awareness”, also called the “Mindful Breathing,” exercise. Each time your mind wanders from what you’re thinking about, gently bring your attention back to the thing you were focusing on.

Mindfulness is developed through a few formal exercises you can do each day, but it can also be practiced informally during the day whenever you want. Take a breath and focus your attention on what is currently happening before you respond to something or someone. Practice each new skill separately at first; then use them all together to become mindful.

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

Practicing Mindfulness has been shown to

- Decrease the body’s stress response
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce anxiety
- Slow down the aging process
- Increase ability to regulate emotions
- Increase feelings of peacefulness, enjoyment, and well-being
- Increase density in the good judgment part of the brain

WHY MINDFULNESS WORKS

When you take deep breaths, the air passes over nitric oxide cells in your nasal passage, which triggers the release of nitric oxide. The nitric oxide relaxes your blood vessels, increasing blood flow to the brain. As you fill your lungs with air, your diaphragm causes your belly to rise, which puts pressure on the vegas nerve, which runs from your brain down your spine. This pressure triggers a release of serotonin, a chemical that helps to calm your body.

1. Breath Awareness Exercise

Each Mindfulness exercise begins with this Breath Awareness exercise. Begin by doing the 5 Ss:

1. Sit up straight. (*Unless you’re doing a body scan.*)
2. Sit still. (*Unless it is a Mindfulness Walking exercise.*)
3. Sit silent.
4. Shut your eyes. (*Unless it is a Mindfulness Walking exercise.*)
5. Shush your brain chatter. (*Take a big, deep breath through your nose, and while you exhale, say “Shhhh. . .” to yourself as you draw an imaginary line from your forehead to your chest.*)

Next, breathe deeply: Focus your attention on the feeling of the air as it enters your nose, fills your lungs, and then exits your nose or mouth. Count five breaths, and then start counting to five again. Continue counting breaths for two minutes. When your attention wanders (and it will), gently bring your attention back to your breathing. Increase the time until you can do it for 10-20 minutes.

2. Advanced Mindful Breathing

While you are doing the Breath Awareness exercise, visualize a quiet inner center in your chest. As you exhale, feel the peace at that quiet spot. Feeling into this center can help you sense your true worth and find comfort in difficult times.

Some people call this area an “inner center of wisdom.” When they have to make a decision, they “feel within” to sense what their intuition, or “gut” feeling, says about the right path to take.

This process may work because the heart and gut are surrounded with millions of neurons that connect with the brain. That’s why your brain can send a feeling of “butterflies” to your stomach if you are nervous, or send a sense of “love” to your chest. Further, your eye sends more messages to your brain than you consciously recognize. These are recorded in your brain and may form a source of intuition that helps you recognize what would be helpful or harmful if you mindfully “feel within.”

Mindfulness

Page 2—Brain exercises to increase focus, reduce stress, and improve relationships



3. Observe & Dismiss Negative Thoughts

Mindfulness includes the ability to mentally stand back, observe your thoughts, and dismiss negative ones without dwelling on them. This includes learning to accept things in the past that you can't change. Once you have made amends and asked for forgiveness, recognize that you can now at least act wisely and kindly to make a better future.

When troubling, negative thoughts arise, take a deep breath and repeat a coping phrase, such as "It is what it is." Use this exercise to label and dismiss negative thoughts that are troubling or limiting:

1. Write down recurring negative thoughts on your "Automatic Negative Thoughts" handout from this lesson. Beside each negative thought, write a more hopeful statement.
2. Sit quietly and begin a Breath Awareness exercise.
3. If a troubling thought or emotion comes to mind, imagine yourself sitting by an open window watching small, puffy white clouds drift by. Then mentally place your troubling thought on a bit of imaginary cloud—and let the cloud drift out of view.
4. Return your focus to your mindful breathing.

4. Think Compassion, Not Criticism

An essential part of Mindfulness is the ability to view yourself and others with a compassionate, kind eye. When we view others with a critical, judgmental eye, we filter reality through our own prejudices, which prevents us from seeing reality. Recognize that all people suffer hardships, and all people deserve compassion. Let it begin with you, knowing that what you give out will return to you multiplied.

1. Decide that you will stop looking at others with a critical eye, and choose to feel compassion instead.
2. Close your eyes and begin a Breath Awareness exercise. As you breathe in, repeat: "May I feel compassion towards myself and others." As you breathe out, repeat: "May my critical eye depart."
3. As you breathe, visualize your body becoming filled with a gentle compassion for humanity, and the negative, critical part leaving your body. Repeat daily.
4. Track your progress. Carry a note card and put a mark each time you think a critical thought. Immediately follow those critical thoughts with the words, "... Just like me." Or, smile and silently say, "I wish you well."

Note: You can feel compassion for yourself while still acknowledging the need for change. Also, compassion never means you tolerate abuse.

5. Mindfully Observe Your Amazing Body

Pretend you are seeing your body as an amazing, biochemical machine for the first time. Focus on its abilities with a childlike awe.

1. Lie down in a quiet, comfortable place, knees slightly bent. Close your eyes and take three deep, mindful breaths.
2. Focus your attention on your body, beginning with the toes of your right foot. Think about each part of that side of your body, moving up to your neck. Then focus attention on the left side of your body, beginning with your toes and moving up to your head.
3. As you focus on each part of your body, tense and relax it, and imagine your breath flowing to that part. Think about the wonderful things each part can do. Then imagine you can see beneath the skin to see how the muscles and bones work together.
4. When your mind wanders, gently refocus on your body.
5. When you reach your head, take a deep, mindful breath, feel a sense of awe and gratitude for your amazing body, and open your eyes.

6. Mindfully Delight Your 5 Senses

Each day for five days, mindfully focus your attention on a different aspect of your senses. Observe each experience with deep gratitude:

1. **TASTE:** Pick up a small piece of food. Notice how it looks and smells before putting it in your mouth. Then put down your fork and chew slowly as you observe and savor the taste and texture.
2. **SMELL:** During a meal, pause and close your eyes and smell the different foods before you eat. If weather permits, sit near a garden to smell the flowers or grass.
3. **TOUCH:** Feel the warmth of the water on your body as you take a bath or shower. Listen to the sound of the water. Feel the texture of the wet bar of soap in your hand. Be fully present and experience the delight of the feeling of the water. Then touch other textures like trees, grass, etc.
4. **HEAR:** At night, sit by an open window for a few minutes, close your eyes, and carefully listen to and try to identify every sound.
5. **SEE:** Take a walk in nature, or even just around your neighborhood. Try to see it with new eyes. Notice every detail about the place and the people. Be thankful for your sight.

Mindfulness

Page 3—Brain exercises to increase focus, reduce stress, and improve relationships



7. Become a Mindful Parent

One goal of Mindfulness is to become a sensitive, nurturing parent. A long-term study showed that children who had nurturing parents who paid sensitive attention to them were much more secure and successful as adults than those who lacked nurturing parents.

1. Cultivate a non-judgmental attitude toward both your children and yourself, while still providing clear standards for behavior.
2. While your child is sleeping, reading, or quietly playing, look at his or her face. Notice with delight the features, the shape of the head, and the color and texture of the hair. Smile with gratitude.
3. Imagine you can see his or her heart. How is it feeling? Does it feel happy or sad or fearful? Imagine you are saying kind or loving things to your child. How does his or her heart react to your words?
4. Recall your last interaction. How did your child's heart feel in the situation? Resolve to use kind, loving, and peaceful words with your child. Do a "loving-kindness meditation" for each child. (See step 12 of these Mindfulness exercises.)
5. Listen with your full attention when your child talks to you. Put away your electronics. Seek to understand their feelings and needs. Be kind and present. Remind yourself to practice Mindfulness when dealing with your children.
6. Notice and name your emotions during difficult interactions. Help your children notice their emotions as well. Example: "It seems like you might be feeling frustrated."
7. When you are annoyed or stressed, take a deep breath and choose the best response by saying to yourself: "Stop. Be calm. Be mindful."
8. Learn and practice each of the seven key skills in the Strengthening Families Program (see handout 10-7).

8. Mindfully Perform Tasks

Training your brain to focus with intense interest on daily activities that you usually do without much thought increases your ability to be aware. This exercise takes no extra time, as you're doing the tasks already.

1. Make a list of the tasks you do daily that you could focus on, like getting dressed, brushing your teeth, washing dishes, working in the garden, walking to school or work, etc.
2. Begin each Mindful Task exercise with three slow, deep breaths. Then Mindfully focus fully on each aspect of the activity. Notice all the little details you usually take for granted. Example: As you brush your teeth, notice how the toothbrush feels in your hand, how the toothpaste tastes, and envision each tooth as you brush it.
3. If any distracting thoughts arise while you are doing the activity, dismiss them from your mind without thinking on them. Stay focused on the activity.
4. End each with a deep, mindful breath.

9. Be Mindful of Interactions with Others

One of the main goals of Mindfulness is to become calmly aware of your thoughts and feelings during interactions with others, and to manage them well so you can listen objectively and speak and act deliberately, compassionately, and effectively. This will help you get along better with others and have a happier life.

The moment you begin to feel a "Fight, Flight, or Freeze" response in a stressful situation, use the acronym "BOLDT" as a reminder to be Mindful:

1. **B=Breathe**—Take a deep, calming breath and engage your quiet center during crisis or conflict.
2. **O=Observe and question your thoughts**—don't assume they are right. (They are often incorrect.)
3. **L=Let go of judgment**. Calmly, curiously, and compassionately ask questions to understand how they feel about the situation.
4. **D=Defuse the situation by validating their concerns**. Say you see their point of view, even if you disagree.
5. **T=Take a break**—If things get hot, thank the person for listening, tell them you need to think about things, and you will get back to them soon.

Mindfulness

Page 4—Brain exercises to increase focus, reduce stress, and improve relationships



10. Mindful Walking Exercise

The first time you do this walking exercise, choose a place where you can enjoy walking quietly. After that, practice the skill of focusing your attention for a few minutes whenever you walk anywhere.

1. While walking mindfully, breathe deeply and focus on each sensation of the movements of your body as you take each step.
2. Notice how your knees and ankles bend and your legs move.
3. Notice the way your foot feels as you pick it up and place it on the ground. Notice the sound it makes as you step on the pavement.
4. Take a deep, cleansing breath and feel delight and be grateful for your body.

11. Overcome Obstacles

1. Take a deep breath and identify the obstacles that keep you from a daily Mindfulness practice.
2. As you breathe, bring each obstacle as a word into your mental focus. Ask yourself: “What can I learn from it?” and “How can I successfully deal with it?” Make a note of your answers to these questions.
3. Visualize the word clearly written across sliding glass doors that open as you approach them.
4. See yourself walking confidently towards those doors. As you approach, the doors part, and you see yourself walking through.
5. Each time you feel blocked by an obstacle, visualize the doors opening and see yourself walking through them.

12. Loving-Kindness Meditation

A loving-kindness meditation involves Mindful Breathing while you focus on a few positive outcomes you desire for yourself and others. As you breathe in and out, use positive thoughts to direct those good things to yourself and others. Those who practice it report increased positive emotions, reduced stress, an increase sense of purpose, and a stronger social support.

1. Sit quietly, eyes closed, back straight, hands open on your lap with palms up, and your mouth in a soft smile.
2. Take several slow, deep breaths through your nose and exhale slowly, focusing all your attention on the sensations of breathing.
3. Then focus your thoughts on a desire to be happy and well. Imagine happiness and vitality coming to you. As you breathe, repeat three phrases like, “May I be healthy and strong.” “May I be happy.” “May I be peaceful.”
4. As you inhale, visualize your body filling with wellness, happiness, and goodness. As you exhale, visualize distress, suffering, and negativity leaving. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your breathing.

5. Focus on a person that you feel thankful for and send vitality to him or her. As you exhale, visualize sending this person happiness, vitality, and goodness. If he or she is having difficulty, imagine he or she is becoming well or full of joy.
6. Focus on a neutral person, or someone with whom you are having difficulty.* Send them wellness and goodness.
7. Focus on the suffering in the world. As you exhale, visualize sending happiness and goodness into the world. Say something like, “May all beings be kind and full of goodness.”

*If it is hard to offer loving kindness to a difficult person, realize that it benefits you as well, for you become more compassionate and loving.

Think on this quote from Soren Kierkegaard:

“To cheat oneself out of love is the most terrible deception; it is an eternal loss for which there is no reparation, either in time or in eternity.”

Look for and Compliment the Good Daily



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



- Look for and compliment the good in each family member daily (including yourself!)
- Ignore annoying behavior; resist fault-finding
- Use “Instant Stress Busters” to self-soothe

FAMILY GOALS:

1. Look for and compliment the good in each family member daily.
 - a) Record the “Reinforcing Compliments” you give each other.
2. Ignore minor annoying behavior and resist fault-finding.
3. Write one thing you noticed and appreciated in the “Gratitude Journal” each day.
4. Practice using “Three Instant Stress Busters” to self-soothe and stay calm.

FAMILY FUN:

Print off the “Family Tree” handout and pages of leaves. Let each person write his or her strengths on the leaves. Cut them out and glue them to the tree.

POWER PHRASE:

“Looking for and daily complimenting the good in family members helps me like them even more—and helps them behave better.”

Look for and Compliment the Good

Tracking Sheet—Child



Draw a smiley face each time you compliment a family member.

Remember, complementing people makes them feel happy and it makes you feel happy too.

Name of Family Member	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

Follow these steps to give a super compliment:

1. Give your compliment as soon as you notice something good.
2. Be happy and really mean what you say.
3. Tell exactly WHAT you liked.
4. Tell HOW it helped the person.
5. Touch the person gently as you give your compliment.

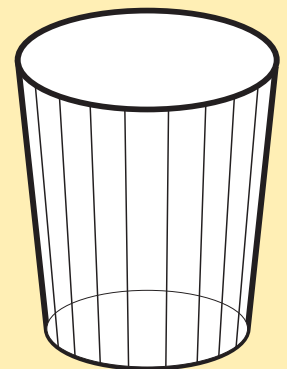
Here’s an example to get you started:

If your mom fixed you a yummy dinner, you could give her a hug and say, “Mom, I really liked your dinner tonight because it was healthy and delicious.”

No Trash Talk

Mark a frowny face every time you are mean to someone, like criticizing or pointing out someone’s mistakes.

Make a goal to stop noticing and pointing out the negative.



Look for and Compliment the Good

Tracking Sheet—Teen



Practice makes perfect. Put a checkmark each time you compliment a family member.

Noticing the good boosts your brain power, and complimenting your family members builds loving relationships.

Name of Family Member	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

Remember to follow these steps to make it a reinforcing compliment:

1. Give it immediately.
2. Be happy and sincere.
3. Tell exactly WHAT you liked.
4. Tell HOW it helped the person.
5. Add a gentle touch.

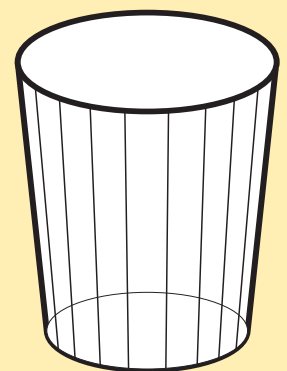
Here’s an example to get you started:

If your sister played well in her soccer game, give her a high-five and say, “Hey! You really rocked that game today. You played hard and had a lot of good touches on the ball.”

No Trash Talk

Put a checkmark every time you criticize or find fault with someone.

Make a goal to stop noticing and pointing out the negative.



The Power of Praising and Ignoring

Two fundamental skills to change children’s behavior



1. Praising the Positive Opposite:

Identify one negative behavior you’d like your child to change and write it below. Only work on one behavior at a time. Decide what that behavior’s opposite would be. (It becomes the Positive Opposite you’re going to praise.) Write it below. For example: the opposite of “fighting” is “getting along”; the opposite of “lying” is “telling the truth,” etc. Every time you see your child doing that positive behavior, praise him or her using Reinforcing Compliments. The steps to use Reinforcing Compliments are praise immediately; be enthusiastic, be specific, give a benefit, and add a touch. Track your praise and your child’s progress.

If the behavior doesn’t occur often enough to be reinforcing, talk to your child privately during a calm moment and set up a reward system that allows him or her to earn special rewards or privileges (see Lesson 3). Track his or her behavior and your Reinforcing Compliments.

Praising the Positive Opposite:			Put a + sign each time you praise						
Name:	Negative Behavior	Positive Opposite Behavior:	S	M	T	W	T	F	S

2. Effective Ignoring:

The other crucial skill in changing behavior is to ignore minor negative behaviors that you want to disappear. Kids feed on attention and want to get a reaction from you. Don’t give it. Ignoring needs to be done right in order to be effective. Here are the 5 Steps of Effective Ignoring:

1. Show no emotion.
2. Turn your attention immediately away; act interested in something else.
3. Don’t look at the person.
4. Have no physical contact until the misbehavior stops.
5. Warmly give your child positive attention the moment the misbehavior stops.

40 Phrases That Praise

Putting deposits in your kid's "emotional bank account"



Say these phrases aloud on your own so that they will come to mind, and feel natural, as you seek opportunities to use them. Actively look for the good in all family members and give sincere compliments—especially to those who annoy you the most. Praise even their attempts at good behavior. You'll feel happier, and so will they. Only after people feel loved and accepted can they begin to change.

REINFORCING* COMPLIMENTS

- 1 I'm proud of you for...
- 2 Thanks for trying so hard on...
- 3 I'm pleased the way you...
- 4 How thoughtful of you to...
- 5 You've made real progress on...
- 6 You did a good job on...
- 7 Keep up the good work on...
- 8 You are a natural at...
- 9 I like it when you...
- 10 That was a really good try at...
- 11 That's a great improvement on...
- 12 I'm pleased you...
- 13 I appreciate you being...
(so thoughtful, honest,
persistent, kind, etc.)
- 14 You showed a lot of creativity at...
- 15 I'm impressed with the
way you...
- 16 Thanks for being so...
(responsible, organized, etc.)



EXPRESSING LOVE

- 17 I love you.
- 18 We make a great team.
- 19 I have fun with you.
- 20 I'm glad you're my son/
daughter, husband/wife.
- 21 I enjoy spending time
with you.
- 22 I'm glad you called.
- 23 If you're concerned / sad /
hurting, I'm here to listen;
help me understand.
- 24 You mean a lot to me.
- 25 You're right.

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

- 26 Well done!
- 27 I like to hear your ideas.
- 28 Excellent work!
- 29 What a great job!
- 30 That's a good point. Thanks
for sharing.
- 31 I'm sure you can do it; you've
done hard things before.
(Or: I knew you could do it.)
- 32 Thanks for doing what
I asked.
- 33 I couldn't have done it
without you.
- 34 Wow! Cool! Way to go!
- 35 That's great! Give me five!
- 36 I like the way you're working!
- 37 You're on the right track.
- 38 Good thinking!
- 39 You're a great helper.
- 40 That's a great idea!

* Reinforcing Compliments: 1. Be immediate 2. Express delight 3. Describe behavior 4. Tell a benefit 5. Add a touch

Three Easy Instant Stress-Busters



Practice each of these Stress-Busters until they become easy to do and you can immediately de-stress and self-soothe. Whenever a family discussion gets “hot,” call a “Ten Second Time-Out” to disengage, and use these three instant stress busters.

1



Calm Breaths

Take three slow, deep breaths through your nose; hold each breath for a second; and then very slowly release the air.

As you take slow, deep breaths through your nose, tiny cells high up in your nasal passage are stimulated, giving off nitric oxide.

Nitric oxide is a relaxing, short-lived brain neurotransmitter. It causes our blood vessels to relax and dilate so they carry more oxygen to the brain, and we feel more calm and alert.

2



Warm Waterfall (Progressive Muscle Relaxation)

- a) Close your eyes and tighten all your muscles, even those in your face.
- b) Imagine a gentle, warm relaxing waterfall that begins to pour softly over your head, run down your face, and flow all the way to your feet. As the soft, warm water touches each part of you, relax that set of muscles.
- c) When the imaginary warm water reaches your feet, flick the water off your fingertips, open your eyes, step out of the “puddle” and you are completely relaxed, de-stressed, and alert.

3



Positive “C” Talk (“Self-Talk”)

- I am **C**alm and in **C**ontrol.
- I **C**an make this moment better.
- I **C**an smile.

As you repeat each of these three statements to yourself, take a slow, deep cleansing breath through your nose. Hold it for two seconds, and then let the air out slowly through your lips. On the last “C” statement—after you breathe out, SMILE!

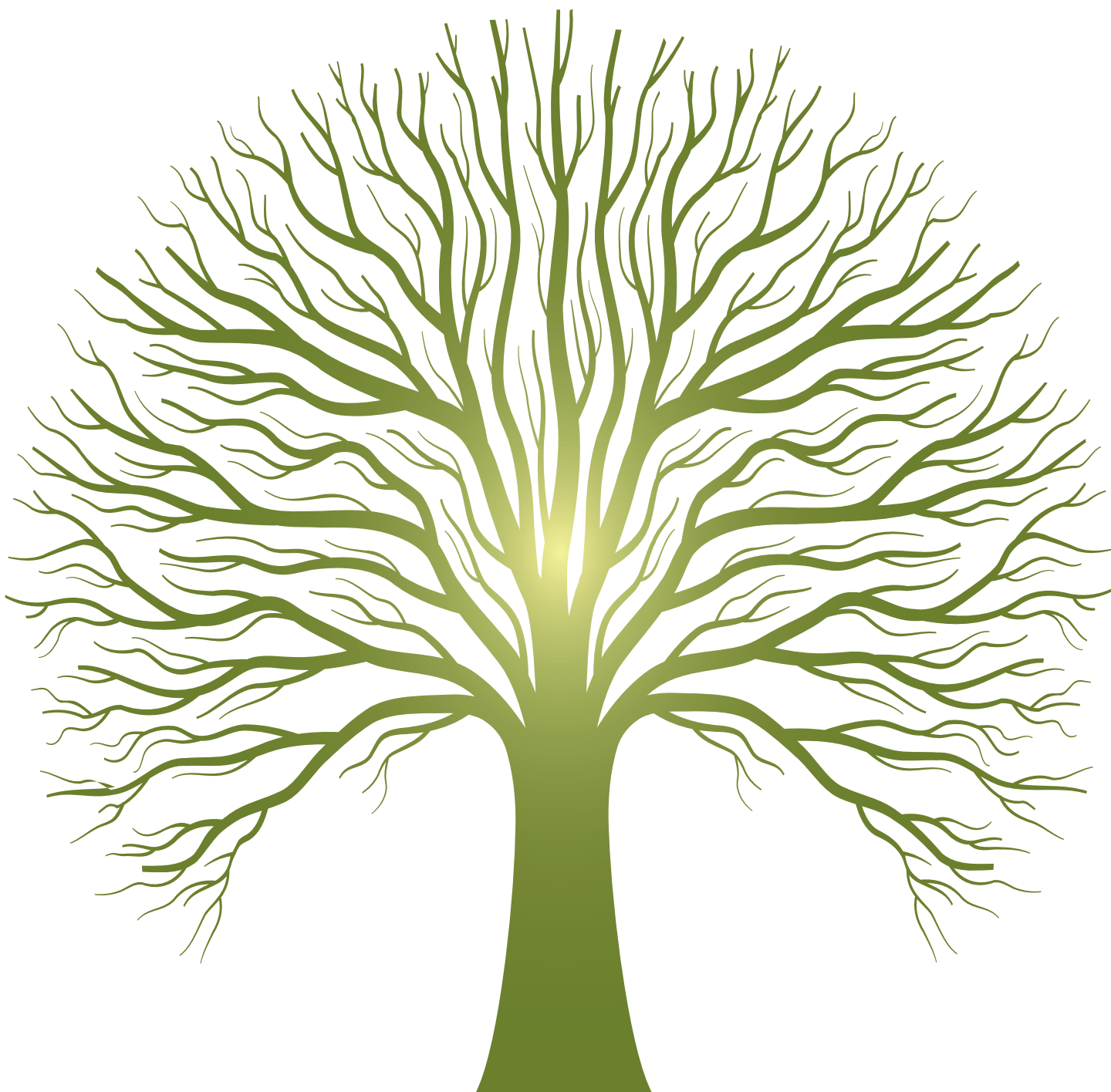
Smiling triggers “feel-good” brain chemicals. You’ll feel a happy difference.

What Makes Our Family Strong

a. Our Family Tree



Print out this page and its companion leaf page. Together, think of strengths that your family has (loyal, helpful, etc.) or that individual family members bring to the family (kind, funny, hard-working, etc.). Give each family member several leaves and have each person write family strengths or positive qualities (including their own) on each leaf. Then glue them to the tree and post where family members can see and appreciate it. Add leaves to the tree as you think of more qualities or learn new skills.

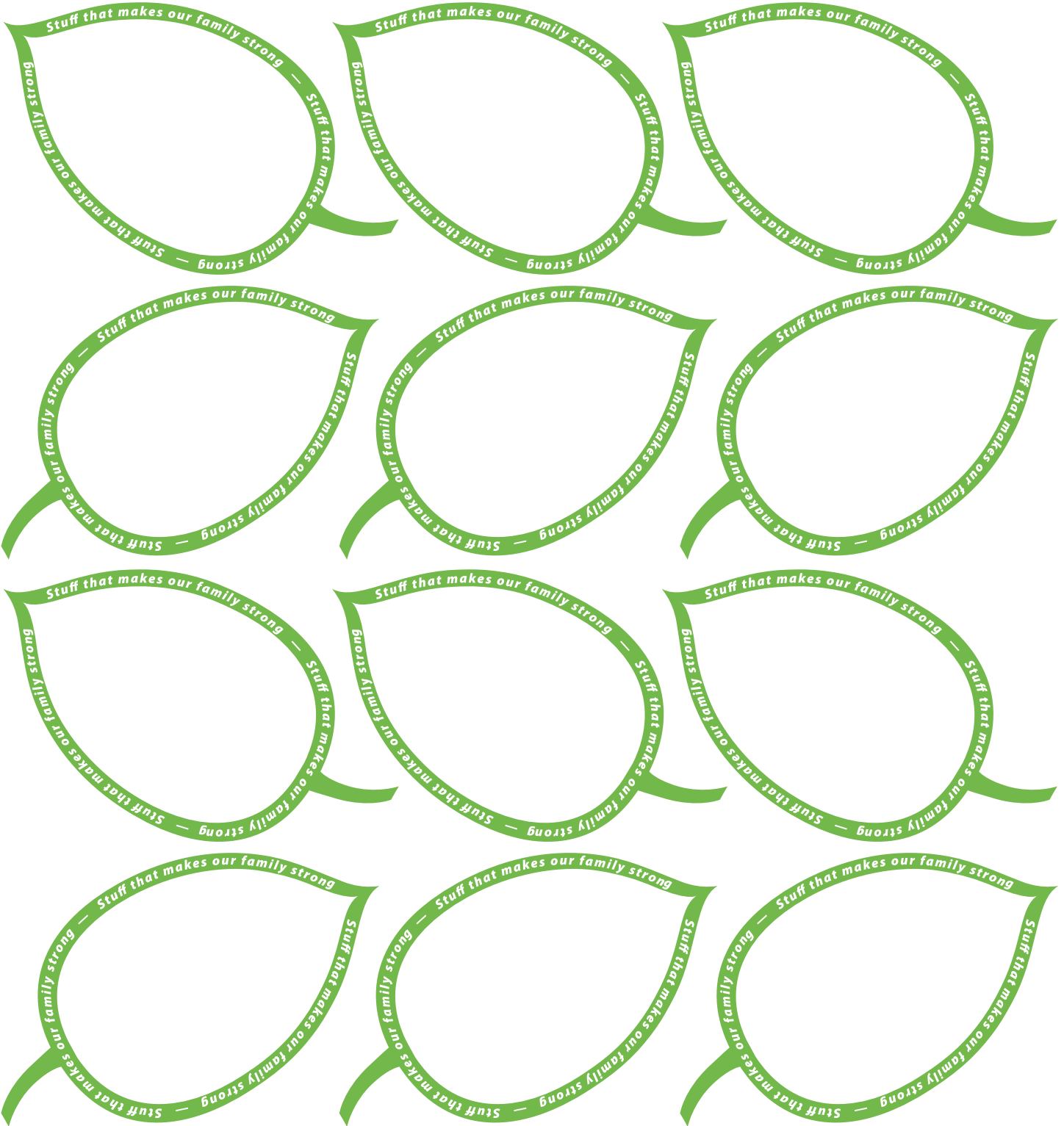


What Makes Our Family Strong

b. Family Tree Leaves



Cut out the leaves and write strengths of your family and/or family members on them; then glue on tree.



What Makes Our Family Strong

c. Personal and Family Strengths



Below are a list of qualities and strengths to write on the leaves in the "Family Tree Leaves" handout. All people have things they do well and qualities that others value and appreciate. Think about each member of your family and write the strengths and qualities they have on your leaves and place them on the family tree. As you look for and discover new qualities continue to add them to your family tree.

- sense of humor
- good sport
- intelligent
- protecting
- gives hugs
- peace maker
- thoughtful
- understanding
- happy
- creative
- loving
- playful
- helpful
- loyal
- bright
- studies hard
- neat and tidy
- cheerful
- dependable
- good cook
- affectionate
- energetic
- hard worker
- good listener



- lovable
- obedient
- clever
- quiet
- observant
- friendly
- agreeable
- controls temper
- positive
- sensitive
- brave
- consistent
- funny
- curious
- good at drawing
- good at math
- good at writing
- good at dancing
- good at speaking
- good at acting
- good skateboarder
- good at geography
- good at remembering
- good story teller
- good speller
- good puzzle solver
- good gamer
- fast runner
- thrifty
- great swimmer
- good at tricks
- truth teller
- organized
- gives service
- cooperative
- strong

- athletic
- out-going
- kind
- supportive
- patient
- assertive
- sharing
- active
- capable
- responsible
- mellow
- caring
- good at fixing things
- imaginative
- persistent
- honest
- calm
- generous

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Encouraging good behavior



HOW TO

GIVE REINFORCING COMPLIMENTS

1. Give your compliment immediately.
2. Be enthusiastic and sincere.
3. Describe behavior specifically. Tell exactly what you liked.
4. Explain a benefit for doing the behavior that your child will appreciate.
5. Add a gentle touch.

HOW TO

PRAISE THE POSITIVE OPPOSITE

1. Identify one negative behavior you'd like your child to change.
2. Decide what the opposite of that behavior is.
3. Every time you see your child doing the good behavior (the opposite of the bad behavior), praise him or her using Reinforcing Compliments.

HOW TO

STOP CRITICIZING

1. Recognize that criticism harms family relationships. It doesn't encourage people to change, and it creates negative brain wiring in the person who is criticizing.
2. Make a firm commitment to yourself and family to stop being critical. Put up reminders.
3. Ask the family to remind you to not criticize, and thank them when they do. Replace your criticisms with a positive phrase.
4. Look for the good in others.
5. Each time you notice a fault or think a judgmental thought about someone, add the words, "... and me too," to the thought.
6. Use the skill of positive criticism from Lesson 7.

HOW TO

IGNORE ANNOYING BEHAVIOR

1. Show no emotion.
2. Turn your attention immediately away; act interested in something else.
3. Don't look at the person.
4. Have no physical contact until the misbehavior stops.
5. Warmly give your child positive attention the moment the misbehavior stops.
6. Praise the positive opposite.

Communicate with Love and Understanding



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Use “LUV-Listening” and assertive “I-Messages” when communicating. Avoid “You-Messages.” Track progress daily.
2. When communicating, use a respectful tone of voice, banish Communication Boulders, and apologize for mistakes.
3. Hold a family meeting this week following the “Family Meeting Agenda and Rules” handout. Begin with compliments, take notes, serve treats, and have fun.

FAMILY FUN:

During your first family meeting, plan a fun activity for the weekend that everyone can enjoy.

POWER PHRASE:

“LUV-Listening, respectful I-Messages and banishing C-Boulders in our family will help us feel more love and peace.

● Use “LUV” when listening:

- a) **LISTEN** with your ears, eyes and heart to understand the other person’s feelings. Try to put yourself in his or her place.
- b) **UNDERSTAND:** Repeat back the main ideas in your own words to show understanding. Ask respectful questions.
- c) **VALIDATE** by expressing empathy, even if you disagree. Express confidence in his or her ability to find solutions.

● Use “I-Messages” when speaking:

- a) Begin with the word, “I” then state your feelings, needs, or thoughts in a respectful way.
- b) Describe specifically what you want, or the behavior that bothers you in a non-blaming way.
- c) Explain the reasons for your feelings/thinking/desires.

Three Easy Communication Skills

Tracking Sheet—Adult



Effective communication skills are highly valued in the world. Increase your listening and speaking skills through effective practice and tracking. Daily pick one conversation you had with a family member and rate yourself on how well you “LUV-Listened”, used “I-Messages,” and showed respect. Use a score of 1-3 (3 the highest). Ask the other person to also rate you.

1 “LUV-Listen”

LISTEN with a genuine desire to understand; try to put yourself in the other person’s place. Show by a comment or a nod that you’re listening.

UNDERSTAND: Repeat back the main points to make sure you understand. Ask questions to get more understanding.

VALIDATE their feelings by expressing empathy for their feelings, circumstances, or point of view even if you disagree. Express confidence in their ability to find a solution if they have a problem or challenge.

2 Use “I-Messages”

I-MESSAGES:

- 1) Begin with “I”, then state your feelings, needs, or thoughts in a respectful way.
- 2) Describe what you want, or the thing that bothers you, in a specific, non-blaming way.
- 3) Explain the reasons for your feeling/ thinking/ desires. “I feel . . . when . . . because . . .”
- 4) Avoid “You” Messages. “You make me mad when . . .”

3 Show Respect

RESPECT:

- 1) Use a respectful tone of voice.
- 2) Never throw Communication Boulders (see the list on handout 5 of this lesson).
- 3) Be assertive, not aggressive or passive.
- 4) Use the 5 most important words often: “I love you” and “I’m sorry.” If sorry, then ask what you can do to make it up to them.



Name:	Date:	Topic of Conversation:	Rate Yourself: (Top space is for you, bottom for other)				

* KIDS: If your conversations with a family member are routinely unpleasant, ask a parent to serve as a “Conversation Coach” next time you talk with that person.

Three Easy Communication Skills

Tracking Sheet—Teen



The words and tone of voice you choose to use greatly affects family relationships. Use this winning formula to help create a happy, loving family: **LUV-Listening + I-Messages - Communication Boulders = Happy Family**

1 “LUV-Listen”

LISTEN politely with your eyes, ears, and heart to understand the other person’s ideas and feelings whenever they talk to you.

Show **UNDERSTANDING** by nodding your head, or asking polite questions.

VALIDATE the other person’s ideas by saying, “I see why you feel that way . . .”

2 Use “I-Messages”

1) Begin with “I”, then state your feelings, needs, or thoughts in a respectful way.

2) Describe what you want, or the thing that bothers you, in a specific, non-blaming way.

3) Explain the reasons for your feeling/ thinking/ desires. “I feel . . . when . . . because . . .”

4) Avoid “You” Messages. “You make me mad when . . .”

3 C-Boulders

C-BOULDERS include any kind of non-respectful communication. Here are some examples:

- Yelling
- Swearing
- Sarcasm
- A cross or angry voice
- Put-downs
- Blaming
- Criticizing
- Taking offense

Put a + in the boxes below for each day you remember to LUV-Listen and use respectful I-Messages and avoid Communication Boulders. Put a 0 for the days you forgot.

Name of Family Member	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

Three Easy Communication Skills

Tracking Sheet—Child



Listening politely and talking nice to each other helps create a loving family. It is called “LUV-Listening.”

L Listen

LISTEN politely with your eyes, ears, and heart to understand the other person’s ideas and feelings whenever they talk to you.

U Understand

Show **UNDERSTANDING** by nodding your head, or asking polite questions.

V Validate

VALIDATE the other person’s ideas by saying, “I see why you feel that way . . .”

I -Messages

- 1) Begin with “I”, then say how you think or feel.
- 2) Describe what you want without blaming the other person.
- 3) Explain the reasons for how you feel: “I feel . . . because . . .”
- 4) Avoid “You” Messages. “You make me mad when . . .”

Put a + in the boxes below for each day you remember to LUV-Listen and use respectful I-Messages. Put a 0 for the days you forgot.

Name of Family Member	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

Draw a happy face in the boxes below for each day you avoided using any “Communication Boulders.”
 Communication Boulders: yelling, swearing, sarcasm, a cross or angry voice, put-downs, blaming, criticising, or taking offense.

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN

The Listening Stick*

Taking turns in truly listening



LISTENING STICK	LISTENING STICK
	
I WILL:	BOULDERS I WILL BANISH:
1 Give you my full attention	1 Sarcasm
2 Put myself in your place	2 Put-Downs
3 Care about your ideas	3 Crabby Voice
4 Value your feelings	4 Slash vv Burn
5 Comment or nod to show I'm listening	5 Hostile Criticism
6 Not think about my rebuttal	6 Always-Never
7 Ask polite questions	7 Blame Game
8 Repeat back your main ideas	8 Mind Reading
9 Validate your point of view even if I disagree	9 Flooding
10 Banish all "C-Boulders"	10 Stonewalling
	11 Take-A-Fence
	12 Dumping

FOLD ALONG THIS LINE

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut along the outside dotted line around the Listening Sticks.
2. Fold along the center dotted line, with the printed sides facing out.
3. Glue or tape the long side and the top and bottom.
4. Cover the entire surface with clear packing tape so it won't wear out.

When you need to have an important conversation with someone, ask the person when a good time to talk would be. Then ask the person to hold the Listening Stick as you express yourself without blaming, using calm, polite tones and respectful "I-Messages."

The person holding the Listening Stick "LUV-Listens" and summarizes your ideas, feelings, or concerns. If the person's summary wasn't complete or correct say, "That's not quite what I meant;" or "There's more to it..." and offer more information or thoughts until the person listening to you correctly summarizes your views. When you feel understood, thank the person and then you hold the stick and "LUV-Listen" while the other person responds. With practice, you will be able to use LUV-Listening in all your conversations without the need for a stick.

**Idea adapted from author John Lundberg, How to Hug a Porcupine*

Being Assertive Pays Off

Worksheet (one for each family member)



Some people think they have to act angry or aggressive to get what they want. This is not true. Being assertive, instead of aggressive or passive, in your family communication will build loving relationships, help you feel better about yourself, and get you more of what you want in life.

Use this worksheet to notice the differences in attitude, body language, tone of voice, and words in the different ways of communicating. Then fill in the blanks with ideas you can use.

ASSERTIVE

Attitude: Deep respect for self and concern for others

Body Language: Confident, erect posture, good eye contact; respects others' personal space

Voice tone: Calm, polite, firm, controlled

Words: Clear "I-Messages" that say how you feel, express your needs, or make requests without sarcasm or blaming

AGGRESSIVE

Attitude: Concerned mainly for self; willing to get own way by bullying or threatening others

Body Language: Threatening, "in-your-face," confrontational; points fingers, rolls eyes

Voice tone: Loud, angry, dramatic, accusatory, hostile

Words: Argumentative, threatening, abusive, blaming, sarcastic; interrupts a lot

PASSIVE

Attitude: Fearful, lacks self-respect, allows others to dominate. May be hiding anger.

Body Language: Slumped shoulders, no eye contact, withdrawn, shoulder shrugs

Voice tone: Weak, whiney

Words: Fails to express feelings or needs; goes along with the crowd. May say: "Whatever; I guess so; It doesn't matter anyway."

1. Circle the assertive statements. 2. Cross out the ones that are aggressive or passive by putting a large X over them.

I feel annoyed when you put your feet on my desk. Please take them off.

You don't know what you're talking about!

I'm feeling _____ about _____. Can we talk about it?

I guess it will have to be okay.

Get your stupid feet off my desk!

It's really not okay with me to _____. What I need you to do is _____.

No one cares what I think anyway. Or: I guess I'll just have to do it myself.

I see your point of view. Mine's a little different. Here's how I see it: _____.

Think of a family situation that bothers you. Then write what you could say by being assertive.

Situation: _____

Assertive "I-Message": "I feel _____ when _____"

Request: "Please _____"

Banishing Communication Boulders

a) Delete the “Dirty Dozen” that block love and understanding



Good communication between family members—where we feel valued, respected and understood—is one of life’s great joys. But often Communication Boulders—what we say or how we say it—builds a wall between us and those we love and blocks effective communication. Remove these boulders from your conversations and you’ll see an immediate increase in family happiness. Becoming aware is the first step. Make it a family game to notice and name these boulders whenever they roll off of someone’s tongue. Soon they’ll disappear.

1. Sarcasm

Cutting humor that insults a person’s ideas, efforts, or intelligence damages a family member’s sense of self and desire to bond. Make a “stop-the-sarcasm” commitment and keep it.

2. Put-Downs

Remarks that mock or put a person down are disrespectful and hinder family bonding. Choose words that build.

3. Crabby-Voice

Cross or angry voice tones cause people to withdraw emotionally, and we get less cooperation. We control our voice tones and can speak calmly and respectfully if we practice. Always use a soft voice when addressing hard issues.

4. Slash and Burn

Yelling, name-calling, insults, or swearing are aggressive and abusive. They render us emotionally unsafe and we lose the love we seek. They have no place in family conversations. Choose to be assertive instead of aggressive.

5. Hostile Criticism

Hostile, insensitive, or harsh criticism demoralizes instead of builds and rarely gets positive results. Avoid these by using the steps in the “How to Give Positive Criticism” handout from Lesson 7.



6. Always-Never

Speaking in absolutes is insulting and usually inaccurate, as there are almost always exceptions. Leave those words out.

7. Blame-Game

Blaming others creates negative feelings and sets people against each other instead of working together. The goal is to fix the problem, not place blame or fight over who is at fault.

8. Mind-Reading

Implying you know a person’s thoughts (“You care more about sports than me”) is judgmental. Ask questions to seek understanding and use “LUV-Listening” and “I-Messages” instead of making assertions.

9. Flooding

Extra-long comments overwhelm kids and come across as lecturing or nagging. Be brief and to the point, and then ask for feedback—or kids will tune you out.

10. Stonewalling

Stonewalling means refusing to admit or acknowledge a concern when someone brings it up. Denying there is a problem, accusing the other person of a fault to deflect attention from your mistakes, or refusing to see a need for change hinders family bonding. Listen to, acknowledge your part in the problem, and seek solutions to others’ concerns.

11. Take Offense

When we feel blamed or misunderstood, we often take offense and our voice tones become defensive, which puts a fence between us and the person we are talking to. If you start to feel defensive, stop yourself. Take a deep breath. Check your tone of voice; and then ask polite questions and use “LUV-Listening” to better understand their view. Or, make assertive “I-Messages” to keep communication going. If things get hostile, take a break and jointly set a time to revisit the issue when you both feel calm.

12. Dumping

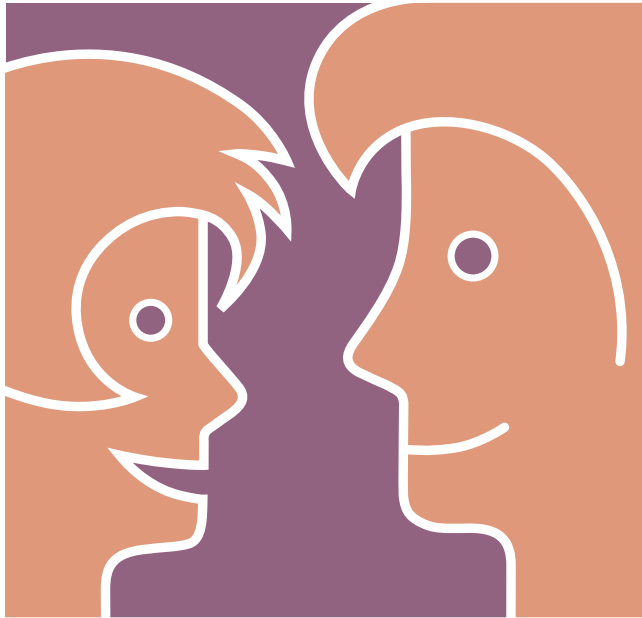
Bringing up all the old arguments and injuries is a sure-fire way to kill constructive communication. Stick to the issue at hand. If you have hurtful issues that continue to surface because they haven’t been resolved, make an appointment to discuss the troubling issues with the person using the Listening Stick, Safe and Cool Scripts, and Problem Solving and Negotiation skills (Lesson 5). Then put them to rest.

Banishing Communication Boulders

b) A family agreement to sign and post



Communication Boulders create contention, harm the happy atmosphere, and damage relationships. Here's what to do:



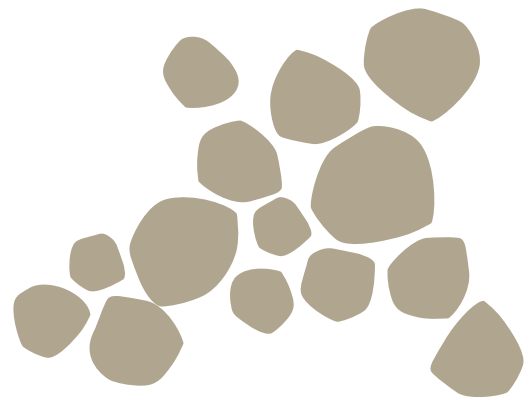
WE AGREE TO BANISH:

- Sarcasm
- Put-Downs
- Crabby-Voice
- Slash and Burn
- Hostile Criticism
- Always-Never
- Blame-Game
- Mind-Reading
- Stonewalling
- Flooding
- Take Offense
- Dumping

THIS HOME IS BOULDER-FREE

Instead of throwing Communication Boulders when we speak, we will:

- "LUV-Listen"
- Use "I-Messages"
- Show Respect
- Welcome Reminders



Signed: _____

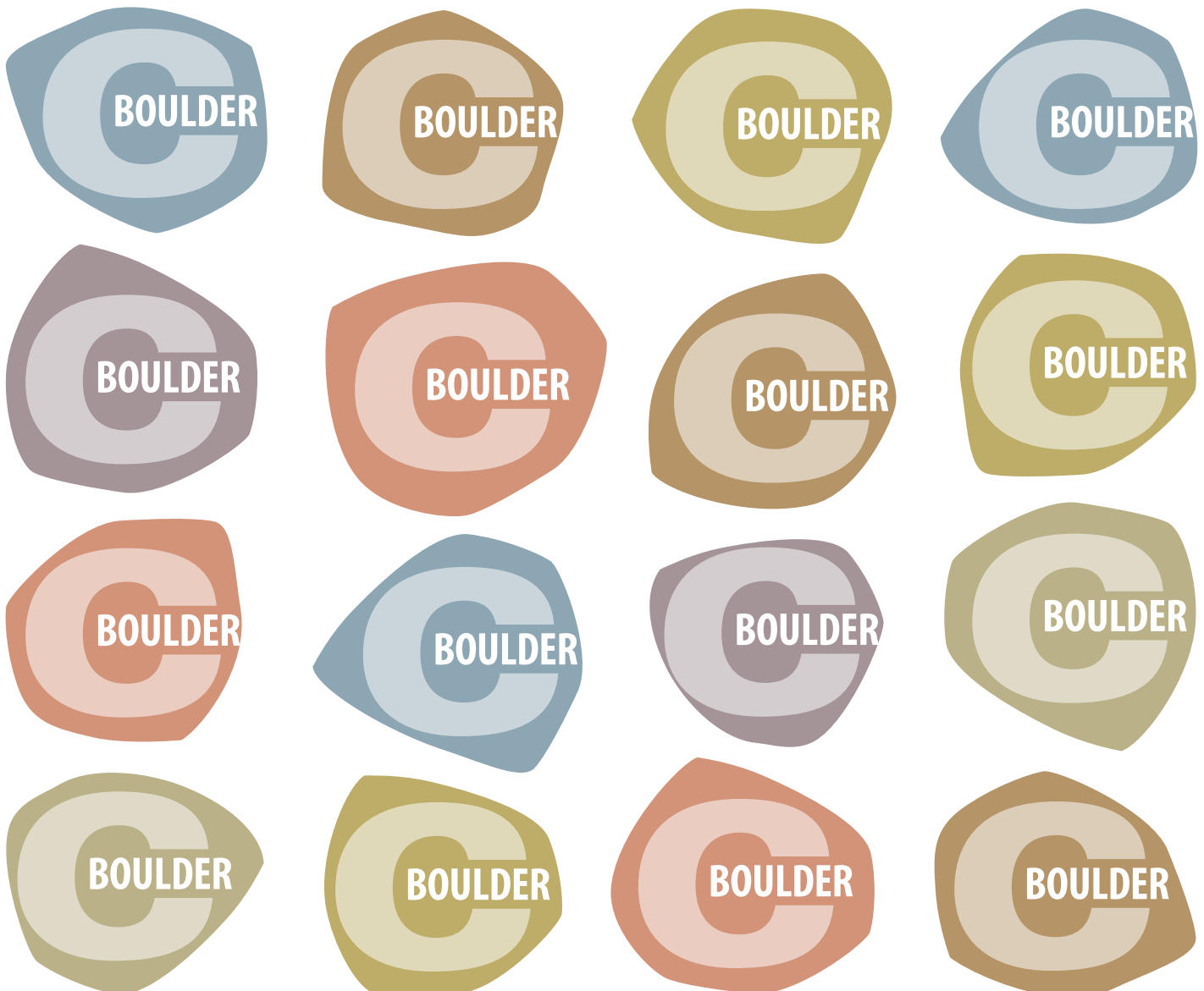
Banishing Communication Boulders Game

c) A fun way to eliminate “C-Boulders” and raise social awareness



To help family members notice how their words and voice tones affect others, play this “Banishing the C-Boulder” game. Here’s how the C-Boulder game works:

- 1 Have everyone in the family sign the “Banish the Boulder” handout. Each person should agree that he or she will welcome reminders when he or she forgets and uses a C-Boulder.
- 2 Cut out the C-Boulder pieces and put them in a bowl where everyone can find them. (You can cover the pieces with clear packing tape so they won’t wear out as quickly.)
- 3 Whenever someone uses a C-Boulder in a conversation, the person listening gives him or her a C-Boulder piece. If the offending person apologizes and says it again nicely, he or she can put the C-Boulder piece back in the bowl. Otherwise, he or she has to keep it until the family meeting. The person with the least C-Boulders wins.



Family Meeting Agenda and Rules

Planning for health and happiness



Use this as a guide and worksheet. Pick a set day and time when all family members can attend, like a Sunday evening. Parents can conduct or assign a child to conduct the meeting. Hold the meeting even if only two can attend. Others may join later when they see that it is a positive experience and that things discussed and decided there affect them. Make sure the meeting is positive and meets the needs of family members.

OUR FAMILY MEETING AGENDA	<i>Date:</i>
Chairperson:	<i>Calls on family members to speak, sees that each person's opinion is heard. Ensures the agenda is followed in a timely fashion.</i>
Note Taker:	<i>Writes down main discussion points and decisions either on note paper or on this agenda. Saves notes in binder or notebook.</i>
1. Compliments <i>Take turns mentioning one good thing noticed about each family member that week.</i>	
2. Coordinating Calendars <i>Coordinate where each person needs to go, do, or have ready for coming week. It is helpful to have a calendar to write on that all can view.</i>	
3. Past Business <i>Note Taker reads and reviews decisions made at the last meeting. Follow up on any new developments.</i>	
4. New Business <i>Review chore charts, chore completion, allowances, rules, family activities that are being planned for the week, month, or year.</i>	
5. Value Message <i>Teach values such as honesty, kindness, perseverance, etc.</i>	
6. Next Meeting <i>When:</i>	<i>Chairperson:</i>
<i>Note-taker:</i>	<i>Message:</i>
7. Family Fun <i>Have a treat and/or fun family game to end with good feelings.</i>	

FAMILY MEETING RULES

- 1. USE AN AGENDA,** take notes, and save past agendas for future reference.
- 2. ONE PERSON TALKS AT A TIME** using short, respectful "I-messages." No interrupting.
- 3. EVERYONE GETS A CHANCE TO TALK,** but no one has to talk.
- 4. NO ONE PUTS ANYONE DOWN** or says his or her ideas are dumb.
- 5. KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET:** About twenty minutes and positive. Serve a treat or play a game after.

Apologies

Learning to apologize and ask for an apology helps heal relationships



All of us make mistakes sometimes and say or do things that hurt or offend others. When that happens, we need to take responsibility, admit we did wrong, and say “I’m sorry.” A sincere apology removes the “hostile barb” you inflicted, allowing their emotional wounds to heal.

HOW TO

APOLOGIZE

1. Admit wrongdoing.
2. Acknowledge that what you did or said was hurtful (even if it wasn’t intentional).
3. Express sincere remorse.
4. Commit that you won’t do or say it again.*
5. Express willingness to make amends.

Example: “I’m sorry I yelled at you for spilling your juice during breakfast. I’m sure that offended or hurt you. I feel badly about it. What can I do to make it up to you?”

*One way to help you not offend again is to try Positive Practice. Examine what you did or said that caused the hurt and choose a positive opposite of the negative behavior to practice instead. This will help you wire the new, more appropriate behavior into your brain.

WHAT NOT TO DO

if someone expresses hurt at your behavior

1. **Don’t deny** there was a problem.
2. **Don’t minimize** the person’s hurt feelings.
3. **Don’t justify** your hurtful behavior.
4. **Don’t become offended** at their words.
5. **Don’t be too prideful to** apologize.

HOW TO

ASK FOR AN APOLOGY

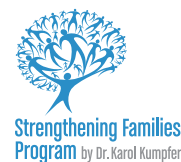
1. Clarify in your mind how and why you feel hurt and how it affected you. Write it down.
2. Examine your own attitudes, words, or behaviors to see if you contributed in any way to the harmful situation, problem, or hurt you experienced. If so, acknowledge it. (This is very unlikely if you experienced a random act of violence.)
3. If you feel the situation is safe to do so, calmly talk to the person privately, or write them a letter, to express how you feel using respectful “I-Messages.”

Example: “I don’t know if you are aware of this or not, but when you _____, I felt _____. A sincere apology would make it a lot easier for me to feel better towards you.”

Example: “I felt really sad and hurt when you _____. It would help me to know that you are sorry and that it won’t happen again.”

Forgiveness

Forgiving is an essential skill to find peace, happiness, health and healing



What is Forgiveness?

Forgiveness is giving up the desire for vengeance and retribution, so you can heal. It allows you to free yourself from the emotional pain and resentment you carry as a result of someone's offensive or harmful behavior, so you can feel a sense of freedom and peace, connect with the innate goodness within you, and become your highest and best self. Forgiving does NOT mean you condone, minimize, or excuse the offense. Nor does it mean you have to continue close relations with the person who harmed you or trust them again. It's a gift to yourself and not the offender. Forgiveness frees you from your negative past so you can make a happier future.

"Forgiveness is the powerful assertion that bad things will not ruin your 'today' even though they may have spoiled your past."
—Dr. Fred Luskin, Director of Stanford University's "Forgiveness Project" and author of the book, *Forgive for Good*.

Forgiveness IS...

1. A willingness to give up the anger and pain caused by the offense, so you can feel peace.
2. A gift of freedom for yourself, not something you do for your offender.
3. Taking back power over your own life.
4. Taking responsibility for how you feel.
5. About your healing, not about the person who hurt you.
6. A trainable skill—any one can learn to forgive.
7. A way to gain control over your feelings.
8. A tool to improve your mental and physical health.
9. The key that allows you to become the hero instead of the victim.
10. A choice that everyone can make.

Forgiveness IS NOT...

1. Saying the unkindness or hurt was okay.
2. Excusing people's bad behavior.
3. Denying or minimizing your hurt, or thinking you have to give up having feelings.
4. Releasing the person from making amends.
5. Forgetting that the painful thing happened.
6. A gift for your offender; it is a gift to yourself.

From Forgive for Good, by Dr. Fred Luskin

Why Should I Forgive?

Holding on to resentment raises your level of cortisol (a stress hormone in your brain and body), which can damage your health. Resentment also dampens your sense of joy, and inhibits you from accomplishing your highest goals.

How Do I Forgive? (Adapted from Dr. Fred Luskin)

You forgive when you choose to free yourself from the hurt or anger caused by another's poor behavior. Put aside the painful memory, hard feelings, and desire for revenge, and focus on the positive present—not the painful past. You forgive when you don't allow the offense to keep harming you.

Steps to Forgiveness

1. Accept that life is often painful and unfair, and we don't always get what we hope for. But we don't have to continue to suffer emotional pain from past hardships or losses.
2. Recognize that thoughts create feelings. If you frequently think on your hurts or losses, you will continue to feel sad. However, you can control, and are responsible for, your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors since the negative experience(s) occurred.
3. Realize that holding onto resentment damages your health.
4. Decide to give up your desire to punish or get even. Hurting people in return rarely causes them to feel remorse or regret, or encourages them to change their behavior. Accept that only forgiveness, not revenge, will give you what you really want: peace, happiness, and healing.
5. Decide that you will no longer spend time thinking or feeling upset about your bad experience. Make a choice to focus your thoughts on feeling grateful and looking for the beautiful and good in life.
6. If you feel safe it is safe to do so, clearly explain to the person (verbally or in a letter) the harm that you felt he or she did to you.
7. Re-write your mental script of what happened so you become the hero in your story by overcoming difficulties and turning the trial into something good, instead of remaining the victim.
8. If the memory surfaces, use Mindfulness Breathing to shift your attention and help you remember your goals. (See Intro lesson.)
9. If the offense was illegal, report it to the authorities and let them deal with the person.

Tips for Talking with Teens

Creating positive conversations with teens



Having daily, pleasant conversations with your teens is an important part of bonding that helps keep them safe from alcohol and drugs. But it isn't easy. Teens claim parents only talk about uncompleted homework or chores. Parents say teens are uncommunicative and uninterested. So they both avoid talking. But teens need parental support and guidance during these difficult years. So daily take time to begin friendly conversations on topics that interest them—without any prying or reprimands. That will make it easier to discuss more difficult topics when you need to, like not using alcohol or drugs, or engaging in casual sex.

Use these tips and scripts to enjoy meaningful conversation with your teen.

1. Look for opportunities to talk that arise in everyday life, to start conversations. Also look for quiet moments—and ask if it's a good time to talk.

2. Begin by expressing appreciation for the good things you notice or admire about them.

3. Use a caring tone of voice and positive body language: a smile, nod, friendly face, etc. Be empathetic, positive and encouraging throughout the conversation.

4. Give your undivided attention, even if they prefer to sit next to you to avoid eye contact.

5. Use “LUV-Listening” skills of listening without interrupting; repeating back main ideas to show understanding; and validating their feelings by saying things like, “That must have made you feel . . . That's too bad.”

6. Use “I-Messages.” Use respectful “I-Messages” to express your own feelings and thoughts. Begin with “I” and then respectfully state how you feel and why you feel that way. Be specific in what you want and don't assign blame. Avoid “You” Messages.

7. Ask open-ended questions, often and casually, about things they are interested in: music, sports, celebrities, friends, TV shows, or movies; who they sat with at lunch; what they like to do for fun; what they think about current events, etc.

8. Respect their right to have a different point of view, even if you disagree. Don't make every conversation a debate.

9. Encourage teens to tell you about problems they may be having, and assure them that you'll try to understand and won't judge or reprimand. Use the Problem Pass.

10. Don't offer solutions unless they ask for advice. Instead, listen, and ask what options they are considering; express confidence in their ability to find solutions. Say, “If you would like to explore any of my thoughts on the subject, let me know.”

11. Ask about school. Find out which classes are hardest and offer to assist or get them help if needed. Help them finish homework before play, TV, or social media.

12. Ask about friends. Find out which friends help kids be their best selves. Encourage and support good friendships.

Conversation Extenders

- “What do you think?”
- “How so?”
- “I didn't know that.”
- “That's helpful. Tell me more.”
- “That's interesting. Keep going.”
- “That's a good question.”
- “Would you like to share more about that?”
- “Can you be more specific?”
- “Good point.”
- “In what way?”
- “That seems important to you.”
- “Do you want to talk about it?”
If they say “No”: “I'm here if you change your mind.”
- “I'm so sorry that happened to you . . . What can you do now?”
- What options are you considering?
- Do you need any advice? Would you like to brainstorm solutions?

Safe and Cool Conversations

How to talk respectfully when emotions run high



Creating emotional safety: Open, honest, and respectful communication increases family bonding and fosters loving relationships. For this to occur, people need to feel emotionally safe with one another. This is especially true in discussing a sensitive topic or talking with teens—who often feel misjudged and emotionally stressed. Fortunately, creating an emotionally safe place only needs three things: a right attitude, improved social skills, and new “scripts” or phrases that can cool a conversation and restore emotional safety. Focus on adjusting your attitudes, memorize the “scripts,” and practice the skills until they come naturally. You’ll see a huge increase in personal satisfaction and bonding.

*(See also VitalSmarts.com or read *Crucial Conversations* by Patterson, Grenny, McMillian, and Switzer.)*

Right Attitudes

- Value others as yourself
- Desire to understand how others feel and see things
- Desire to express yourself respectfully as a peacemaker
- Develop pure intentions
- Cease to judge or be critical
- Be generous instead of selfish
- View others with compassion
- Abandon ill-will; be willing to love
- Respect others’ boundaries and right to choose differently
- Desire to speak only truth
- Believe you could be wrong; freely admit errors
- Be willing to make amends if you offend
- Have courage to bring up hard issues in a sensitive and kind way.
- Feel sorry when you offend

Proven Social Skills

- Use “LUV-Listening”
- Talk in “I-Messages”
- Use positive and kind words
- Use respectful voice tones and body language
- Look for and compliment the good
- Notice others’ body language
- Notice if the discussion gets tense
- Notice your own stress and quickly self-calm if needed (see Lesson 1 and Lesson 6)
- Defuse confrontations with calming statements and questions
- Avoid throwing any C-Boulders
- Say hard things in kind ways
- If misunderstood, patiently clarify your motives and restate what you mean
- Be tentative with your opinions
- Avoid getting defensive
- Apologize quickly for offenses
- Ask openly for what you want or need
- Use Mindfulness techniques to calm your brain, help you be non-judgemental, and question your thoughts and “stories.”

Safe and Cool Scripts

- “Is this a good time to talk?”
- “I want to be here for you. Let me know if you just want a listening ear, or if you need help or advice.”
- “What I appreciate about you is . . .”
- “So what I think you’re saying is . . .”
- “Help me understand what you mean by that.”
- “How would you like things to be?”
- “Thanks for sharing your opinion.”
- “You must feel . . .”
- “I sense you’re feeling _____. Tell me more.”
- “I’m sorry you’re upset.”
- “I appreciate your concerns.”
- “Would you like my thoughts?”
- “I’m sorry, that’s not what I meant to imply. What I meant was _____.”
- “I’m sorry, what do you need me to do to make it up to you?” (If you offended.)
- “Let me think on that and get back to you.”
- “Let’s get more facts on this and then revisit it.”
- “I recognize I’m also part of the problem.”
- “Let’s take a break to cool-down.”
- “Let’s take turns getting our own way.”
- “Let’s agree to disagree for now.”
- “Let’s get outside help with this.”
- “I need your help. Would you please . . .”

The Problem Pass

Give your kids “a pass” from fear of sharing a problem or concern



Kids are often afraid to talk to their parents about sensitive issues or problems for fear of negative reactions. To encourage honest disclosure, create an emotionally safe environment by giving these “Problem Passes” to your children to pre-establish your commitment to calm reactions when they share distressing problems.

HELP ME FEEL SAFE TO TALK

PROBLEM PASS

I have a problem that, if you knew about, you might get angry or upset. So even though I’m still responsible for my actions, by accepting this PASS you agree to “LUV-Listen” and help me problem–solve without saying “I told you so,” “I can’t believe you did that,” or getting angry.

HELP ME FEEL SAFE TO TALK

PROBLEM PASS

I have a problem that, if you knew about, you might get angry or upset. So even though I’m still responsible for my actions, by accepting this PASS you agree to “LUV-Listen” and help me problem–solve without saying “I told you so,” “I can’t believe you did that,” or getting angry.

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Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

How to communicate with love and understanding



HOW TO USE I-MESSAGES

1. Have a respectful tone of voice.
2. Begin with “I,” then state your feelings, needs or thoughts in a respectful way.
3. Describe what you want, or the thing that bothers you, in a specific, non-blaming way.
4. Explain the reasons for your feeling/thinking/desires: “I feel . . . when . . . because . . .”
5. Avoid “you” messages, like: “You make me mad when . . .”

HOW TO BE ASSERTIVE

1. **ATTITUDE:** Have a deep respect for yourself and a respectful concern for others. Pause to think how they might view the concerning issue.
2. **BODY LANGUAGE:** Act confident, stand up straight, have good eye contact, and respect others’ personal space.
3. **TONE OF VOICE:** Speak in a calm, polite, firm, controlled voice. Avoid all Communication Boulders.
4. **WORDS:** Use a clear “I-Message” to say how you feel, to express your needs, or make requests without sarcasm or blaming.

HOW TO LUV-LISTEN

1. **LISTEN** with a genuine desire to understand. Try to put yourself in the other person’s place. Show by a comment or a nod that you are listening, not thinking of your response.
2. **UNDERSTAND:** Repeat back the main points to make sure you understand. Ask questions to get more understanding.
3. **VALIDATE** the other person’s feelings by expressing empathy for their feelings or point of view, even if you disagree.
4. Say something like, “I see why you feel that way.” Express confidence in his or her ability to find a solution if he or she has a problem.

HOW TO RESPECT OTHERS

1. View all persons as equal to your own self. If you start to feel judgmental about one of their negative points, say to yourself, “Just like me.”
2. Use a respectful tone of voice when you talk.
3. Never throw Communication Boulders: yelling, swearing, sarcasm, cross or angry tone of voice, put-downs, blaming, criticizing, or taking offense. (See the complete list on handout 2-7.)
4. Be assertive, not aggressive or passive.
5. Use life’s five most important words often: “I love you” and “I’m sorry.”
6. If you say you are sorry, then you should really mean it. Ask what you can do to make it up to the person you hurt.

The Five Rs for a Happy Home:

- 1- Rules
- 2- Rewards
- 3- Responsibilities
- 4- Routines
- 5- Happy Rituals



Strengthening Families Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Decide and write down family rules, commit to obey them, and track compliance.
2. Determine rewards for obeying the family rules:
 - a) Write down the rewards.
 - b) Make a Reward Jar.
 - c) Track rewards and praise.
3. Divide family responsibilities; make a family chore chart; decide on pay or privileges earned; track compliance.
4. Decide and post family routines such as bedtime, getting up, etc.
5. Decide and implement one happy family ritual to build loving family relationships.

FAMILY FUN:

Have kids choose which charts and rewards from the "Rewards Tracking" sheets they want to use. Cut out and assemble the spinner. Serve treats.

POWER PHRASE:

"Rules, rewards, and responsibilities help create order in a home and train children to become responsible, thoughtful adults."

● The 5 Rs can help you:

- a) Prevent chaos in the home
- b) Increase good behavior
- c) Build loving relationships

● Decide family rules and rewards; reward obedience to rules

● Divide family responsibilities

● Set up family routines and happy rituals

Our Family Rules!

Standards to live by that keep us happy and safe



Together as a family, create rules that establish rights and responsibilities, teach children pro-social values, and keep them safe. When children help make rules, they are more likely to obey them. Next, establish rewards for following family rules. The following week, add negative consequences for breaking them. Rules that are fair, firm, and consistently reinforced and enforced, help children feel more secure and develop better self-control.

Rule	Reward	Consequence
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Family-Friendly Rules

Tracking Sheet—Teen



Family rules help you know the right path, stay safe, avoid trouble, and make a happier home. You can do your part by following your family rules and encouraging others to do so as well.

Write down each of your family rules below. Give yourself 0 to 5 points each day according to how well you obeyed each of your family rules during the week.

RULE 1	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 2	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 3	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 4	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 5	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

Family-Friendly Rules

Tracking Sheet—Child



Family rules help you learn right from wrong, stay safe, avoid trouble, and make a happier home. Your job is to follow your family rules and help others to follow them, too.

Write down each of your family rules below. Give yourself 0 to 5 points each day according to how well you obeyed each of your family rules during the week.

RULE 1	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 2	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 3	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 4	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

RULE 5	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
WHY IS THIS RULE USEFUL?							

Track and Reward for Good Behavior

Introduction



THE CONCEPT: One of the best ways to change behavior is to pay attention to and reward the behaviors you want. The most powerful reward is praise, which is a **social reward**. Another social reward is spending time with your child. Other effective rewards are **privileges** (like T.V. and gaming time, special outings, extra bedtime stories, time with friends) and **material rewards** such as money, toys, treats, or a Driver's License.

When choosing rewards, make sure children find the rewards enticing by having them fill out the "Rewarding Rewards" handout. Some rewards can be small for smaller achievements and some can be larger for significant progress. Make sure the rewards are on-hand and easy to give. Children earn points to receive rewards by practicing the desired behavior, setting up a tracking chart, and daily doing the behavior.

Rewards can be enhanced by making earning the reward be entertaining and introducing an element of surprise—like a spinner or dice to have luck determine which reward the child receives. (See handout 3-14.) Change the rewards over time to keep your child's interest high. As behavior changes for the better, choose new behaviors to work on and reward.

HOW TO SET REWARDS:

1. CHOOSE the behavior you want your child to do and write it down. Begin with a behavior that is not too hard to achieve. You can then tackle more difficult behaviors. (If you want your child to stop doing a negative behavior, decide what its opposite is; that becomes the behavior goal.)

2. PRACTICE: Break down the new behavior into small doable steps you can teach your child and have him or her practice the behavior. Decide on the how the behavior will be measured—how your child knows he or has accomplished it.

3. REWARD: Decide what reward your child likes and how it will be earned (number of points required, etc.). Have the rewards on hand.

4. CHART: Let your child choose a tracking chart (see examples in handouts). Fill it out and be clear about what your child must do to earn a move on the chart and receive a reward. (If you are using a very long "Dot-to-Dot" chart, divide the chart into sections, with a special activity at the end of each section.)

5. REWARD: Put the chart and the dice or spinner in a place where they will be easily seen. Be interested and enthusiastic when your child marks the chart.

6. MAKE IT EASY: Set up your child's environment for success—make it easy to do the new behavior. (See Lesson 7 handouts "Contracts for Change" and "Positive Criticism".)

7. PRAISE: Praise your child every time you see him/her doing the new behavior and have him/her note it on the chart.

Example

Keeping his room clean is Ben's new goal. He and his parents decide that "bed made" means the sheets and blankets are pulled up and off the floor. "Clothes away" means all dirty clothes are put in the laundry basket; all clean clothes put away properly. "Toys away" means that all toys are in the toy box. His parents will check Ben's room each day at 7:30 p.m. Ben chooses a "Dot-to-Dot" chart and will circle a dot and receive a point every day his room is clean. His parents circled every fifth dot in red; when Ben reaches a red circled dot, he uses the spinner to discover his reward. He will receive the special reward when the chart is finished.

Sporadic Rewards

When the behavior becomes a habit, switch to sporadic rewards by only rewarding when the dice rolls or spinner lands on specific numbers.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN USING CHARTS AND RANDOM REWARDS

1. Check your child's chart each day at the time you set. Be sure your child is there and participating.
2. Look for something you like and praise it. Be sure your child knows what he or she did right and what is expected. Do not scold for missed behaviors. Your child simply misses a chart move for the day.
3. Be sure your child gets the Reward he or she earned that day **NO MATTER WHAT!**
4. Ignore your child's arguing or begging in an effort to get the reward without complying.
5. Don't give any of the Rewards at any other time, for any other reason. (If they get them anyway, why should they work for them?)
6. **DO NOT** take away an earned star or move for unwanted behavior.
7. Involve an element of surprise such as a spinner or dice to indicate the reward.
8. Change rewards occasionally to keep your child's interest high.
9. Change the behaviors on the chart after your child learns to do them well.
10. Keep it happy and fun.

What Chores Can Young Kids Do?

Young kids build skills and self-esteem as they help with family chores



Young children usually enjoy helping with chores if **1)** they are trained in the skill, **2)** the job is within their abilities, **3)** their physical environment is set up for their success (unbreakable dishes, lower cupboards, stools to help them reach, etc.) and **4)** they receive lots of praise for their efforts.

Below are some chores young children can do. Start with only one or two chores, then add as they get older. Set up a reward system so children can check off completed chores and earn points toward things they like. Don't criticize if the chores are not well done at first. Praise even the smallest attempts. If children are reluctant to help, emphasize that because they have the **RIGHT** to live in the home, they have a **RESPONSIBILITY** to help take care of it. (TIP: Children with ADD may have trouble staying on task or figuring out how to organize. Ask them to report back to you or let them work as a team with someone. Don't assign them jobs that need to be done before someone else can do their chore, like unloading the dishwasher so another sibling can load it.)

AGES 2–3

- Wash hands and face
- Brush teeth
- Undress self (may need some help with fasteners)
- Choose between two articles of clothing
- Pick up toys and put away
- Put library books in a basket
- Put silverware and napkins on the table
- Clear own dish off the table
- Help unload clean silverware from dishwasher (except sharp knives)
- Pick up things they dropped while eating
- Help carry cans or small boxes from grocery bags

AGES 3–4

- Wash and dry their hands and face
- Dress self—except for some fasteners
- Put unbreakable plates and silverware on the table
- Dust furniture (provide a dust mitt or large sock for their hands)
- Wipe up their accidental spills
- Help make bed (TIP: Sew 2 top sheets together, insert blanket and secure into corners so there is only one piece to make bed.)
- Help make a grocery shopping list
- Help put groceries away
- Help unload dishwasher—will need help putting dishes away
- Help in the yard or garden
- Feed pets on schedule

AGE 5

- Dress self without help
- Make bed
- Pick up toys and clothes in room and put away
- Help separate laundry into colors and whites
- Help fold clothes (small things) and put away
- Help with family meal planning and buying groceries
- Set the table
- Help clear the table
- Help wash dishes or help load dishwasher
- Unload dishwasher (may need help putting things away up high)
- Make own sandwich, put things used away
- Pour own water, milk, or juice
- Help put ingredients in a bowl for cooking
- Help stir or hold mixer while baking
- Help with yard work

AGE 6

- Brush hair—may need help with long hair
- Tie shoes
- Help clean out the car
- Help wash the lower parts of the car
- Empty wastebaskets
- Prepare cold cereal and toast for breakfast and clean up after self
- Help Mom or Dad fix dinner
- Break up lettuce for a salad
- Make simple dishes or desserts
- Help wash and dry dishes
- Wash out the kitchen sink (need a stool, apron, soapy dishcloth)
- Help fold laundry, mate socks, and put clothes away
- Wash fingerprints off doorjamb
- Sweep up dirt with small hand-broom and dust pan
- Help with additional yard work

Stress-Busting Routines

Positive routines reduce chaos, foster freedom and peace



Establishing positive routines in each of the five areas below will reduce family stress, improve children's emotional health, and assure that the things most important to you get done. Together, decide routines that work best for your family, and try to stick with them. Problem-solve until you get the results you want.

1. Sleep

Bedtime _____ Wake up _____ Bedtime duties/hygiene _____

2. Dinner

- Who buys food? _____ When? _____ (buy brain-healthy food; avoid junk)
- What's for dinner? (plan weekly; include veggies, fruit, whole grains, lean protein) _____
- When is dinner? (weekdays) _____ (week-ends) _____
- Who fixes food? _____ and _____ and _____
- Who cleans up? _____ and _____ and _____

3. Study, Learn, and Work

- Homework Study-Time Routine:
 - Time (weekdays) _____ Place: _____ How long? _____
 - Time (weekends) _____ Place: _____ How long? _____
- Reading (when and for how long) _____
- Laundry:
 - Who does it? _____ When _____
 - Who does it? _____ When _____
- Practicing talents and skills (make charts with day, time, and for how long) _____
- Chores (make chore charts, list duties, when each is to be done) _____

4. Play, Plan, Progress ("My Time", Family Meeting, Personal Meetings, Exercise, etc.)

- Family Play-time _____ One-on-One Play-time _____
- Weekly Family Meeting (day) _____ (time) _____
- Pleasant Personal Conference (days) _____ (time) _____
- Exercise (thirty minutes, five days a week) What? _____ When? _____
- Other _____ Day _____ Time _____

5. Financial

Plan Income and Spending: Date _____ Time _____ Review it: Date _____ Time _____
Describe your plan to track spending _____

Happy Family Rituals

Create special moments to increase family love and bonding



A happy family ritual is a set, loving way of saying or doing something that enhances an event’s meaning and promotes family bonding. These include tender ways of greeting each other or ways to say, “I love you.” (“I love you bigger than the sky!”) Some families have a nighttime ritual that includes reading a bedtime story, or giving back rubs and songs to help a child feel loved and secure. As teens grow, it could be a special snack when coming home from school while sharing the “best and worst part of the day;” or a quiet bedtime chat ending with, “I sure love you. Thanks for being my son or daughter.” These moments help family members feel loved and appreciated. Whether your family ritual is daily—like pausing tenderly to give welcome home hugs, a special greeting, and a long look into a child’s eyes; or kisses whenever you see a rainbow—be sure to do it happily and regularly, so kids can count on it.

Below, list the happy family rituals you already have and ask: “Are our happy family rituals adequate to produce family bonding? How can we make them more meaningful? What happenings occur on a daily or weekly basis that we could enhance with a loving moment?” Get family input; write down your ideas. Then begin another happy family ritual.

Our Happy Family Rituals	New Happy Rituals to Begin	Happy Family Ritual Ideas
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting: special saying: “What did you bring home from school today—besides your beautiful brown eyes and your happy sweet smile?”; take time to kiss • Departing: group hug; special sayings: “Make it a great day!”, “Give me four things: a kiss, a hug, a high-five, and a ‘I love you!’” • Nighttime: songs, stories, back rubs, hugs, calm music, prayers • Morning: hugs, music, exercise • Mealtime: “compliment the cook”; ask a blessing; use Conversation Jar • Sharing Values: memorize a saying, add a star to the Values Chart • Spiritual: prayer, reading an uplifting thought or verse of scripture, lighting candle • Holiday: hang valentines in bedroom doorway; put a special star on a Christmas tree for each child and share story of their birth, and why they’re special to you • Seasonal: sharing spring tulips or daffodils; raking fall leaves and jumping in the pile • Memorial: singing a departed loved one’s favorite song while placing a flower on his or her grave • Other: special hand-squeeze that means, “I love you”

Track and Reward for Good Behavior

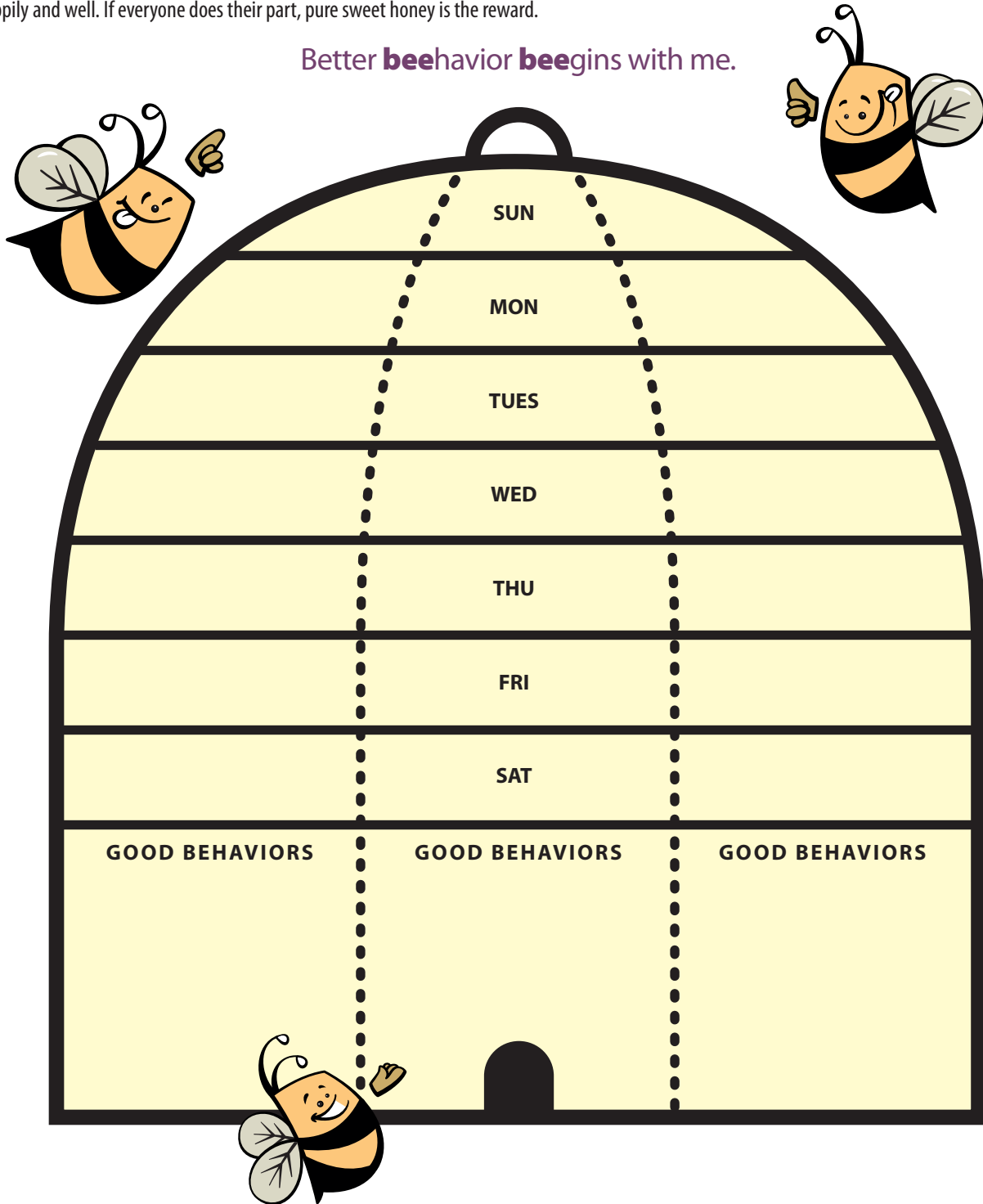
Bee Good Chart



Write the skill or behavior to be practiced at the bottom of the beehive. Place a small sticker or mark on the poster each time that the skill or behavior is practiced. Behaviors could be making the bed, obeying the first time, accepting "No" nicely, putting clothes away, etc.

Bees are known for their hard work and their positive effect on their own family or hive. A hive is like a home—everyone has a job to do to make the family run happily and well. If everyone does their part, pure sweet honey is the reward.

Better **bee**havior **bee**gins with me.



Track and Reward for Good Behavior

High-5s



Record the behaviors you want to track and reward in the boxes below. Use a star to mark each day that a task or behavior is achieved. Behaviors could be doing a daily chore, meeting curfew, doing homework on time, being nice to a sibling, etc.

An alternative to using stickers is using a rating system. For example, you can rate the performance from 1-5, 5 being excellent and 1 the least acceptable. Write the score on the poster each day. At the end of the week add up the score. Pick a minimum score, such as 25 or 28 that earns the reward. Give a bonus for extra high points.

BEHAVIOR:	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

BEHAVIOR:	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

BEHAVIOR:	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

Track and Reward for Good Behavior

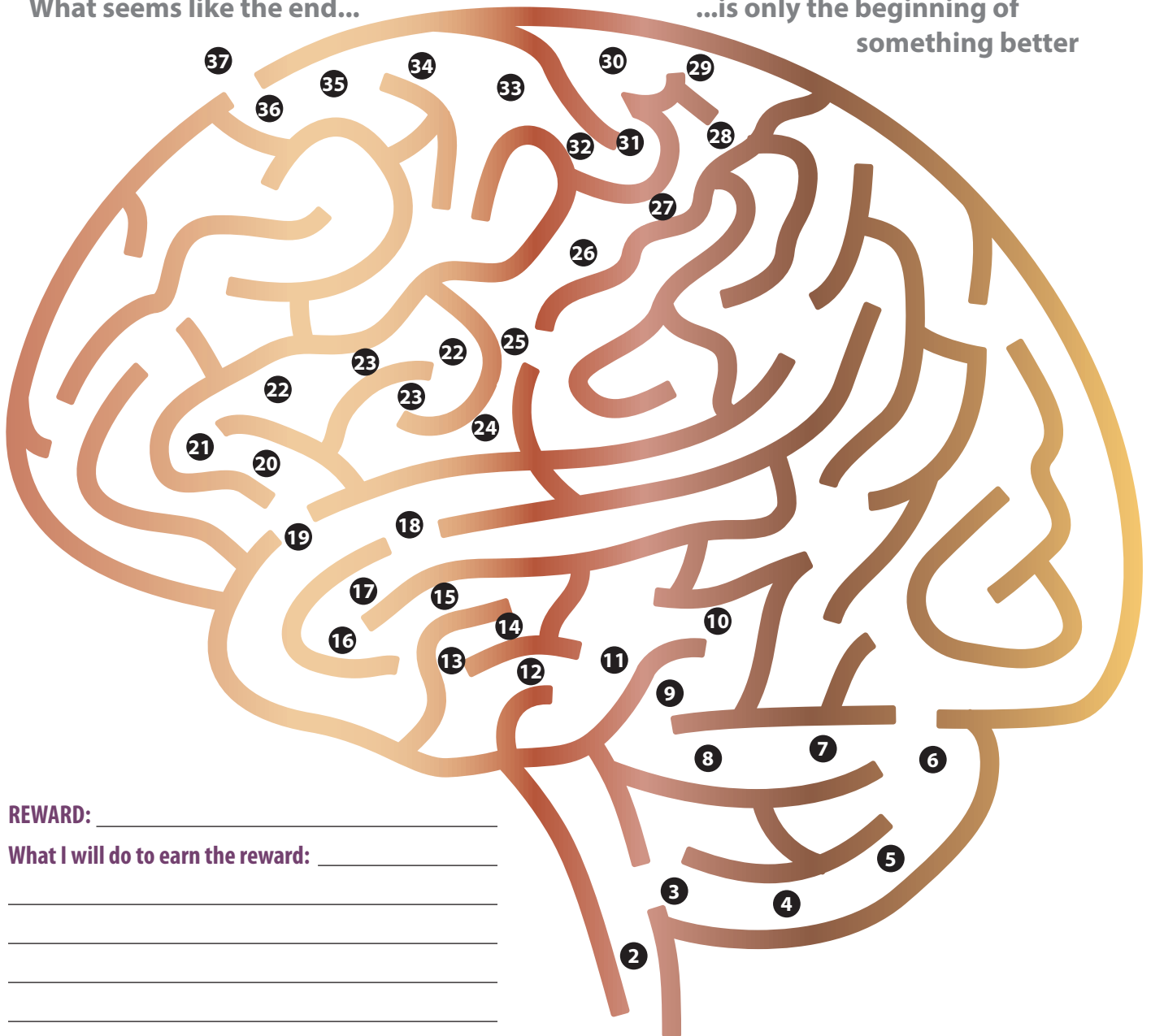
Brain Gain Chart



When we improve our behavior by learning and practicing a new skill, we wire our brain to be more effective. Decide how often to give a reward by circling with a colored pen or pencil certain dots, such as every third or fourth dot. Have your child draw a line between the dots as he or she accomplishes what is expected.

What seems like the end...

...is only the beginning of something better



REWARD: _____

What I will do to earn the reward: _____

All progress starts 1 with the first step

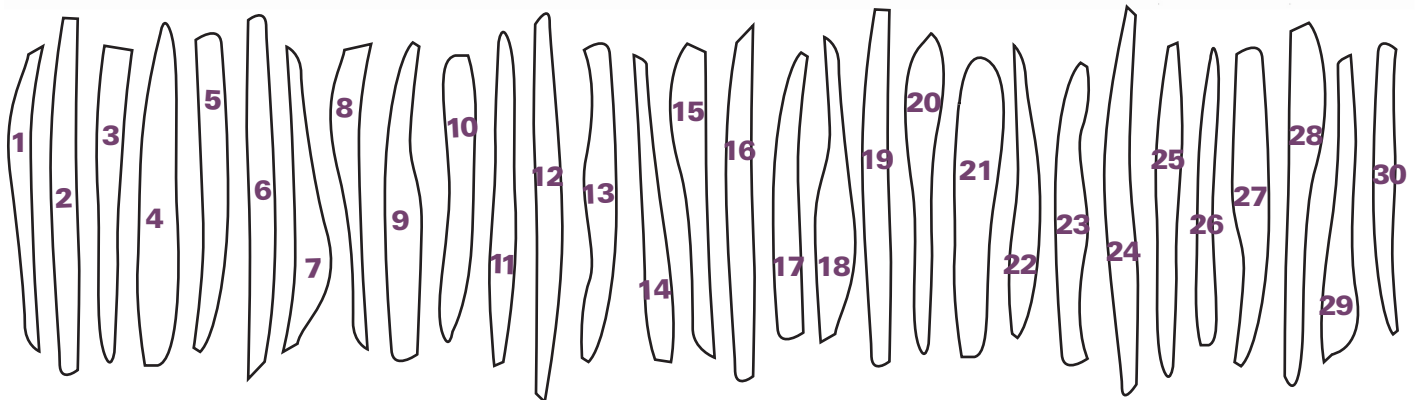
Track and Reward for Good Behavior

Earning Your Stripes



Write the behavior to be learned and the reward to be earned below. Circle which stripes you will use as short-term rewards. Have your child color in the stripes as he or she completes assigned tasks or does the behavior.

**What seems like the end, is only the beginning of something better.
All progress begins with the first step.**



SHORT-TERM REWARDS: _____

REWARD: _____

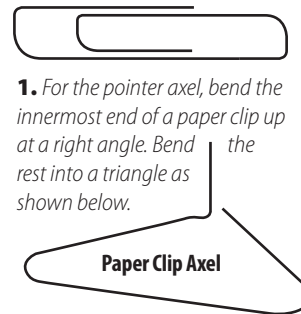
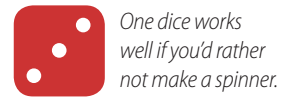
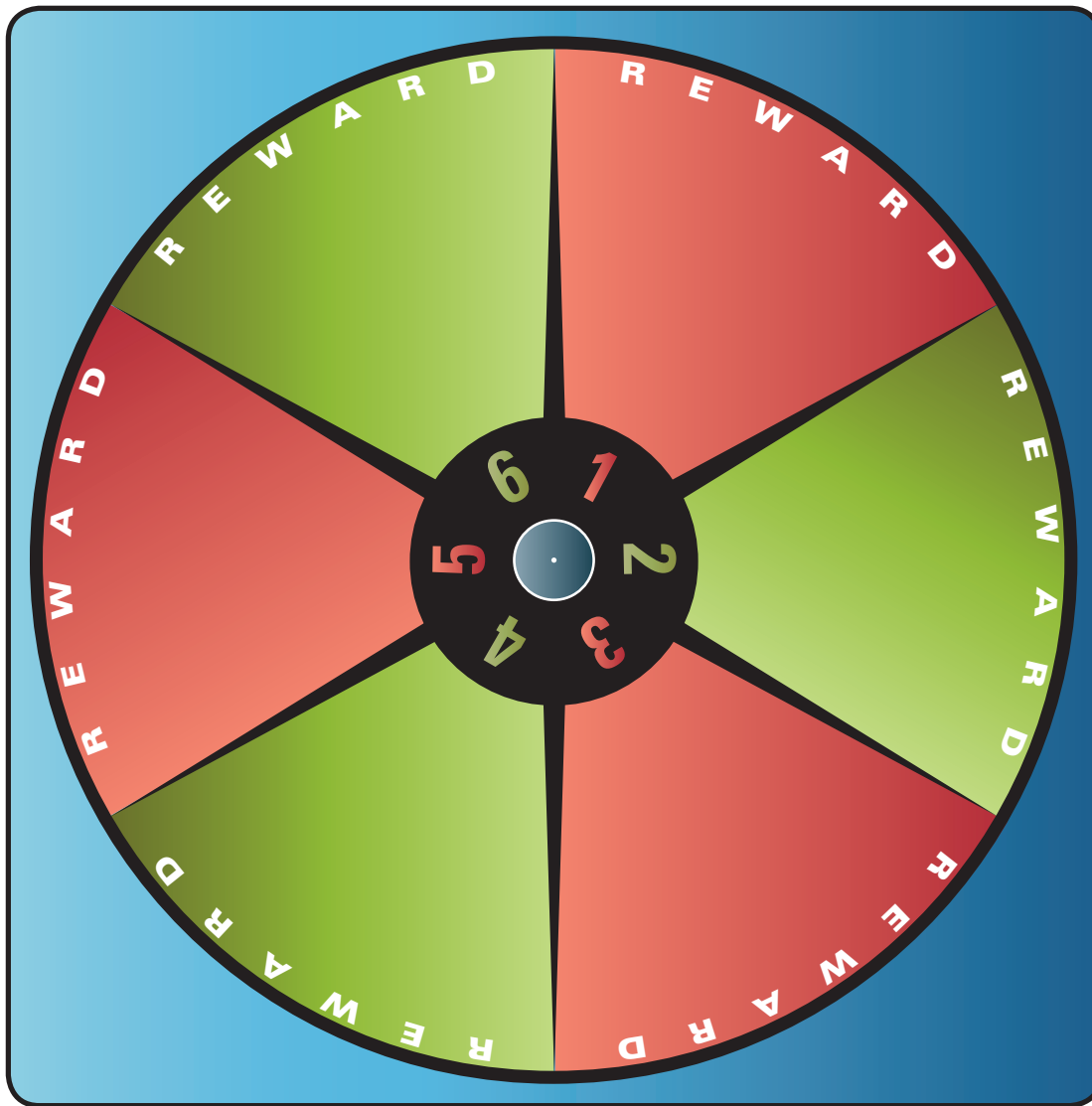
What I will do to earn the reward: _____

Rewards Spinner

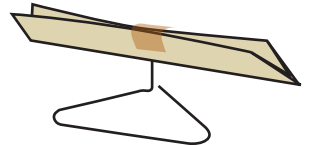
Random Reward Games



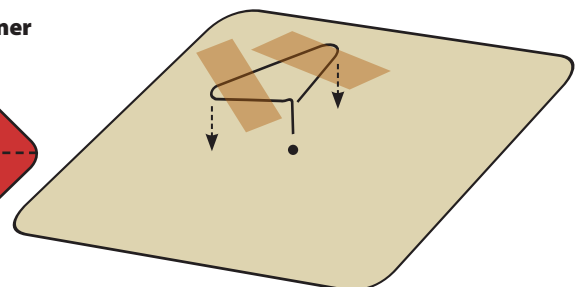
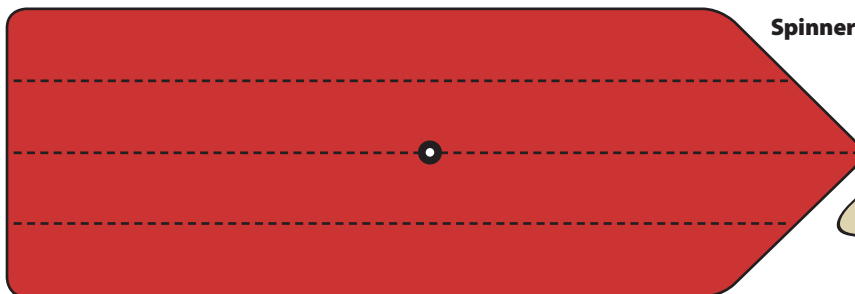
The idea of a spinner is to provide an element of fun and surprise as to what the reward will be once the opportunity for a reward is earned. (You can also make a spinner with a paper plate and a bobby pin.) Write the rewards that you and your child have determined in the numbered pie shaped pieces. Either roll a dice or make and use the spinner to determine the number of the reward they get.



2. Cut out the pointer in the bottom left corner of this page. Poke the end of the paper clip axel through the hole and then take back out. Fold the pointer's far outside edges inward on the dotted lines. Fold inward again until it meets in the middle.



- 3.** Cut out the spinner square on the left, turn over, and poke the end of the paper clip axel through the center. Tape to the bottom side of the spinner as shown below.
- 4.** Put the pointer on the axel and tape the middle as shown above.
- 5.** Write the rewards in the pie shaped pieces of the spinner and spin away!



Pointer

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

How to have good rules, routines, rewards, and rituals



HOW TO MAKE GOOD FAMILY RULES

1. As parents, write down the values, beliefs, and pro-social behaviors that are important to you.
2. Invite your children to a family meeting to help make family rules. Share your list of values and behaviors that you want to have to create order and good family relationships in your home.
3. Ask family members to brainstorm ideas for family rules that would create those attitudes and behaviors. Together, choose the best ones and write them down. Have everyone sign their agreement to follow the rules and track progress.
4. Evaluate at the end of the week and month to see how it went. Make adjustments to the rules if needed.

HOW TO SET UP POSITIVE ROUTINES

1. Use the handout on routines to examine six areas of family life that could use some improvement. Choose one new routine to add structure and relieve stress. Write it below:

HOW TO REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR

1. Decide which behavior(s) you want to reward.
2. Have your child choose a reward he or she enjoys (one you can afford and that fits his or her efforts.)
3. Have your child choose a tracking sheet. Decide on the number of points needed to earn the reward.
4. Give reward points immediately after the good behavior. Smile, be enthusiastic, show you are pleased, and tell exactly the behavior you liked.
5. Give the reward only AFTER the good behavior.
6. Reward consistently at first; then after it becomes a good habit, explain that you will be switching to sporadic rewards. Then switch the reward to a new behavior to work on.
7. Don't offer a reward to stop bad behavior.

HOW TO MAKE HAPPY FAMILY RITUALS

1. A happy family ritual is a small, loving way of saying or doing things on a regular basis that helps family members feel loved and appreciated.
2. Look at the ways you daily interact in common situations with family members. Decide to add a ritual to your usual ways of doing things that will help family members feel loved.
3. Look at happy families around you, or do research online, to find happy rituals you can do in these five areas: bedtime, greeting each other, mealtime, celebrating successes, and birthdays.
4. Present your ideas at a family meeting. Choose the ones you all agree on. Set up reminders.

Limits and Consequences



**Strengthening Families
Program** by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



- **Establish limits and reasonable consequences and then follow through calmly**
- **Decide and post “My Family Rules!” with consequences**
- **Make a Chore Jar for breaking rules**

FAMILY GOALS:

1. Commit to use Positive Discipline; study and follow the handout.
2. Track rewards and consequences.
3. Use Positive Practice to teach family members to do the following:
 - a) Follow directions
 - b) Accept “No” nicely
 - c) Stay calm in consequences
4. Decide consequences and write them on the “My Family Rules!” handout.
5. Make a Chore Jar

FAMILY FUN:

Play the game “Truth or Consequence.” Make two jars labeled “Truth” and “Consequences.” Put slips with funny questions in the “Truth Jar” and put funny consequences or stunts in the “Consequence Jar” that people must perform if they answer with a lie instead of the truth. Each person pulls out a slip, reads the question aloud, and either tells the truth or picks and does a consequence.

POWER PHRASE:

“Punishment creates resentment and doesn’t produce lasting change, while Positive Discipline produces long-term good behavior, and better family relationships.”

Positive Discipline

Adding mild consequences to your rewards program increases good behavior



Seven Steps of Positive Discipline

1. Teach the behaviors you want using “Positive Practice.” (“Positive Practice” is teaching kids the specific steps of pro-social good behavior.)
2. Decide on negative consequences ahead of time; discuss them with your children. (Short, mild consequences work best.)
3. Give clear directions.
4. Remain calm.
5. Give a Warning Cue.
6. Be consistent in giving consequences every time.
7. Make sure your kids know they are loved.

Put Positive Discipline into Practice

Teach good behavior using Positive Practice

- 1) Name the skill and say how it will benefit your child.
- 2) Explain the steps.
- 3) Ask questions to check for understanding so you’re sure your child knows what you expect.
- 4) Help your child practice the skill using several pretend situations.
- 5) Provide feedback and praise.

Use Positive Practice to correct misbehavior:

- 1) Show empathy for your child’s feelings. (Don’t use “but.”)
- 2) Describe what your child did wrong. (“Just now, you...”)
- 3) State the correct thing your child needs to do.
- 4) Give a consequence that can be reduced if your child practices willingly.
- 5) Invite your child to practice the skill—and praise their performance.

Follow the rules for choosing consequences:

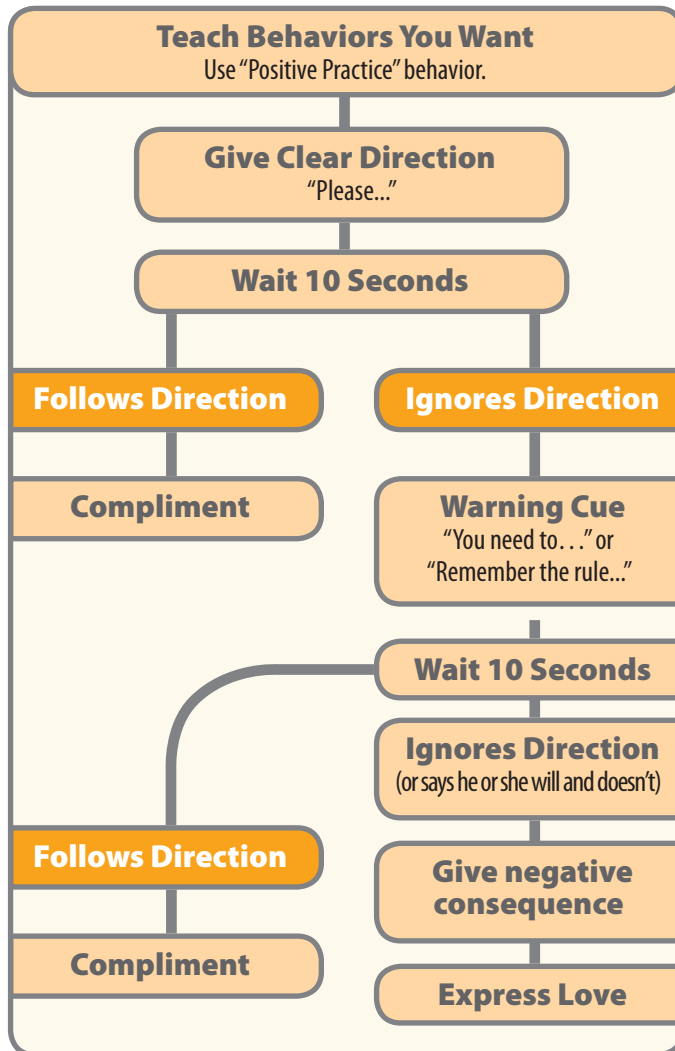
- 1) Consequences need to match the severity of the misbehavior.
- 2) Kids need to know what the consequences are beforehand.
- 3) Consequences need to be mild and of short duration.
- 4) Consequences need to involve a “response cost” (e.g., it costs the kids something in time, effort, or money.)
- 5) Consequences need to be given calmly and not in anger.
- 6) Consequences need to be followed by expressions of love.

How to give Clear Directions:

1. Get your child’s attention.
2. Give lead-time warning if possible.
3. Tell exactly what to DO; explain what, how, and when you want it done.
4. Be brief (don’t follow with long explanation).
5. Tell, don’t ask.
6. Use a firm, but polite, voice.
7. Follow through. (“Follow through” means stand near your child; give one Warning Cue. If they don’t obey after the Warning Cue, give consequence.)

Directions that DON’T work:

- a) Chain directions
- b) Vague directions
- c) Question directions
- d) “Let’s...” directions
- e) Directions followed by a long explanation



Choosing Effective Negative Consequences

Replacing punishment with consequences that work



A negative consequence is effective when it helps bring about long-term positive change in a child’s behavior, while still preserving a loving parent/child relationship. The difference between punishment and positive discipline is intent: the intent of punishment is to inflict pain; the intent of positive discipline is to train a child in positive, pro-social behaviors. Punishment is ineffective because it does not bring about long-term change (i.e. you can’t punish people into lasting good behavior), and it harms relationships so children don’t want to please you. Choosing consequences ahead of time enables you to be fair (kids know what to expect), fit the consequence size to the misbehavior, and teach missing skills to help your child improve long-term behavior. Consequences should include a “response cost” —the time, effort, or money the child needs to give to “make it right.”

Effective consequences include the following:

- Positive Practice (practice the missing social skill that led to the misbehavior)
- Extra chores (choose a chore from the Chore Jar)
- Time out (effective for kids ages 2–12)
- Make it right (apologize and fix the mistake)
- Grounding from privileges or possessions for a short time (6–24 hours) until the child does Positive Practice or makes it right

EFFECTIVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES ARE:

1. **Mild:** Doesn’t cause physical or emotional harm
2. **Kind:** Doesn’t involve anger, yelling, humiliation, or threats
3. **Logical:** Results logically from the misbehavior
4. **Instructive:** Involves practicing the missing skill
5. **Understood:** Agreed upon beforehand
6. **Simple** to give and track (ex. “Chore Jar” and “Tracking Sheet”)
7. **Consistent:** Negative behavior results in negative consequence
8. **Loving:** Followed by a sincere expression of love
9. **Safe:** Never violates a child’s basic human rights to food, shelter, emotional and physical safety, love, or education

DRAWBACKS TO PUNISHMENT INCLUDE:

1. **Fear and resentment:** Kids won’t like or respect you, making it hard for them to obey you or accept your values
2. **Two-faced behavior:** Kids only behave when you’re around
3. **Imitation:** Children hurt others (including you when they’re grown)
4. **Low self-esteem:** Children think parents don’t love them
5. **Hard to control:** Kids build up tolerance to pain; parents escalate and become abusive
6. **Ineffective:** Usually fails to produce lasting change
7. **Insecure attachment:** Failure to bond with parents; negatively affects future relationships
8. **Harsh physical consequences** lowers a child’s IQ

PRE-PLANNED NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES		
As a family, discuss negative behaviors and decide on negative consequences ahead of time. Write them in the spaces below.		
Minor Offenses	Medium Offenses	Major Offenses
Behavior	Behavior	Behavior
Consequence	Consequence	Consequence
Behavior	Behavior	Behavior
Consequence	Consequence	Consequence
Behavior	Behavior	Behavior
Consequence	Consequence	Consequence
Behavior	Behavior	Behavior
Consequence	Consequence	Consequence
Behavior	Behavior	Behavior
Consequence	Consequence	Consequence

I Stayed Calm!

Tracking Sheet—Teen



When you make mistakes, like disobeying family rules or harming yourself, others, or things (including animals), you may receive a negative consequence. The negative consequence helps you know when you made a wrong choice, and you know you need to change your behavior to have a happy, successful life. If your parent gives you the negative consequence kindly and calmly, then it can help you be a better person. If you can learn to stay calm when you get a negative consequence, it shows you are developing more self-control—and you will receive fewer negative consequences.

Write down the answer to these questions for each negative consequence you receive this week:

- a) What did YOU DO to receive a negative consequence?**
- b) What was the CONSEQUENCE?**
- c) Did your parent stay calm while giving the negative consequence to you?**
- d) Did you stay calm while receiving the negative consequence?**

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

I Stayed Calm!

Tracking Sheet—Child



When you make mistakes, like disobeying family rules or harming yourself, others, or things (including animals), you may receive a negative consequence. The negative consequence helps you know when you made a wrong choice. If your parent gives you the negative consequence kindly and calmly, then it can help you be a better person. If you can learn to stay calm when you get a negative consequence, it shows you are developing more self-control—and you will receive fewer negative consequences.

Write down the answer to these questions for each negative consequence you receive this week:

- a) What did YOU DO to receive a negative consequence?**
- b) What was the CONSEQUENCE?**
- c) Did your parent stay calm while giving the negative consequence to you?**
- d) Did you stay calm while receiving the negative consequence?**

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

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a) Mistake I Made	b) Negative Consequence	c) Was My Parent Calm?	d) Did I Stay Calm?

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

How to get along with parents and everyone else



Social skills, like these, help children function well in society and develop “emotional intelligence”—the ability to manage emotions and respond in a pro-social way. Have kids memorize the steps of each skill and practice different pretend situations using them. Reward them for practicing; then track and reward real-life performance. When kids forget to use the skills, have them do “Positive Practice.” For more social skills, see “Teaching Social Skills to Youth” at www.boystownpress.org.

HOW TO

DEVELOP IMPULSE CONTROL

1. Practice Mindfulness Breathing for 2–5 minutes night and morning to train your brain to focus.
2. Choose one weak area in your life where you need impulse control. Make a plan of what to **think** and **do** when you are triggered to be impulsive. Then courageously follow your plan.
3. When you are tempted to be impulsive, take three deep breaths through your nose and ask yourself the W.I.S.E. question:
W = Will everyone say it's ok if I do or say it?
I = Is it true and necessary?
S = Will this help me be my highest and best self?
E = Do I want everyone to do it to me?
4. Redirect your thoughts to a more positive thing to do; then do it.

HOW TO

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

1. Look at the person who is speaking to you.
2. Repeat the instructions and say okay.
3. Do what is asked and do it the best you can.
4. Report back when you've finished.

HOW TO

ACCEPT NO NICELY

1. Look at the person who is speaking to you.
2. Calmly ask for a reason if you don't understand.
3. Say “okay” and thank the person for listening.
4. If you disagree, you may calmly bring it up later. However, after two times the discussion is over.

HOW TO

STAY CALM IN CONSEQUENCES

1. Take a deep calming breath.
2. Look at the person with a polite face.
3. Remind yourself to be calm.
4. Don't argue.
5. Say “okay” in a neutral voice tone.

Skills for Successful Parenting

How to handle stressful situations



These cards contain tips that cover some common parenting challenges. Memorize the steps and use them regularly to reduce parent stress, help your kids have better behavior, and make your job as a parent more fun and enjoyable.

HOW TO DO

POSITIVE PRACTICE

1. Name the skill and say how it will benefit your child.
2. Explain the steps of the skill.
3. Ask the child to repeat the steps.
4. Have your child practice the skill several times using pretend situations.
5. Provide feedback and praise.

HOW TO

CONFRONT NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

1. Find a good time to talk privately and calmly.
2. Describe the behavior you observed.
3. Ask what happened.
4. Ask what the child could have done differently.
5. Ask what the child can do to correct behavior and make amends. Give consequence if needed.
6. Ask the child to practice the correct behavior.
7. Express love.

HOW TO

GIVE CALM CONSEQUENCES

1. Stay calm and talk privately with your child.
2. Express empathy: "I understand how you feel..."
3. Describe behavior: "Just now you..." (Don't begin with "But...")
4. Give the consequence: "For choosing to _____, you earned _____ [consequence]."
5. Reduce consequence if they do positive practice and make amends.
6. Express love.

HOW TO

HANDLE CHILD RAGES

1. Stay calm. View it as a teaching opportunity.
2. Recognize a child has a right to feel angry, but not the right to behave badly.
3. Say, "I understand you feel angry. We will talk about this when we both feel calm."
4. Walk away. Don't attempt to reason with a raging person.
5. When calm, discuss the situation; give consequences for bad behavior.
6. Use up Positive Practice to teach missing skills that calm rage.

Skills for Successful Parenting

How to correct behavior



These cards contain tips that cover some common parenting challenges. Memorize the steps and use them regularly to reduce parent stress, help your kids have better behavior, and make your job as a parent more fun and enjoyable.

HOW TO USE 7 STEPS OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

1. Teach the behaviors you want using “Positive Practice.” (Positive practice is teaching kids the specific steps of each good behavior you want them to do and helping them practice it.)
2. Decide on negative consequences ahead of time and discuss them with your children. Remember, short, mild consequences work best.
3. Give clear directions.
4. Remain calm.
5. Give a warning cue.
6. Be consistent. Give the right consequence every time.
7. Make sure your kids know they are loved.

HOW TO GIVE CLEAR DIRECTIONS

1. Get your child’s attention.
2. Give him or her a warning ahead of time, if possible.
3. Tell him or her exactly what to do. Explain what, how, and when you want it done.
4. Be brief (don’t follow with a long explanation).
5. Use “please” and then tell, don’t ask.
6. Use a firm, but polite, voice.
7. Follow through to make sure he or she did what you asked. You can follow through by standing near your child and start by giving one warning cue. Wait ten seconds, and if they don’t obey, then give the consequence.
8. Here are some directions that DON’T work: chain directions, vague directions, question directions, “Let’s . . . directions,” or directions followed by a long explanation.

HOW TO USE POSITIVE PRACTICE TO CORRECT MISBEHAVIOR

1. Show empathy for your child’s feelings. Don’t use “but” or it negates your empathy statement.
2. Describe what your child did wrong. Example: “Just now you . . .”
3. State the correct thing your child needs to do. Example: “What you need to do is . . .”
4. Give a consequence that can be reduced if your child practices the correct behavior willingly. Example: “For hitting your sister, you need to take two yellow slips from the chore jar. But, if you practice talking about it nicely instead of hitting, you only need to take one slip.”

Track and Reward Positive Practice

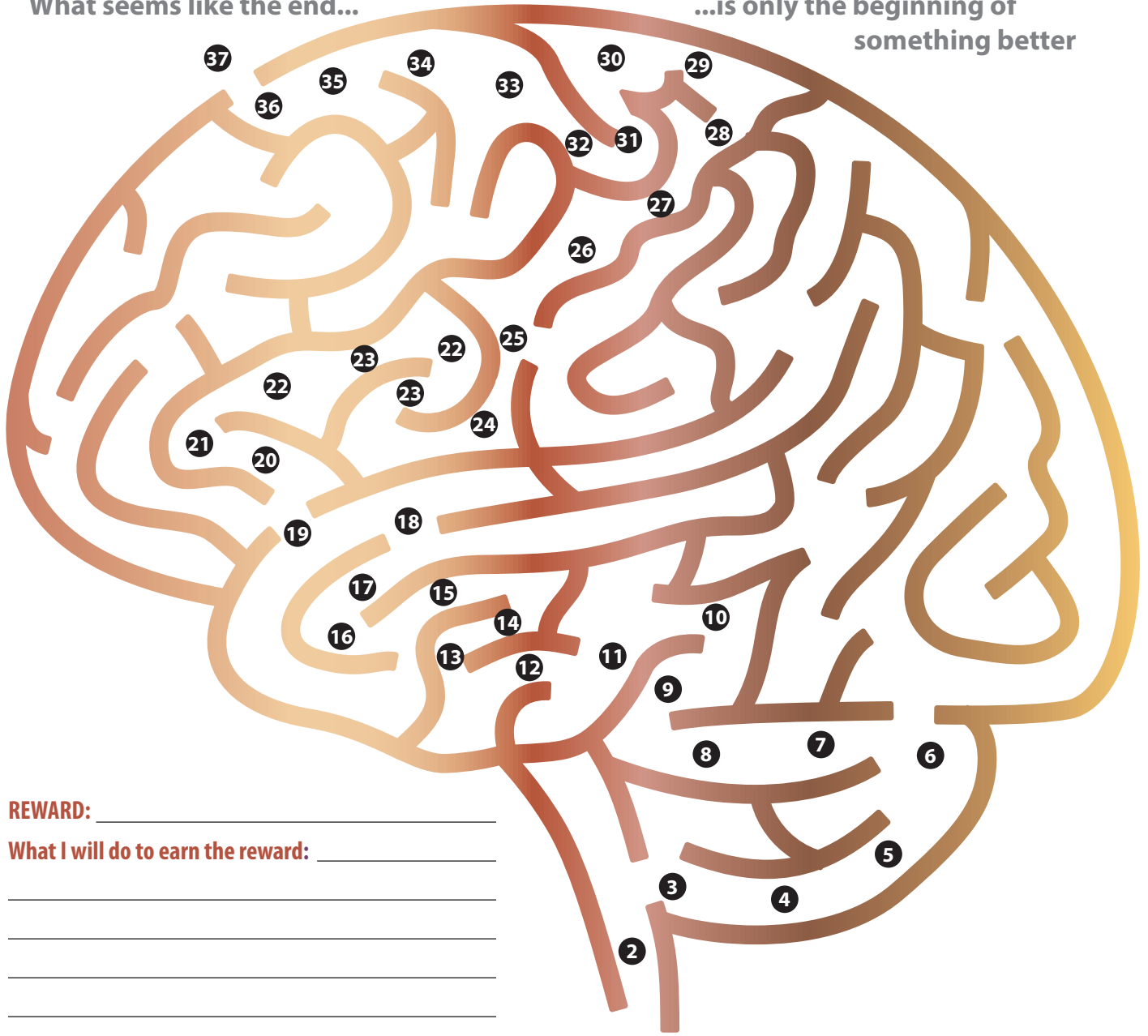
Brain Gain Chart



When we improve our behavior by learning and practicing a new skill, we wire our brain to be more effective. Decide how often to give a reward by circling with a colored pen or pencil certain dots, such as every third or fourth dot. Have your child draw a line between the dots as he or she accomplishes what is expected.

What seems like the end...

...is only the beginning of something better



REWARD: _____

What I will do to earn the reward: _____

All progress starts 1 with the first step

Track and Reward Positive Practice

High-5s



Put a small sticker or mark each time a skill or behavior is practiced. Skills could include staying calm, obeying the first time, accepting “No” nicely, etc.

An alternative to using stickers is using a rating system. For example, you can rate the performance from 1-5, 5 being excellent and 1 the least acceptable. Write the score on the poster each day. At the end of the week add up the score. Pick a minimum score, such as 25 or 28 that earns the reward. Give a bonus for extra high points.

SKILL:	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

SKILL:	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

SKILL:	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT

Track and Reward Positive Practice

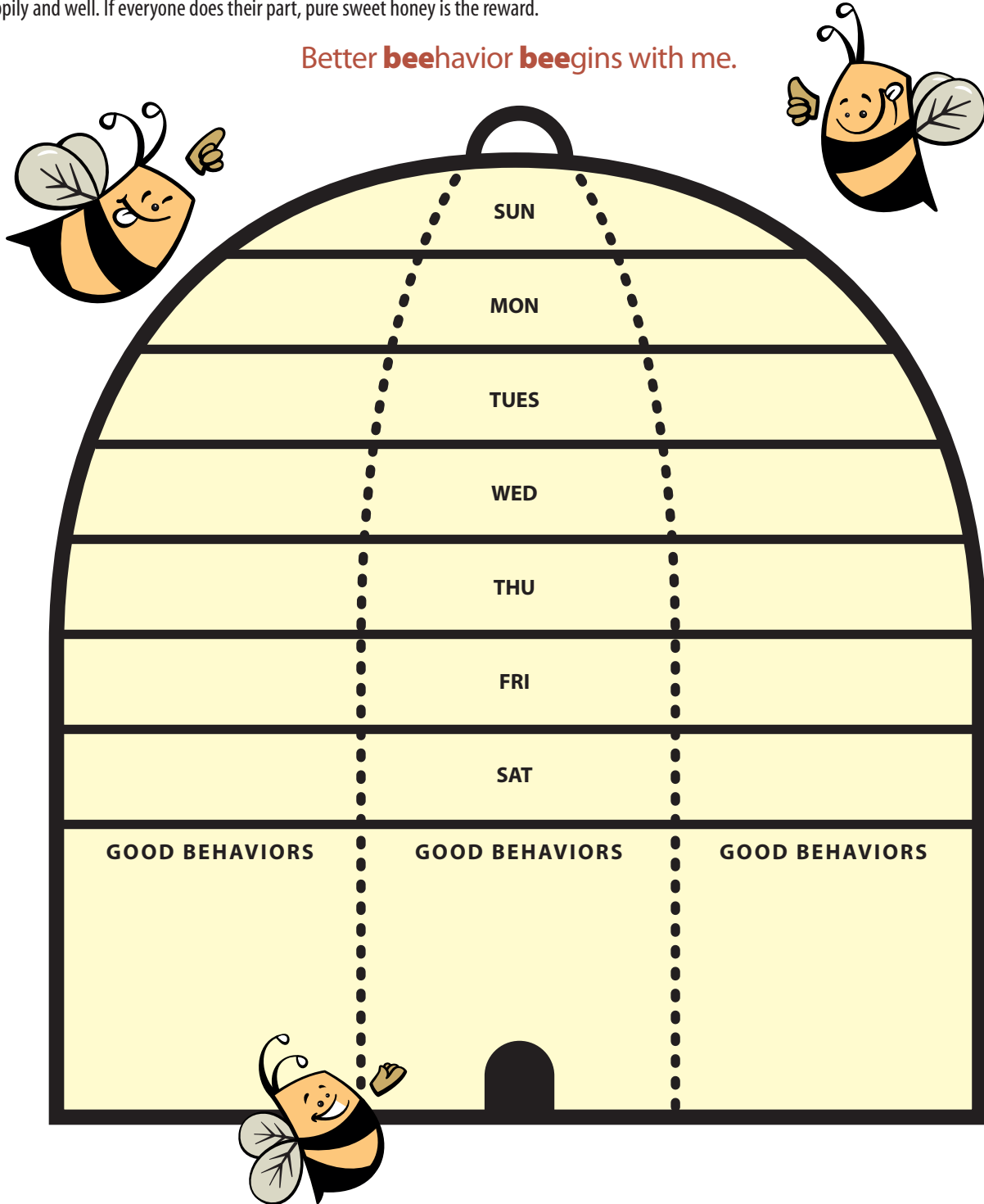
Bee Good Chart



Write the skill or behavior to be practiced at the bottom of the beehive. Place a small sticker or mark on the poster each time that the skill or behavior is practiced. Behaviors could be making the bed, obeying the first time, accepting "No" nicely, putting clothes away, etc.

Bees are known for their hard work and their positive effect on their own family or hive. A hive is like a home—everyone has a job to do to make the family run happily and well. If everyone does their part, pure sweet honey is the reward.

Better **bee**havior **bee**gins with me.



Problem Solving and Negotiation Skills



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Discuss and post the “Steps of Problem Solving” handout and use during family meetings or when problems occur.
2. Discuss and use the “Win-Win Negotiation” handout as a family using pretend situations. Use these skills with family members.
3. As a family, identify “trouble” that kids might be asked to participate in; use the “P-OK-E & C” handouts to help kids say “no” to trouble.
4. Help kids memorize the 5 Cs and practice using pretend situations.

FAMILY FUN:

Plan a fun family outing during a weekly family meeting using problem solving and negotiation skills.

POWER PHRASE:

“Most difficult issues can be resolved using the 7 Steps of Problem Solving and Win-Win Negotiation, while ‘Pre-Problem-Solving’ helps keep kids out of trouble.”

- Use problem-solving and negotiation skills to reduce family conflict
- “Win-Win Negotiations” work best
- Pre-problem-solving skills can help kids say “no” to trouble and still keep their friends

Problem Solving Worksheet

Seven easy steps to solve problems effectively



Use this worksheet to “work” through specific problems and challenges.

PROBLEM SOLVING	<i>Date:</i>
1) a. What is the problem?	
b. What are the different views? Use respectful “I-Messages” and “LUV-Listening.”	
Dad:	
Mom:	
Kids:	
Other:	
c. What current practices may be contributing to the problem?	
2) How would you like things to be?	
3) Brainstorm possible solutions. Be respectful of others ideas before commenting. Think win-win. Write down all ideas.	
4) Evaluate 3 best solutions. What would happen if? What would it take? Which are win-win solutions?	
5) Decide on the best solution: Consider costs, consequences, and interests of all family members.	
6) Make an action plan and do it: Decide who will do what, when.	
a) Steps to accomplish:	
b) People needed:	
c) Resources needed:	
d) Date to start:	Date to finish:
7) Evaluate outcome. Did it work? What needs to be improved? If not, try another solution.	
a) What worked?	
b) What didn't?	
c) New ideas to try if needed:	
d) How to keep it going:	

Win-Win Negotiation* Worksheet

Finding solutions that make both people happy



“Win-Win Negotiation” is the skill of finding solutions that satisfy both parties. To do that, you need a creative mind and a desire to be fair, respectful, and generous. To develop that mind-set, read, agree to, and initial the 5 core values of “Win-Win Negotiation.” Then begin filling out the worksheet.

THE 5 CORE VALUES OF WIN-WIN NEGOTIATION:

- _____ 1. *We agree to find solutions that will benefit both of us* and that we both feel good about.
- _____ 2. *We agree that we will negotiate using* the family values we have committed to live by, like generosity and unselfishness.
- _____ 3. *We agree to use respectful “I-Messages” when stating our position*—what we want and why it is important to us. Understanding the “why” allows us to seek other possible solutions that neither of us thought of.
- _____ 4. *We agree that we will “LUV-Listen.”* (Listen by trying to put our self in the other’s place, show Understanding by repeating back main ideas, and Validate the other’s points of view even if we disagree.)
- _____ 5. *We agree to brainstorm other possible solution*—other than the things we said we wanted—but that would satisfy us both. We will choose one option we agree on; write down the details, then sign and abide by it.

WORKING FOR A WIN - WIN		<i>Date:</i>
PERSON A	Position: What you want	
	Reason: Why you want it	
PERSON B	Position: What you want	
	Reason: Why you want it	
Brainstorm possible solutions. Be respectful of other’s ideas. Think win-win. Write down all ideas.		
Negotiation Agreement: What is expected, who will do what when, and what is needed to do it.		
Agreed upon by: Negotiator A	name	signature
Agreed upon by: Negotiator B	name	signature

*Based on the Roger Fisher and William Ury Harvard Negotiation Project

Pre-Problem Solving Steps

Review these “P-OK-E & C” concepts with your kids



One of the best things kids (or adults) can do for themselves is to avoid problems before they begin by training their brains to think ahead so they can recognize when anti-social opportunities present themselves and avoid them. “Pre-Problem Solving” skills give kids and adults “smart power” so they can recognize the negative consequences that could result from bad choices and say “no.” You can develop these pre-problem solving skills by using the “P-OK-E & C” steps below.

BELIEVE

CONCEPTS BEHIND SMART POWER:

- > You have personal power to make choices.
- > There are two types of choices: pro-social or anti-social. Pro-social behaviors strengthen society. Anti-social behaviors weaken it.
- > Every choice has consequences—something good or bad will happen as a result.
- > Your choices are based on what you *think* will happen. (But your first thought may be wrong, so you need to think twice.)
- > You are responsible for any harm you cause others or society, and you must pay for, or make amends, to correct it.

THINK

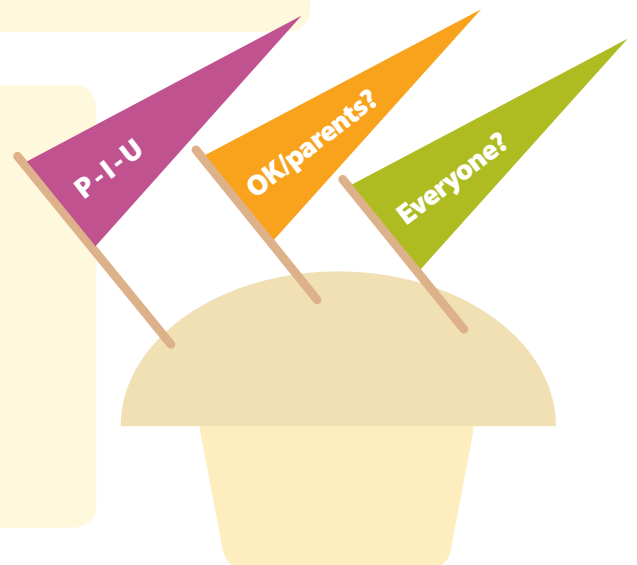
5 STEPS OF PRE-PROBLEM SOLVING:

- 1) **Think ahead of possible problem-causing situations** you might be asked to participate in.
- 2) **Test it**—Give each situation a four-question “P-OK-E & C” test (see below).
- 3) **Consider the negative consequences** if you did it. Ask your parents’ or teachers’ advice.
- 4) **Practice saying “No”**—using the “5 Cs” and do something good instead.
- 5) **Congratulate yourself** for using smart power.

TEST

USE THE FOUR-QUESTION P-OK-E & C TEST:

- 1) **P** = P-I-U test: Is any **P**art **I**llegal, **I**mmoral, **U**nkind, **U**nsafe, or **U**nethical?
That’s p-i-u for short—the “pee-yew” test to identify stinky anti-social behavior.
- 2) **OK** = Is it **OK**ay with my parents, the public, and the police if I do it?
- 3) **E** = If **Everyone** did it to me, would I honestly like it?
- 4) **C** = **Consequences**: What could happen if I did this?



Pre-Problem Solving Worksheet

Identify and prevent stinky anti-social behavior using "P-OK-E & C"



P = P-I-I-U-U test: Is any **P**art **I**llegal, **I**mmoral, **U**nkind or **U**nethical?

OK = Is it **OK**ay with my parents, the public, and the police?

E = If **Everyone** did it to me, would I like it?

C = **Consequences**: What would happen if I did this?

Questionable Behavior <i>Briefly describe</i>	P-OK-E it? <i>In what ways does it fail?</i>	Consequences <i>What will happen?</i>	Call it like it is:	
			Anti-social	Pro-social
1. Drink alcohol	Illegal, unethical, not okay with my parents	Could get arrested; parents will not trust me; damages my brain	X	
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				

The 5 Cs to Stay Smart and Safe

A smart way to say "no" and still keep your friends



When pressured by friends to do something you don't want to do, or you know is harmful, it can be hard to say "no." Practice using the 5 Cs to help you to say "no" in a nice but firm way, and still keep your friends. You'll be glad you did.



1- Caution
Ask questions

2- Cool it

Name the negative behavior and say "no"

3- Change the plan
Suggest a better idea

4- Catch you later
Leave if necessary

5- Call me
Call me if you change your mind

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

How to solve problems, negotiate, and keep friends



HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

At a family meeting, write down the following:

1. a) What is the problem? b) What are the different views?
c) What contributes to the problem?
2. How would we like things to be?
3. Brainstorm possible solutions. Write down all ideas.
4. Evaluate the three best solutions.
5. Decide on the best solution. Consider the costs, consequences, and the interests of all family members.
6. Make an action plan and do it. Decide on who will do what, when, resources needed, and the date to start.
7. Evaluate the outcome. Did your plan work? If not, try another solution.

HOW TO PRE-PROBLEM SOLVE

1. Think ahead of possible problem-causing situations you might be asked to participate in.
2. Test it out in your mind—Give each situation the pro-social “P-OK-E & C” test:
P = Is any PART illegal, immoral, unkind, unsafe, or unethical?
OK = Is it OK with my parents, the public, and the police if I do it?
E = If EVERYONE did it to me, would I like it?
3. Think about negative CONSEQUENCES that could happen if you did it. Discuss it with your parents.
4. Practice saying “No” using the 5 Cs and find something good and fun to do instead.
5. Congratulate yourself for using smart power.

THE 5 CORE AGREEMENTS OF WIN-WIN NEGOTIATION

1. We agree to find solutions that will benefit both of us and that we both feel good about.
2. We agree that we will negotiate using family values we have committed to live by.
3. We agree to use respectful “I-Messages” when stating what we want and explaining why it is important to us.
4. We agree to “LUV-Listen” to each other: listen without interrupting, repeat back main ideas, and validate the other person’s points of view even if we disagree.
5. We agree to brainstorm other solutions (than what we wanted) that would satisfy us both. We will choose an option we agree on. We will write down the details, sign it, and agree to abide by it.

Stress and Anger Management Skills



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



- Use stress-reducing techniques and effective anger management skills
- Recognize emotional triggers and reprogram new responses
- Make goals to reduce anger outbursts; give rewards

FAMILY GOALS:

1. Fill out your “Managing Stress” charts; choose two new behaviors to reduce stress; choose and practice one “Relaxation Response.”
2. Discuss, post, and practice the “Tracking and Taming the Anger Monster” handouts.
 - a) Make goals to reduce anger outbursts.
 - b) Using pretend situations, practice positive responses for tense or recurring situations.
 - c) Reward appropriate behaviors.
 - d) Use “Step Out of Anger” game.
3. Use the “Emotion Coaching” sheet to help your child identify and discuss feelings.

FAMILY FUN:

Practice using the “Step Out of Anger” game to music to reduce recurring anger outbursts.

POWER PHRASE:

“Each of us can become a highly respected peacemaker by re-programming our anger habits with pro-social behaviors.”



Managing Stress

a) What causes stress, what it does to you, and what to do about it

When our brain perceives a threatening or stressful situation, it triggers chemicals that shut down body systems not needed for instant survival (like our immune system), raises blood pressure and heart rate, and diverts blood from our brain to our large muscles. While some stress is positive, in helping us become energized to finish demanding tasks, too much stress is negative. When our body remains in a negative stressed “high alert to danger mode” for long periods, it impairs our health. It also makes us more likely to respond aggressively to people or things that stress us. Because stress is triggered by our thoughts and circumstances, the more we take control of these, the more we are able to reduce negative stress. Use the chart below to help you and your children identify stressors, choose reducers, and write your plans to reduce stress in the spaces provided. Don’t try too many things at once; that is stressful!

Things That Cause Stress

- negative thoughts about self/others
- friendship problems
- being rejected
- health problems
- fighting, hostility within family
- too many activities
- too high expectations
- too many demands
- poor time management skills
- being late
- procrastination
- disorderly room or household
- not enough sleep
- poor nutrition
- lack of exercise
- divorce of parents
- changing schools
- being bullied at school
- unsafe neighborhood
- lying/dishonesty
- financial problems
- overspending; no budget
- difficult co-worker
- demanding relatives
- death of a loved one
- holding resentment, grudges
- poor relationship skills
- too many responsibilities
- violent video games or music
- too much “screen-time” (computer, game screen, TV, smartphone, or other smart device)

Exercise to Reduce Stress

Exercise reduces stress by triggering “pleasure chemicals” in our brain such as serotonin and dopamine that make us feel calm and happy. It reduces anxiety, which affects mood, vitality, alertness, and feelings of well-being. Fifteen minutes of vigorous, heart-pumping exercise helped kids focus and be less “antsy” for two to four hours afterwards.

Plans to Reduce Stress

(Begin with a couple of easy ones)

Stressor _____

What I will do: _____

Stressor _____

What I will do: _____

Stressor _____

What I will do: _____

Eat Healthy to Reduce Stress

- Eat as much fresh, unprocessed food as possible. Frozen is next best to fresh.
- Meals and snacks should consist mostly of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, and some lean protein.
- For healthy protein eat: All kinds of beans—dry beans cheaper than canned; eggs; low fat cheese, cottage cheese; nuts; tuna, sardines, or other fish.
- Eat whole, unprocessed grains in breads, cereals, or on their own.
- Avoid pre-prepared foods with lots of ingredients you can’t pronounce.
- Avoid corn sweeteners, high salt, and trans fats / hydrogenated oils.
- Drink water, 100 % juice, or skim milk.

Stress Reducers

- Problem solve _____ (list what)
- Learn new skills _____ (list skill)
- Make new routines
- Change attitudes
- Be honest
- Eat healthy
- Exercise daily (min. 15 minutes)
- Get adequate sleep—before midnight is best
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs
- Learn relaxation techniques—deep breathing, muscle relaxation, mental imaging, mindfulness
- Rehearse situations beforehand
- Be assertive; state feelings in polite, but firm ways
- Learn practical coping skills, i.e., break large tasks into small ones
- Stop negative self-talk
- Stop procrastinating
- Make and live within a budget
- Don’t demand perfection from self
- Listen to soothing music
- Work on fun hobbies
- Be with a pet
- Talk to a friend
- Express gratitude
- Forgive others; give up desire for revenge
- Limit “Junk Culture” and screen-time

Sleep Enough to Reduce Stress

Lack of sleep causes stress, irritability, and depression in most people. In one study, teens who regularly went to bed after midnight had a 24 percent higher risk of depression and suicidal thoughts than those who went to bed before 10:00 p.m. Teens who slept only five hours a night were 71 percent more likely to suffer depression.

Managing Stress

b) Teach your body to relax during stressful times



When our brain perceives a physical or psychological “threat” it activates hormones that prepare our body to run or fight—or sometimes “freeze.” These stress hormones instantly raise blood pressure, heart rate, and produce a chemical “rush.” When the brain perceives the threat is gone, it triggers a “relaxation response” that immediately returns all body processes to normal. When feeling stressed, we can trigger our own “relaxation response” using the Instant Stress Busters from Lesson 1 and the relaxation skills below. Like all new skills, practice makes perfect! Have everyone in your family choose one; master it, and use it whenever they feel stressed.

Tense and Relax

When you’re under stress, your muscles have a higher level of resting tension that causes fatigue. As you tense and then relax your muscles, the resting tension level drops. Even children can do this. Start by sitting comfortably, with good posture, hands in your lap, and then tense and relax each set of muscles. Begin with your feet, take a calming nose breath, hold the tension for five seconds, and then as you exhale say the word, “Relax.” Imagine the tension flowing out of the muscles. Then tighten and release the muscles, one set a time, in the legs, stomach, back, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, and face, including jaw muscles and forehead. This is also a wonderful relaxer to do lying in bed to help get to sleep. You can even use a short “whole-body-tense-and-relax” version while sitting in traffic.

Meditative Breathing

Meditation works to calm the stress response by focusing the brain on a single calm thought and supplying the brain with increased oxygen. The most basic form of meditation is a simple breathing exercise. When we are anxious, we breathe less deeply and more rapidly which limits oxygen to the brain. Breathing exercises help children quiet their minds into a relaxed state, so they can better manage emotions and refocus thoughts.

To begin, have your child sit in a comfortable position, eyes closed, and breathe in deeply and slowly through the nose. Hold the breath for five seconds, and then slowly let the breath out through the mouth. Concentrate only on breathing, feeling the chest and stomach inflate and deflate. As kids master the skill, have them focus on one word, like “calm” or “peace.” Each time the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the word. Practice this deep breathing for five to ten minutes each day, depending on age of child. He or she will be calmer and more able to concentrate.

Imaginative Countdown Relaxation

PREPARE: Get comfortable in a chair and close your eyes. Imagine you are standing alone at the top of a beautiful winding stairway. It’s your private stairway, and you feel comfortable there. Visualize the steps in front of you. See the handrail. Imagine yourself stepping very slowly down the stairway as you count slowly backward from ten to zero. As you silently say each number, beginning with ten, breathe in deeply through your nose; hold it; and then breathe out. As you count, imagine you are stepping down the stairway. With each count, move yourself slowly down the steps deeper and deeper. As you step, you will relax more deeply as you go deeper and deeper into a state of profound relaxation. When you reach zero, imagine you have reached the bottom of the stairway. You then find you are in a place of perfect calm.

BEGIN COUNTDOWN: Ten, and take your first step. . . Nine, relaxing more deeply. . . Eight, deeper and deeper relaxation. . . Seven, gently walking down the stairs. . . Six, feel more and more relaxed. . . Five, deeper and deeper. . . Four, serene and calm. . . Three, very relaxed. . . Two, deeper and deeper. . . One, very, very profoundly relaxed. . . Zero, gently step off the bottom step into a perfectly relaxed and calm peace. Now, drift still deeper with five more breaths. Deeper and deeper. Feel that deeper relaxation all over and continue relaxing. Now, relaxing deeper and deeper, you should feel an emotional calm. . . tranquil and serene feelings. . . feelings of safe security. . . and a calm peace. Pause there.

Now, count from one to three. Silently say each number as you take a deep breath. When you reach three, open your eyes. You will be relaxed, peaceful and alert.

Managing Stress

c) Using a Stress Test* to recognize symptoms of too much stress



Besides too much stress causing physical symptoms like high blood pressure and insomnia, it can also cause changes in our emotions, attitudes, and productivity. In the chart below, put a check mark beside anything that you have noticed lately in yourself. If you have checked more than a few items, use our “Managing Stress” handout to identify your major sources of stress, and then find ways to reduce them. Be sure to use the basic Stress Reducers first which are: Problem Solving, Learning New Skills, Changing Attitudes, and setting up Positive Routines. Then make sure you consistently use the next three essential Stress Reducers: eat healthily, exercise daily, and get adequate sleep (7 ½–8 hours nightly; kids need 9–10 hours).

Test Your Stress

Check below for the symptoms of stress that you are feeling.

PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	ATTITUDINAL
<input type="checkbox"/> tired	<input type="checkbox"/> worry a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> empty feeling
<input type="checkbox"/> tense	<input type="checkbox"/> mood swings	<input type="checkbox"/> negative
<input type="checkbox"/> can't sleep	<input type="checkbox"/> bad dreams	<input type="checkbox"/> angry at self
<input type="checkbox"/> sleeps too much	<input type="checkbox"/> discouraged	<input type="checkbox"/> angry at others
<input type="checkbox"/> can't eat	<input type="checkbox"/> little joy	<input type="checkbox"/> apathy
<input type="checkbox"/> eat too much	<input type="checkbox"/> cry often	<input type="checkbox"/> unforgiving
<input type="checkbox"/> colds, headaches	<input type="checkbox"/> temper	<input type="checkbox"/> self-doubt
<input type="checkbox"/> muscle aches	<input type="checkbox"/> don't want to talk	<input type="checkbox"/> cynical attitude
<input type="checkbox"/> teeth grinding	<input type="checkbox"/> talk too much	<input type="checkbox"/> life meaningless
SOCIAL	THINKING	PRODUCTIVITY
<input type="checkbox"/> fewer friends	<input type="checkbox"/> forget things	<input type="checkbox"/> work piling up
<input type="checkbox"/> stay home more	<input type="checkbox"/> can't concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/> increased work absences
<input type="checkbox"/> angry at others	<input type="checkbox"/> mind wanders	<input type="checkbox"/> pressure at work
<input type="checkbox"/> feeling lonely	<input type="checkbox"/> confused	<input type="checkbox"/> can't finish on time
<input type="checkbox"/> manipulative	<input type="checkbox"/> think negatively	<input type="checkbox"/> procrastinate
<input type="checkbox"/> clam up	<input type="checkbox"/> feel bored	<input type="checkbox"/> work long hours

*Jansen, Paterson, & Blashko, 1993

Calm Anger by Rethinking Your "Stories"

Giving up angry, blaming thoughts helps us feel peace



You can change your emotional state, and thus the intensity of your anger, by being aware of what "stories" you are telling yourself about the things that trigger your anger. Question your thoughts about what happened to you and look for the part you played in the situation. (From *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie*)

What Are "Stories"?

Recurring anger usually comes from the "stories" we tell ourselves about things that happen to us, not from the things themselves. This allows us to feel victimized and to justify our anger, and prevents us from taking responsibility for our life and feelings.

In her book *Loving What Is* Byron Katie* states that angry feelings are caused by a thought that is untrue for us. Examine your stories by using this technique:

- A. Fill in the six statements to the right (Part A).
- B. For each statement, ask yourself the four questions in Part B. Meditate and listen as the answers surface.
- C. Turn around your statements in Part A, then find at least three specific, genuine examples of how each turnaround is true for you in this situation.

Example: "Paul doesn't listen to me about his health."

Possible turnarounds:

- a. *To the self:* "I don't listen to myself about my health."
- b. *To the other:* "I don't listen to Paul about his health."
- c. *To the opposite:* "Paul does listen to me about his health."

The Judge-Your-Neighbor Worksheet — By Byron Katie

A. Begin by writing down the following:

1. Who angers, upsets, saddens, or disappoints you, and why? I am _____ with _____ because _____
emotion name
2. What do you think of them in this situation? Make a list. _____
3. What is it in or about this situation that you don't ever want to experience again? _____
4. How do you want the person to change? _____
5. What advice would you offer to them? _____ should/shouldn't _____
name
6. In order for you to be happy, what do you need them to think, say, feel, or do? _____

B. Now ask yourself these four questions about EACH of the six statements above in Part A.

1. Is it true? (Yes or no. If no, move to question 3.) _____
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true? _____
3. How do you react? What happens when you believe that thought? _____
4. Who would you be without the thought? _____

C. Turn the thought around by stating its opposite. There may be more than one opposite (see example).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

D. Let go of the negative thought each time it appears and feel freedom and peace.

Tracking and Taming the Anger Monster

a) Five simple steps to managing anger



Anger is a natural emotion that is meant to alert and energize us when there is a need to change a harmful situation. Like a small flame shedding light on an injustice or problem, anger can trigger a pro-social response to a negative situation.

- **Pro-Social = good; eradicates crime or injustice; builds society**

Like any flame, anger can quickly rage out of control and become an anti-social and destructive force. Fueled by selfish or imagined grievances, faulty beliefs, and “hot thoughts,” untamed anger can damage health, destroy relationships, harm society.

- **Anti-social = selfish; seeks to dominate, punish, control; damages families, relationships, society**

Our Anger Monster responses are learned behaviors. We can change them by reprogramming our brain. We do this by “Tracking it” (noticing when and what triggers our anger), and “Taming it” using Reducers to calm our body’s stress response, Reminders to calm “hot thoughts;” and using “New Planned Responses” in aggravating situations.

Use the accompanying tracking sheet, “*Tracking and Taming the Anger Monster*,” with the concepts below. Evaluate yourself at the end of each day for at least a month to establish new patterns of awareness and improved responses to stress and anger. It works.

1) Note Triggers:

Notice and write down on the tracking sheet what makes you angry:

- External triggers (what others do)
- Internal triggers (what you say to yourself and how you interpret an event)

2) Note Cues:

Notice and write down your body’s physical response to anger-producing situations:

- Feel flushed or hot
- Pounding heart
- Knot in your throat or stomach
- Grinding teeth
- Sweaty palms
- Clenched fists and/or tense muscles
- Rapid breathing, etc.

3) Use Anger Reducers:

Write down which reducers relieve your tension and anger best for you:

- Calming breaths
- Backwards counting
- Calm, pleasant imaging
- Conscious, methodical, muscle relaxing
- Projecting and reflecting: “What could happen if I don’t control my anger?” “Why am I getting angry?” “Is it worth being angry about?”

4) Use Reminders:

Decide and write down words and phrases to cool your “hot thoughts:”

- Cool thoughts: “Just stay cool.” “It’s not worth it.” “I’m not getting hooked.”
- Problem-solving thoughts: “How can I solve this peacefully?”
- Questioning your motives thoughts: “Why am I getting angry? What’s behind this?”
- Control and escape thoughts: “I can walk away.” “It’s okay to take a time out.”
- Forward-looking thoughts: “What will happen if I let myself get angry?”
- Self-rewarding thoughts: “Good; I’m not yelling, I’m staying calm.”

5) Evaluate Response:

Write your response. Analyze anger out-bursts by answering these questions:

- How did I do? Was I aggressive, passive-aggressive, or assertive?
- Did I react to any faulty assumptions on how I “thought” people should act?
- Were my “grievances” real or imagined?
- Did selfishness or jealousy kindle my anger?
- What “hot thoughts” fed my anger?
- What were the consequences?
- Do I value the power of a peacemaker?
- What can I do different/better next time to get a better outcome?

Tracking and Taming the Anger Monster

b) Applying the five steps to managing anger



	Triggers	Cues	Reducers	Reminders	Evaluate and Choose
DAY	What caused your anger?	What were your body's first signs of getting angry?	What instant stress reducers did you use?	What words did you use to coach yourself to stay cool?	What didn't work? What new response could?
SUN	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:
MON	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:
TUE	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:
WED	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:
THU	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:
FRI	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:
SAT	Trigger:				
	Hot Thoughts:				New Planned Response:

Tracking and Taming the Anger Monster

c) Worksheet for kids



The things that make you angry are called “triggers.” If you can figure out what your triggers are, you can learn to control them so you can feel calm and happy. Choose an anger trigger to work on this week. Write down what made you angry, how you felt about it, and how you reacted.

1. TRIGGER

What made you angry? *Example: My sister took my things without asking.*

2. HOT THOUGHT

What thoughts did you have that made your anger worse?

Example: I thought about how my sister always steals my things and she never gets in trouble for it.

3. BODY CLUES

What were your body’s first signs of getting angry? *Example: My face got red and my eyes felt hot.*

4. CALM

What things did you do to help you feel calm? *Example: I closed my eyes and took ten deep breaths.*

5. HOW DID YOU DO?

What did you do and say when you got angry? *Example: I asked my sister nicely to give my things back. But she didn’t, so I yelled at her and tried to take her stuff instead.*

What will you do and say next time this anger trigger happens?

Example: I will ask nicely for her to give my things back. If she doesn’t, instead of screaming, I’ll ask my mom to help me figure out how to solve the problem.

Step Out of Anger

Instructions



5 Steps to Prepare

After filling out your “Tracking and Taming the Anger Monster” tracking sheet, choose a reoccurring anger situation to play this “Step Out of Anger” brain-reprogramming game. You will need a pen and the five “footprint” papers that follow this instruction sheet.

1. On paper #1 write the “Trigger”—a one-word description of the thing or grievance that triggered your anger.
2. On paper #2 write the “Cue”—the first body signal you feel when you begin to get angry (flushed cheeks, tight throat, fast heartbeat, etc.).
3. On paper #3 write:
 - a) “Reducer” (a physical act, like a deep nose breath) to calm your body’s anger response
 - b) “Reminder” word to calm “hot thoughts”
4. On paper #4 write one word to describe your “New Planned Response.”
5. On paper #5 write a word that means you are very pleased with yourself—like feeling a big confident win.

Place the papers on the floor about 8 inches apart and begin. As you step on each paper, think of and generate the feelings of each page.

Ready to Begin?

1. **Practice by stepping on paper #3.** Take a deep “Calming Breath” or other “Reducer;” think your “Reminder” word, and feel completely calm. Make a body pose that shows complete calm.
2. **Step on paper #4,** do a body pose that represents your “New Planned Response.” Visualize yourself doing it, and notice how good it feels.
3. **Step on paper #5** and do a body pose that represents feeling very pleased with yourself. Remember each of those body poses and feelings; then begin the “Step Out of Anger” exercise.
4. Begin by **stepping on paper #1** and thinking of the “Trigger.”
5. As soon as you have it in mind, **step on paper #2** “Cue” and let the feeling of anger just barely begin.
6. Immediately **step on paper #3.** Use a “Reducer;” do your calm pose, and think of your “Reminder” word. As soon as you are calm, step on the next paper.
7. **Step on paper #4,** do your pose, and visualize yourself successfully doing your “New Planned Response.”
8. Now **step on paper #5** and feel very pleased that you tamed your anger and used your new response.
9. **Repeat** this process going from paper #1 to paper #5 several times, getting faster each time. Then, do it again, **without the papers,** fluid—like in a dance.
10. Now, standing still, use only mental images and tiny hand motions or small foot movements that you could use if you became angry in a real-life situation. Repeat this micro-version several times daily until you can use your “New Planned Response” automatically in real life.



Step Out of Anger

Step one



1. Trigger

Identify, with a one-word description, the event that triggered your anger.



Write word here.

Step Out of Anger

Step two



2. Cue Identify the first body-signal that indicates you're getting angry.



Write body-signal here.

Step Out of Anger

Step three



3. Reducer, Reminder

Reducer:

Example: Deep calming breath to calm body's anger response

Reminder:

Positive self-talk to calm "hot thoughts"



Choose a Reducer

Write one word of positive self-talk to calm "hot thoughts"

Step Out of Anger

Step four



4. Response

Response:

“New Planned Response” to handle grievance



Write one word to describe your “New Planned Response.”

Step Out of Anger

Step five



5. Pleased with Self

Put your body in a position showing that you are pleased with yourself.



Write how you feel here.

Face Up to Your Feelings

Emotion Coaching



Five Steps of Emotion Coaching:

1. Be aware of your child's feelings/emotions.
2. Be calm; recognize negative emotions as a positive teaching opportunity.
3. Show empathy; validate your child's feelings by paraphrasing what he/she is feeling.
4. Help your child identify and label his/her emotions (teach the vocabulary).
5. Help your child decide ways to express emotions in pro-social ways; set behavior limits.



Family Agreement for Dealing with Conflict

How to handle disagreements to reduce conflict



Conflict arises when family members disagree on how things should be done in a family, or are hurt or offended by how they are treated. This worksheet is a tool to handle disagreements without becoming angry or insulting one another. Check the boxes that you, as a family, all agree with. Then sign your names committing to live and use these attitudes, skills, and tools when you disagree.

OUR FAMILY AGREEMENT FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT

- WE AGREE that what we want most long term for our family is to have warm and loving relationships.**
- WE COMMIT to not say or do anything that would harm our goal of a happy family.**
- WE AGREE that when we have a disagreement or concern and we begin to feel angry or upset over it, we will choose a specific time to sit down together and discuss it.**
- WE AGREE to adopt the Strengthening Families Program attitudes of respect, kindness, generosity, patience, and peace in dealing with one another.**
- WHERE WE WILL GO TO TALK:** _____
- WHAT TOOLS WILL WE USE in our discussion?** (Checking all the SFP handouts below will give you the best chance of success).
 - Problem Solving Worksheet** (Lesson 5-2)
 - Win-Win Negotiation Worksheet** (Lesson 5-3)
 - Safe and Cool Conversations** (Lesson 2-14)
 - Three Easy Communication Skills** (Lesson 2-2, 2-3, 2-4)
 - The Listening Stick** (Lesson 2-5)
 - Banish Communication Boulders** (Lesson 2-7, 2-8, 2-9)
- WE AGREE that if we can't solve the disagreement, we will seek a neutral outside person to help us mediate the problem and not just give up and abandon the relationship.**

SIGNED: _____

Building Emotional Control

Train your mind to be calm and positive



Sometimes when people experience trauma, their brains become dysregulated and stay stuck in a negative, downward spiral. They may experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), where their brains overreact to stressors. Or, they may suffer from Attachment Disorder, which includes a faulty belief that no one care deeply about them. People who struggle with these traumas may misbehave to punish, get control, or prove they are unlovable so they won't have to be abandoned again. With brain dysregulation, people's minds can swirl with hot thoughts, self-hate, intense fear or anxiety, or negative stories of how others mistreated them, which they grow to believe.

If this sounds like you or someone in your family, Mindfulness Meditation can help change those attitudes and replace them with the skills below. Practicing these skills every day can help re-regulate the brain, which helps lessen pain, anxiety, and family conflict. Remember: people can only heal in a safe, secure, loving, accepting environment. Do your part to make your home that way.

ACCEPT UNPLEASANT REALITIES

1. Recognize and accept the fact that life is hard and you will always have challenges. Overcoming them helps build character.
2. Love (both giving and receiving love) strengthens us and makes a hard life bearable.
3. You have the power to turn hardships and challenges to your good.
4. If you can't change a reality, accept it as it is. Say, "It is what it is." And don't stress over it.
5. You do not have to accept mistreatment from people or realities you can't change. Get help to protect yourself. Forgive and let go so you can heal and move on.

MANAGE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

1. Recognize that emotions are created by your thoughts, and sometimes your thoughts lie.
2. Use Mindfulness to dismiss your negative thoughts and act appropriately on correct thoughts.
3. When the first emotional cue surfaces, take a very deep 4-6-8 belly breath (inhale 4 counts; hold 6 counts; exhale 8 counts) to trigger a relaxation response before you speak.
4. Notice and label your emotions. Be curious: ask how to express them and not harm others.
5. If you use anger to get people to do what you want, resolve to stop. It is manipulative, anti-social behavior.

LEARN TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS

1. View others with a kind, compassionate eye. When you notice their faults, remind yourself that you have faults too. When one of their faults comes to mind, say "And me too" or "Just like me."
2. Recognize that everyone has something good about them. Look for that good and think about it. When a person is unpleasant, it is often a call for help.
3. Tell people what you like about them. Let them feel loved and accepted in your presence.
4. Be flexible. Listen to others' wants and needs. Be generous; don't always demand your way.
5. Do a Loving Kindness Meditation for those with whom you don't get along.

HANDLE STRESS AND ANXIETY

Remind yourself that an extreme response to unpleasant triggers makes things worse. When extreme emotions hit, use this "STOP and TEMP" exercise.

STOP:

S = Stop and breathe

T = Talk back to your thoughts and encourage yourself.

O = Observe the trigger with curiosity, not anxiety

P = Proceed with compassion for others and yourself

TEMP:

T = Take a break and use a tapping exercise to redirect your mind

E = Exercise (jog in place, lift your arms up and down)

M = Muscles (tense and relax all muscles)

P = Press hard with your fingers on your head's pressure points

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Manage anger appropriately



Identifying and reducing stress is a first step in managing anger—so we added it here as a skill. From there, the “Anger Tracking Sheet” and “Step Out of Anger” game will help you change negative behavior. So will learning a few new skills—such as these. Practice these skills using a wide variety of pretend family situations until they become automatic.

HOW TO

REDUCE NEGATIVE STRESS

1. Trigger a “relaxation response” by taking slow, deep breaths through your nose, holding each for a count of five, then slowly exhaling.
2. Identify sources of stress.
3. Decide best ways to decrease negative stress; write a plan.
4. Put plan(s) into action.
5. Evaluate success.

HOW TO

DISAGREE POLITELY

1. Use a calm, polite tone of voice. (Avoid using any “Communication Boulders.”)
2. First validate their point of view. (“So the way you see it is..”)
3. Use respectful “I-Messages” to share your different view. (“I see it differently...”)
4. Explain any details.
5. Thank them for listening.

HOW TO

MAKE AN ASSERTIVE COMPLAINT

1. Stay calm.
2. Decide on a time to talk.
3. Look the person in the eye.
4. Say how you feel with assertive “I-Messages.”
5. Make your request; ask if they’ll do it.
6. Thank them for listening.

HOW TO

RESOLVE CONFLICTS IN PEACE

1. Identify the specific problem.
2. Identify your feelings and they how impact you.
3. Decide if you want to try and resolve the conflict.
4. Set up a time to address the conflict peacefully using “I-Messages,” “LUV-Listening,” Problem Solving, and “Win-Win Negotiation.”

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Skills to minimize arguments and fights



These attitudes and skills will help protect your kids from anti-social behaviors and make your life more calm and pleasant.

HOW TO DEVELOP PATIENCE

1. Control your self-talk: remind yourself that not everyone does things the same as you, and that's okay.
2. Remind yourself to be patient.
3. Think of something pleasant.
4. Take several calming breaths.
5. Talk to the person later using "Positive Criticism" if problems continue.

HOW TO BE FAIR

1. Decide that being fair is an important quality you want to develop.
2. Be willing to sacrifice in order to do right by other people.
3. Think of how you would want to be treated.
4. Do the same for the other person as you would want for yourself.
5. Feel pleased that you were fair.

HOW TO STAY COOL IN CONFLICT

1. Notice your triggers and cues.
2. Avoid those who want to pick a fight.
3. Withdraw from arguments until you're both calm.
4. When you feel anger cues rising, use a "Reminder" and a "Reducer" to remind yourself to stay cool in conflict.
5. Congratulate yourself on staying cool.

HOW TO SHOW RESPECT

1. Believe that others have a right to enjoy a happy life the same as you do.
2. Don't bully, threaten, tease, purposely annoy, or make fun of others.
3. Don't use other people's property without asking.
4. Don't vandalize or damage other people's property.
5. Feel pleased that you are a respectful person.

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Skills to reduce conflict and have a peaceful family life



HOW TO

REDUCE FAMILY CONFLICT

1. Maintain respect for your child, spouse, or partner even during an argument. Bring up problems in a non-blaming way.
2. Stay focused on finding an acceptable solution to the current problem—and don't drag up past issues.
3. Stay calm, and don't let "hot thoughts" cause you to rage. Take a break if you feel yourself getting hostile. Use "I-feel" messages like this one: "I feel angry and upset because of _____ but I still love you. When we're calm, I'd like to work to find a solution."
4. Use Mindfulness Breathing to trigger a "relaxation response."
5. Recover quickly from arguments. Do not let resentments carry on. Negotiate a solution, forgive, and then forget.
6. Don't let anger from an argument spill over into other areas of your life. Separate your conflict from the rest of your relationship by being mindful of the things you do like about your family member.

HOW TO

BECOME A PEACEMAKER

1. Develop deep respect for yourself and equal respect for others. Make a firm decision to never intentionally harm anyone.
2. Examine your motives to be sure they are pure.
3. When you have a problem with someone, pick a good time and place to talk to him or her.
4. Tell the truth about how his or her behavior affected you, and ask for a solution.
5. Take steps to protect yourself from verbal and physical abuse. Get help if necessary.

HOW TO

EMOTION COACH YOUR CHILDREN

1. Become aware of your child's emotions. Often they are expressed in indirect ways such as misbehavior.
2. Recognize negative emotions as a positive teaching opportunity.
3. Validate your child's feelings by paraphrasing what they are feeling, and let your child know you see their point of view. It doesn't mean you agree with it, but you see it.
4. Help your child verbally label their emotions.
5. Discuss and decide on ways to express their emotions in pro-social ways, setting behavior limits and using problem-solving skills.

Goals and Contracts to Change Behavior



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Each person fill out their “Achieving My Dreams and Goals” sheet. Have kids share dreams and goals; discuss ways to support their goals.
2. Each person take the “Assessing My Talents and Strengths and Skills” survey. Choose one new skill to develop to benefit yourself, and one skill to make family life happier. Each person fill out a “Contract for Change.”
3. Discuss “How to Give Positive Criticism” from the “Helping Kids Change for the Better” handout. Practice the skill several times using past family situations.

FAMILY FUN:

Have each child make a paper collage, with pictures and/or drawings of who and what they want to become in life.

POWER PHRASE:

“Setting goals helps us develop talents and find purpose in life. Dividing our goals into small steps, and using ‘Contracts for Change’ helps us achieve our goals.”

- **Goal-setting, tracking, and rewarding help people change for the better**
- **Learn to give and receive positive criticism**
- **Setting up a budget will help you achieve your dreams**

Helping Kids Change for the Better

Skills to help others change negative behavior



Preparing Kids for a Happy Life

- 1) Help kids decide what they really want in life and write goals to achieve it.
- 2) Identify the positive skills they need to achieve their goals.
- 3) Help them fill out a Contract for Change to develop the skills. Put "**Tips to Achieve Success**" into action.
- 4) Have kids practice the new skill(s) several times and praise their efforts.
- 5) Track behavior and reward efforts.
- 6) Hold a pleasant, personal conference with your child and use the steps of Positive Criticism listed below when agreements aren't met.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN ask yourself these five questions: (If the answer is yes to all of them, then proceed in a kindly manner.)

1) Is it my responsibility to give this person feedback? **2)** Is the criticism true? **3)** Is the criticism necessary? **4)** Have I thought of several positive things about the person that I can first share with him or her? **5)** Did I ask for and receive permission to criticize? (Ex: "I noticed some things that seem to be causing you trouble. May I talk to you about it?")

How to Give Positive Criticism

PREPARE:

- 1) Feel genuine respect and concern for the person.
- 2) Pick a good time. (*Don't criticize when someone is angry or upset.*)
- 3) Pick a good place. (*Usually quiet, and away from other people.*)
- 4) Have a pleasant face and calm voice.

DELIVER:

- 1) Say what you like about the person first.
- 2) Ask if the person has noticed the problem.
- 3) Describe how the problem affects others or is negatively affecting the person's life. (*I noticed...*)
- 4) Ask what he/she thinks the solution might be. Offer your own solution if needed.
- 5) Ask if he/she will make the change; and offer to help write up a "Contract for Change."
- 6) Thank the person for listening; express love.

Tips for Delivering Difficult Feedback

PREPARE:

- 1) Remember to protect the relationship.
- 2) Sit side by side (*like partners, on same team*).
- 3) Look AT THE PERSON while giving all positive comments.
- 4) Look STRAIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU when describing the problem or giving negative comments.

DELIVER:

- 1) Begin by saying what you like about the person.
- 2) Describe the problem as you see it.
- 3) Ask what happened.
- 4) Ask what the person will do to behave differently (next time).
- 5) End by saying something positive about the person.

HELPFUL TIP

Consider the "problem" you want to discuss as an imaginary object in front of you; point at it several times to focus negative energy

there as you talk. Or look at and point to a notebook in your lap on which you have written a couple of words describing the problem.

Motivational Interviewing

1. Express empathy for the person's problem, concern, or point of view.
2. Point out inconsistencies between the person's values and their behavior.
3. Validate the reluctance to change as natural; but not beneficial to him/her.
4. Express confidence in the person's ability to change.
5. Ask what he or she is willing to do differently.
6. Ask for a commitment to do it.
7. If willing, help the person fill out a "Contract for Change."
8. Help the person with the items in the "Tips to Achieve Success" column.

Achieving My Goals and Dreams

Read each morning to remember what you want most in life*



Think about who you want to be in five years, and write down what you want most in each area of your life. Then decide what you need to do to get there, and what skills you need to develop to make it happen. Use the "S.M.A.R.T. Goals Tracking Sheet" or "Contracts for Change" to set up short weekly goals to develop the needed skills and do the actions to make your goals and dreams reality. *Adapted from Dr. Daniel Amen's "One Page Miracle" sheet.

MY GOALS

Relationships	School and Work	Physical Health
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Actions to Take:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Skills to Develop:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p>Actions to Take:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Skills to Develop:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p>Actions to Take:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Skills to Develop:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>
Emotional/Spiritual Health	Financial	Other
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Actions to Take:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Skills to Develop:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p>Actions to Take:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Skills to Develop:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>	<p>Actions to Take:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Skills to Develop:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>

Remember: "Don't trade what you want at the moment for what you want long-term."

Making S.M.A.R.T. Goals

(S)pecific; (M)easurable; (A)chievable-in-steps; (R)ewarding; (T)ime



S.M.A.R.T. goals was a term coined by George Doran. The letters stand for “Specific, Measurable, Achievable-in-steps, Rewarding, and Time-specific.” Use the spaces below, and the “Contracts for Change,” to help your child set S.M.A.R.T. goals. Here’s an example of how to set up a S.M.A.R.T. goal. Make it:

- S Specific:** Set a specific goal, name it, and list the details of what you want to do.
- M Measurable:** How will you measure the goal? How will you tell when you’ve done it.
- A Achievable-in-steps:** Start very small and make your goal easily achievable. List the steps.
- R Rewarding:** What rewards will I get when completing my goal?
- T Time:** Decide on a date you will start and when to fill in a tracking log. Set a deadline for you to complete your goal.

S.M.A.R.T. GOAL 1

Specific Goal _____

Measurable _____

Achievable-in-steps (list the steps) _____

Rewarding _____

Time _____

TRACKING MY PROGRESS

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

S.M.A.R.T. GOAL 2

Specific Goal _____

Measurable _____

Achievable-in-steps (list the steps) _____

Rewarding _____

Time _____

TRACKING MY PROGRESS

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

My Goals

Setting and tracking goals for kids



A goal is a plan to do a new thing that would make your life better or happier. Think about your life and family. What things could you do differently to make life better and happier for you and them? Then choose two small goals to work on this week and write them below. Choose one goal to make your own life better or happier. And choose one goal to make your family life better or happier. Track how well you are doing by putting an "X" in each box that you remember to work on your goals. Ask a family member to help remind you.

GOAL #1

What is one thing you can do to make your own life better or happier?

WHAT:

WHEN:

REWARD:

TRACKING MY PROGRESS

Mark an X for every day you worked on your goal.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

GOAL #2

What is one thing you can do to make your family life better or happier?

WHAT:

WHEN:

REWARD:

TRACKING MY PROGRESS

Mark an X for every day you worked on your goal.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

Contract for Change

Create new brain wiring for a happier life



You can create new brain wiring, and thus new habits, by mindfully changing your thoughts and practicing new pro-social behaviors. This can help you become happier and achieve what is most important to you. Prepare for change by following the "Tips to Achieve Success" and use the four-week tracking sheet.

CONTRACT FOR CHANGE

Name _____ Date _____

The **negative behavior** I want to change is _____

I want to change because _____

The **positive behavior** I will do instead is _____

I want this positive behavior instead because _____

Reminders I will give myself are _____

I will **track it** by _____

Rewards I will earn for changing my thoughts and doing this new behavior

Consequences if I don't do it are _____

Positive Practice:

Parent's Signature _____ Child's Signature _____ Date: _____

- Tips to Achieve Success
- 1) Choose one negative behavior to change.**
 - 2) Feel a personal motivation to change.**
 (Establish rewards you care about; think how the behavior is harmful, has negative consequences, and violates your values.)
 - 3) Set-up your environment for success.** (Choose reminders; make it easy to do; make plans to stay away from negative influences and triggers.)
 - 4) Do "Positive Practice" of the new behavior.**
 (Practice using pretend situations until it's easy to do.)
 - 5) Set a specific time to report progress.** (Weekly Pleasant Personal Conference.)
 - 6) Make it socially rewarding.** (Ask family and friends to look for and compliment your efforts of new good behavior.)

TRACKING MY PROGRESS							
WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

Assessing Strengths and Skills

Developing pro-social skills helps wire your brain for success



Below, grouped by area of Intelligence, are pro-social attitudes and skills that enable us to fulfill our life's goals and make a positive contribution to society. Because the brain has the amazing ability to adapt and change its physical structure through our choices, we can increase our intelligence in each area through "Positive Practice."

HOW: Each person ranks self [0-to-5] in each category. Then choose one skill to develop that would benefit self, and one that would help make your family life happier. If you see a weak area, choose its Positive Opposite, make a S.M.A.R.T. goal and fill out a "Contract to Change." Then track and reward your performance.

Emotional Intelligence

- Aware of own feelings, needs, and motivations
- Uses accurate and positive self-talk
- Aware of how own behavior affects others
- Moderates own moods and responses
- Exercises emotional control: is not easily angered
- Expresses self politely
- Patient; can wait without annoyance
- Chooses polite responses to stressors
- Exercises impulse control; stops when appropriate
- Notices others' body-language; picks up emotions of others
- Feels empathy for others' needs
- Gracious; makes others feel comfortable
- Is kind and thoughtful
- Notices and expresses gratitude

IQ = Standard Intelligence

- Reads extensively, studies math, science, literature to increase knowledge and intelligence
- Has a good working memory: remembers, holds information in mind to complete a specific task
- Notices connections; make deductions
- Ponders deep questions
- Has good logical reasoning skills
- Has good problem-solving skills
- Makes good decisions
- Sees innovative solutions
- Mentally flexible; shifts attention from one aspect of a problem to another; doesn't get stuck

Practical Intelligence

- Plans, thinks ahead; anticipates problems; weighs decisions before going forward
- Sets goals; finds ways to fulfill them
- Organizes surroundings to create order
- Organizes time to do needed tasks
- Begins tasks without being reminded
- Stays on-task; ignores distractions
- Checks work for mistakes; assures accuracy
- Budgets and spends money wisely
- Responsible and dependable: takes ownership of task and completes it.
- Persistent; doesn't give up in the face of obstacles or difficulties
- Hardworking



Moral Intelligence

- Adopts pro-social values
- Develops a conscience, a strong inner voice that helps us know right from wrong
- Committed to choose right
- Honest; tells the truth; doesn't lie, cheat, or steal
- Obeys laws and rules
- Appreciates and respects diversity
- Values others as equals
- Respects others' rights and property
- Kind; generous to others
- Fair; values win-win negotiation
- Admits mistakes; rectifies them
- Values socially responsible sex (i.e. bonds spouses; doesn't spread disease, exploit women or children, or produce children outside marriage)
- Avoids all pornography

Skills I will work on to develop my intelligence

Other Talents and Gifts

- Artistic
- Dance
- Sports/ athletics
- Musical
- Cooking
- Sense of humor
- Public speaking
- Good communication skills
- Drama, acting
- Event planning
- Organizing; intuitively senses who will work well together
- Decorating; arranging things or surroundings
- Happy, cheerful, friendly
- Creative or inventive
- Good at fixing things
- Electronics or programming
- Spiritual

Time Master—Achieving Your Goals

Copy and use this sheet daily to use your time more effectively



Teach children time management skills by helping them fill out this sheet and track how they use their time: **1)** Decide what needs to be done; **2)** List priority/ importance of each; **3)** Give each a realistic time limit; **4)** Divide large projects into small steps; **5)** Assign a time to do each thing; **6)** Strive for balance; **7)** Do most important things first; **8)** Avoid procrastination; **9)** Stay on task; **10)** Evaluate nightly; plan for tomorrow.

What matters most? A, B, C	Stuff to Do	How long will it take?
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	

What's Going On When	On Task?
6:00 a.m.	
6:30	
7:00	
7:30	
8:00	
8:30	
9:00	
9:30	
10:00	
10:30	
11:00	
11:30	
12:00 p.m.	
12:30	
1:00	
1:30	
2:00	
2:30	
3:00	
3:30	
4:00	
4:30	
5:00	
5:30	
6:00	
6:30	
7:00	
7:30	
8:00	
8:30	
9:00	
9:30	
10:00	

Project-Planning	
PROJECT:	DUE
STEPS:	DATE
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Having Trouble Getting Going? Try These Procrastination Busters:

Before you begin, do this:

- Prepare a plan—write what to do when
- Pick a “Power-Work” time and a set place
- Prepare a production “pile” (all materials needed)
- Pick rewards (short and long term) for completion

When it's time to work, do this:

- Program your mind with positive self-talk
- Pump up your brain blood-flow with exercise
- Smile, push through your fear, and touch the pile of materials
- Pick up a pencil and work for ten minutes

Tips for School Success

Skills to help your kids achieve success in school



A child's primary "job" growing up is to get a good education and acquire attitudes and skills to contribute to society and become a thoughtful, responsible adult. Kids need to take their "job" of becoming well-educated seriously. Parents can help kids by emphasizing the exciting nature of learning new skills that wire their brains for success. The more kids learn in one area, the smarter their brain becomes over-all. Teach kids that their brain loves a challenge and they can learn even difficult material if they try different learning strategies and practice more. (For learning tips see: "Rediscover the Joy of Learning" by Dr. Don Blackerby. For tips on brainpower see research by Dr. Carol Dweck.)

Prepare For Success

1. Care properly for your brain: Your brain is a biochemical "computer" that can do amazing things if you feed it, exercise it, and rest it well. Eat a nourishing breakfast of whole grains and protein (eggs or cottage cheese, etc). Avoid high sugar cereals and high fat food. Drink water to hydrate your brain and take a fish oil/Omega 3 supplement and multi-vitamin. Do some aerobic exercise (minimum of eight to twelve minutes) every morning to increase blood flow to the brain. Get enough restful sleep. Your brain puts the things you learned in the day into long-term memory during sleep.
2. Have a good attitude about school and your ability to learn. Keep your self-talk positive.
3. Be persistent. Don't give up. When faced with difficulty, you just need two things: a better strategy and more practice
4. Know your learning style (ways and times you learn best). Use all three: Visual learners take notes, make outlines, view drawings in texts. Auditory: read material aloud, listen to books on tape; have someone read to you. Kinesthetic or body-motion: do jumping jacks, jump rope etc. while reciting facts to remember.

During School

1. Don't skip class or make excuses why you don't need to go. You do.
2. Make the most of your time at school by getting to class on time. Listen intently, and take good notes. Have a system for note taking so you can find them later: (Ex: a spiral notebook for each subject). Pre-made outline notebooks exist for this, or you can make your own.
3. Sit as close to the front as possible. Move from people who distract you with chatter or notes.
4. Get an assignment notebook or planner and write all homework assignments and tests in it as soon as you get them.
5. Get ready for class by skimming over the next day's material the night before so you can make comments and ask good questions in class.
6. Form study groups with smart students who do their homework. (Look online for tips of how to do it.)
7. Be very polite, friendly, well-groomed, and act interested in class so the teacher will want to help you.

After School

1. Make a routine to study in the same place and time each day and do it.
2. Make study time totally distraction free—no IMs, texts, or phone calls.
3. Use a color-coded notebook system so things are easy to find. Put finished homework into back-pack or book bag as soon as you finish them.
4. Start early in the afternoon so you have plenty of time to finish before bed.
5. Use a "Time Master" sheet to block out when you will study each subject.
6. Eat brain-healthy snacks and drink water: no junk food.
7. Have it quiet or listen to classical music (look-up the Mozart Effect).
8. Work on most difficult subject first.
9. Take a five-minute break every hour and do some fast exercises (like jumping jacks, fast dance moves) to bring blood flow to the brain.
9. Use "Procrastination Busters" on the "Time Master." Find a method for keeping on focus. (Some snap wrist with rubber band each time they're off focus!)
10. Reward yourself for staying focused and completing all your homework.
11. Use "Time Master" sheets to break up your long projects and term papers into smaller assignments. Start them early, so you have time to revise and edit.

Tips for Successful Test-Taking

Mark the test date on your calendar as soon as you know it and begin studying days ahead. Make a study plan of what to study when and use a "Time Master" sheet to break down "things to study" into specific blocks of time. Ask your teacher what material or chapters will be covered on the test. Use 3 x 5 inch note cards to write important facts and formulas, and review them often. Make word associations (acrostics) to help you remember things. Take practice tests from your book or teacher. Use colored markers to highlight points in your notes. Have someone quiz you. Before the test get a good night's sleep; eat a good breakfast that includes protein; and drink a glass of water so your brain is hydrated and has fuel. During the test read all the test instructions carefully first. Answer multiple choice questions in your head; then find answer that is closest. Use positive self-talk; deal with test anxiety using stress reducers.

My Homework Routine

Make a plan to succeed in school



MAKE A PLAN

Where I will study: _____

What time I will study: _____

What days I will study: _____

My REMINDER to go to my study spot: _____

My REWARD for following my homework routine for a week: _____

MY HOMEWORK ROUTINE TRACKING SHEET—Month 1

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

MY HOMEWORK ROUTINE TRACKING SHEET—Month 2

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1							
2							
3							
4							

Draw a picture of the REWARD you will receive for doing your homework in your chosen place and at your chosen time:

Budget and Tracking Sheet

Simple forms to help your kids learn valuable financial skills



A budget is a plan—spending tool to help you decide in advance how to spend your money. Making and living by a budget can help you stretch your money further, save for the things you really want, and give you peace of mind. Help children learn the skill of budgeting by planning and tracking what they earn and spend. As they grow older, let them help plan and track family household spending so they get used to living by a budget.

In the family box below, write down “Fixed” expenses that don’t vary much in the box on the left. Put an X by each expense as you pay it. In the top shaded line, write the amount you will spend in each “Variable” category that you have more control over. Whenever you spend any money in the Variable category, write it in the white box and subtract from the amount you have left in that category. When you reach “zero” in the category, stop spending.

FAMILY TRACK-SPENDING CARD for MONTH: _____ (INCOME: \$ _____)

FIXED BILLS			Food and treats	Auto gas and repairs	Clothes/personal	Gifts	Recreation	Charity	Other	What did you buy?
X	←Mark when paid	Amount ▼	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
		Housing								
		Auto payment								
		Electricity								
		Heating								
		Water								
		Phones								
		Internet								
		Insurance								
		Medical								
		Education								
		Savings								
		Charities								
		TOTAL	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	

KIDS’ BUDGET TRACKING CARD for MONTH: _____ (INCOME: \$ _____)

THINGS I’M SAVING FOR			Food and treats	Toys and games	Clothes/personal	Gifts	Fun	Charity	Other	What did you buy?
X	←Mark when saved	\$ ▼	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
		TOTAL	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Help kids change for the better



These skills will help your child in life and at school. Be sure to practice them together using pretend situations several times until they come naturally.

HOW TO

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

1. Think deeply about what you want most in life.
2. Fill out the “Achieving My Goals and Dreams” sheet.
3. Read your “Goals” sheet each morning.
4. Be aware when you get distracted or tempted to vary from your goal.
5. Practice “Mind-Switching” to bring your thoughts to what you want most. Then do it.

HOW TO

DEVELOP A POSITIVE NATURE

1. Recognize that life has both good and difficult parts, and that our brains grow and become more capable by solving problems.
2. Look for a positive benefit in each difficult situation.
3. Daily smile and say positive things to yourself and others, even if you don’t feel like it at first.
4. Look for three small things to feel grateful for each day and write them in a journal.
5. Do something nice for someone else every day.

HOW TO

DEVELOP PERSISTENCE

1. Decide something that you want to accomplish and write down why it is important to you.
2. List all the steps you will need to take to achieve it.
3. Mentally envision yourself doing each step; then begin.
4. Daily encourage yourself to be brave, be determined, and not give up.
5. During each step, congratulate yourself for not giving up.

HOW TO

ASK FOR HELP

1. Raise your hand or stand near the person.
2. Ask if the person has time to help you now. If not, ask for a later time.
3. Describe the problem or need clearly.
4. Listen carefully to what they say.
5. Thank the person for helping you.

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Help kids change for the better



These skills will help your child in life and at school. Be sure to practice them together several times using pretend situations until they come naturally.

HOW TO

GIVE POSITIVE CRITICISM

1. Feel respect and concern for the person.
2. Pick a good time and place to talk to him or her.
3. Say what you like about the person first.
4. Ask if the person noticed the problem.
5. Ask what he or she thinks the solution might be.
6. Offer your own solution if needed and ask if he or she will do it.
7. Thank the person for listening. Express love for him or her.

HOW TO

RECEIVE CRITICISM CALMLY

1. Look at the person politely.
2. Listen carefully to what he or she is saying.
3. Ask polite questions if you need more information.
4. Restate the criticism.
5. Don't argue. Say, "Thank you. I'll think about it."

HOW TO

DEVELOP IMPULSE CONTROL

1. Practice Mindfulness Breathing for 2–5 minutes night and morning to train your brain to focus.
2. Choose one weak area in your life where you need impulse control. Make a plan of what to **think** and **do** when you are triggered to be impulsive. Then courageously follow your plan.
3. When you are tempted to be impulsive, take three deep breaths through your nose and ask yourself the W.I.S.E. question:
W = Will everyone say it's ok if I do or say it?
I = Is it true and necessary?
S = Will this help me be my highest and best self?
E = Do I want everyone to do it to me?
4. Redirect your thoughts to a more positive thing to do; then do it.

HOW TO

SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

1. Keep a good attitude about education and your ability to learn. Use positive self-talk.
2. Don't skip classes. Listen carefully and take notes.
3. Write down all your homework assignments and test dates in a notebook as soon as you know about them.
4. Start your homework as soon as you get home.
5. Divide large projects into small tasks. Do each sub-task on a set day.
6. Be persistent. If things are hard, ask for help; do more practice work; or find a better strategy.
7. Thank your teachers and be nice to them. They will be more willing to help you.

Discover and Share Your Talents and Gifts

You have unique and important ideas and talents to contribute to the world



“Every person is born into the world to do something unique and something distinctive, and if he or she does not do it, it will never be done.”

Benjamin E. May, educator and scholar

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it.”

Martha Graham, dancer

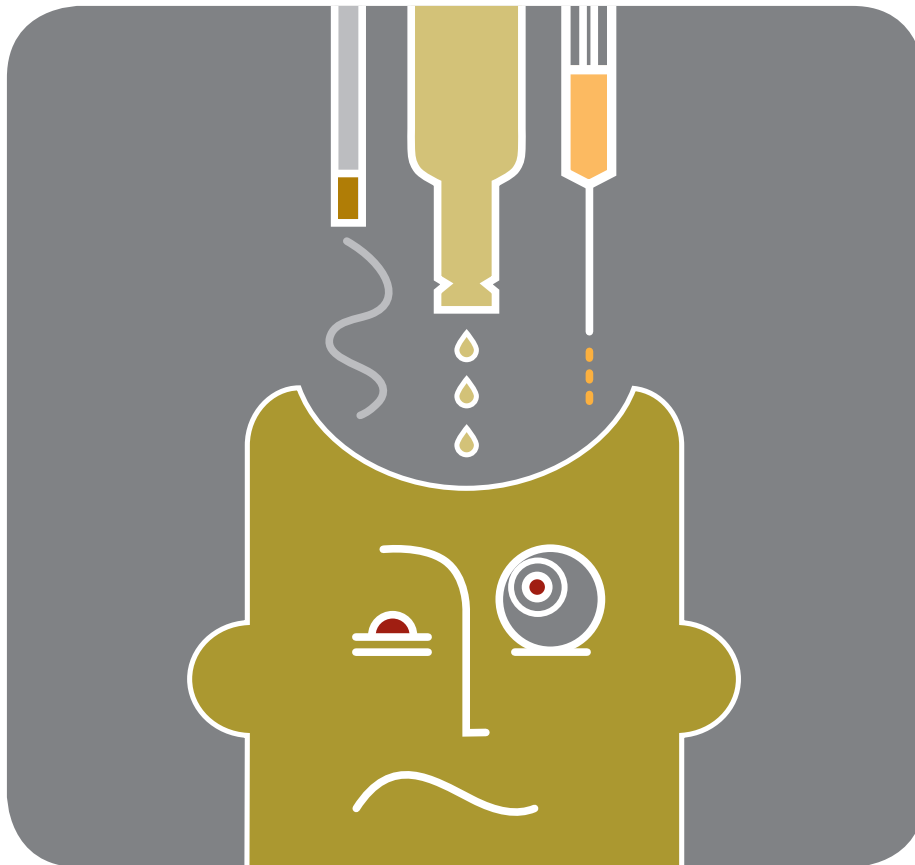
“The tragedy of life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.”

Benjamin E. May, educator and scholar

NO Alcohol, Tobacco or Other Drugs (A.T.O.D.)



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Review "Alcohol Brain Harms" section on the DVD, and discuss "Harms" handout with your kids.
2. Make a firm "No A.T.O.D. (Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs)" family rule.
3. Practice the 5 Cs using pretend situations with the handout as your guide. Create a plan to call parents if alcohol is at a party.

FAMILY FUN:

Watch the "Lives Affected" video* and have a Pledge Signing Ceremony to celebrate "Freedom from Addiction and Drunk Driving." Serve treats.

* The "Lives Affected" video can be found at <http://youtu.be/M5faKg5Fz-g>

- Alcohol damages the teen brain
- Parental disapproval is the #1 reason kids don't drink
- Use the 5 Cs to handle peer pressure
- Set a clear, no-alcohol, tobacco, or drugs rule, with firm consequences

POWER PHRASE:

"Our brains are the most awesome computers ever created. Polluting them with toxic chemicals like alcohol, tobacco and drugs harms our precious brains."

Keeping Kids Alcohol- and Drug-Free

Use these six proven skills drawn from research and experience



1. BELIEVE IN YOUR INFLUENCE AS A PARENT

- Kids say parents are the biggest influence in their lives—more than peers
- Kids say parental disapproval of drinking is the #1 reason they don't drink
- Parents influence kids not to drink when they bond, set clear “no-alcohol” rules, and monitor activities

4. BOND WITH YOUR KIDS

- Express love, empathy, appreciation
- Speak respectfully; make time to chat
- Eat dinner together, share values
- Be involved in their lives and activities; encourage good school performance
- PLAY!!! One-on-one “My-Time” daily

Try saying this: *“You mean more to me than anything else in the world. I'd really be sad if you drank or used drugs and limited your future happiness.”*

2. TEACH HOW ALCOHOL HARMS TEEN BRAIN

- Brain is not fully developed until mid-twenties; alcohol harms the developing brain
- Impairs “white matter” formation
- Harms prefrontal cortex—good judgment, impulse-control center
- Harms pleasure-reward center, creating high risk of addiction
- Harms hippocampus—learning and memory center; 10% smaller in drinkers
- Illegal drugs and misuse of prescription drugs also harm the developing brain

5. SET BOUNDARIES

- Make a firm no alcohol, tobacco, or drugs rule
- Establish firm, fair consequences; then enforce consistently if rules broken
- Kids must leave party if alcohol there
- Make a firm “no riding with driver who has been drinking” rule
- Practice “refusal skills” using the “5 Cs”

Try saying this: *“Because we love you so much, we have made a firm, ‘no using any alcohol before age 21’ rule; and no tobacco or drug use, including other peoples’ prescription drugs.’ We prefer you not hang out with kids who do use.”*

3. KNOW WHY KIDS DRINK AND WHAT TO DO

Kids drink because:

- Exposure to alcohol makes them think drinking will be pleasurable
- Impulsive; risk-taking, thrill-seeking
- Immature judgment: “drunk is fun”
- Bored; “nothing else fun to do”
- Stressed; need ways to relax
- Unhappy; want to escape
- Peer pressure; want to fit in
- Want to rebel or appear grown-up
- Genetic predisposition; e.g. children of alcoholics; mental disorders
- Easy alcohol access, availability

3 essential skills to prevent drinking:

- Bonding, Boundaries, and Monitoring

6. MONITOR

- Lock-up your liquor and beer; limit access to your prescription drugs
- Know who kids are with, what they are doing at all times (always ask the 5 Ws)
- Get to know your kids’ friends’ parents; discuss your no-alcohol rules
- Make sure kids are supervised when not in school and parents are gone
- Monitor plans and parties to make sure kids stay in alcohol-free activities
- Help plan fun no-alcohol activities

Try saying this: *“We want to get together with your friends and their parents, to plan fun no-alcohol activities.”*

Alcohol Harms a Teen's Developing Brain

Knowledge is power; share these alcohol facts with your kids



New research shows that alcohol affects a teen's developing brain differently than a mature adult brain. It can harm "white matter" formation, good judgment, memory, mental health, and greatly increase the risk of alcoholism. Share these facts with your kids, have them commit to stay alcohol-free until at least age twenty-one, and sign the "Alcohol-Free Pledge."

"The brain goes through dynamic change during adolescence, and alcohol can seriously damage long-and short-term growth processes."

—American Medical Association Fact Sheet, 2003; <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/no-index/physician-resources/9416.shtml>

Prefrontal Damage

(Good judgment area) "Adolescent drinking could cause severe changes in this area...which plays an important role in forming adult personality and behavior..." (AMA Fact Sheet 2003)

Hippocampus Damage

"The hippocampus suffers from the worst alcohol-related brain damage in teens. Heavy teen drinkers had... 10% smaller hippocampi." (AMA Fact Sheet 2003)

Altered Pleasure-Motivation System

Alcohol alters the brain so it gives a pleasure response to a harmful chemical instead of a real experience. http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/5704898/addictions_alter_the_pleasure_center.html?cat=5

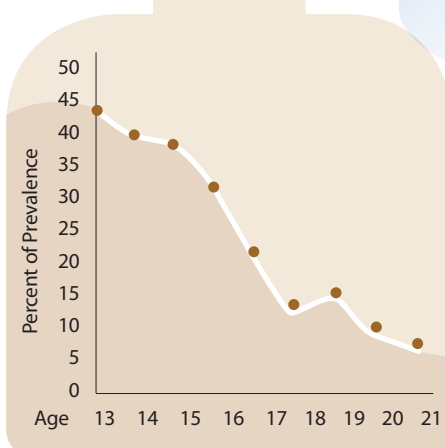
White Matter Damage

In MRI studies by Dr. Susan Tapert, binge drinking teens showed structural damage to the white matter throughout the brain—which helps transmit brain signals. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122765890>

Impaired Memory and Learning

"Short term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more in youth than adults." (AMA fact sheet 2003)

Alcohol Can "Wire" A Teen's Brain For Addiction



Grant, BF and Dawson, DA. *Journal of Substance Abuse* 9:103-110. 1997

45 percent of kids who begin drinking at age thirteen will become alcohol dependent

Only 7 percent of those who begin drinking at age twenty-one become alcoholics

More Troubles With Teens and Alcohol

- Alcohol poisoning: Brain cut-off switch under-developed, allows teens to drink dangerous amounts; can die if pass-out with alcohol still in stomach
- Increased illegal drug use among teen drinkers
- Increase in youth suicide attempts (In eighth grade girls, 37 percent of heavy drinkers attempted suicide versus 11 percent of non-drinkers)
- Increase in teen pregnancies, STDs, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome babies
- "The younger adolescents are when they start to drink, the more likely they are to engage in risky behaviors including promiscuity, doing drugs and earning poor grades..." (NIH, NIAAA publication # 67, Jan. 2006)
- Brain altered in heavy teen drinkers to react positively to alcohol ads. (fMRI's show high brain "cue reactivity" to visual images of alcohol advertising vs. no response in non-drinking teens; meaning the brain is now programmed to respond to alcohol advertisements) http://www.csam-asam.org/pdf/misc/_Brown_-_Neural_Response_to_Alc_in_Adol.pdf
- When kids drink, their brains' ability to care if they make a mistake is suppressed.

FOR MORE FACTS, GO TO: www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/237145.pdf

Marijuana Harms Brain Development

There is no safe level of use for the developing brain



The most current research, including MRI brain scan studies have confirmed that marijuana use harms the developing brain and should never be used while the brain is still developing (until age 25).

“Teens and young adults who are heavy marijuana users are more likely than non-users to have disrupted brain development. Pediatric researchers found abnormalities in areas of the brain that interconnect regions involved in memory, attention, decision-making, language and executive functioning skills. Studies of normal brain development reveal critical areas of the brain that develop during late adolescence, and our study shows that heavy cannabis (marijuana) use is associated with damage in those brain regions.”

– Journal of Psychiatric Research, 2009; 43 (3): 189–204 DOI: 10.1016/j.jpsychires.2008.12.002

Harms Brain Development

A variety of brain scans done on college-age marijuana users showed brain damage, even with occasional use. The scans showed **structural abnormalities** in gray matter density, volume, and shape in the *nucleus accumbens* and *amygdala* parts of the brain.

(Dr. Jodi Gilman, *Journal of Neuroscience*, April 16, 2014)

Increases Risk of Mental Illness

Studies show that young people who use marijuana were **twice as likely to develop schizophrenia**, a disabling brain disorder, as those who didn't use marijuana. They were also twice as likely to develop psychosis (delusional perceptions) over the next 10 years as non-marijuana-users. Using marijuana hastened the onset of mental illness by 3 years.

(www.health.harvard.edu/blog/teens-who-smoke-pot-at-risk-for-later-schizophrenia-psychosis-201103071676)

Teenagers who use marijuana weekly have double the risk for later **depression and anxiety**.

(Degenhardt, Hall et al. 2001; Patton, Coffey et al. 2002)



Harms Learning and Memory

Marijuana impairs **learning and memory, attention, decision-making**, and causes deficits in **time estimation**.

(*JAMA*. 2002 Mar 6;287)

“Those who began using marijuana before age 18 showed significant lower IQ at age 38 that those who didn't use; or those who began using after the brain was developed.”

(*National Institute of Drug Abuse, Bulletin* August 13, 2013)

Creates Problems in Social Functioning

People who use marijuana heavily have a persistent lack of decision-making abilities and show **alterations in brain activity**.

(www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S105381190500100)

Marijuana use before age 18 resulted in **higher rates of addiction**—up to 17 percent within 2 years—and disruption to an individual's life . . . A 21-year study found that regular use was associated with increased rates of illicit **drug use, crime, depression and suicidal behaviors**.

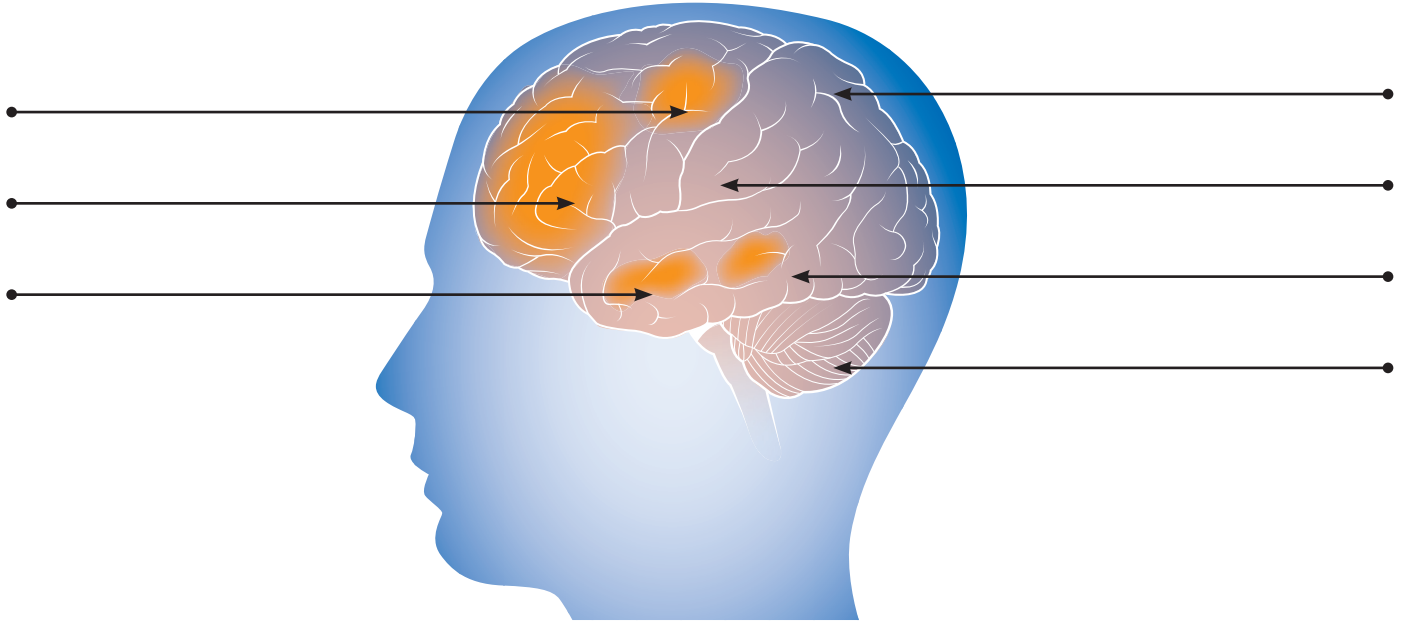
(Fergusson, Horwood et al. 2002)

I Can Have a Healthy, Powerful Brain

Staying alcohol- and drug-free keeps your brain healthy



Directions: Fill out the lines below with things that can harm your brain.



Directions: Fill out the lines below with things that help you have a healthy brain.



PLEDGE

I will value and respect my brain and I will stay alcohol- and drug-free until my brain is fully developed: _____

Family Protective Strategies

Use these to protect your children from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs



Below are bonding, boundaries, and monitoring strategies that help protect kids from A.T.O.D. use. Put an “X” by the ones you already do; circle the ones you’d like to work on. Make a plan and start out small. Add new ones as the old ones become a habit.

BONDING

- We tell our children we love them and make a point to look for and compliment the good in each family member.
- We spend 10-15 minutes of one-on-one “My Time” with each child almost every day.
- We eat a meal together as a family at least three times a week, and make our time together pleasant.
- We have weekly family meetings.
- We spend time together as a family laughing and doing fun things.
- We talk often to our children about their dreams and goals.
- We keep up positive family customs and traditions.
- We try to go to school activities such as games and performances as a family.

BOUNDARIES

- We have family rules that are fair and consistently enforced. Write a clear “No Alcohol” rule here: _____
- We talk about our standards related to no alcohol, tobacco, or drug use; if alcohol or drugs show up at a party, kids are to call us and come home.
- We encourage and support school work, and we have set times to do homework.
- We divide household chores among family members.
- We have rules (curfew) for each kid about what time to be home.
- We encourage our kids to participate in activities that promote a positive sense of self.
- We help our children develop skills in goal-setting, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

MONITORING

- We find out where our children are going, who they’ll be with, what they’ll be doing, and when they’ll be home.
- We get to know our kids’ friends’ parents and share our no A.T.O.D. rules.
- We see that our kids stay in an alcohol- and drug-free social environment.
- We make sure our children don’t have access to our alcohol or prescription drugs.
- We promote fun, positive alternative activities to teen alcohol and drug use.

The 5 Cs to Stay Smart and Safe

A smart way to say "no" and still keep your friends



1- Caution
Ask questions

2- Cool it

Name the negative behavior and say "no"

3- Change the plan
Suggest a better idea

4- Catch you later
Leave if necessary

5- Call me
Call me if you change your mind

Family Freedom Pledge

Read, commit to, and post publicly



When people want to make a serious and commitment, they often make a pledge like the one below. Here's your chance to take a public stand for your freedom to love life and live smart by staying drug- and alcohol-free.

FAMILY FREEDOM PLEDGE

.....

BECAUSE **ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS CAN NEGATIVELY ALTER THE NEURO-PATHWAYS OF MY BRAIN AND CAUSE ME TO BECOME ADDICTED**

AND

BECAUSE **I VALUE MY FREEDOM AND REFUSE TO BECOME A SLAVE TO GREEDY DRUG DEALERS OR ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO COMPANIES WHO WOULD PROFIT FROM MY ADDICTION**

AND

BECAUSE I WANT TO **ENJOY LIFE** AND **PROTECT MY BRAIN'S ABILITY TO SENSE FUN AND PLEASURE FROM NATURAL HIGHS**

AND

BECAUSE **I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE SMART CHOICES AND KEEP MY BRAIN FULLY FUNCTIONING AND ADDICTION FREE**

THEREFORE

I PROMISE TO STAY ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG FREE

SIGNED: _____ DATE _____

..... AND

BECAUSE **WE AS PARENTS RESPECT AND SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN IN THESE IMPORTANT CHOICES, WE WILL HONOR OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS PARENTS AND COMMIT TO: PROVIDE A SUPPORTIVE, LOVING FAMILY ATMOSPHERE, SET CLEAR RULES, AND BOUNDARIES OF NO UNDERAGE DRINKING, DRUG, OR TOBACCO USE; HELP OUR KIDS ENJOY LIFE THROUGH SAFE, ALCOHOL-FREE FUN; AND MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE OUR KIDS STAY IN AN ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT.**

SIGNED: _____ DATE _____

Freedom Pledge to Never Drink and Drive

No excuses—make a personal pledge and keep it



I PLEDGE

BECAUSE ALCOHOL IMPAIRS BRAIN FUNCTION WHICH CAN RESULT IN DRUNK DRIVING CRASHES

AND

BECAUSE DRUNK DRIVING CRASHES CAUSE INTENSE SUFFERING THAT IS BOTH NEEDLESS AND

BECAUSE 100% PREVENTABLE

I WILL NOT RISK FORCING OTHERS TO SUFFER LIFE-LONG GRIEF BECAUSE OF MY BAD CHOICES.

**T H E R E F O R E
I SOLEMNLY PLEDGE NEVER TO DRINK AND DRIVE.**

I WILL ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO LIKEWISE.

I WON'T RIDE WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DRINKING

I WILL NOT DRINK UNDERAGE OR GIVE ALCOHOL TO A MINOR.

X _____ **DATE**

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Tips for staying alcohol-free



Helping children stay alcohol- and drug-free is a team effort involving both parents and kids. These skills cards will help you achieve that wonderful goal—allowing kids to grow up addiction free. Practice the skills aloud, using pretend situations, until they become automatic.

PARENT TIP

MONITOR ASKING THE 5 Ws

1. Where are you going?
2. Who are you going with?
3. What will you be doing?
4. When will you return?
5. Will there be alcohol there?

HOW TO

SAY NO USING THE 5 Cs

1. Caution: Ask questions before saying “yes.”
2. Cool it: Call negative behavior as it is.
3. Change plan: Suggest a better idea.
4. Catch you later: Leave if they insist.
5. Call me: Invite to join you if they change their minds.

HOW TO

PLAN FUN ALCOHOL-FREE

1. Decide as friends to party alcohol-free.
2. Make long category lists of fun things to do—things that cost money, things that are low or no cost, inside fun, and outside fun.
3. Weekly choose an activity; plan and do it.
4. Have plenty of good food and no alcoholic drinks.
5. Permit pleasant parent monitoring.

HOW TO

STOP DRINKING

1. Value your brain; make a firm decision to stop drinking.
2. Find ways to cope with withdrawals.
3. Tell your parents and friends and ask for their support.
4. Plan no-alcohol fun. Avoid drinking places and people; they will trigger a relapse.
5. “Mind-switch.” Think of something else powerful and good if you are tempted to drink or do drugs.

The Risks of Prescription Drug Abuse

Protect your brain from addiction



Prescription drug abuse is a real danger, especially when it comes to narcotic (or opioid) pain killers. They can be highly addictive and can be as dangerous as street drugs. Even when legally prescribed by a doctor, this type of drug must be carefully monitored and correctly used to avoid dependence, addiction, damage to your body and brain, overdose or even death. Please take this this issue very seriously, not just for yourself, but also for your kids. Here are five ways you can keep your family safe from prescription drug abuse:

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS

- In a study published by the CDC ¹, researchers reported that physical dependence on opioids can begin after just a few days of use.
- Opioids aren't the only type of prescription drugs that come with risks. Be aware that other legal drugs—like tranquilizers, sedatives, and hypnotics (used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders) and stimulants (like cognitive enhancers used to treat attention-deficit disorders or depression)—can also be addictive or have harmful side effects when not used properly. ²
- The biggest cause of overdose deaths in adults and youth comes from prescription drug abuse. ³

USE YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS CORRECTLY

- Only take medication that is prescribed to you—and in the correct dose.
- Never use prescriptions for any reason other than the pain or injury they were prescribed for.
- Never share your prescriptions with others.
- Ask your doctor how your prescription will interact with other medication or alcohol.
- Remember pain medication isn't like an antibiotic—you don't need to finish the whole prescription. Quit using them as soon as you can.

TALK TO YOUR KIDS

- When it comes to prescriptions, keep a close watch on your kids—and your medication. In one survey, half of teens believed prescription drugs are safer than illegal street drugs. ⁴
- According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, teens who abuse prescription drugs are twice as likely to use alcohol, five times more likely to use marijuana, and twelve to twenty times more likely to use illegal street drugs. ⁵
- Talk to your kids about the risks of prescription drug abuse. Set clear rules about using medication only as it is directed by a healthcare professional.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR / DENTIST ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

- Opioids can be useful for some types of pain, such as cancer or end-of-life care. But there are many other effective (and perhaps safer) pain management options available, such as non-narcotic drugs, physical therapy, behavioral therapy, and alternative medicine.
- If you or your child are prescribed opioids, have a conversation with your doctor or dentist to find out if that choice is right for you and you understand how to use them safely. Here are some questions you can ask your healthcare provider before taking an opioid.
 1. Do I really need an opioid? Is there a safer alternative?
 2. What are the risks for me?
 3. Is my prescription for the lowest dose?
 4. How can I avoid addiction and what are the warning signs?

Screenshot these questions so you have them next time you visit a doctor or dentist.

STORE AND DISPOSE YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS SAFELY

- Store your prescriptions securely out of sight and reach of family or friends, especially kids. Keep track of the number of pills so you know if any are missing. Don't combine prescriptions in one bottle; keep them in the original container. Many problems with prescription drugs start with people getting them from family or friends, so keep yours locked up.
- Never keep or use leftover or expired prescriptions. Dispose of them safely at a medicine take-back event or location, such as a drop box at a pharmacy or police station. You can also mix them with an unappealing substance such as dirt or used coffee grounds and throw them away in a sealed bag at home. Remove your information from the bottle.

1. Anuj Shah; Corey J. Hayes, PharmD; Bradley C. Martin, PharmD, PhD, "Characteristics of Initial Prescription Episodes and Likelihood of Long-Term Opioid Use — United States, 2006–2015." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Published by the CDC. 3/17/17. 66(10):265–269.

2. Drugabuse.gov

3, 4, 5. Foundation for a Drug-Free World

Choosing Good Friends and Monitoring Activities



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Discuss “What Makes a Good Friend” handout and how to help your kids’ friends stay out of trouble.
2. Discuss and practice friendship skills.
3. Get to know kids’ friends and their parents.
 - a) Share no-A.T.O.D. rules with other parents.
 - b) Plan fun, no-A.T.O.D. activities for kids.
 - c) Discuss ways to monitor kids to ensure they stay in an alcohol-free social environment.

FAMILY FUN:

Invite parents of your kids’ friends to a multi-family get-together and discuss ideas for alcohol-free fun.

POWER PHRASE:

“The true mark of a good friend is one who helps me become my best self. Parents help that process with effective monitoring using the 5-Ws.”

- **Monitoring is an important part of decreasing A.T.O.D. (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug) use**
- **Help kids identify, choose, and become a good friends**
- **Plan fun, alcohol-free activities with friends**

The 5 Cs to Stay Smart and Safe

A smart way to say "no" and still keep your friends



1- Caution
Ask questions

2- Cool it

Name the negative behavior and say "no"

3- Change the plan
Suggest a better idea

4- Catch you later
Leave if necessary

5- Call me
Call me if you change your mind



Making and Becoming a Good Friend

Use “mindfulness” in choosing and being a positive friend

The biggest risk factor in whether kids drink, use drugs, or participate in anti-social behavior is whether their friends do. That’s why it is so important for kids to be “mindful” in choosing good friends who will encourage them to be their best self. It’s also important to be a good friend: to be kind, accepting of others, and a good influence. Even with for kids who have good friends, it is important for parents to monitor their activities—even the online games they play. When kids play violent video games, or games promoting anti-social behavior, it programs their brain for negative behavior. In one study, kids with the highest video game usage had higher alcohol and drug use. When kids help their friends stay away from alcohol, drugs, and anti-social behavior (behavior that would harm self or community), they’re not just being a good friend; they’re making a positive difference in the world.

Have your kids rate themselves and their friends [0-to-3] for each quality below to find out (a) what kind of a friend they are, and (b) what kind of friends they have. Help them identify personal friendship skills that need to be developed and choose a few to work on. If current friends don’t rank high as a positive influence, help them find new ones. If you hear of, or notice, your child being mean to others, put a stop to it immediately. It harms character and puts other kids at risk.

Me	Friend	Quality (rank 0-3)
		Friendly
		Is humble; doesn’t brag
		Includes you in a group
		Accepts you like you are
		Stands up for you if others talk about you
		Is pleased, compliments you when you do well
		Treats you kindly
		Cares about others
		Listens when you have a problem
		Doesn’t gossip
		Generous
		Cares about others’ feelings
		Stays away from gangs
		Encourages you to do your best
		Respects people who are different
		Respects your values
		Stands up for weak/disadvantaged kids
		Patient, easy going, has a sense of humor
		Peacemaker
		Helps you stay out of trouble

Me	Friend	Quality (rank 0-3)
		Snobbish
		Braggs, feels superior
		Leaves you out
		Sometimes makes fun of you
		Talks behind your back
		Is jealous when you do well
		Is sometimes mean to you
		Is mean or cruel to others
		Minimizes your problems
		Gossips
		Stingy
		Self-centered; puts people down
		Gang member
		Asks you to do anti-social things
		Disrespects those who are different
		Calls you a wimp if you say “no”
		Bullies kids, expects you to join in
		Hot-tempered; gets angry easily
		Gets in fights; holds grudges
		Asks you to do illegal things: drinking, drugs, cheating, stealing, promiscuity

Friendship Skills to Develop

Books on making friends:

- Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me—The Top 25 Friendship Problems and How to Solve Them*, Michele Borba
- A Good Friend: How to Make One and How to Be One*, from Boys Town Press
- Say Goodbye to Being Shy*, Richard Brozovich, Ph.D. and Linda Chase
- Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves

HOW TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS

- Respect yourself; value your own unique worth.
- Care about and respect others.
- Act friendly and confident, even when you’re scared.
- Learn and practice conversation skills.
- Go where you can meet new people.
- Look for kids who have your same likes and values.
- Stand near kids you want to meet; notice their actions; look for things to compliment.
- Introduce yourself to someone in the group; mention the good things you noticed.
- Ask if you can join the activity. (“Mind if I join...”)
- After a while, invite them to an activity you host.

I Can Be a Good Friend

A good friend is someone who helps you become your best self



Directions: Circle the things a good friend would do. Cross out the things a bad friend would do.

BULLIES	KIND TO EVERYONE	USES DRUGS	STEALS	HONEST	GETS ANGRY EASILY
DRINKS ALCOHOL	GANG MEMBER	GENEROUS	LEAVES YOU OUT	JEALOUS	MEAN
STANDS UP FOR YOU	MAKES FUN OF YOU	LIES	DOESN'T BRAG	RESPECTS YOUR VALUES	
CHEATS	LISTENS TO YOUR PROBLEMS	ASKS YOU TO MAKE BAD CHOICES	JEALOUS		
GOSSIPS	GIVES COMPLIMENTS	SELFISH	HAPPY	DISRESPECTS PEOPLE'S DIFFERENCES	

Directions: Think about how important it is to set an example of how to be a good friend to others. List some things you will do to be a good friend.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

HOW TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS

1. Be kind and respectful to yourself and others.
2. Act friendly and happy, even when you're scared.
3. Say nice things and give compliments to other kids.
4. Go where you can meet new kids, like the park.
5. Look for kids who like the same things you do.
6. Stand near kids you want to meet.
7. Introduce yourself to other kids.
8. Ask if you can join other kids if they're doing something fun.
9. Invite other kids to join your fun.

Stop Bullying!

Social skills and scripts for the bully, the victim, and the bystander



BULLYING: Attitudes and acts that intend to intimidate, manipulate, mock, belittle, persecute, or take advantage of; usually directed at vulnerable people.

Bullying is anti-social behavior that harms both the bully and the victim. Bullying can leave emotional wounds and psychological scars that harm self-esteem and can last a lifetime. Bullies lack empathy, are deficient in social consciousness, and have immature moral reasoning skills. The psychological “rewards” they perceive from bullying are harmful, and they are more likely to develop anti-social personality disorder as adults. Unless action is taken to correct and train them when they are young, bullies can cause crippling misery to themselves and others—including parents, spouses, and children. Parents need to teach children what bullying is, explain the lasting harms, insist they never engage in it, and teach them how to confront it. We also need to insist that schools adopt an anti-bullying policy that requires parent notification, restitution, and retraining in empathy and moral reasoning skills. The following can help in a bullying situation.

HOW TO STOP BULLYING

1. If you have bullied or mocked others, stop yourself, admit fault, apologize, ask forgiveness, and seek to make amends.
2. Recognize that every human being has a right to and deserves kindness and respect.
3. Bullying or mocking others harms your psyche, creating anti-social brain wiring, which damages your character.
4. People who are different or have disabilities provide you with an opportunity to practice compassion. Appreciate and be kind to them.
5. Remember whatever good or bad you give out in life will come back to you. Choose a good life by being kind.

HOW TO STAND UP TO A BULLY

1. Recognize you have worth as a human being. You have a right to a life free from fear, mocking, persecution, or intimidation.
2. Your first priority is to stay safe. If you feel threatened, avoid contact with your bully, and find an adult.
3. When you are ready to confront your bully, have confident body language and the courage to look him or her in the eye and stand up to bullying. Remain cool and calm.
4. Practice assertive comebacks: “If you want to lower yourself by bullying me, go ahead. But I will report you because it’s wrong to treat people like this.”
5. Don’t fight back with bad behavior or insults. Take a deep breath, use a friendly and assertive voice, and walk away.

HOW TO CONFRONT A BULLY

1. Recognize what bullying is and never participate in it.
2. If you see bullying, stand up for the victim. You can try to help the victim get away from the bully (e.g., invite them to join you or make up an excuse for them to leave). Or, you can confront the bully if you feel comfortable with that:
 - a. “(Insert bully’s name), what you did is bullying. It’s anti-social behavior and we don’t like it. You need to stop.”
 - b. “Come on, stop bullying. You’re better than that.”
3. Remember: there are no innocent bystanders. If you laugh or encourage the bully, you’re a bully too.

OTHER BULLY COMEBACK LINES

1. “Sorry, your words are meaningless.” Or, “So what?”
2. “How does it feel to be a bully?”
3. “Did you know people dislike bullies and talk about them behind their back?”
4. “Are you trying to bully me? If you are, it won’t work.”
5. “Excuse me; you’ve mistaken me for someone who cares what you think.”
6. “You’re wasting my time.” Or, “You’re boring me.”
7. “How would you feel if someone was treating you this way?”
8. “I could feel bad about what you’re saying, but you’re not worth it.”
9. “Why do you have to bully people to feel good about yourself?”
10. “Did you know that people who bully have poor self-esteem?”
11. “I must be pretty important to get this much attention.”

Children who are bullied by siblings at home are three times more likely to develop psychotic disorders as young adults. Stop sibling bullying!

Monitoring Kids' Activities

An essential skill to prevent youth addiction and delinquent behavior



Monitoring means knowing where your children are, who they are with, what they are doing, when will they be home, and whether there will be alcohol or drugs at the activity. Monitoring is an essential parenting skill to protect kids from using harmful substances or participating in delinquent or anti-social behavior.

Because parents have the legal and moral responsibility to protect their children from harm, they have the inherent right to monitor their children's activities to make sure they stay in an alcohol- and drug-free social environment—regardless of how loudly teens push back.

Monitoring children and teens is essential because the risk-taking part of a teen's brain develops very early in life, and the good judgment, impulse-control part of the part of the brain doesn't finish developing until the early 20's.

Monitoring is easier if you make and adhere to three parenting rules:

1. Set up and enforce a reasonable, healthy curfew, with consequences if they violate curfew.
2. Always ask your children the 5 W questions while they are planning any get-togethers or activities and before they leave the home. Then verify that they are where they said they would be, doing what they said they would do. A good motto is: "Trust—but verify."
3. Talk to the parents of your children's friends to be sure they agree with your "No A.T.O.D." rules and will monitor kid's activities while at their home or under their supervision. Ask them to help plan fun "No-A.T.O.D." activities on a rotating basis.

THE 5 Ws OF MONITORING:

1. **Where** are you going?
2. **Who** are you going with?
3. **What** will you be doing?
4. **When** will you return?
5. **Will** there be alcohol or drugs there?



Assess Your Child's Risk for A.T.O.D. Use

Evaluate your child's risk of using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs



Whether kids use A.T.O.D. depends on life factors that protect or put them at risk. Evaluate "Risk and Protective Factors" for each child, and write the number of the risks you find. Create an "Action Plan" to reduce the risks and increase the protections. Review "Family Protective Strategies" for ideas.

PUTS YOUR CHILD AT RISK:	PROTECTS YOUR CHILD:	EVALUATION OF YOUR CHILD:			
<p>PERSONAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Difficult temperament from age 2-3 2) Impulsive; hyperactive, on edge 3) Thrill seeking, risk-taking 4) Low self-esteem or depression 5) Attitudes favorable to A.T.O.D. use <p>FAMILY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6) Lack of love and nurturing; neglect 7) Chaotic, poorly managed home life 8) Harsh discipline; or lax discipline 9) Hostile parent-child conflicts 10) Insufficient parental monitoring 11) Teenage mother 12) Parent who abuses A.T.O.D. <p>PEERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13) Friends who use/ approve A.T.O.D. 14) Peer rejection 15) Poor social skills <p>SCHOOL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16) Poor school performance 17) Aggressive classroom behavior 18) Low commitment to school <p>COMMUNITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19) Frequent moves/ changing school 20) Bar density-easy access to A.T.O.D. 21) Poverty 	<p>PERSONAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Social skills to respect authority 2) Self-control; can delay gratification 3) Opportunity for positive involvement 4) Positive sense of self 5) Pro-social beliefs, norms and values <p>FAMILY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6) Strong, loving parent-child bonds 7) Functional, well-managed home 8) Mild, consistent discipline 9) Clear rules against A.T.O.D. use 10) Monitoring child's activities and peers 11) High expectations; involved parent 12) Parents set a good A.T.O.D. example <p>PEERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13) Peers disapprove of A.T.O.D. use 14) Positive social opportunities 15) Well-developed social skills <p>SCHOOL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16) School attendance and success 17) Participation in school activities 18) Caring support of teachers and staff <p>COMMUNITY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19) Opportunities for participation 20) Decrease A.T.O.D. accessibility 21) Strong bonds with religious organization 	NAME:	# OF EACH RISK:		

ACTION PLAN TO PROTECT MY CHILDREN FROM ADDICTION:	
CHILD:	THINGS TO DO TO REDUCE RISKS AND INCREASE PROTECTIONS

Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

How to build friendship skills



Practice these simple friendship skills over and over with your children until they feel comfortable using them in real life.

HOW TO

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

1. Smile, look friendly, and act confident.
2. Use a casual voice.
3. Say, "Hi, my name is _____. What's yours?"
4. Ask an open-ended question.
5. When leaving say, "It was nice to meet you. See you around."

HOW TO

DEVELOP EMPATHY

1. Recognize the equal worth of every person.
2. Notice the needs of those who are different.
3. Think how that situation would make you feel.
4. Care what happens to others; be kind.
5. If possible, do something about a need or injustice you notice.

HOW TO

GET ALONG WITH OTHERS

1. Recognize that others have equal claim to a good life; respect them as equals.
2. Be unselfish; willingly take turns and share.
3. Feel pleased when others achieve good things.
4. Don't brag or put others down.
5. Find fun activities you can do together.

HOW TO

MAKE CONVERSATION

1. Stand near the person, make eye contact, and smile.
2. Using a pleasant voice, ask an open-ended question.
3. Use "LUV-Listening" to respond.
4. Thank the person for chatting with you.

Values, Traditions, and Service



Strengthening Families
Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



FAMILY GOALS:

1. Discuss family values; explain why each is important to you and how they will benefit kids. Write them on the handout and find ways to reinforce them.
2. Discuss and establish fun family traditions and ways to give family service; write on handout and post them.
3. Together, discuss how kids can be an "Agent for Change" to help others be alcohol-free.

FAMILY FUN:

Make a Family Shield with four family values. Create a motto that represents those values and write it above the shield. Display it in your home.

POWER PHRASE:

"Our happiness is directly related to adopting pro-social values, giving service to others, and bonding with fun family traditions and happy family rituals."

- Identify, teach, and reinforce pro-social values
- Establish fun family traditions
- Give service to help build and strengthen society

Fun Family Traditions

Creating and celebrating happy family memories



Family traditions are ways of celebrating events or happenings that help kids have fun and feel a sense of identity, belonging, and connectedness. Tradition celebrations can happen once a year, like a family reunion or a holiday celebration, or take place on a monthly or weekly basis like a monthly Sunday dinner with relatives or a Friday night family board game. A monthly “Give Back to My Community” day of service—either by helping elderly neighbors, helping the less fortunate, or picking up trash in the park—helps kids develop empathy and respect for their community. A tradition can also be a “family cheer” to celebrate a success, like good grades; or a group hug for making it through a hard day. Regardless of how your family decides to celebrate or serve, it’s all about happy, healthy togetherness.

Below, write the traditions you already enjoy and ask yourself: “Are our family traditions adequate to produce happy family bonding?” and “Do they reinforce our values?” If not, how can you make them more meaningful? If you would like to create a new family tradition, what events would you like to celebrate? Write down your ideas in the middle column. Add ways to make good health part of your on-going holiday traditions by including physical activity, healthy foods, and new healthy ways to fix traditional foods.

Our Current Family Traditions	New or Improved Family Traditions	Some Ideas to Get You Thinking
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family game night • Reunion with extended family • Religious holidays; add service to deepen meaning • National holidays: add meaning like hanging “Blessing Leaves” on Thanksgiving “Thankful Tree” • Picnic celebrating summer • Birthday dinners / breakfasts • Sunday dinner with relatives • Friendship day: invite neighbors • Independence Day; make a collage of gifts freedom provides • Make a “Welcome New Baby” book • Father-son outing • Daddy-daughter date • Monthly lunch date with Mom • Saturday special breakfast • Memorial Day: celebrate your heritage by learning of ancestors • Celebrate Grandparents Day with service, a meal or coupon to a restaurant • Celebrate Mother’s/ Father’s Day with “service” coupons • Write love notes of things you like about each other on Valentine’s Day • Celebrate wedding anniversary by doing your own “circle of love” • Hold a monthly “Values” night and serve treats

I Have Power to Do Good

Doing good in my family, school, and community makes me happy



Our brain is “hard-wired” to give feelings of pleasure when we do good. You can increase your feelings of happiness by giving service and doing good to others.

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it.”

Martha Graham, dancer

Directions: Make a list below of things you can do in your family, school, and community to make them better and happier.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Shield Your Family by Sharing Your Values

Design a shield and create a motto highlighting your most important values

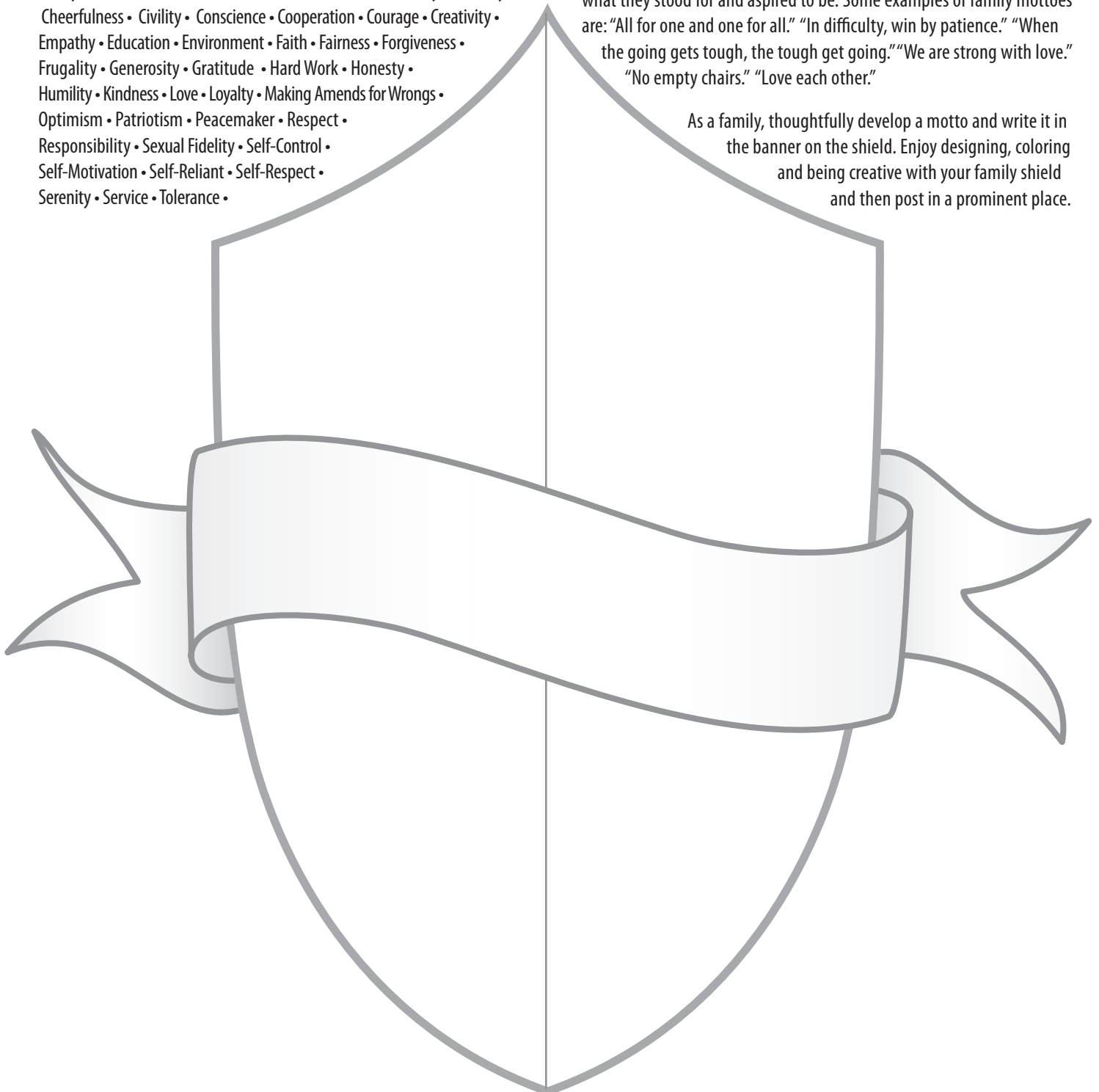


Values are attitudes about life that determine our thoughts and actions. Pro-social values—that benefit self and society—help kids make good decisions and feel happier. Write the values that matter most to your family on the shield. Some to consider are:

- Ambition • Charity • Chastity • Cheerfulness • Civility • Conscience • Cooperation • Courage • Creativity • Empathy • Education • Environment • Faith • Fairness • Forgiveness • Frugality • Generosity • Gratitude • Hard Work • Honesty • Humility • Kindness • Love • Loyalty • Making Amends for Wrongs • Optimism • Patriotism • Peacemaker • Respect • Responsibility • Sexual Fidelity • Self-Control • Self-Motivation • Self-Reliant • Self-Respect • Serenity • Service • Tolerance •

A motto is a brief statement that captures the values and beliefs of an individual or family. For hundreds of years, families have created mottoes and put it on their family shield or crest to let people know what they stood for and aspired to be. Some examples of family mottoes are: “All for one and one for all.” “In difficulty, win by patience.” “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” “We are strong with love.” “No empty chairs.” “Love each other.”

As a family, thoughtfully develop a motto and write it in the banner on the shield. Enjoy designing, coloring and being creative with your family shield and then post in a prominent place.



Keeping the Changes We've Made

5 skills to bond, set boundaries, and monitor to keep kids safe from addiction



1. PRACTICE MINDFULNESS to calm and strengthen your brain by doing breath awareness exercises. (Intro Lesson)



2. HAVE "MY TIME." Daily one-on-one play time with each child, where you focus on giving positive attention and compliments. (Intro Lesson)



3. NOTICE AND COMPLIMENT THE GOOD DAILY Make sure your compliments are sincere, specific, and enthusiastic. (Lesson 1)

4. COMMUNICATE WITH LUV-LISTENING AND RESPECTFUL "I-MESSAGES" Banish the Communication Boulders. (Lesson 2)



5. HOLD A WEEKLY FAMILY MEETING (Lesson 2)



6. USE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE AND REWARDS TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR. Teach and reward the behaviors you want, and be consistent in calmly using mild negative consequences for non-compliance. (Lessons 3 and 4)

7. MONITOR YOUR KIDS and their friends to make sure that they stay in an alcohol- and drug-free environment. (Lesson 9)



Pro-Social Skills for a Successful Life

Building brain power with values and skills



These values and skills will arm your children with life-long habits that are highly respected, valued in the workplace, and create personal satisfaction.

HOW TO

TELL THE TRUTH

1. Look at the person.
2. Reflect on your commitment to tell the truth.
3. Answer questions honestly, saying exactly what happened.
4. Don't leave out details to misrepresent what happened.
5. Admit to mistakes; offer to make amends.

HOW TO

DEVELOP COURAGE

1. Recognize that fears are generated by thoughts.
2. Keep your self-talk positive ("I can do this...")
3. Decide on your values, why they are important to you.
4. Be willing to take hardship or persecution.
5. Respectfully speak up when you see a wrong done.

HOW TO

SET AN EXAMPLE

1. Be humble; recognize everyone has worth.
2. Resolve to live true to your values.
3. Work hard to excel in an area.
4. Be kind and friendly to everyone.
5. When faced with a choice between a "low road" (anti-social behavior) and a "high road" (pro-social ways), always choose the "high road."
6. Encourage friends to do the right thing.

HOW TO

BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE

1. Notice something in your home, school, or community that needs to be changed.
2. Research and talk to others about it.
3. Decide on a plan of action.
4. Talk to friends and get their support.
5. Present your idea to those in charge; work to make it happen.

Talking with Your Kids about Sex

Helping youth understand rights, responsibilities, and consequences



One of a parent's most important jobs is to teach children about the rights and responsibilities of sexual reproduction and the innate power they have to create human life. To be effective, parents need to have many open, honest conversations about it throughout a child's life based on their own family values.

Here are three things parents need to share with their kids:

- 1) **How the miracle of human life is created** when two tiny cells, each carrying a man and a woman's personal DNA, meet in a woman's body and begin the amazing process of making a baby. They need to know about the female menstrual cycle and how to prevent conception.
- 2) **Sexual activities release powerful "bonding chemicals" in the brain** that create intense euphoric feelings and are designed to create strong emotional ties with a spouse. These sexual experiences become a fixed part of a person's brain wiring. When physical intimacy between loving couples is combined with emotional intimacy and a lasting commitment to their relationship, sex is much more enjoyable, satisfying, and helps create stable marriage relationships.
- 3) **The right to mate and reproduce the human species carries enormous responsibilities.** A stable society depends upon well-raised children who become responsible, law-abiding, tax-paying adults. Because a person's sexual actions can produce human life—those choices are not their "own private business"—they can permanently affect the lives of others. Once a baby is born it cannot be "put back." Children have the right to be born into a family with two loving parents to care for them. When children are born outside of a marriage relationship, they are more at risk for neglect, poverty, abuse, and addiction—forcing the child into unhappy, difficult circumstances. Often, society has to support the child or pay for problems he or she may cause.

Parents need to teach youth that their personal sexual choices can have a positive or negative effect on themselves and society: a positive (or pro-social) effect when it serves to bond couples in a loving, stable family relationship that produces children who grow up to become contributing citizens. Or it has a negative (anti-social) effect if it spreads disease, exploits women or children, or results in children born outside of a stable family relationship.

Other Facts to Share with Teens

- Every child has the right to be born into a family and be cared for, as much as possible, by the mother and father whose sexual union gave him or her life. (*UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 7, 1990*)
- Single teen mothers put their children at higher risk to have health problems, live in poverty, be neglected or abused by others, do poorly in school, use alcohol and drugs, run into trouble with the law, and become teen mothers or fathers themselves.
- Children who are neglected or abused often suffer attachment anxiety, which later negatively affects their ability to bond in a romantic relationship as an adult, and hinders their ability to be a responsive caregiver to their own children. Children deserve better than this.
- Two-thirds of teen mothers never finish high school, which means they have to take lower-paying jobs, or be publicly supported on welfare.
- Half of all single mothers receiving welfare had their first child in their teens, before they were mature themselves.
- Only 20% of teen fathers ever marry the mother.
- If a boy fathers a child, legally he is financially responsible for raising the child to age 18. Young fathers can be court-ordered to pay thousands of dollars in child support, and have their wages garnished if they fail to pay.

Factors That Put Teens at Risk for Early Sex and Unplanned Pregnancies

While teens have the ultimate choice over whether they participate in early sexual activities, parents can lower the risk by being actively involved to prevent or minimize the following risk factors:

- 1 **Alcohol or drug use** lowers inhibitions, good judgment, and the ability to care if they make a mistake; often used for date rape
- 2 **Media influence:** Kids who watch "R" rated movies are twice as likely to engage in sexual activities, have unplanned pregnancies as those who don't watch sexually explicit films
- 3 **Negative peer pressure** gives the false belief everyone is doing it
- 4 **Pornography:** damages brain's pleasure center, making it harder to bond with a spouse (or future spouse); addicting
- 5 **Exclusive dating** or dating older boys/men
- 6 **Lack of parental love;** lack of affection from a father
- 7 **Lack of parent monitoring** of activities, dating partners, and time alone—particularly when parents are at work or late at night
- 8 **Abuse:** Sexual, physical, emotional abuse, or neglect

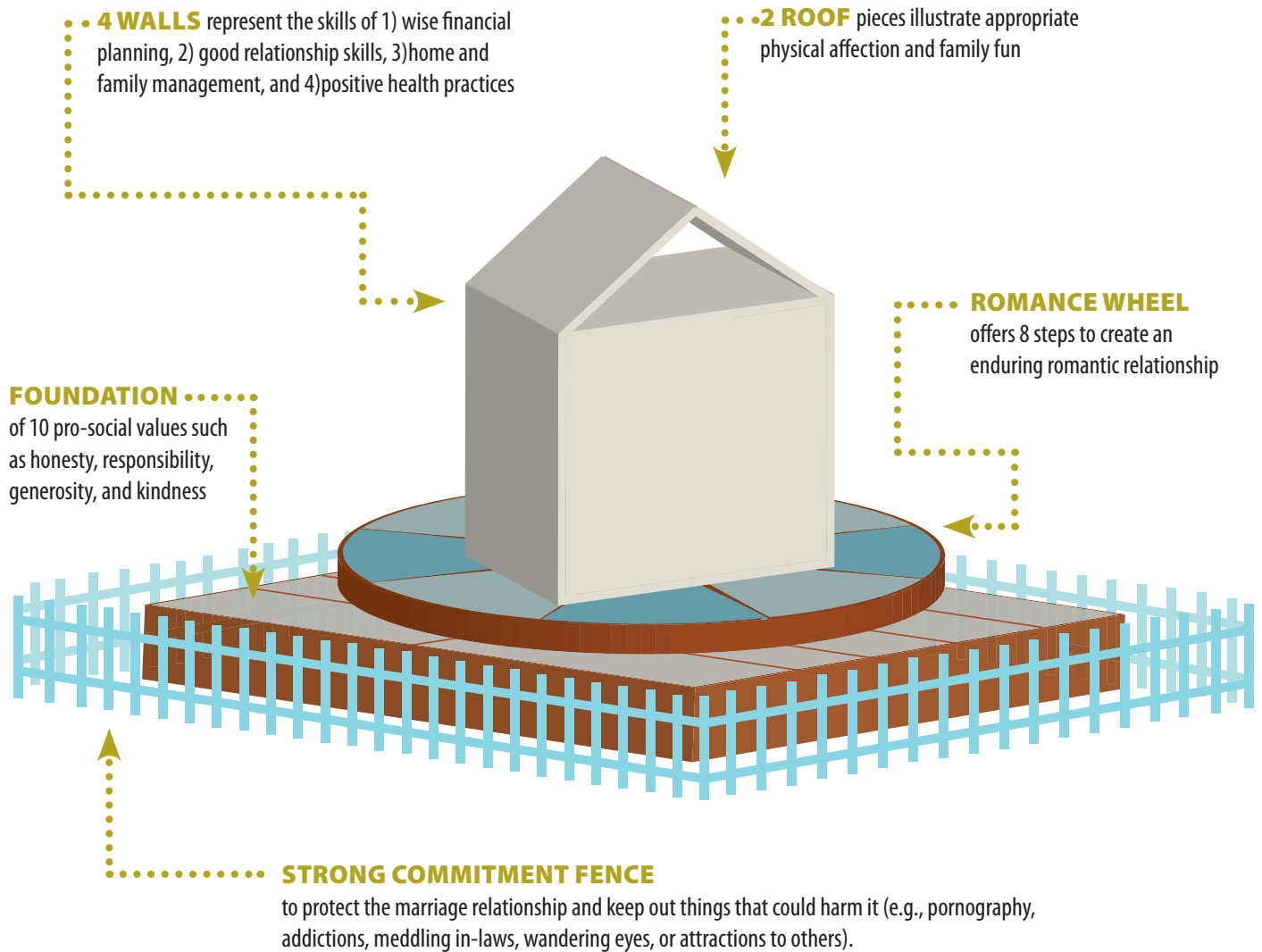
Creating Stable Families (part 1)

Society's future depends on learning how to create stable families



As teens mature, some of the best things parents can teach them are the attitudes and skills to create loving, stable families of their own. These include 1) skills to develop an enduring romantic relationship, 2) skills to create a happy, stable home-life, 3) a commitment to honor, support, and protect each other and the relationship, and 4) pro-social values that foster loving family relationships. This includes the value of socially-responsible sex (i.e., sex that bonds a couple in a loving, stable relationship, and doesn't spread disease, exploit women or children, or produce children outside of stable family relationships).

This visual can help you teach these preparing-for-marriage skills: a foundation of good values; a "romance wheel" to create loving relationships; a sturdy house of personal skills built of four walls and a roof; and a strong commitment "fence" to surround and protect the marriage relationship.



Creating Stable Families (part 2)

Foundation, romance wheel, and fence



Foundation of 10 Pro-Social Values

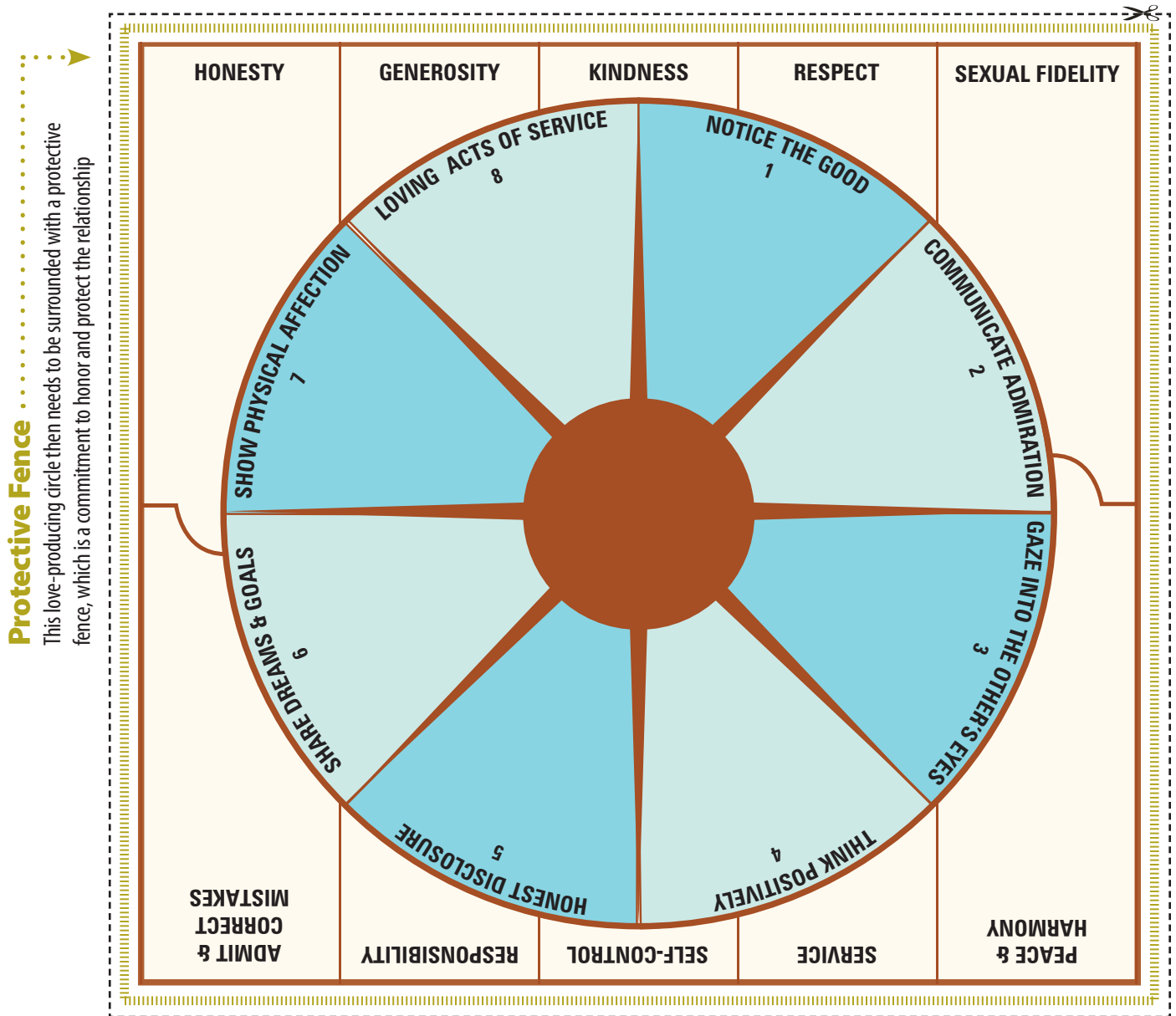
“Pro-social values” are personal beliefs on how to behave and treat others. They are like interlocking blocks that serve as a firm foundation for a marriage relationship. When you include these 10 fundamental beliefs in your value system, love can flourish:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Honesty | 6. Peace & Harmony |
| 2. Generosity | 7. Service |
| 3. Kindness | 8. Self-control |
| 4. Respect | 9. Responsibility |
| 5. Sexual Fidelity | 10. Admitting & Correcting Mistakes |

8 Steps to Create an Enduring Romantic Relationship

These are shown as a wheel because once you go through steps 1-8, you begin number 1 again, this time at a deeper level and continue in these steps all the rest of your married life.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Notice the good in each other | 5. Have honest disclosure |
| 2. Communicate admiration | 6. Share life's dreams and goals |
| 3. Gaze into each other's eyes | 7. Show loving physical affection |
| 4. Think positively (about the person and the relationship) | 8. Be kind and perform acts of service |



Creating Stable Families (part 3)

House with walls and roof



Building a marriage is like building a home: it needs four strong walls and a good roof.

WALL 1: WISE FINANCIAL PLANNING

- 1) Get a good education with marketable skills.
- 2) Find a good job and work hard to provide for your family's needs.
- 3) Establish financial goals and write them down.
- 4) Make a reasonable budget to meet those goals. Track your spending; review weekly as a couple. Avoid impulse purchases and buying to impress others. Plan ways to share with those who are less fortunate.
- 5) Save for the future.

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WALL 2: GOOD RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- 1) Notice and compliment the good in others; accept and appreciate differences.
 - 2) Use effective communication skills including LUV-Listening and respectful, assertive I-Messages. Avoid Communication Boulders).
 - 3) Treat others with kindness, unselfishness, and affection. Express love often; notice needs and give service.
 - 4) Practice good problem solving and negotiation skills.
 - 5) Use good anger management and conflict resolution skills.
- *Evaluate your behavior often: "Are my attitudes or actions helping or harming family relationships? What do I need to change?"

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WALL 3: HOME & FAMILY MANAGEMENT

- 1) Plan and use time wisely to accomplish the things that are most important to a stable family life.
- 2) Work to have an orderly and well-functioning home where each member has responsibilities and contributes.
- 3) Make chore charts. Establish a set cleaning time. Reward compliance.
- 4) Have set places for each person's belongings. Put back the things you use.
- 5) Set up positive routines with set times to pay bills, clean house, do homework, have family meetings, and have family fun.

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WALL 4: POSITIVE HEALTH PRACTICES

- 1) Appreciate your body. Cultivate a positive mental attitude and avoid all addicting substances.
- 2) Plan and eat nutritious meals with whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and low-fat protein.
- 3) Maintain a healthy weight: eat normal portion sizes, healthy foods, mindfully enjoy each bite, and stop when you begin to feel full.
- 4) Get physical exercise five days a week. Include aerobic, strength-building, and stretching exercises.
- 5) Try to get 8 hours of sleep each night. Maintain a consistent bedtime.

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ROOF 1: APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL AFFECTION

Appropriate physical affection (including touching, hugging, caressing, kissing, and massaging) triggers "feel-good" chemicals in the brain that make family feel loved and emotionally bonded.

(Appropriate physical affection includes the duty to protect children from sexual abuse.)

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ROOF 2: FAMILY FUN

Plan and make time to laugh, play, and have weekly fun activities as a family. Family fun contributes to healthy family bonding and is good for children's brain health.

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Couple's Time: Questions to Reconnect

Communication that increases love, understanding, and appreciation



WHAT: Once a month, plan a quiet time alone when kids are put to bed early and parents have “Couple’s Time” where you can talk undisturbed for an hour about 1) your positive memories, thoughts and feelings for each other; and 2) your needs to help your relationship flourish. It can be during a quiet dinner or sitting together in a favorite quiet spot.

HOW: Decide on the time and place ahead of time. Set the mood by playing soft music that you enjoyed during courtship, lighting a scented candle, or by taking a few minutes to do a “Loving-Kindness Meditation” exercise directing positive thoughts towards yourself and your spouse (See Handout 1-9).

Begin by reading The Love Pledge and then bring to mind a happy memory you shared together, before you were married, where you felt loved. Savor the feeling the memory created. Touch hands and look into each other’s eyes for a minute or two. Then take turns choosing a few positive expressions to complete from the first category (below). Then share ideas or needs from the second category while your spouse LUV Listens. End Couple’s Time by expressing your love and sharing physical affection.

The Love Pledge

I care deeply about you and desire to understand your thoughts and feelings. I pledge to create a loving and emotionally safe environment for you to tell me about the things you think, feel, and need. I will “LUV-Listen” with respect, and promise not to get angry about the things you share.

Expressions of Appreciation

(Adapted from JoAnn Larsen, DSW)

- “The thing I love most about you is...”
- “I am especially proud of you when...”
- “The thing that attracted me to you was...”
- “One of the happiest times of my life was...”
- “Something good that I learned from you is...”
- “One of your best assets is...”
- “I like it when you...”
- “A peak experience in our relationship is...”
- “One of the needs you satisfy in me is...”
- “A song that reminds me of you is...”
- “The things I most like to do with you are...”
- “You are most helpful when ...”
- “The things that hold us together are...”
- “One way I try to show I love you is...”
- “What I like most about our relationship is...”
- “What I would miss most about you is...”
- “The gift I would like most to give you is...”

Expressions to Increase Understanding and Help Our Relationship Flourish

- “A feeling I have trouble with is...”
- “When I can’t express something to you, I...”
- “One thing I am afraid of is...”
- “A habit I have that bothers me the most is...”
- “I need you most when...”
- “I wish you would let me know when...”
- “Something I need most from you is...”
- “It hurts me when...”
- “A pattern I see in our relationship is...”
- “I would like our relationship to...”
- “I wish you would let me know when I...”
- “When we fight, I...”
- “I tend to not tell you about...”
- “I think you avoid me when...”
- “An important issue between us is...”
- “A question I’ve wanted to ask you is...”
- “To keep from being hurt, I...”

Making Happy Marriages (part 1)

Proven skills and attitudes to create the marriage you've dreamed of

(Print two worksheets per couple)



A happy, secure marriage—where spouses are best friends; who love, support, and nurture each other; and who enjoy mutual sexual pleasure—is one of life's greatest joys. Research shows that most marriages can be made joyful, caring, and romantic by adjusting partners' attitudes and developing specific skills to change behaviors and build a close marital friendship.

It is worth the effort to make these mental adjustments and learn these new skills because a happy, secure marriage improves mental and physical health; contributes to economic prosperity; and helps you have a happier, more fulfilling life. A happy marriage is also the foundation of a stable society, because children will be more emotionally stable and grow up to be thoughtful, law-abiding, responsible adults who contribute to the well-being of society.

Below are attitudes and skills that either help a marriage become joyful and satisfying or that harm it. Each of the harmful ways of interacting are "learned behaviors" that can be corrected by learning and practicing new attitudes and skills.

Put a check mark by the ones you engage in, and ask your spouse to grade you as well. Then, using the form on page 10-12, have a pleasant personal conference where you lay aside defensiveness, refrain from blame, and take honest note of your skill deficiencies and attitude errors. Make a plan to correct the negatives by choosing to learn, embrace, and live the positive opposite of each deficiency. Practice Loving-Kindness Meditation towards your spouse daily. Track your behavior. With honest soul-searching and effort, you can change your attitudes and learn skills to create the joyful marriage you've always dreamed of.

Attitudes and Skills to Create a Happy Marriage

- Respects and has positive regard for spouse, despite differences
- Values spouse's friendship; makes time to play, talk
- Notices and appreciates spouse's good qualities; expresses it daily
- Affectionate: seeks to touch, kiss, have eye contact, hold hands
- Daily expresses love, devotion, and positive feelings for spouse
- Polite and courteous; mindful of how harsh words can harm
- Expresses own needs; airs differences; discusses hard subjects
- Looks for positive intentions; gives spouse the benefit of the doubt
- Kind; looks for ways to be thoughtful, give service, fulfill needs
- Unselfish, generous; lets spouse have his/her way 50% of the time
- Doesn't blame; uses Positive Criticism and assertive complaints
- Accepts Positive Criticism; looks for ways to improve self
- Forgives freely
- Apologizes; offers to make amends for wrongs or hurts caused
- Interested in spouse's thoughts and ideas; empathetic at hardships
- Respectful in disagreements; doesn't let it sour other parts of life
- Committed to spouse; refuses to think or get involved with others
- Resists any pornography
- Totally honest; doesn't lie, cheat, steal, or attempt to deceive
- Doesn't use illegal drugs or abuse prescriptions; limits alcohol
- Desires financial stability; budgets and spends money wisely
- Shares meaningful sexual intimacy that fulfills spouse's emotional and physical needs; respects spouse's sexual boundaries
- Hard working and dependable
- Tries to be healthy and attractive to his/her spouse

Attitude Errors, Skill Deficiencies, and Toxic Behaviors that Destroy Marriages

- Lacks respect for spouse; feels superior; has little positive regard
- Fails to take time to nurture friendship, play
- Fails to notice the good in spouse or express appreciation
- Stingy with affection; withholds touch, caressing, or kissing
- Fails to express love and positive feelings
- Impolite, disrespectful, uses cross tones of voice and sarcastic humor
- Fails to express own needs and desires; harbors resentment
- Takes offense easily; assumes negative intention; reacts negatively
- Unkind, self-centered, disagreeable, demanding, cross, or mean
- Selfish, stingy, puts own needs first; insists on having own way
- Critical; makes hurtful comments instead of specific suggestions
- Stonewalls: refuses to acknowledge concerns; denies responsibility
- Withdraws; is distant; emotionally "checks out"
- Harbors grudges; remembers offenses; fails to forgive
- Fails to apologize and make amends for wrongs and hurts
- Hostile in disagreements; lets it spill over and sour other parts of life
- Wandering eyes: lets thoughts and affection wander to others
- Views pornography; triggers pleasure from images, instead of spouse
- Dishonest, lies, manipulates facts, or fails to keep commitments
- Alcohol or drug addiction (including prescription drugs)
- Poor money management; over-spends and puts family at risk
- Demands or spitefully withholds sex; coercive, demeaning, or insensitive to spouse's sexual wants or needs
- Lazy or undependable; messy
- Neglects health and appearance

Making Happy Marriages (part 2)

A plan for increasing love & correcting attitude errors or skill deficiencies

(Print two worksheets per couple)



1. **Set a goal.** Decide what you want your marriage to be and feel like and write it below:

2. **Set up protocols:** Decide on respectful protocols (set ways of doing or discussing things) to handle difficult aspects of marriage. Remind each other to follow them.

a) How we will handle disagreements: _____

b) How we will handle money/budgeting issues: _____

c) How we will handle concerns about sex: _____

d) How we will handle differences in parenting: _____

e) How we will protect our relationship from intruders: _____

3. **Take inventory; discard anti-social behaviors:** Look at the attitude errors and skill deficiencies you marked on the previous page. Recognize that they are anti-social behaviors and that they harm your ability to have the loving marriage you want. Desire to rid yourself of them. With the help of your spouse, choose three things that are most harmful to your relationship. Decide that you will permanently abandon those negative things and **adopt the positive opposite** of each behavior or attitude.

4. **Write the 3 positive behaviors you will begin doing here.** (List any skills you need to learn to put the behaviors into practice.)

a) _____ SKILL: _____

b) _____ SKILL: _____

c) _____ SKILL: _____

Contract: Write out a Contract for Change on each new behavior. Do Positive Practice and track your behavior. Apologize when you make a mistake and keep trying.

5. **Give a gift of self to your spouse** by asking: "What is one thing you would like me to do differently to make you feel more loved?" (List it as a positive behavior—something you want him or her to DO, not STOP doing.) Write it here: _____

6. **Develop emotional intimacy:** Learn the skills required to develop emotional intimacy and put them into practice. This will help emotionally heal a spouse who is burdened with "attachment anxiety/avoidance" caused by poor nurturing or abuse as a child. It will provide a more peaceful, happy marriage.

Tips to Develop Emotional Intimacy in Marriage

- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>1) Emotional intimacy begins with trust in the love, deep commitment, and kind intentions of a spouse. This is coupled with a secure sense of knowing you are respected as an equal and you feel totally safe, both emotionally and physically.</p> | <p>2) Emotional intimacy requires communication skills that foster love, peace, and understanding, which enable openness and honesty in sharing private thoughts and feelings, knowing they will be valued and protected.</p> | <p>3) Emotional intimacy requires basic generosity of heart, noticing and complementing the good in each other, sharing, wanting the best for each other, and giving each other the benefit of the doubt.</p> | <p>4) Emotional intimacy requires the skills of resolving concerns and conflicts in a fair, respectful way; forgiving and letting go of past hurts; and not holding grudges. It also requires eliminating angry, unkind, or revengeful outbursts.</p> | <p>5) Emotional intimacy requires willingness to learn the touches that please and arouse your spouse; appreciating the natural differences between men and women; and finding enjoyment in fulfilling each other's sexual needs.</p> |
|---|--|--|--|--|

DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY
<input type="checkbox"/> Kiss; say "I love you;" touch; hug; make eye contact <input type="checkbox"/> Do a kind deed; say what you like about each other; express gratitude; laugh	<input type="checkbox"/> Go on a fun date <input type="checkbox"/> Build your friendship <input type="checkbox"/> Have happy, tender sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold a family meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss goals, children, finances; make plans <input type="checkbox"/> Take a relationship inventory <input type="checkbox"/> Review and set goals to build relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Express needs; air differences

Making Happy Marriages (part 3)

Tips to deal with toxic behavior in those we love



“Toxic” people yell, swear, use sarcasm, use angry or derogatory voice tones, or become manipulative or violent when they don’t like what is happening or get their way. People engage in angry, manipulative behavior for a variety of reasons. These toxic behaviors may stem from some of the causes listed below:

- 1) **Neglect or abuse as children:** This can lead a child to develop attachment anxiety, which translates into attachment avoidance as an adult, which prevents bonding and causes him or her to misinterpret other people’s intentions, see harm where none was intended, and respond badly.
- 2) **Parents who gave in to their rages** as children, which rewarded and reinforced bad behavior.
- 3) **Immature moral reasoning skills:** they don’t understand that it is wrong to treat people badly in order to get what they want.
- 4) **Mental illness; poor brain health** from genetic factors; or increased irritability due to **inadequate brain nutrition.** (These may be helped by counseling, medication, neuro-feedback, and changing diet to consume adequate fish oil, vitamins, and protein.)

Regardless of the cause, people can improve brain health and learn new behaviors and skills if someone kindly confronts them; expresses love; requests that they change their behavior; praises good behavior; and ignores them when they become abusive or manipulative.

How to Deal with Toxic Behavior

The following steps will help you deal with toxic behavior from those you love. However, the situation may get worse before it gets better as the toxic person goes through stages of shock, denial, anger, depression, and upping his or her toxic behaviors to see if you will give in to his or her demands. Eventually the person will accept the need to change. If these steps don’t help, ask a counselor or trusted friend to talk to the toxic person with you.

1. Recognize that it is not in the best interest of the toxic person to remain abusive.
2. Believe that, despite your weaknesses, you deserve to be treated with respect as a human being.
3. Document each abusive occurrence in writing. List the date and time of what triggers the abusive behavior. Make two copies—one to use, and one to keep in a safe place.
4. Decide what behaviors you want the toxic person to do **instead**; write it down. List the skills the person needs to handle irritating situations in positive, constructive ways. **Be sure to learn and use those same skills yourself.**
5. Prepare yourself for a frank, but loving, conversation by learning and practicing the skills of positive criticism, delivering difficult feedback, and motivational interviewing from Lesson 7.
6. Ask the toxic person for a pleasant personal conference at a time you both agree on.
7. At your personal conference, present the evidence of his or her toxic behaviors that you’ve kept track of. Explain how it has affected you and how you would like him or her to behave instead. Ask him or her for a commitment to change the toxic behaviors. Use the Contract for Change handout in Lesson 7. Ask what help he or she needs.
8. Explain what you will do if the toxic behavior occurs again:
 - a) **Call it to his or her attention.** (“Just now when I disagreed with you, you began yelling. That is anti-social behavior.”)
 - b) **Say what you need.** (“What I need is for you to speak politely. When we are both calm, we can talk.”)
 - c) **Then IGNORE him or her** and walk away until he or she is willing to discuss things politely using LUV-Listening and assertive I-Messages.
9. Praise every attempt at good behavior.

Are You Toxic?

CORRECT YOUR ATTITUDE ERRORS:

1. Acknowledge other people’s rights to see, feel, and choose differently than you.
2. Have empathy and respect for other people’s points of view. Admit that you could be wrong.
3. Be generous—recognize that other people have the right to win in disagreements too. Let your spouse have his or her own way at least 51 percent of the time.
4. Be happy for other people’s successes.
5. Find joy in giving service to others.

LEARN AND PRACTICE NEW SKILLS:

1. Practice positive communication:
 - a. Use LUV-Listening and I-Messages.
 - b. Be assertive instead of aggressive.
 - c. Give kind, respectful responses.
 - d. Let go and accept “no” graciously.
2. Notice and compliment the good in others daily.
3. Use good problem-solving and Win-Win Negotiation skills.
4. Practice Mindfulness and Loving-Kindness Meditation from the Intro Lesson.
5. Apologize for your mistakes. Ask forgiveness and offer to make amends.