SKILLS COMMON TO ALL EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTIONS: PRACTICE GUIDES

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SKILLS FOR MENTORS

To review attitudes, behaviors, and skills of an effective helper

To be effective in your implementation of this program, you need to be able to establish strong relationships with parents and children. You already are successful in forming good relationships, but special attitudes, behaviors, and skills are needed to be an effective helper.

Attitudes
Here is how an effective helper feels and thinks about the people seeking help.

> *I understand that it is not easy to seek help. There is often shame in admitting that you can't handle something on your own. These clients have received blame and criticism, both from others and themselves. I need to show them that I am not judging them or looking down on them. I need to always remind myself that there are good reasons why people have severe problems in their lives, and if I understood their childhoods and life experiences, it would make sense to me. I need to feel compassion and show a desire to understand without judgment. I need to feel and convey empathy – the ability to see the world from another person's perspective and imagine myself inside that person's skin. In order for clients to want to participate in the program, they need to trust me and believe that I respect and value them as people. I can't fake feelings of respect and appreciation – they have to be genuine. So I need to work on any obstacles in ME that would prevent me from being caring and respectful.*

It is important that you understand the principles of the program, and believe that the program can result in significant change in the lives of your client. With that attitude, you will convey optimism to the client and the client, in response, will develop hope in a more positive future. Here are some principles that contribute to the program's success.

- Researchers have used scientific methods to demonstrate that the skills and tools in this program are effective in changing people's behaviors, feelings and moods, and relationships. They really work!
- People need a clear vision of their desired future, so goal-setting is an essential part of the program.
- Change occurs in small steps; once a goal is established, there needs to be a series of steps that gradually take the person towards the goal.
- Small improvements need to be recognized and acknowledged.
- When change doesn't occur as expected, there is no one to blame. Instead, the lack of progress is a clue that the steps need to be modified.
- The helper needs to create a positive relationship and serve in many roles: educator, coach, partner, and supporter.

Behaviors

The behaviors of an effective helper fall into two categories: nonverbal and verbal.

Nonverbal behaviors

In forming relationships, *what* you say is often less important than *how* you say it – your "nonverbal" behavior. This term refers to such things as body language (facial expression, posture, gestures), vocal qualities of speech, and emotional messages. Here are some ideas about desired nonverbal communication:
- Warm (not cold)
- Equal (not superior)
- Accepting (not judgmental)
- Patient (not impatient)
- Respectful (not disrespectful)
- Appreciative (not critical).

As stated above, you can't have appropriate nonverbal behaviors if you don't have the correct attitude. For instance, if you think to yourself that the client is stupid, lazy or unworthy, then you will be broadcasting disrespect and dislike, no matter what words you choose.

Sometimes we have negative communication habits that are out of line with our positive inner feelings. With awareness, we have the chance to correct our nonverbal behavior.

For instance:
- I'm interested in what you have to say (but I don't look at you and continue reading a magazine while you talk to me).
- I want to connect to you and reduce our distance (but I stand with my arms crossed, as if I'm protecting myself.)
- I truly want to understand you (but I interrupt what you are saying and offer my own opinion.)
- I want you to feel good about yourself (but I constantly point out ways you can improve.)

Experts in communication have created guidelines for the nonverbal behavior of effective helpers. These are only guidelines – once you have learned these behaviors, it is important to remember that you need to be flexible and tailor your behavior to your specific client. For instance, the guidelines mention a certain kind of eye contact. However, members of some cultural groups prefer more or less eye contact. Or you will notice that some individuals find too much eye contact makes them uncomfortable.

> **Body posture:** Turn your whole body toward the person you are talking to. Have an open posture – avoid crossing your arms on your chest. If seated, lean forward. Look relaxed and comfortable, rather than fidgety and tense.
> **Facial expression:** Your face should look warm and friendly; you should smile frequently. Sometimes when we are confused or thoughtful, our facial

expression can seem judgmental or angry, so it is important to become aware of that and learn to keep your muscles relaxed. When the client is emotional, your face can mirror the feelings, to show that you understand and are supportive.

Eye contact: It's important to look at the other person's eyes frequently, but not constantly. You can break eye contact after a sentence or so by looking away, horizontally. When either person is taking time to think, it is natural to break eye contact.

Nonverbal aspects of speech: Your voice should sound warm and friendly. People talk at different speeds (tempos); it is important for you to listen to the other person and then match that tempo. Jumping in to speak too quickly gives the impression that you haven't truly been interested in the other person's words. Instead, wait a beat before beginning to talk. You can offer little sounds like "uh huh" or "mmm" that show that you are engaged in what the client is saying.

Gestures: An occasional head nod shows interest, and invites the person to continue talking. Too much head nodding looks mechanical. Hand gestures should support what you are saying and not be distracting.

Communication skills

Here are a few communication skills that you will need to use in implementing this program, not only in the engagement phase.

Paraphrase
To paraphrase means to restate in your own words what the client has said, in a tone of voice that shows you are seeking confirmation that you truly understand. You can begin with a phrase like *Let me see if I understand* or *I get the idea that ….* By doing this, you give the client a chance to correct you. You also are giving the client a chance to hear out loud what she has said, which can lead to more clarification and even insight.

Summarize
This term is used when the client has been talking at length, and you want to show understanding of the highlights. Summaries are selective and brief. A good summary not only shows the client that you are following and absorbing large amounts of information, but also serve to organize thinking. For instance, a summary can begin, "*I hear there are four main sources of stress in your life* …" when the client has been jumping from topic to topic in a disorganized way.

Reflection of feelings and meaning
A very important skill is to recognize what another person might be feeling and implying, but not directly stating, and then to communicate this understanding. Of course you cannot be certain about what goes on inside another person, but you can gently offer a guess. Clues to feelings come from both nonverbal messages (facial expression, tone of voice) and the content of what is said.

By putting feelings in words, you show that you are interested in the person's entire experience. When feelings are brought into the conversation, there is more connection and trust. To practice reflection of feelings, we use this formula: **"You feel _____ because _____".** The words after "feel" must be feeling words: be careful not to insert "that" or you will be describing thinking, as you can see in the second and third sentences.

> You feel angry. (*feeling*)
> You feel that he can't be trusted. (*thinking*)
> You feel like he's disrespectful. (*thinking*)

After the word *because* you would describe the events, thoughts, and behaviors that cause the feelings.

> You feel angry, upset, and disappointed, because he promised to do his homework and he didn't. (*event*)
> You feel angry, upset, and disappointed, because you thought you could trust him to be responsible (*thoughts)* and now you will have to supervise him *(behavior).*

After you master the skills of using the formula, you need to make the wording sound more natural.

I can tell that you're really disappointed with him for breaking a promise, and I wonder if you're angry over having to go back to supervising him every night.

Information-gathering

Asking questions is the most direct way of gathering information. There are two types of questions:

Open: This type of question invites the other person to talk at length, and to decide what is relevant and important. Typical open questions would be "What are major difficulties you are having with your child?" "What would you like to get out of this program?" Open questions cannot be answered with a single word. People differ greatly in their verbal styles. Some people speak very briefly and will need encouragement to continue (Could you tell me about a recent example, in as much detail as possible?) while other people will talk at length, with excessive detail, so you might need to provide instructions such as "What about this bothers you the most?"

Closed. This type of question can be answered with a single word or a sentence. Examples: "When did this problem begin?" "What specifically did you say?"

Using statements instead of questions. It is important to use variety in the way you gather information. Instead of questions, you can frame requests for information by beginning a sentence with words like "Please tell me about…"

or "I wonder what …" By using statements, you avoid sounding like an interrogator.

Giving compliments.

One of the tools you will be teaching in this program is the use of praise. It is important that you model this behavior. When people seek help, they have been focusing on their problems and what is wrong in their lives, and need reminders of their strengths and accomplishments. By using compliments, you show that you appreciate the other person; if his self-esteem is low, he can begin to build a better sense of worth by hearing another person describe his good qualities. In giving compliments, your voice must sound sincere and appreciative. Be sure to vary the phrases you use so it doesn't sound like a formula. Here are suggestions for giving compliments:
- **Focus on specific behaviors and skills.** "I really admire how clearly you describe what you are dealing with." "I think it's great how you balance so many demands in your life."
- **Acknowledge personal qualities:** "It takes a lot of courage to face something that makes you so uncomfortable." "You've shown real determination to avoid making the mistakes your own parents made."
- **Find the good intention under the problem behavior**. "Even though what you've been doing hasn't been effective, it's clear that you really want to keep your child safe, and that's wonderful."

Self-disclosure

This term means that you are sharing your own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In our friendships, we can choose what and how much to share with the other person, and typically, there is an equal amount of self-disclosure from each person. In helping relationships, the balance is very different. **When the helper self-discloses, it is with the intention of providing something useful for the client**. Your self-disclosures can either be about your own personal experience or phrased as a story about someone you know ("a 12-year old girl I know …). Here are examples of when self-disclosure is desirable:
- To show that you have struggled with challenges similar to those that the client is dealing with, so she knows that you can understand and won't judge.
- To show that you have benefited personally from the tools and skills that are provided by the program, to increase hope and confidence that the program will help.
- To demonstrate that you have appropriate training and experience, so that she will have confidence in your ability to help.
- To provide concrete examples when you are explaining concepts or teaching skills, to enhance learning and make sessions more enjoyable.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PARENT

To establish rapport with parents and promote their full participation in the program

These guidelines describe how to begin a relationship with a parent who is seeking to be a participant in this program.

Steps:
- Introduce yourself and the program
- Establish the type of help that the client wants
- Clarify your future roles
- Encourage a commitment to participate fully in the program.

Introduce yourself and the program

Self-disclosure: Explain your qualifications and training. Share something personal about your challenges as a parent, and something positive you have gained by using the principles in this program.

Give a brief overview of the program.
You need to practice describing the program enough so that you can cover the main points without sounding like you have memorized a script.
- State that this is a preliminary overview, and you will answer questions and give more details after you have discussed the parent's goals.
- Explain that the principles, skills, and tools of this program come from hundreds of scientific studies, and that the methods have been found to work -- not only for changing children's problem behaviors but for reducing parents' stress and creating a healthier family.
- Explain that change
    - Occurs slowly over time
    - Requires taking small steps
    - Is based on clear goals, practice, and a strategy of tested skills and tools.
- Explain that participants need to agree to engage in practice activities between sessions.

Establish the type of help that the client wants

An important task of the engagement phase is identifying the client's needs and framing them in a way that shows how the program you offer is the right match.

Invite the parent to talk about her reasons for talking to you and wanting to make changes.

Start with an open question to hear about the parent's concerns, challenges, and problems, and use all of your communication skills to demonstrate empathy and understanding, show appreciation for strengths, gather information, and summarize key issues. While you need to be flexible and follow the flow of the client's story-telling, here are some key types of information that you need:

- examples of when the problem is *not* occurring, and examples of what the parent appreciates about the child;
- what the parent has done to try to solve the problem; and
- prior experiences trying to make changes: what has helped and what has not worked.

Create a list, with the parent of (a) problems/challenges and (b) desired goals. Decide which goal should be addressed first. Express confidence that the tools and methods of the program have been successful in achieving that goal with other families.

Clarify your future roles

Explain your role:
- Like a coach who helps people develop and apply new skills
- Make sure that practice is tailored to the family's specific needs and goals
- Plan, supervise, and troubleshoot – give feedback and address obstacles.
- Structure the sessions: at the beginning of each meeting, you will listen to the client share about the events of the week; you will be flexible about the agenda for the rest of the session, based on the progress described; you will end the session with directions for the coming week.

Explain the parents' roles:
- Emphasize that parents are experts on their children, and that the key ingredient to the success of this program is that the parents will not only be engaged in the sessions but will also implement the new tools in the days between sessions.
- They need to discuss any concerns that arise and make a commitment to fully participate.
- Explain that there will be assignments to keep written records to discuss in sessions.

Encouraging a commitment to participate fully in the program.

In this final phase of the engagement process, you will address concerns and discuss and plan for possible obstacles to participation.
- Ask for feedback and questions. Paraphrase what the parent says and answer questions. Be sure not to get defensive if she challenges the worth of the program.

- Ask the parent to identify anything that might come up to prevent full participation, using the term "barriers to participation." Make a written list, being sure that it contains both practical and emotional barriers. You can add to the list, as well.
  - Practical: things like competing commitments, transportation, baby-sitting needs.
  - Emotional: feeling too stressed, hopelessness, anger, it makes you feel incompetent to have to learn to be a better parent.
- For each item on the list, help the parent to discover a solution: what, specifically, could be done to overcome the barrier in order for her to participate fully.
- End the encounter by expressing enthusiasm for working with this family.

ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILD

To build a collaborative relationship with the child and promote active participation in the program.

In this guide, we examine how to build a relationship with the child and smooth the way for the child's active participation in the program. This process includes meetings with the parent and child together as well as meetings with the child, alone.

Steps:
- Introduce yourself and say why you are meeting.
- Notice a strength of the child
- Develop positive expectations.
- Address concerns and barriers to participation.

Before describing those steps, here are general guidelines for working with children.

Motivation: The child's motivation for change will be different from that of the parent; it is important for you to discover the child's goals, and find a way to create common goals with the parents. The child might want parents to stop nagging, more control over free time, and specific rewards and privileges. An adolescent might express desires for privacy, respect for choices, more independence, and later curfew. You need to assess whether the child is currently motivated to please her parents or is more likely to be defiant and rebellious.

Developmental stage: Your choice of language and examples will vary, depending on the child's level of education and maturity. Activities must be selected that are age-appropriate. Allow the child to have as much control over decisions and goals as possible. For instance, an older child can suggest convenient times, choose activities, and create out-of-session assignments. The type of praise you give and the rewards that are used have to be suitable for the child's age-level.

Create a positive relationship with the child

As you implement specific steps of the program, attention must always be paid to the quality of the relationship with the child. You need to appreciate the child as a separate person with her own needs, feelings, and point of view. It is important that the child feels your nonjudgmental acceptance of who he/she is as a person, even if there are negative behaviors. Here are some suggestions:
- Get to know the child, apart from the problems. Learn about interests, favorite TV shows and music, friends, feelings about siblings, etc.
- Get "in tune" with the child: match his speed of talking, adapt to his preferred amount of eye contact, use vocabulary that is at his level, and show interest and enthusiasm for what he likes.

- Engage in enjoyable activities together. Plan sessions so there is always some fun. Bring humor into your interactions.
- Use skills of empathy: help the child put into words his thoughts and feelings.
- Be caring and nonjudgmental, showing that you are a safe, supportive, and trustworthy person.
- Recognize moments when the relationship has a problem, and work on restoring a good working relationship before proceeding with your agenda.

Plan to assure access to services and increase participation

For young children, the parent will be responsible for assuring the child's attendance. For older children, you can assist in the practical details, while giving the child the sense of power and control. Here are some factors to consider:
- **Location/transportation:** Will you be meeting at the home or another location? How will the child travel? Is there a need for assistance, such as bus tokens and route information? What location will be most comfortable, such as a park or a coffee shop?
- **Scheduling:** What are the child's preferences (e.g., right after school, after dinner?) Be sure to respect the child's other time commitments and show flexibility. You need to consider your own schedule, but when possible, give the child a choice of day and time.
- **Food:** Providing snacks can set a positive tone for the meeting.
- **Provide reminders:** Between contacts, confirm the date, time, and location of next meeting (by phone, text, email, or in person). You may need to review the travel plan or the details of how the child will get excused from class (in a school setting).

Now we will cover the steps of your first encounter with the child.

Introduce yourself and the program.

Self-disclosure: Tell the child what you want to be called. Explain that you are trained to help family members improve their relationships, solve problems, and to achieve their personal goals. Express positive feelings about meeting the child and seeing if you can be of help.

Explain why you were asked to meet with the child. Begin to introduce the term *goals* into the conversation. Express the parents' reasons for seeking help in an age-appropriate way. Examples:
- *Your parents are very concerned that you seem to be sad (angry, lonely) and their goal is for you to feel better.*
- *Your mother and teacher are worried that you are not keeping up with your grade and their goal is for you to be more successful in school.* (For adolescents, you can expand on this: *They want you to have the best opportunities for a good career and they want you to have the grades and study habits that will lead to a successful future.*)

Invite the child to describe his/her goals.
Ask open questions to explore changes the child would like.
- How do you feel about your parents' goals?
- How would you like things to be different in your family?
- What things in your life are making you unhappy that you would want to change?

Use good listening skills – paraphrase, show empathy, and summarize what the child has said.
Explain that you will be helping the child make the changes she wants, as well as helping the whole family achieve goals.
If the child is reluctant and skeptical, encourage him to give the program a try and then talk about it again in a few weeks.

Give a brief overview of the program.
- Explain the details of meeting together (frequency, duration, length of meetings).
- Describe what will happen during meetings (e.g., talk, do activities together, practice new skills.)
- Explain that the child will need to do practice between sessions, but that he/she will help choose what to work on.

Clarify the roles.
Explain your role:
- Like a coach who helps people develop and apply new skills.
- Sometimes like a teacher.
- Address the issue of confidentiality: If you are meeting with the child alone, will you be able to assure that you will not repeat everything to the parent? In most cases, parents will agree that you should use your best judgment, and only report to the parents when there is risk of harm to child or others (e.g., drug use, suicidal thoughts, destructive behaviors).

Explain the child's role:

- Explain that the child is the expert on his own life and that he will need to teach you what works and what doesn't work. *"How does it sound if when we work together, sometimes I am the teacher, and sometimes you are the teacher?"*
- For the program to work, the child needs to participate fully and keep agreements.
- Explain that he/she needs to be honest about feelings and concerns.

Explain the parents' roles:
- Explain that parents are responsible for the well-being of children, and need to be involved in setting goals and deciding on rewards and penalties.

- Explain that the parents are also learners: they will be learning new ways to communicate and will be working towards making the family a happier, more comfortable group of people.

Develop positive expectations.

You want the child to have a positive outlook and to be motivated to fully participate.
- **Show that it is normal to receive help:** To have a problem and receive help doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with the child. For instance, "Many kids get help from people other than parents and teachers." " This would be difficult for anyone." "Lots of kids have trouble with school/parents/ friends." "We all face problems that are hard to handle – it's a real strength to be able to accept help." Give an example – like how singers on TV shows (like The Voice) improve when they get coaching.
- **Build confidence in self and program:** "You'll learn new skills that will help you handle those situations." "This program has worked with others your age who have had the same problem."
- **Tell success stories.** Describe a child the same age, with the same difficulty, who engaged in this program, and describe the positive results.
- **Emphasize collaboration and teamwork:** "We'll do this together and you'll play a key role in deciding how we spend our time."

Address concerns and barriers to participation.

Ask for feedback and questions. Paraphrase what the child says and answer questions. Be sure not to get defensive if she challenges the worth of the program.

Ask about previous services with a counselor or coach, and discuss what worked and what was less useful. If the child had a negative experience, reassure him that your relationship will be different. If there were past successes, learn what worked so you can replicate it. If the child has never had counseling, ask if she has friends who have.

Encourage the child to share negative feelings: *It's a common experience for children to not be enthusiastic about coming to these meetings, and sometimes they feel weird about it in some way.* Probe for specific concerns and provide reassurance:
- **What other people will think:** first make clear that the meetings are private. Then seek to reduce feelings of shame or embarrassment.
- **Confidentiality**: Explain that you will maintain confidentiality unless there is something that the parents need to know to protect the child.
- **That an older person (or a person from a different ethnic group) won't be able to understand**: Assure the child that you will do your best to overcome these barriers.

Ask the child to identify anything that might come up to prevent full participation, both during sessions together and in completing between-session assignments. Make a written

list, being sure that it contains both practical and emotional barriers. You can add to the list, as well.

- o Practical: things like other commitments, not having time, not understanding instructions, or transportation problems.
- o Emotional: wanting to be with friends, feeling bad about having problems needing help, feeling angry or sad.

For each item on the list, help the child to discover a solution: what, specifically, could be done to overcome the barrier in order for her to participate fully. Here are specific suggestions:

- Provide worksheets to guide practice.
- Work out an example during the session.
- Give contact information, so the child can ask you questions.
- Have the child identify specific practice times, and give ideas for providing reminders (a calendar, a cell phone alarm, a phone-call from a support person).
- Contact the child between sessions to find out how practice is going and to address barriers to practice.
- Review practice at the beginning of the next session, and provide praise.
- If it isn't complete, discuss how to make it easier to complete it, or find a way to complete it during the session.
- Provide rewards for completion of practice.

End the meeting by expressing enthusiasm for working with this child and family.

ATTENDING

To improve the quality of the parent-child relationship and promote the child's sense of self-worth

This guide explains how to teach the parent to provide positive responses to the child that in order to build a positive relationship, develop self-esteem, and promote healthy development.

Steps:
- Motivate parents to engage in positive behaviors with their child.
- Describe and practice how to provide appropriate and effective positive interactions with the child.
- Explain how to avoid bringing other types of behaviors into the allotted "attending time."
- Anticipate difficulties and address concerns.
- Create a plan to engage in a specified amount of attending time.

Motivate parents to engage in positive behaviors with their child.

Ask the parent how much time she spends enjoying relaxed time with her child. Then ask how much time is spent in making demands, criticism, scolding, punishing.

Explain that there are two ways to change that balance:
- Increase pleasurable time
- Decrease negative time

You will be teaching methods to change negative behaviors in other sessions. Now you are going to focus on the benefits of increasing pleasant time with the child. Explain the following:

*A specific kind of positive response – praise – will be addressed in a different session. Praise is a positive response that shows the child what type of behavior is desired. Here we will use the term **attending** for positive behaviors directed toward the child that do not have the agenda of getting the child to behave differently. These attending behaviors accomplish the following:*
- *Showing that you accept and appreciate your child exactly as he or she is.*
- *Showing that you enjoy spending time together with your child.*
- *Allowing your child to be a leader and choose the activity, set the pace, and tell you what he would like you to do*
- *Listening to your child to learn about his inner world – his thoughts, feelings, dreams, fears, goals, worries, etc.*
- *Helping the child to label and understand his experiences.*

- *Providing appropriate support: recognizing when your child is doing well on his own and doesn't need help as well as recognizing when your child does need assistance and comfort.*

Describe and practice how to provide appropriate and effective positive interactions with the child.

Explain that the parent needs to set time aside for specific activities, as well as be flexible enough to stop another activity when a good opportunity for closeness arises.

Here are some activities that provide opportunities for attending.
- Playing a game
- Being with the child while he engages in creative activity
- Encouraging the child to share whatever goes on in her head
- Reading to the child and talking about reactions to the book
- Preparing a special meal together

Here are examples of the types of behaviors that show good attending.

Scene	Good Attending
Child is playing with toy trucks and legos on the floor.	Join the child and do the types of play behavior that he is doing Describe what the child is doing, with enthusiasm ("you're building a very tall tower!) Show interest and let the child be the expert. ("How do you know which pieces go together?) Show that you are enjoying yourself.
Child is sitting at a table, drawing with markers.	Just being present and interested is enough. Show interest when the child wants to show you something. Express pleasure in the child's enjoyment and creativity.
Child comes home from school with a sad face and low energy.	Sit together and enjoy a snack. Say that you notice that her face looks sad. Say that talking can be helpful. Ask if you can help. Suggest an enjoyable activity to do together.

Explain how to avoid bringing other types of behaviors into the allotted "attending time."

Explain that it is important to resist the temptation to do teaching, correction, guidance, or direction. When you do that, you change the feelings in the interaction. It may be hard to let go of goals, but this is time that is for connection and appreciation. This style of responding should not only make your child feel good – YOU should feel good, as well.

Here are some examples of what *not* to do:
- Don't lead and direct
- Don't tell the child what to do
- Don't let yourself show boredom
- Don't try to improve the child's behavior
- Don't scold or criticize

Anticipate difficulties and address concerns.

Ask the parent if she is able to relax and enjoy herself, without having a voice in her head telling her what she should do or worrying about problems. Ask for the most recent example.
- If there is an example, help the parent realize that she would not have been able to relax if there was a voice telling her how to be better or what was wrong. Therefore, she has to be able to protect her child from hearing that kind of voice. You want your child to be able to be free of chronic worry and an excessive need to be productive – good childrearing means that the child does not lose the capacity for play and feeling very close and safe with another person.
- If there is no example: it might be advisable to help the parent develop a "self care" behavior change plan for herself. Explain that she won't be able to engage in this behavior with her child if she can't be present, relaxed, and free of nagging voices in her head, during her own "free time."

Discuss what to do if the child begins to misbehave during the attending time. Help the parent see the difference between "not doing it your way" and "hurting people or property."

Review these principles:
- Your first response should guide the child to the positive behavior. "Let's play gently with the doll."
- If the behavior persists, try looking away and terminate your positive behaviors (ignoring.)
- If the child doesn't correct herself, put an end to the activity, without doing negative behaviors like scolding, threatening, or punishing.

Ask the parent if there are any questions or concerns.

Create a plan to engage in a specified amount of attending time.

Have the parent make a commitment to practice good attending behaviors a realistic number of times during the coming week.

Suggest a chart to monitor *attending time*.

MONITORING PARENT'S ATTENDING

What were we doing together?	What specifically did I do? Be specific about how you showed interest.	How did you feel during the activity?	Is there anything you need to improve in your attending behaviors?

PRAISE

To increase the parent's use of praise to improve the parent-child relationship and increase the child's self-image and appropriate behavior

In the guide on *Attending* we discussed positive responses to the child that are intended to build a positive relationship, develop self-esteem, and promote healthy development. Here we are focusing on the use of a particular type of positive response that is used with the intention of increasing the child's appropriate behavior: *praise.*

Steps:
- Motivate parents to use praise to increase positive behaviors.
- Describe and practice the skill of giving clear, specific, and enthusiastic praise.
- Explain how to avoid mingling criticism with praise.
- Explain the best timing for praise.
- Encourage the parent to find opportunities to give praise.
- Address concerns.

Motivate parents to use praise to increase positive behaviors

Explain important principles of behavior change:
- What happens AFTER the behavior has a strong effect on whether the behavior increases or decreases.
- When REWARD follows a behavior, it tends to increase. A reward is something that the child wants – that produces good feelings and provides desired things and experiences. Praise – compliments for the performance of the desired behavior – is a very powerful reward.

Explain that praise has other benefits besides being a method of changing behavior:
- It contributes to the child's self-worth. The child learns that in the eyes of others, he is competent, worthy, and appreciated.
- It contributes to positive relationships in the family and breaks patterns of criticism and negative judgment.
- It helps to shape skills and develop competence. When you say specifically, "I like the way that you checked your homework and found your own mistakes," you are guiding the child toward future school success.
- It motivates the child to persevere through steps to accomplish difficult tasks.
- Children who receive frequent praise will get clear messages about the right thing to do or right way to do something, which helps them develop their own internal rules, so that they behave the right way when they are not being observed.
- Children who receive praise will learn to give it to others; that will contribute to their positive relationships with others, including younger siblings.
- Giving praise will make YOU feel good.

Discuss parents' opinion of using praise:

Ask the parents to think about positive experiences they have had with praise – from parents, teachers, or employers. Ask whether they ever worked for someone who only gave criticism but never acknowledged what they were doing right.

Here is a list of objections that parents may give. You need to address the objection, and reinforce the message that child developmental experts are convinced that praise is an essential part of child-rearing.

- "*He should know how to behave without praise.*" Explain that praise will help establish the correct behavior, and then it will no longer be needed all the time. Praise is not just for getting the child to behave, it is for building self-esteem and it contributes to a positive loving relationship.
- "*There are other methods to make a child behave.*" Explain that threats and punishment do not result in consistent good behavior. They can have negative results: increasing the rebelliousness of a child, making the parent feel angry and frustrated, reducing the peace and harmony in the family.
- "*Praise should be saved for outstanding behavior.*" Explain that this approach ignores the learning process. It takes small steps to achieve high levels of competence. By providing praise at early stages, you help the child persist and develop higher skills.
- "*There is nothing to praise.*" Explain that the parent is probably focusing on the child's performance of behaviors that are desired by others. Suggest that they can find something to praise if they focus on when the child has no demands, or is doing something she likes. You can give suggest behaviors that are problem for other kids but not for this child: getting up on time, trying new foods, reading well, having a good friend.
- "*Praise will make him think he's better than others.*" Explain that people who act superior and conceited are often people who feel inferior inside. Praise will help the child develop genuine self–esteem. You will be providing a model, so that the child will learn to give praise to others.
- "*My child doesn't like being praised.*" Explain that it is a natural response to enjoy praise – give an example of how a dog reacts to "good boy." Then explain that some children learn to reject praise because they have a poor self-image – they are the ones that really need praise to begin to feel better about themselves.

If objections persist, suggest that they use praise for a few weeks, and then discuss their opinions and feelings.

Describe and practice the skill of giving clear, specific, and enthusiastic praise.

In giving praise, label a specific behavior so that the child learns what behaviors are valued.
> Too general: *Good job*
> Specific: *I like the way you put your toys away.*

Use variety in the wording of praise.

> Stating your reactions: *I like the way... I feel proud of you when you…. It makes my life easier when you ….*
>
> Focus on the behavior: *Your homework is very neat. It was very considerate of you to help me unpack the groceries.*

Make your nonverbal behavior very warm and enthusiastic.

> Voice: if you genuinely feel happy, proud, and loving, your voice will show it.
>
> Use gestures: a high 5 or hug can accompany your words.

Explain how to avoid mingling criticism with praise.

It is important not to add anything after the praise that has a negative, critical tone. Here are examples of negative phrases:

* *Why can't you always do this?* You need to let go of your frustration from the past, and give the child a "clean slate."
* *It could be done better (sooner, faster*). Remember that skills develop in steps. At a separate occasion you can describe and show what the next stage will be.
* *See, that's not so scary (hard, boring).* This minimizes the child's accomplishment. It is better to say "I'm proud of you that you (state behavior).

Explain the best timing for praise.

Praise is most effective when it comes immediately after the desired behavior. Don't give praise when the child is doing something inappropriate at the same time. For instance, if the child is breaking toys while playing, it would not be the right time to praise her for playing independently.

Encourage the parent to find opportunities to give praise.

Tell the parents that a very important strategy is to "catch the child being good." Suggest that they make a commitment to find opportunities for praise during the day. When a child follows a rule or completes a chore without being asked, it is a great time to provide praise. You can ask the child to do something and praise him for compliance.

Address concerns.

Answer questions and check to be sure the parent understands the principles, can demonstrate the skills, and has a plan in place. You might want to ask the parent to do a self-monitoring chart on the use of praise.

What my child was doing	What I said	My child's response

Helpful tips:
- Remember to always use praise when working with the parent – you should be a model of appropriate use of praise.
- Ask parent to explain these concepts to other adult figures in the child's life.

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

To teach socially appropriate strategies to express feelings, stand up for oneself, and disagree with others

These guidelines are designed for use with adolescents (youth), but they will also be appropriate for parents and can be simplified for young children. The purpose of this training is to teach youth how to communicate effectively to express feelings, stand up for themselves, and disagree with other people. The elements of training should be spread out over several sessions. In order to be effective in a stressful conversation, you need to be able to manage your emotions. The *Relaxation Training* tool should be taught before progressing to the use of assertiveness in difficult situations.

Steps:
- Explain benefits of learning "assertiveness skills."
- Explain four styles of relating, with pros and cons.
- Discuss "personal rights."
- Teach specific strategies.
- Identify challenging situations that can be handled with assertive skills.
- Use behavioral rehearsal to develop skills and prepare for real-life situation.
- Create plans to practice and implement assertive skills.

Explain benefits of learning "assertiveness skills."
The client may have already described challenging situations where new skills are needed, or you can speak in general terms:

> *We all face difficult situations with other people when we feel frustrated, anxious, or afraid to speak up. Sometimes we get so angry that we say things that we later regret. Luckily, there are specific skills that can help us cope with these situations. If we learn these skills, we will find that we can feel more powerful and effective. We can improve relationships we care about, feel better about ourselves, and do a better job of getting our needs met. The name of these skills are "assertiveness skills." **The meaning of "assertive" is to express yourself in a way that respects both yourself and the other person.***

Find examples from your own experience, or from your knowledge of another person the same age as the client.

Explain four styles of relating, with pros and cons.

Teach the labels for the four styles of relating and ask the client to think about the advantages and disadvantages. Your goal is to convince the client that assertiveness is the most effective path.

- **Aggressive:** one person dominates (bosses, bullies, tries to control) the other person, without caring about that person's rights, desires, needs, or well-being. Aggressiveness is fine in a competitive sport like football or boxing, but in our daily interactions with people, it ends up causing problems – it hurts people's feelings, makes them want to avoid you, makes them angry so they don't want to give you want you want. Explore whether the client has religious or moral values that work against hurting other people. Explain that sometimes people are aggressive because they feel powerless or because they lack self-control and don't know how to relax and take time to think about what to say.
- **Passive:** A person gives in to another's dominance without speaking up. This means that the person ignores his own needs, desires, rights, and well-being. Sometime people are passive because they are scared – scared of the other person or afraid that they will lose the relationship if they don't agree completely. Passive people may feel powerless and not have a lot of respect for themselves. They sometimes just want to keep things peaceful, but they pay a price – they feel bad about themselves, and they can let small amounts of anger at another person build up until they explode. They might then flip into being aggressive.
- **Passive-aggressive:** This is a sneaky style – the person acts as if they are giving in but they find hidden ways to hurt the other person – by being stubborn, doing something poorly, causing frustration.
- **Assertive:** The person has the ability and courage to express himself honestly and directly, in a style that is respectful of the other person. The person values his own needs and well-being, but also can understand and value the needs and well-being of the other.

Discuss the pros and cons of the different styles and ask for specific examples.
- Has there ever been a time when you yelled at or hit someone because you thought that was the only way to express your frustration or to get what you wanted?
- Did you ever let yourself go along with what others wanted and then end up feeling miserable, angry, and unimportant?

Assist the youth in concluding that assertiveness will help him or her successfully manage stressful situations with others and avoid the build-up of negative feelings (e.g., anxiety, anger) and behavior (e.g., aggression).

Discuss "personal rights."

Explain that a person can only be assertive if he believes that he has basic human rights. Make sure the client understands the word "rights" and give examples: a right to vote if you are a citizen over 18, a right to get a refund of money if a new product is damaged, a right to receive care in an emergency room.

Generate a list of basic rights in different relationships, being careful to be sensitive to cultural differences. You may need to work with parents at the same time, to help them recognize that a child has the right to express an opinion in a respectful way.

Here are some rights that support assertive behavior:
- The right to have your own feelings and opinions
- The right to express them appropriately and be taken seriously by others.
- The right to ask for what you want.
- The right to say "no" to a friend's request without feeling guilty.
- The right to protect yourself from harm.
- The right to speak up when you see injustice or wrong-doing by others.

As the client discusses problem situations, you can ask "What rights do you have?" You need to make clear that rights exist, whether or not another person respects them. Point out that aggressive people do not respect rights. Explain that authority figures sometimes don't respect rights of students or employees.

Explain that an important principle is that you have the right to choose *not* to be assertive if you believe that it will have harmful consequences. Use the example of karate: "Just because you know karate doesn't mean that you have to go around using it on everybody."

Teach specific strategies.

Explain that you will be teaching specific communication skills – what to say and how to say it. Before you will deal with specific problem situations in your client's life, you will teach a set of strategies that work in common situations. Decide which ones to practice first, depending on the client's interest.

- Saying no to a person who is trying to get you to do something you don't want to do
- Asking for help
- Asking someone to change a behavior that bothers you
- Responding to someone who is being aggressive
- Responding to constructive criticism

Saying no using "broken record.'
1) Explain how vinyl records work: if a needle gets stuck, it plays the same thing over and over. This technique involves choosing a phrase that you will repeat. Explain that "you have a right not to give an explanation" and that this skill can be combined with a statement that shows sympathy – but that is the client's choice.
2) Describe typical situations and ask the client to choose one. Here is a list with increasing difficulty:
   a) A salesperson who wants you to buy something: the broken record response could be "Thanks, but I'm not interested."
   b) A friend who wants to borrow money. "I understand that you really need money, but I don't have any to spare."
   c) A friend who wants you to break a parent's rule. "I know you would like me to join you, but I don't want to."

3) Practice the scenario. You play the other person. Start with a cooperative response (OK, I understand) and then increase the difficulty ("I thought you were my friend." "What's the matter, are you scared?"

Asking for help
1) Review the client's beliefs and feelings about seeking help. Some barriers might include shame, the belief that he should be able to succeed without ever needing help, the fear of rejection if the person says no. Remind the client that the other person has the assertive right to say "no," and he can choose in each situation whether or not to ask for help, but for now, it is important to have the skill to ask for help, in case he ever wants to.
2) Explain the formula:
   a) Show understanding of other person's feelings (empathy): I know you are busy.
   b) State specifically what you want. Instead of saying "could you help me with homework" say "I would like you to spend half an hour with me explaining my math homework and doing some sample problems with me."
   c) Suggest a plan of action: "Could we meet sometime after dinner?"

Asking someone to change a behavior that bothers you
1) Explain that there are stages in this process. If you have never told the person that the behavior bothers you, then you need to let go of any past anger and just start with a description of the behavior, how you feel, and what you want. If you have already made this request, and the person ignores it, then you need to become firmer the next time. You may need to state what you will do if the person doesn't change, and make a commitment to yourself to do it. Your strategy will depend on the nature of the relationship: if it is a friend, you will be thinking of how to maintain and enhance the relationship; if it is someone that you don't want a relationship with, you can be thinking of how to set limits and reduce contact. Explain that the client can use this skill with authority figures (parents, teachers), as long as it is done in a respectful way. Explain that success with the skill is not based on getting your way, but on expressing yourself in an assertive way, and being persistent.
2) Here is the formula:
   - State in very specific terms the behavior that you don't like, such as "keeping me waiting more than 10 minutes" (to a friend); "reminding me to do a chore when I have promised to do it at a later time" (to a parent); "giving everyone extra homework when only half the class had trouble with the assignment" (teacher); "standing over me with a threatening posture and demanding that I give you my lunch" (to a bully at school).
   - Describe the reasons why the person should stop – it hurts your feelings, makes you feel disrespected, it doesn't seem fair, it is against the school policy.
   - Make a specific request – be punctual, trust that I will keep my promise without being reminded, give extra homework only to the kids who need it, observe the school's no-bullying policy and not approach me with threats.
   - If the person doesn't change behavior, be prepared to describe consequences: I will leave and make other plans if you don't show up on time, I will feel less

motivated to do what I said and I will feel hurt that you don't trust me, I will do the extra homework but I will feel that it is unfair that you don't reward those of us who put the time in to do it right the first time; I will report you to the vice-principal.

Responding to someone who is being aggressive
1) Discuss the motivation of someone who is deliberately being mean – calling you "stupid," insulting your appearance, trying to provoke you into fighting. Their "payoff" is that you will be angry, lose control, feel bad, or get into a fight with them. You need a strategy that shows that this person can't get into your head or under your skin – that you don't have a negative reaction to what they are doing.
2) Explain the technique called "fogging" or "clouding" and its impact on the other person: Instead of getting the response he expects, he will get a soft, wet cloud that leaves him surprised and confused. The skill involves agreeing with what the person said – in principle, in part, or with humor. Here are some examples:
   a) Other person: *You're really stupid.* You say: *Yeah, I could be smarter.*
   b) Other person: *That's the ugliest shirt I've ever seen.* You say: *There are a lot of nicer shirts out there* or *really? I have much uglier shirts at home.*
   c) Other person: *If you had any guts, you would get up and fight.* You say: *If I had guts, I would ask (a rock star) to go out with me, I wouldn't waste my energy fighting.*

Responding to constructive criticism
1) Explain that being able to hear criticism without being defensive or shutting down is a very important life skill. We will be getting criticism throughout our lives – from teachers, coaches, and bosses. Our first task is to decide what kind of criticism it is: If it is destructive, then we can use fogging, or just ignore it and leave the situation. Other times, criticism needs a different response.
   a. It can really help us improve and meet our goals.
   b. It is coming from an authority and we need to figure out how to get this person to give us what we want (approval, a good grade, a privilege, a raise)
2) Here is the formula for responding.
   a. Thank the person for being honest and telling you what you are doing wrong. You should paraphrase to show that you understand: *Thank you for giving me your feedback. I understand that you want me to be a better participant in discussions.*
   b. Ask the person questions so you can learn what the correct/desired behavior is. *Could you please tell me exactly what you would like me to be doing?* Keep asking questions to get the person to be more and more specific. *In addition to making eye contact, what else would you like me to do?*
   c. Confirm that if you do exactly what has been described, the other person will be satisfied: *Does this mean that if I look attentive and make eye contact, speak up once to offer my thoughts, and raise my hand at least twice, then you will give me full credit for participation?*

The previous skills can be practiced in many scenarios. This type of training cannot occur in a single session – expect it to take several meetings and continued follow up.

As you teach these basic skills, you will have a chance to explain these principles:
- You always have the right to delay your response by saying "Let me think about that," or "I need a little time."
- You cannot be effectively assertive unless you can put yourself in a calm state. In addition to relaxation methods such as deep breathing, it helps to have a sentence or two that you can repeat to yourself, "I can handle this," or "Keep control of my anger."
- By using the *self-monitoring* tool, you can identify barriers to being assertive:
  - **Emotional and body states:** fast heartbeat, sweaty palms, fear, anger
  - **Thoughts:** The probability of aggression is increased when the client judges the other person harshly and ignores the other's perspective; passive responses are likely when thoughts focus on fears or the client minimizes his rights and feelings.
- Nonverbal behavior is as important as what you say: your tone of voice and posture can be aggressive, assertive, or passive. (You can ask the person to say the same sentence in three different ways, such as "Don't look at my paper during the test."
- It's better to address a problem early, instead of letting your anger and frustration build up.

Identify challenging situations that can be handled with assertive skills.

Make a list with the client of specific situations in her life that could be improved by using assertive skills. For each situation, rate the difficulty level and also discuss the advantages of taking action. There may be some situations – especially with authority figures – where the best strategy might be relaxed acceptance: not everything can be fixed with good communication.

Use behavioral rehearsal to develop skills and prepare for real-life situation.

To start this phase of assertiveness training, pick a scenario with a relatively high chance that assertiveness can result in improvement. Ideally, there is a specific interpersonal encounter that the client can arrange in the next week. Review the *Modeling* guidelines, because in this activity, you will be serving as a model as well as a coach. Here are the steps of a successful behavioral rehearsal.

- **Create a practice scenario:** *We will pretend that I'm your friend, and I will try to act like your friend while you practice an assertive way of having a conversation.*
- **Have the client play the part of the other person:** *First, I'm going to pretend that I am you, and I am going to start the conversation. Could you play the part of your friend, and show me how you think she will respond? I will be learning from your example how to play her part so it will be realistic for you.* Discuss the role play afterwards and highlight the strategies you used.

- S**witch roles so that the youth has a chance to practice.** After a brief period of practice, stop the role play. Start by asking the client what she liked about how she handled it. Insist on hearing positives. Then ask how she would like to improve. Then give your feedback: start with praise for what was done well. Make a small suggestion for improvement. Then do another role play. Continue this process, noting how the client improves in assertiveness. Attention should be paid to nonverbal behaviors (voice, posture, eye contact) that show increasing confidence. Continue rehearsing until satisfactory performance is demonstrated.
- **Vary the difficulty of the role plays**. In playing the part of the other person, you can start by making it an easy encounter – the other person immediately agrees and shows cooperation. Then you can increase the difficulty, throwing in challenging responses. At the end of this process, the client should be well-prepared for what will probably occur. If you role play very exaggerated negative responses, the client can see that some of her fears are unjustified.

Create plans to practice and implement assertive skills.

At the end of the role play, ask the client if she would be willing to implement this strategy in the current week. If the client says yes, remind her that her success depends on her staying assertive, not on how the other person responds. Explain that it often takes several tries to get desired changes in relationships.

If the client doesn't feel ready, create a practice assignment that will help the client examine her barriers, and promise that you will discuss it more next time.

GOAL SETTING

To assist family members with identifying and achieving goals

When people seek help, they start by telling you what is wrong – their complaints, difficulties, problems, and suffering. When you focus on goal-setting, you are helping them describe their **desired future** – how they want things to be. Your task as a mentor is to help clients set good goals, and then offer strategies for achieving these goals. Goal setting has many beneficial side effects.
- Gives a sense of purpose by providing a specific end point for efforts to create positive change.
- Creates feelings of hopefulness, optimism, and a sense of control.
- Gives a means for evaluating progress.
- Leads to pride and satisfaction at progress and success.

Steps:
- Provide education about goal-setting.
- Select goals and set priorities.
- Create small steps toward goals (sub goals).
- Select tools, skills, and resources for attaining goals.
- Identify possible obstacles and plan to overcome them.

All of these things will not occur in one session. In fact, you will need to do some thinking and consulting between sessions in order to come up with the best ideas for a specific family. **What needs to occur at the end of a meeting is that the client has a specific plan for the coming week that involves taking a small step towards an important goal.**

Provide education about goal-setting.

There are many kinds of goals, and it might seem most natural to focus immediately on a goal for the most pressing problem that the parent presents. But it is important to keep a broader perspective of promoting healthy functioning in all members of the family, both as individuals and as members in close relationships with each other. Here are some categories of goals.
- **Behavioral goal.** This type of goal addresses what a person is DOING, that can be observed by others and also measured in some way. Examples:
  - Arriving at school on time
  - Doing homework for one hour
  - Reading an enjoyable book
- **Emotional goal.** It is impossible to avoid unpleasant emotions in life, but sometimes negative emotional states result in suffering and impairments in life functioning. Such problematic states are excessive anxiety and worry, sadness or depression, and anger. Emotional goals involve not only achievement of pleasant emotional states but, more important, the ability to regulate one's own emotions

and motivational states – to achieve serenity and relaxed states, or to increase one's energy level and determination to do hard work.

- **Relationship improvement.** To produce changes in family relationships, you ideally can get each family member to agree to a set of shared goals, such as "increase positive communication," "engage in enjoyable activities together," "provide help and support to each other, when asked." Sometimes you only have one client, and then the goal needs to be framed as what that individual can do to change a relationship pattern.
- **Life skill development.** Sometimes parents only focus on a specific behavioral goal for their child, such as "talking respectfully" or "doing a chore without being asked." They may need help to see the bigger picture: parenting involves helping children to develop skills to be successful adults. Important categories of skills are emotional regulation, understanding the emotions and thoughts of another person, communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and working independently. While a parent might want to focus on a particular achievement for the child (making the honor role), it may be more important to set a goal such as "help the child identify interests and passions that will lead to future career choice."

Standards for Effective Goals

Not all goals are created equal. Here are the qualities of good goals; you will need to explain these characteristics of effective goals and help the client shape goals that meet these standards.

Positive. Goals are stated in terms of what will be occurring, rather than what will not be occurring (negative). Negative goals are things like "don't fight with parents"; the positive goal answers the question – What will the person be doing instead of fighting? Then the goal might be "Express angry feelings in a calm, respectful way" or "Use communication skills when discussing disagreements with parents." If the goal is "be less stressed," the positive wording might be "Be able to maintain a relaxed emotional state."

- Advantages of using positive goals: You can't just stop a behavior without having something to fill its place. By describing the desired, new behavior, you provide a path to success, encourage use of strengths, and have a means of measuring progress.
- Questions to change negative to positive (assuming "X" is the unwanted behavior.)
  - What do you want instead of X?
  - What would you be seeing and hearing, if X were no longer a problem?
  - What would replace X?

Realistic and attainable. There are many ways that goals can be unrealistic. Here are three examples.
- *Basing success on outcomes that are not under control.* For instance, it is realistic to set a goal in terms of effort, practice, and performance of a skill up to certain

standards, but it is not realistic to describe the goal as winning a contest or getting your way. Here are examples:

- o Instead of "win the prize at the piano recital" say "practice piano an hour a day, 5 days a week, with concentration."
- o Instead of "lose 20 pounds in 3 months" say "eat 1200 calories a day, 6 days a week."
- o Instead of "get my neighbor to stop making noise," say "request a change in noise level by communicating in a polite, friendly, and firm way."

- *Faulty expectations of perfection.* It is unreasonable to expect 100 per cent attainment of what you want. Goals must allow room for normal lapses in human behavior. For instance, to "Abstain completely from junk food" is too difficult and unrealistic. Instead, "Allow a treat of no more than 100 calories every day" would be an acceptable goal. To assure that a goal is not too perfectionistic, here are some questions you can ask:
  - o What are some ways you can make this goal more realistic?
  - o Under what circumstances would it be OK to have this behavior not happen?
  - o Would you be willing to have this happen 85% of the time instead of 100%?

- *Lack of knowledge of child and adolescent development.* Children progress in their abilities in stages, and there are normal, expected disruptions in adjustment at each transition. As a mentor, you will need to provide education about child development. You could do this by using examples from your own experience or creating examples of other families. It would be unrealistic to expect a 6-month old baby to walk. Similarly, here are some unrealistic goals:
  - o Expecting a two-year old child to understand another person's feelings.
  - o Expecting a five-year old child to sit and concentrate on a mental task for a half hour.
  - o Expecting a fifteen-year old not to care about what other kids are doing and thinking.

- *Ignoring a person's desires, strengths and limitations.* Parents sometimes set goals for children that will make them feel happy and proud, but which ignore who the child really is, as a separate individual. Some children have the ability to get "all A's and B's" on a report card, or be successful playing a musical instrument, but others don't.

Measurable. This means that the outcome is so clear and specific that you can describe how you will know it is achieved. It also means that you can evaluate progress towards the goal, since we know that change occurs in steps. Sometimes the desired behavior is so clear, you can use numbers to measure, such as time spent at an activity. More often, you need to create your own scale. Here are questions to help develop measurable goals:

- What will you see, hear, or be feeling that will let you know that you've achieved your goal?
- How will you know that you have achieved your goal?
- What kind of chart could you create to measure the behavior that you want?

Select goals and set priorities.

Work together with the family members to create a list of goals, including the ones that they discussed in their initial meetings with you.

Explain that it is better to make large gains on a small number of goals than small gains on a large number of goals, because motivation and perseverance increase as people get closer to achieving a goal. To set priorities means to decide which goals should be tackled first, and in what order goals should be addressed. There are several approaches to setting priorities.

- **Choose the goal that has the best probability of easy success:** When people see that their efforts lead to achieving their goal, they develop confidence in their ability to create change and increase their commitment to the program.
- **Choose the goal that will have the largest impact on reducing distress**: This goal may or may not be what is most obvious. The mother might think that changing the child's behavior would make her day more pleasant. But it could be that having her engage in a private, pleasurable activity for half an hour a day would improve her mood and make her happier with her child.
- **Choose a goal that will have impact on multiple problems**: The mother might think that the struggle over bedtime is the biggest problem, and want to solve that problem first. The child's sad mood is also a problem. The family as a whole shows a lack of positive time together. Therefore, a good goal to start with might be "increasing pleasant interactions when the father comes home."

Create small steps toward goals (sub goals).

A strategy for change involves framing the change process as a series of steps. Each step can be described in measurable terms. Having the step-by-step plan written out will create confidence that the final goal will be reached. In fact, by using a calendar and specifying the exact days and times that certain actions will occur, the change process gets integrated in the family's daily routines. Here is an example of how to break large goal into smaller goals for this outcome goal: *The child will read one hour per day, without company or distractions, 6 days a week.*

Gradually increase units of time, quantity, or frequency: Start with 20 minutes the first week, and increase by 5 minutes each week. Start with 3 days a week, then increase by one day every 2 weeks.

Gradually increase standards of performance or level of difficulty: The first month, the child chooses to read whatever she wants. Then the second month, the child must choose one book from a list of challenging books after reading two books of her choice. The third month, every other book must be a challenging book.

Gradually decrease the amount of support or assistance. The first month, the parent keeps the child company during reading time. Then the next month, the parent checks in twice per reading session. The third month, the parent checks in once. After that, the child reads on her own.

Select tools, skills, and resources for attaining goals.

Here are some ideas for developing a strategy to achieve behavior change.

- **Rewards**: One of the most powerful principles of behavior change is that **when behavior is followed by reward, it tends to persist and increase.** Rewards can be as simple as praise from a parent (see guide on *Praise*) or as complex as a system of tokens to be cashed in for desired rewards (see guide on *Rewards*.)
- **Rehearsal, modeling, and coaching:** New behaviors can be developed in the same way that people learn a new sport or to play a musical instrument. They need to practice, they need to see how other people perform the behavior effectively, and they need the feedback – praise and constructive criticism – from a coach.
- **Small steps are needed:** People cannot move to perfect competence with their first try. It takes many small steps, with gradual improvement. It is important to create a step-by-step plan and to not be impatient when progress is slow.
- **Social support:** Support is a term for both concrete help (like information, money, lending tools) and positive emotional connections. In addition to family members being supportive of each other, they can find support outside the family

Identify possible obstacles and plan to overcome them.

Once a plan is established, it is important to ask questions about obstacles: *What could come up that would prevent you from achieving this goal* (or *sticking to this plan*, or *doing this practice in the coming week*)? Some of the obstacles will be practical, and others will be emotional.

- **Practical obstacles:** having other commitments, lacking certain supplies, difficulties focusing on a plan for one child when other children make demands.
- **Emotional obstacles:** frustration, exhaustion, being too stressed, anger, feeling shame for needing help, not wanting a child to become more independent, resentment over not having more time for yourself.

As obstacles are mentioned, you can help create a plan to manage them. Sometimes new goals will emerge in this discussion.

Sometimes it can be useful to explore the benefits of things staying the same and *not* changing:
- *Imagine you have achieved the goal. Can you think of any ways that your life would be worse or new problems would appear?*
- *Is there a part of you that might want to hold on to this problem?*

- *Sometimes change is scary, even if you know that the change will be the good. Are you afraid of how this change might affect your family?*

This discussion can be useful for anticipating obstacles to change as well as for recognizing current strengths and sources of satisfaction.

Sample Mentor-Parent Dialogue

The left column shows a goal-setting conversation between a mentor and a mother, and the right column describes the skills the mentor is using.

Goal-setting Conversation	Comments
Mentor: Let's work together to come up with your desired goal. You said that you wanted Ariana to stop being so moody and disrespectful. (parent nods). We need to turn this goal into a positive goal – what would be happening in the future for you to be satisfied that the problem is resolved? **Parent:** I want her to have a happy mood. She's always angry and rude, and just wants to stay in her room. When I ask her to do something, like set the table, I want her to just do it, and not give me angry looks and tell me to do it myself. **Mentor:** Let's separate this into separate goals (writing on a paper): you want Ariana to be happier, to communicate with the family members in a friendly way, and to do household chores in a cooperative way. Does that sound right?	The mentor is demonstrating listening skills by paraphrasing what she has heard. The parent's goal was stated in negative terms and needs to be changed to a positive goal. The mentor is separating the behavioral goal (doing chores in a cooperative way) from goals that relate to the child's emotional and social functioning. These serve as preliminary goals; they are realistic but not yet specific to be measured. It takes more than one session to get clear goals.
Parent: OK, that makes sense.	The mentor is careful not to impose ideas and wants to be sure that the parent is on the same page.
Mentor: Let's separate the simple behavioral goal of doing chores from those that have to do with your child's emotional state. There are many reasons why kids are unhappy, and it's important to understand more about her feelings. For now would you accept this goal for yourself: Be able to start a conversation with my daughter to learn about her feelings and troubles?" That way, you'll get information to come up with a strategy to help her be happier. Also, you will be providing support, and that in itself can improve her mood.	The mentor is providing some education. She is then proposing a sub goal for a goal she has in mind for the mother: be able to listen to her child with empathy and lack of judgment and develop understanding of the daughter's inner world. The mentor knows more information is needed. It is possible that the daughter suffers from depression and that counseling might be needed.
Parent: Whenever I ask her what's wrong with her, she tells me "nothing" and asks me to leave her alone. **Mentor:** I can hear that you are very concerned. It must be so frustrating to get that response.	The mentor is not rigidly sticking to a goal-setting

	agenda: she is using her empathic listening skills and hoping to develop a good relationship with the mother. Incidentally, she is modeling the skill she hopes the mother will be able to use with Ariana.
Parent: It sure is! I wish there was something I could do.	
Mentor: Right now we are setting goals and gathering information, but we will definitely come up with a plan for you. It's very normal to have this kind of communication with someone your daughter's age, and it's great that you're a parent who notices her moods so well.	Here the mentor is modeling good problem solving skills: the goal setting comes before the plan development. She is normalizing the mother's concerns and trying to create more hope. She finds an opportunity to focus on a strength and provide praise.
Parent: I hope this will help. I really miss how she used to be. We used to be so close.	
Mentor: I understand how that hurts. It's a very common feeling among mothers of teenage girls. We'll talk more about that in the future. For now, we need more information about exactly how things are going in your home. This is called a *monitoring assignment* – you won't try to change anything, just describe what is happening. Here's a form I want you to use.	More empathic understanding and normalizing. The mentor will be sure to return to that topic. Now as the session nears the end, it is time to create the assignment. The instructions for monitoring are kept to a minimum. For now, the mentor wants to see how the parent handles the assignment, and next time she will build on her strengths and teach more about monitoring.

Helpful tips
- Goal-setting is part of the entire program. It will not be covered in just one meeting.
- As you work with a client, you will expect to be less active, and help him or her develop goal-setting skills, so that this process can continue when the program is completed.
- Check frequently to be sure that the material is understood.
- Remember to praise and focus on the client's strengths. Point out that by setting a goal, the first step has been taken toward positive change.
- Express optimism and confidence that the client can achieve the goal by implementing the plan.

PROBLEM SOLVING

To provide children with a systematic way to solve problems and consider alternative solutions to situations

This guide is designed for working with a child, but the same principles apply with people of any age. It is useful to have blank copies of a problem-solving chart, which is provided at the end of this guide.

Steps:
- Explain that problems are normal and that there are specific skills for solving them.
- Teach the steps to problem solving, using examples.
- Have child identify a problem and work through steps of problem-solving together.
- Create between-session practice.

Explain that problems are normal and that there are specific skills for solving them.

Asks the child to explain the meaning of the word "*problem*" (something that is different from how you want it to be).

Explain that we all have problems, every day. We use that term when there is a gap between how things are and how you want them to be. We need to define problems in ways that allow us to find solutions. There are some unfortunate situations that don't have solutions because we have no control. For instance, you can't solve the problem of "bad weather" but you can solve the problem of "feeling bored on a rainy day."

Problems are normal – it is impossible to have a life without problems. Being able to solve problems is an extremely important life skill.

Explain that you will work together not just to solve specific problems, but to give the child **problem-solving skills** – the ability to find solutions to problems, on her own, in the future.

Talk in general terms about problems of kids the same age as your client, in different areas of life, and have the child contribute to the list:

> **School**: difficulty finishing homework, feeling bored in class, not liking teacher, not getting good grades
> **Friends:** not having close friends, feeling left out, sad because friend moved away
> **Family:** angry that sister gets better treatment, wanting more time to do what you want, having fights with mother, wanting father to spend more time with you
> **Other topics**?

Teach the steps to problem solving, using examples.

Here are the basic steps:

1. **Say what the problem is.** A problem exists when there is a gap between how things are now and how you want them to be (the goal). You need to be very specific about when the problem occurs, with which people, when it began, what will be occurring for you to consider it solved.
2. **Brainstorm solutions.** "Brainstorm" means think of as many solutions as possible, without criticizing them. They can be realistic and unrealistic. The idea is to be creative and go for variety.
3. **Examine the advantages and disadvantages of each solution**. Think through each solution and consider both immediate and long-term results. Examine the difficulty, practicality, probability of success, amount of risk, and whether the solution is consistent with values (e.g., respecting others, not spending too much money, not breaking school rules).
4. **Choose a solution and try it.** Examine the list of alternatives, and select a few that have a good chance of working. Then choose the one that will be tried first. If it doesn't work you will have other solutions to turn to.
5. **See if it works.** Evaluate the outcome and feel good about yourself if it works. If not, go back to the list and try another solution.

Provide an example, using the chart. Fill in your problem description, and show the child the solutions you considered. Ask if the child can think of others. Then fill in the two columns (advantages and disadvantages) together. Ask the child what choice he would make, then share your choice. If they differ, you can explain how *values* enter into problem solving: people differ in their preferences and priorities.

Here is one possible example:

PROBLEM-SOLVING CHART

DESCRIBE PROBLEM	My car is old and unreliable and the mechanic told me it needs some expensive repairs. I want to be able to drive a reliable car and feel good about the car I drive.	
LIST POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:	Advantages ("Pros")	Disadvantages ("Cons")
1. have the repairs done		
2. get rid of the car and buy a nice, used car that doesn't cost too much money		
3. get rid of the car and buy a brand new car, and make a monthly payment for the next 5 years.		

4. stop using a car and just get rides from other people		
5. have the repairs done and also spend more money to get a new paint job in a different color.		
6. ask my father to buy me a new car		
Select a solution and plan to try it		
Evaluate outcome		

Have child identify a problem and work through steps of problem-solving together.

Using a blank chart, go through the steps with one of the child's problems – one that is not too difficult. Go up to the step of selecting the best solution.

Create between-session practice.

Ask the child if she would be willing to try the solution and report back.

Another assignment could be to pick a different problem, and have the child use the chart to go through the steps on her own.

Once the basic method is taught, the steps of problem solving can be implemented, without a chart, as problems are described during sessions with the child.

PROBLEM-SOLVING CHART

DESCRIBE PROBLEM		
LIST POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:	**Advantages ("Pros")**	**Disadvantages ("Cons")**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
Select a solution and plan to try it		
Evaluate outcome		

SELF-MONITORING

To gather information on area of concern and to provide important information about progress

How to monitor another person's behavior is covered in the guide on *Monitoring*. Here we focus on how to teach the child to monitor his/her own behaviors as well as feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. It is important to tailor the instructions to the child's level of development.

Steps:
- Explain the purpose of self-monitoring and motivate the client to engage in this task.
- Identify target behaviors, thoughts, and feelings to monitor.
- Develop a rating scale to increase the accuracy of the monitoring.
- Create a procedure for recording the information.
- Review information.

Explain the purpose of self-monitoring and motivate the client to engage in this task.

Start by reminding the child of the goals you have agreed on: *feeling happier, learning to express anger without getting in trouble, enjoying school more, getting along better with your brother.*

Then offer an analogy that frames self-monitoring in familiar terms – it helps to know the child's favorite TV show, games, or sports. Here are some examples:

- *We need to solve the mystery of _____ (why you feel so sad, why it is so hard to control your temper). What do detectives look for when they are solving a mystery? That's right – clues! We need to work together to gather important clues – I'm going to ask you to keep a special notebook so that you can gather clues that we can discuss next time.*

- *Do you know what they call that big board on the wall in a basketball game? Scoreboard – that's right. Those numbers keep track of how many points the team earned by getting the ball in the basket. We want to come up with a scoring system so we can keep track of the behaviors that YOU want to increase.*

- *When you are sick, what does your mother do to measure your fever? Yes, she uses a thermometer. That's an instrument that has numbers on it to show whether the heat of your body is in a normal range. If the number is too high, she knows she needs to take you to a doctor or even to the emergency room. We can use a thermometer to measure feelings that make you uncomfortable.*

Identify target behaviors, thoughts, and feelings to monitor.

Work together with the child to choose a behavior or emotion for monitoring. Provide practice in labeling and describing feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. For instance, you can create a feeling word chart appropriate to the child's vocabulary level, and then ask for additional words.

Feeling Words	
CATEGORIES	**Adjectives to use in your self-monitoring charts, as well as when practicing empathic reflection.**
HAPPINESS	Anticipating, amused, appreciative, cheerful, comfortable, content, , glad, grateful, happy, joyful, optimistic, overjoyed, peaceful, pleased, refreshed, relaxed, relieved, satisfied **Add words:**
FEAR	Alarmed, anxious, apprehensive, courageous, dreading, fearful, frightened, horrified, intimidated, nervous, panicky, scared, tense, terrified, threatened, worried **Add words:**
ANGER	angry, annoyed, cranky, frustrated, furious, infuriated, irritated, mad, , pissed off, resentful, revengeful **Add words:**
SADNESS/PAIN	depressed, despairing, devastated, disappointed, discouraged, displeased, , empty, grieving, guilty, helpless, homesick, hurt, incompetent, lonely, miserable, sad, tormented, troubled, unhappy, worthless **Add words:**
SURPRISE	Amazed, astonished, disbelieving, shocked, stunned, surprised, **Add words:**
UNCERTAINTY	conflicted, confused, decided, indecisive, uncertain, undecided, unsure, stuck, torn **Add words:**
RELATIONSHIP FEELINGS-Positive	Accepted, adored, affectionate, appreciated, cared for, caring, cherished, comforted, cooperative, competitive, friendly, liked, loved, loving, respected, safe, secure, sympathetic, soothed, supported, trusted, trusting

	Add words:
RELATIONSHIP FEELINGS negative	Abandoned, ashamed, bashful, betrayed, cheated, deserted, disliked, distant, distrustful, envious, exploited, forsaken, harassed, humiliated, inferior, insecure, jealous, mistreated, misunderstood, neglected, overlooked, rejected, shy, slighted, unappreciated, unforgiving, withdrawn **Add words:**
MOTIVATION AND INTEREST	Absorbed, bored, challenged, competent, confident, curious, determined, eager, enthusiastic, excited, fascinated, hopeful, impatient, inspired, interested, patient, powerless. **Add words:**

Develop a rating scale to increase the accuracy of the monitoring.

If it is an emotion, draw a picture of an emotional thermometer, and label numbers on it to indicate levels of the problem emotion (sad, angry, afraid, shy, bored) as well as the desired emotion (happy, calm, confident, friendly, interested). You can also show how to keep a tally, or measure the amount of time spent in a certain behavior. You can invite the child to give examples: "Last week, was there a time when your anger was above 8? What was happening?" Be sure to use the scale to discuss how the child feels right now, with you.

Create a procedure for recording the information.

First, decide on what information needs to be recorded. Ideally, in addition to the target behavior or feeling, the child will gather information about the situation, other people's behaviors, how his body feels, and what he is saying to himself. Start with a simple task, and make it more complicated.

Create a chart or a notebook that has spaces for the desired information. Then agree on *when* to monitor and *how often*. Here is an example for monitoring the emotion of sadness, three times a day.

Self-Monitoring Chart – Sample
EMOTION SCALE: 10 ARE HAPPIEST, 5 IS NEUTRAL, 1 IS UNHAPPIEST.

Day and Time	Situation (Where, what, with whom, etc.)	Feelings (label emotions)	Body sensations (heart, muscles, breathing, temperature, etc.)	Thinking (self-talk in quotations)	Emotion scale (1-10)
Wed, 3/5 8 PM	Mother felt bad after chemotherapy session	Worried, frightened, sad, anxious, helpless, guilty	Muscles tense, heart beats faster	"I can't bear to lose her."	1
Thurs, 3/6 3PM	Shannon invited me to party.	Excited, happy,	Calm, energetic	"I'm so happy."	6
Fri. 3/7 4 PM	Doing homework, trying to figure out problem and don't understand.	Unhappy, angry, bored, confused, inferior	Thirsty, pain in back from sitting so long	"I'm stupid, I hate this. I wish I could watch TV."	3

Review information.

For gathering information before any intervention: Ask client questions to help interpret the information: For instance:
- What is most interesting about this information?
- What is the difference between situations with the highest and lowest ratings?
- Does what you say to yourself make you feel better or worse?
- What did you need in that situation to feel better?

For checking to see if intervention is helping:
- Do you notice progress in your ability to manage your emotions?
- What is helping you to feel happier?
- What obstacles do you see?

ACTIVITY SELECTION

To introduce mood-elevating activities into the child's day

An effective tool for improving mood is choosing to engage in an enjoyable activity. Here we introduce an intervention for improving the mood of the child. The principles can also be applied to the parents:

Steps:
- Explain how activities can improve mood.
- Create a list of simple, pleasant activities.
- Practice one activity in the session.
- Create a plan for engaging in pleasant activities between sessions.

Explain how activities can improve mood

Explain to the child that our feelings about ourselves and our lives can be improved by engaging in specific types of activities. You are going to discuss a strategy she can use to improve her mood – feel happier during the day and enjoy life more. If you have already been using *self-monitoring*, you can begin by using that information, or you can begin the conversation by asking, "Have you noticed that when you are doing certain activities, you feel better?"

Discuss examples that the child provides: you can be writing down specific activities that the child enjoys, in preparation for the next step. Provide your own examples – from your own life or describing a child the same age as your client. You want to be sure that the child can identify 2-3 times when (a) she felt bad, (b) did something enjoyable, and (3) felt better.

Explain the general principle: *If we schedule enjoyable activities, we will feel better, and the good feelings will carry over to the rest of the day*. Assure the child, *There is always enough time, every day, to enjoy at least one pleasant block of time*.

These are the key principles that you want the child to understand:

- There is a link between positive activities and feeling good
- When we engage in enjoyable activities with someone we like, we have the additional benefits of a positive relationship and not feeling alone.
- If we tend to worry and focus on our negative feelings, it helps to keep busy and find activities that distract ourselves.
- When we find ways to help other people, we not only make them feel good, but make ourselves feel good. Explain that "helping others" can show us that we have something important to offer, and it helps take the focus off of our own problems.

Create a list of simple, pleasant activities.

Ask the child to make a list of easy-to-do activities that he/she can do to improve his/her mood. Explain that the activities must be **simple, free, do-able at any time, and certain to make the child good.** Make sure that one of these activities could be done right now in the session. The list can include brief activities as well as ones that take a longer amount of time. Here are some examples:
- Physical exercise: stretching, running, dancing to music
- Playing with a pet
- Drawing a picture
- Reading a fun book
- Watching a favorite TV /movie recording
- Calling a friend
- Playing a game
- Doing a simple craft project
- Helping a younger kid with homework

Review the list, and check to see that it includes items in these four categories:
1. **Doing something that we enjoy, on our own, that we can do any time.**
2. **Doing something we enjoy with a person we like.**
3. **Doing something that keeps us busy, and distracts us from thinking unpleasant thoughts.**
4. **Doing something that helps another person.**

It is important that the items on the list represent healthy activities. An overweight child may say that eating is the only way to improve her mood. You can explain the importance of having many other activities, while suggesting for the list "eat a snack slowly with full attention to every mouthful."

Practice one activity in the session

Ask the child to pick an activity from the list that can be done right now. Present a worksheet like this, using a mood scale where 10 IS HAPPIEST, 5 IS NEUTRAL, 1 IS UNHAPPIEST.

Day/Time	Mood rating before activity	Description of activity	Mood rating after activity
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Write down the mood rating, then have the child engage in the activity, then write the mood rating after the activity.

If there is no change, discuss the reasons – perhaps it would be different if the child were alone or with a different person.

More likely, there will be a positive change, and you can discuss the principle that you want to teach: *doing what you enjoy will make you feel better.*

Emphasize to the child the purpose of doing these activities:
- You will discover which activities really improve your mood (you can find a different wording – activities can be "mood-boosters" or "mood-lifters"—ask the child what she would like to call it.)
- MOST IMPORTANT, you will learn that you have a tool for making yourself feel better. Your mood is under your control. We all feel bad, and sometimes we can sink into bad moods and feel hopeless. But by learning how to select these positive activities, you will discover that you can manage your own emotions.

Create a plan for engaging in pleasant activities between sessions.

Discuss with the child a plan for the coming week. Using the worksheet, you can write in activities for specific days, and leave other days open. Set the initial practice for a small number of times, but encourage the child to do more, if possible.

Explain to the child that a common barrier to doing the activity is that you will say to yourself, *I'm not in the mood to do th*at. Remind the child that the purpose of this tool is the **change your mood**. Help the child develop a way to remind himself of that principle: *If I start the activity in a negative mood, the activity will put me in a better mood.*

Decide if you want to arrange contacts with the child (e.g., by text) so you can support practice between sessions.

Decide whether the parents should be involved or the child should manage this practice on her own.

Helpful tips:
- Review the report at the beginning of the next session and help the child discover what works best.
- Provide praise at every level and reward even small steps toward progress. For instance, if the child only did an activity on one day, provide praise for giving it a try. If the child did no practice, praise the child for his honesty.

RELAXATION

To introduce relaxation training and its use in controlling tension

Relaxation training is an effective strategy for helping children (and adults) manage their emotions and control tension. By engaging in specific practices, the child can achieve a calm emotional state to replace feelings of tension, anxiety, or anger. The *self-monitoring* tools should be mastered first, so that the child can recognize changes in mood before and after using a relaxation strategy.

Steps:
- Explain benefits of learning to relax.
- Train in relaxation methods.
- Plan for practice between sessions.
- Review experiences with relaxation.

Explain benefits of learning to relax.

Before teaching relaxation skills, the child needs to understand the following:
- Unpleasant emotional states involve tension in muscles.
- The achievement of a calm, relaxed state can be under our own control, regardless of what is happening in our lives.
- It is important to be able to focus on the sensations in our bodies and recognize how we feel.
- Relaxation skills can be learned, but they require practice.
- Once you know how to relax on demand, you can use this skill in specific situations
    o when you want to fall asleep;
    o when you are nervous about doing something (speaking to a group, taking a test);
    o when you are very angry and risk doing or saying something that will cause trouble.

It is very useful to have *self-monitoring* information to discuss.

Discuss with the child the times when he/she has felt "up-tight" ("tense," "stressed), focusing on how the body felt at those times. You can ask the child to close her eyes and imagine herself in a specific situation that results in tension (being called on in class, having a parent yell at her, being teased by a sibling.)

Then ask the child to think of a time or situation when she was really calm and happy. When the child is fully imagining that experience, ask how the body feels. Make sure that the child understands the difference between a relaxed and tense body.

Create motivation by asking, "Would you like to be able to put yourself in a calm, pleasant state, whenever you want?" Help the child understand the benefits of being able to manage his emotions:

- feel better
- able to make better choices
- other people can't control your feelings, so you feel better about yourself
- it's a life skill that will protect your health as you get older.

Ask whether the child has already figured out some tools for improving mood and putting herself in a relaxed state. (*Activity selection* is another tool for emotional regulation; the child might mention that.) Maybe the child has seen other people (on TV or in real life) who know how to calm themselves down.

Explain that you will be teaching "relaxation methods," but that it will be up to the child to decide what works best, and in what situations she will use these tools.

Train in relaxation methods.

There are three methods that you can teach: deep muscle relaxation, breathing exercises, and imagery.

- **Muscle relaxation:** This method takes time to teach. You might want to make a recording that the child can listen to during home practice, or you can write out a script and have the child record it so he can listen to his own voice. Once the child has mastered a slow, thorough form of muscle relaxation, she can use a brief form of muscle relaxation to get to a relaxed state more rapidly.
    - *Introduce the activity by asking the child to make a tight fist while you count to 5, and focus on how it feels. Then ask the child to relax the fist, and count to 5, and focus on warm, relaxed feelings.*
    - *When the child reports the difference, explain that you will teach a method for relaxing the entire body.*
    - *Ask the child to get in a comfortable position, close eyes, and breathe deeply.*
    - *Go through muscle groups one by one, asking the child to tighten for about 5 seconds and then relax each group during a 10 second pause. During these pauses, suggest that the child focus on how soft, warm, and relaxed the muscles feel, and how the tension is melting away – keep using words like that, in a very relaxed tone of voice. A typical order is this:*
        - *Forehead (instruct to raise eyebrows as high as possible)*
        - *Cheeks (instruct to smile widely)*
        - *Eye muscles (instruct to squint tightly)*
        - *Neck muscles (instruct to pull head back as if to look at ceiling)*
        - *Fists (instruct to clench)*
        - *Biceps (instruct to flex)*
        - *Arm (straighten arm, lock elbows)*
        - *Shoulders (instruct to lift up as if they could touch ears)*

- **Upper back** *(instruct to pull shoulders back as if shoulder blades could touch)*
- **Stomach** *(instruct to suck in)*
- **Butt** *(instruct to tighten)*
- **Thighs** *(instruct to press knees together, as if you were holding a penny between them)*
- **Calves** *(instruct to flex feet, pull toes toward you)*
- *Curl toes*

- *By now the entire body should be relaxed. "Imagine a wave of relaxation slowly spreading through your body, beginning at your head and going down to your feet. Feel the weight of your relaxed body. Breathe in… and out… in and out."*

- **Breathing:** Explain that when a person breathes deeply and slowly, the body chemistry automatically changes and a relaxed state can replace a tense state. Have the child put a hand on the diaphragm and breathe in a way so that the stomach presses out as he inhales. Point out if, in addition to breathing deeply, the child focuses his mind solely on breathing, it will quiet the thoughts that create worry and anxiety. Practice doing this together, saying aloud "inhale… exhale." Discuss the experience, and have the child recognize how focusing on deep breathing is good for both mind and body.

- **Imagery:** Ask the child to think of a place or situation where she felt completely calm and relaxed. Ask her to close her eyes and imagine herself in that place. In a soft, rhythmic voice, suggest that she feels her body, sees the sights, hears the sounds, and puts herself completely in that experience. Then ask her to "return to the present," and describe how she feels. Help the child find an imagery activity that is guaranteed to lower the tension level and produce calm, pleasant feelings.

Plan for practice between sessions.

Explain that the child needs to practice between sessions in order to make these skills become automatic. Remind the child of the goal: **to recognize tension in body and have a tool to relax it.**

Create a worksheet for relaxation practice. Using a tension scale where 10 the greatest possible tension/stress, 5 is a comfortable amount of tension (like you would need for playing a sport or taking a test) and, 1 is feeling completely relaxed and at peace.

Day/Time	Tension rating before relaxation practice	Description of relaxation practice: type of relaxation practice; where? How long?	Tension rating after relaxation practice
Monday			
Tuesday			

Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Review experiences with relaxation.

Discuss the child's practice experiences, reviewing the information on the chart. Ideally, the child can see that using relaxation tools leads to better moods and reduced tension. Help the child discover what method works best. With practice, the child should be able to relax more quickly. Once relaxation skills have been learned, you can help the child plan to use relaxation for specific challenging situations. Explain that relaxation is not just an end in itself, but it is a tool to help the child be more effective in challenging situations – we can't solve problems or communicate effectively if we are too scared, angry, or worried.

SKILL BUILDING

To assist children in developing talents and skills they can feel good about

This activity allows the child to choose talents and skills that he/she wants to develop. The purpose is to give the child a tool for elevating his/her mood as well as experiences in persistence, planning, and directing his/her own learning.

Steps:
- Motivate the child to engage in a skill building process.
- Select a specific skill that the child wants to develop.
- Establish small for building that skill.
- Plan and review practice assignments.

Motivate the child to engage in skill building process.

Introduce this idea: **one way to feel good about ourselves is to develop our talents and skills**. Discuss this idea with the child:
- *Can you think of a time when you felt good because you were doing something really well?*
- *Do you admire anyone who is very good at a particular skill?*
- *Have you ever felt bad because you wanted to do something well but didn't know how?*

Provide examples – from your own life, other children the same age as this client, stories from magazines. Emphasize these points:
- It feels good to do something really well.
- It can lift your mood to engage in an activity that you do well.
- Everybody has an interest or talent that can lead to an enjoyable skill.
- Being good at a skill takes time and effort, but the rewards are worth it.
- The purpose isn't to be the best at something, just to find enjoyment while doing something well.

Work with the child to create a list of skills that he or she would enjoy having. You might start by asking what the child enjoys doing already, or what she likes to watch on TV. Suggest a range of activities: music, art, sports, cooking, doing well at a subject in school, writing stories, etc.

Select a specific skill that the child wants to develop.

From the list, have the child pick one specific skill. Make sure that the choice is realistic – that the child can actually develop the skill, with practice. The goal should be at a moderate level of difficulty; if it is too easy, there will be no challenge and sense of progress.

Establish small steps for building that skill.

Explain to the child that you now need to create small steps toward the goal. You can create a diagram of a staircase, and write a different activity on each step. Some steps might involve getting help from others, watching demonstration videos on YouTube, or getting supplies or equipment. Be able to give an example, such as this one for "learning to draw people."

- Find a free online course.
- Get supplies (paper, pencils, sharpener, eraser).
- Contact someone you know who knows how to draw (as "expert") and make arrangement to meet on a regular basis.
- Take first lesson.
- Practice for 20 minutes a day.
- Show work to expert

Have the child describe what the next steps would be. Establish realistic expectations for how much skill development will occur with varying degrees of practice.

Plan and review practice assignments.

Help the child create a schedule for building the skill. Discuss possible obstacles and how to deal with them.

- **Frustration over slow progress**: discuss the benefits of persistence; explain that the process of learning can be enjoyable; suggest how to find satisfaction in reaching small goals.
- **Difficulties staying focused**: suggest strategies to remove distractions; to set realistic length of time for practice, with breaks; to vary the type of practice.
- **Negative thinking**: suggest ways to stop and change negative thinking; explain that failures and setbacks are normal parts of progress.

Provide a worksheet for the child to keep track of practice.

Day/Time	Feelings before practice	Description of skill-building practice	Feelings after practice
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

At the beginning of the next session, discuss the experience and help the child discover the difference between a positive and negative practice session. Have the child modify the list of steps, as needed. Encourage persistence and provide praise.

MONITORING

To gather information about areas of concern and to keep records of improvement.

The term *monitoring* refers to the process of gathering information about behavior in a structured way. (When you gather information about yourself, we call it *self-monitoring*).

Steps:
- Motivate parents to engage in monitoring tasks.
- Identify target behaviors to monitor.
- Develop a rating scale to increase the accuracy of the observation.
- Create a procedure for recording the information.
- Review information.

Motivate parents to engage in monitoring tasks.

After you have engaged in goal-setting with the parent(s), you want to have them gather information about both the problem behavior and the desired (goal) behavior. The first time that monitoring occurs, it is called the *baseline*: a picture of what is happening before there is any deliberate intervention. Here is an explanation of the benefits of monitoring that you can offer to the parent:

> *We need to start by getting accurate measurement of how things are now, at the beginning of the program. Together, we will develop a system for you to observe your child's behavior and keep a written record – we call this process "monitoring" the behavior. Then, when we create a plan for change, you can continue to monitor the same behaviors and notice whether progress is occurring. If there is no positive change, we can figure out how to adjust the plan. If things go well, you can see how change is occurring, even if it is slow, and will be able to recognize when you reach your goal.*

I**dentify and define behaviors to be monitored**.

If the goal was defined in specific measurable terms, then you should already have identified the desired behavior. You also need to come up with a very accurate way of measuring the problem behavior. Here are some examples.

Vague problem description	Specific Problem Behavior	Desired (goal) behavior
Throws tantrums when he doesn't get what he wants.	After being told "no" to a request, cries or yells for 1 minute or more.	After being told "no" to a request, engages in a different suggested activity, either without

Vague problem description	Specific Problem Behavior	Desired (goal) behavior
		complaint or with less than 1 minute of crying.
Doesn't do chores willingly.	When asked to do a chore, engages in a different activity, or does the chore with verbal or nonverbal negative messages.	When asked to do a chore, complies within 15 minutes and completes chore in a competent way, with pleasant voice and facial expression.
Doesn't come home by curfew.	Arrives home after 8:30 on weeknights and after 11 on Friday or Saturday.	Arrives home on or before stated curfew.

Establish rating scale.

For some behaviors, the rating is simply "yes" or "no" – the behavior was either done or not done. Sometimes the scale will be amount of time. In the above examples, you can count the number of minutes of the tantrum or the number of minutes after curfew. You can create a frequency scale to count the number of times a behavior occurs (such as getting out of bed at night, or taking a sibling's toy). You can also create a scale to evaluate the quality of a behavior, with 1 being very low and 10 being very high. For instance, the "disruptiveness" of a child's behavior can be evaluated by that type of scale. These scales are necessary for measuring emotional states such as anxiety, sadness, or anger.

Establish recording procedure

Before the session ends, the parent needs to be very clear on how and when the monitoring should occur. It is helpful to prepare a form for purposes of monitoring.

Initially, the form will just record the behavior, without any intervention.

Day/Time	Situation	Behavior	Measure
M/4:15	Wanted toy from sibling	Tantrum	2 minutes
W/10	no to 2nd cookie	tantrum	4 minutes

After you have begun an intervention, the monitoring form can have space for the parent's response and whether it was effective.

Day/Time	Situation	Behavior	Measure	My response	Did it work?
M/4:15	Wanted toy	Tantrum	2 minutes	Redirect to	Yes

Day/Time	Situation	Behavior	Measure	My response	Did it work?
	from sibling			other toy	
W/10	no to 2nd cookie	tantrum	4 minutes	Active ignoring, praise when she picked up toy	yes

Recording methods can be private or public.

- **Private**: the child doesn't know that you are keeping records
- **Shared:** you put the recording form on the wall or refrigerator and show the child what you are doing.

Recording can occur every time a behavior occurs or at specified times. In the above example (tantrum), the recording occurred every time the undesirable behavior occurred. You can also choose to record at specified times of day. For instance, if you want to record how siblings get along, you can pick three times a day, and enter what they are doing: playing peacefully together, fighting, engaged in separate activities.

Regardless of the method you choose, the parent must know when, how often and what to record.

Review information

Whenever you give a monitoring assignment, it is essential that you review the information that has been gathered. Otherwise, the parent will conclude that the assignment wasn't important to you.

When the monitoring assignment has been completed successfully: Look at the information side-by-side with the parent and discuss what the information means. If it is the baseline information, check whether there were any surprises: was it more or less what the parent expected? If you have begun an intervention, examine whether there is any positive progress. Find opportunities to praise the parent for implementing a new approach, even if it didn't work. Discuss the implications of the information and what the next step should be: continue with the same plan, modify the plan, or gather a new kind of information.

When there are gaps or errors in the monitoring: Find something to work with, and provide praise for what was completed correctly. Then explore ways to make it easier to complete the monitoring assignment – maybe a simpler form, less frequent monitoring times, fewer behaviors. Perhaps the parent would prefer not to use a chart, but would

enjoy writing in an attractive journal. Show your flexibility and eagerness to hear the parent's ideas.

When the parent has not done the monitoring assignment. Be interested, curious, and eager to understand. Assume that there are good reasons – go back to the list of practical and emotional obstacles that you addressed when doing the goal-setting. Invite the parent to share honestly how they are feeling about the program and you. For instance:
- I wonder if there was anything about the way I presented this assignment that made it uncomfortable for you to do it.
- How does this monitoring task fit with your expectations about how the program should work?
- Do you have ideas about how monitoring could be easier for you?

Try to elicit a commitment to complete the next assignment, and then proceed with your agenda for that session. At the end, have the parent take the lead in constructing the assignment.

REWARDS

To increase the likelihood of a desired behavior

This guide shows how to teach a parent to use a formal system of rewards to increase desired behavior.

Steps:
- Explain what a "token economy" is.
- Identify behaviors to increase (e.g., doing specific chore, being kind to sibling, completing homework on time).
- Select value (in tokens) of each behavior.
- Develop a reward menu (what tokens can be cashed in for).
- Implement the system.
- Address concerns.

Explain what a "token economy" is.

The term "token economy" refers to a system of giving tokens (points, chips, or stickers) for the performance of desired behaviors, and taking away tokens for misbehavior. The tokens that the child receives can be cashed in for specific things or experiences: a reward menu can specify the cost in tokens of items such as staying up late, choosing what to eat for dinner, getting a new toy/album/book, having a special privilege.

When tokens are given, they are called *rewards*; when they are taken away, we use the term *response cost*. We want the child to understand that this is different from punishment given by a parent: Instead, the child is fully responsible for whether he wins or loses tokens. The child should learn: *If I do the correct behavior, I can earn what I want, but if I don't, I will not be able to get what I want.*

The use of a token economy has benefits besides increasing desired behavior and reducing undesired behavior: it teaches the child about how the money economy works.
- We need to work to get paid
- We can make choices about how to spend – buy smaller things that we want now or save up for better things.
- If we don't perform well, then there are negative consequences.

Not all desired behaviors should be incorporated into the token system. You still want to use praise as a reward, and encourage the child to do positive behaviors without expecting a reward. Over time, you can phase out parts of the token system, explaining to the child, "now that you are older, you are expected to do this, just because you are part of this family (or because it will help you to be healthy, successful in school, happier).

After a reward system is established, you can introduce the strategy of *Response Cost.*

Identify behaviors to increase.

You have already laid the foundation in the sessions on goal-setting. Have the parent come up with a list of desired behaviors, but explain that the token economy system works best when 3 behaviors are chosen to start. It is best when you include behaviors that are already occurring with some regularity as well as a new behavior that isn't occurring yet.

The behaviors must be described in ways that are very clear and specific. For instance, instead of "help with dinner preparation," it should be "set the table." "Share toys for 5 minutes" is a better target behavior than "don't fight" or "get along with sibling."

Select value (in tokens) of each behavior

Easy behaviors should receive small rewards, while difficult behaviors receive large rewards. For instance, the child could earn 1 chip for *putting toys away* and 3 chips for *sharing a toy with a sibling*.

The token values should change over time, with the child required to perform at a higher level of skill, more frequently, or for a longer period of time to earn the same amount of tokens. Examples:

> **For a behavior that requires sustained concentration or self-control:**
> Step 1: reward 10 minutes of doing the behavior
> Step 2: the same reward is given for 20 minutes of the behavior
>
> **For a behavior that is a desirable daily routine:**
> Step 1: reward every time the child does a task
> Step 2: reward when the child has done the task three days in a row
>
> **For development of a new skill:**
> Step 1: reward for completing the behavior even when there are errors
> Step 2: reward only when the behavior is completed to a high standard.

Develop a reward menu.

Effective rewards are desirable to the child. The parent and child need to work together create a "reward menu" – a list of rewards with their price in tokens. Here are examples:
- 5 tokens = staying up later than bedtime to watch a special TV show
- 10 tokens = buying a desired toy or album;
- 20 tokens = a sleep-over party

. The list should contain items in these categories:

- Free or inexpensive privileges: 15 minutes on the computer, a chosen TV show, a special dessert, a trip to the playground. The majority of items should fall in this category.
- Larger items: a trip to the movies, a new toy, having a friend sleep over.

You can find items for the list by paying attention to what the child enjoys doing; then those activities can be turned into rewards that have to be earned by good behavior.

Implement the system.

It is best to start with an easy behavior. The child can easily earn a reward, and this will increase motivation to participate. A maximum of 3 behaviors at different levels of difficulty should be targeted at one time.

You will need to help the parent create menus and charts, select tokens, and develop procedures for using the system. Here is an example of a chart for keeping records of tokens. Notice that there are only three behaviors and they vary in difficulty.

Day/Time	Behavior #1 (Child already does it) worth __ tokens	Behavior #2 (Child does it occasionally) worth __ tokens	Behavior #3 (Child doesn't do it yet) worth __ tokens
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

The system needs to be adapted to the child's level of development and to the parent's ability to monitor behaviors.

Frequency of behaviors: if a desired behavior is expected to occur once a day and at a predictable time (e.g., set the table, stay in bed at bedtime), it is easy to monitor. A behavior like "sharing toys with siblings" requires more attention and effort.

Child's level of development: Younger children need simpler reward programs with fewer behaviors than older children. Younger children will respond better to physical tokens (stickers, chips); older children are satisfied with numbers in a chart.

There are several principles that need to be explained to the parent:

Timing of rewards: rewards *follow* behavior. The reward or token should follow immediately after the behavior, or as soon as possible. It is important to teach the child that there is a link between the good behavior and the reward.

Reward items need to be earned: For the system to work to increase desired behavior, the parent should not give access to the reward items unless the child has earned it. For instance, if a video game is on the reward menu, the child should not be permitted to play the game unless he pays for it in tokens.

The child is given control over the decision of what to spend the tokens on.

Use of praise: Praise should continue to be used as a reward for behaviors within the token system as well as for other behaviors that are not part of the system. The token economy system is a temporary program to increase desired behavior. As the program is phased out, praise should be used to maintain the desired behavior.

Address concerns.

Here are some common concerns that you may need to address.

- **Is this system the same as bribing a child?** No, with bribes, the reward comes first, upon the child's agreement to do the behavior. Here the reward comes after the behavior.
- **Why should I reward something that the child should be doing anyway?** Rewards are always part of raising children – This system helps the child develop positive behaviors and good habits more rapidly than praise alone.
- **Won't this mean that the child will never do anything good unless she gets a reward?** Explain that the child will be learning that there are benefits other than external rewards for engaging in behaviors that parents desire. The child will develop pride, will begin to enjoy learning, and will enjoy a home environment without nagging and criticism. The system will be phased out as the child matures and as family life becomes more cooperative.
- **How will I explain this system to my child?** It will be very useful to have the parent role play a conversation with the child, so you can model how to explain the system. (See guide on *Modeling*.). This activity will give the parent a chance to review the principles of the program and feel more confident in implementing it.

RESPONSE COST

To decrease the likelihood of undesirable behavior

Once you have explained how a token economy works and helped the parent implement the reward system (see *Rewards* guide) you can introduce a system of penalties to decrease the unacceptable behavior. Unlike punishment that is applied by the parent, the strategy of *response cost* teaches children that the penalty is a consequence of their choices. If they choose to engage in the desired behavior, they get rewards; if they choose to engage in misbehavior, they lose the chance to get rewards.

Steps.
- Identify behaviors that will result in penalties.
- Develop a penalty menu.
- Implement the system.

Identify behaviors that will result in penalties.

Be specific about the exact behavior that will result in penalties. This sets up clear expectations for the child and allows the parent to easily identify when the behavior has occurred. For example, "hitting sibling" is more specific than "being mean."

Explain to the parent that "not receiving a reward" is already a penalty, and it might be unfair to add an additional penalty. For instance, if, in the reward system, the child earns 3 tokens for setting the table, then if the child does not set the table, the failure to receive tokens is the penalty.

Develop a penalty menu.

Values are assigned to each undesirable behavior, with more severe misbehavior resulting in greater penalties. The reward and penalty systems should show the same logic. For instance, if "sharing a toy" earns 3 chips, then "taking a toy" should result in the loss of 3 chips.

Implement the system.

Start with just one behavior. No more than 3 behaviors should be monitored in any given week. When deciding on using more than one behavior, consider these factors:

> **Frequency of behaviors:** if an undesired behavior can only occur once a day (stay in bed in the morning after 6:30), then it is easy to monitor. A behavior like "taking toys from brother" requires more attention and effort to monitor.
> **Child's level of development:** Younger children need simpler penalty programs with fewer target behaviors than older children.

A visual record, such as a chart on the wall, is very helpful.

CHART FOR UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS

Day/Time	Behavior #1 Costs __ tokens	Behavior #2 Costs __tokens	Behavior #3 Costs __ tokens
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

You might consider providing an extra reward for "no penalties for entire week."

Explain these principles:

Timing of penalties: penalties *follow* behavior. The token(s) should be taken away immediately after the behavior, or as soon as possible. It is important to teach the child that there is a link between the unacceptable behavior and the penalty.

Adjust the reward and penalty systems if child is not concerned about losing tokens: The penalties might not matter to the child if she has accumulated many tokens and can get rewards at the same time as penalties are being given. You might need to create the rule that tokens cannot be cashed in on days when penalties exceed a certain amount (e.g., no video game on days when child hits sibling more than once.)

Use of praise: You can find opportunities to praise the child for not engaging in misbehavior.

Negative behaviors not in the token system: If a behavior is not listed in the system, then you shouldn't remove tokens for it.

MODELING

To promote the development of a new skill through demonstration.

You serve as a *model* when you provide a demonstration of a skill so that the learner can imitate you. You will be serving as a model for clients and also teaching parents how to serve as models or find useful models for their children. (This guide should be studied before implementing the *Skill Building* and *Assertiveness Training* guides.)

Steps:
- Explain principles of modeling.
- Select a skill.
- Use modeling as part of role playing.
- Plan between-session practice.

Explain principles of modeling.

Explain that it can be helpful to watch another person performing the skill that you want to learn. Ask for and suggest examples: how to swing a bat, play the piano, do a math problem, or learn to cook. Here are some general principles to discuss with the parent:
- Modeling a skill for a child should occur in stages: the first demonstration should be close to the child's level of performance, rather than at a level of perfect mastery. Then as the child improves, the model can demonstrate the next level of skill.
- It can be very helpful to model (speak out loud) the thoughts of facing and coping with difficulties and the feelings of struggling to do something new.
- Models can be more effective when they are similar to the child in age, gender, and appearance.
- Models can be found on video or TV shows, as well as from people outside the family.
- If the parent serves as the model, she can participate in the child's practice sessions.

Select a skill.

Help the child or family identify skills that are needed to move toward the goals they have established. For instance, skills can be related to goals of improving school performance, developing new friendships, expressing anger in a healthy way. A specific goal can be broken into a set of skills. Here is an example:

Develop new friendships:
- Start a conversation with a new person
- Join a group of people who are having a conversation
- Invite an acquaintance to a join you in play
- Talk about yourself in an interesting way
- Listen and ask questions to show interest

When you have agreed on a skill, ask about the child's past experiences in trying to perform this skill. It might be useful to do a *Self-Monitoring* assignment before engaging in modeling.

Use modeling as part of role playing.

Here is an example of how to provide modeling for the skill "joining a group of people."

> (To child) *I'm going to show you how I went about learning to approach a group of people. I'm going to say out loud what I'm thinking and feeling. I'm going to pretend that you are part of the group.*
>> (In role) "What if I say hello and they ignore me? I feel so stupid. But if I don't try, I'll never make new friends." Walks up to the client. Clears throat. "Hi, my name is _____. You guys seem to be having fun."
>
> (To child): Ask questions: *What do you think about how I handled that? Do you have similar thoughts?*
>> Ask child to practice: *Now it's your turn. I'll pretend to be sitting here with friends.*

Give plenty of praise, even for attempts that are not entirely successful. Provide constructive feedback between each attempt, and practice several times so that there are opportunities to improve.

When you play the role of the other person, start by making the role play very easy and successful. When the child has confidence, you can make it more challenging – play someone who is unfriendly initially. Then you can model other skills: how to listen and find an opening to say something, how to think about an unsuccessful experience without feeling bad.

> (in role): "That felt bad to have them ignore me, but I can walk away and it won't be so bad. Next time, I'll look for signs that the people are friendly."

After the role play, have a discussion about it. Ask the child what she learned from the role play activity. Help the child develop a list of "tips" for using the skill on her own. Focus on behaviors as well as thinking. Ask questions: *What's a good way to start? How can you recognize good opportunities? What's a good way to think about it if it doesn't go well? What would be a good next step if you get a good response?*

Provide praise and point out strengths and improvement. Express confidence that the child's skills will improve with practice.

Plan between-session practice.

Make a plan for the child and parent to continue to practice the new behavior at home. Remind the parent how to demonstrate the skill and provide feedback and praise for the child's practice attempts. Ask about other possible models to practice with.

Ask the child to determine when she feels ready to practice the new skill in a real situation. Suggest a method of self-monitoring, such as this chart. The first row in the chart is completed as an example.

Day/Time	Situation	Description of what I did	What happened	Goal for next time
Tuesday, 12	School lunch room	Approached Jackson and Josh and asked if I could join them.	They smiled and said yes. They talked about a TV show, but I didn't have anything to say. I was very nervous.	Practice offering my opinion. Learn to relax and feel comfortable listening.