Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Adults

What is the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Adults class?

This six session class series introduces participants to a basic understanding of Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in adults, coping with the disorder in "real life" situations and activities, and treatment options for managing through each cycle of adulthood.

Participants will become knowledgeable about: the symptoms of ADHD; will learn to manage negative aspects of impulsivity and related behaviors such as anger; how ADHD impacts relationships and self-esteem; time management skills; self-care; and planning for the future.
Class Outline

Session 1: Overview of ADHD

A) Introduction to Adult ADHD class
B) What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?
   - Attention Problems / Hyperactivity / Impulsivity
   - Etiology
   - Prevalence
   - Differential Diagnosis / Co-morbidity
   - Treatment Options
   - Managing Stress

Session 2: Treatment Options

A) Check-in / Relaxation Exercise
B) Medication
   - Types of Medications
   - Side Effects and Efficacy
   - Compliance
C) Psychotherapy / Education
D) Self-Care

Session 3: Managing Impulsivity – "Putting on the Brakes"

A) Check-in / Relaxation Exercise
B) Introduce Topic of Impulsivity
C) Delineate How Impulsivity can be both Positive and Negative
D) Reducing Negative Aspects of Impulsivity
E) Anger as a form of Impulsivity
F) Substance Abuse as a form of Impulsivity
Class Outline (continued)

Session 4: Relationships, Communication & Self-Esteem

A) Check-in / Relaxation Exercise
B) How ADHD Impacts Relationships and Communication
C) Communicating with Your Partner or Spouse
D) Strategies to Use at Home with Family Members
E) Strategies to Use at Work
F) Strategies to Use in Social Situations
G) Solutions While on the Phone
H) Self-Esteem and Mood

Session 5: Time Management, Planning & Getting Organized

A) Check-in / Relaxation Exercise
B) Scheduling Activities
C) Strategies for Planning at Work
D) Problem-Solving Skills
E) Reducing Distraction and Increasing Focus

Session 6: Planning for the Future

A) Check-in / Relaxation Exercise
B) Identify Resources
   ♦ Clinical
   ♦ Community
   ♦ Personal
C) Discussion of "Self-Identifying" as ADHD
D) Ongoing Coping and Support
E) Future Goals
F) Evaluation & Appreciation
G) Closing
SESSION 1:
Overview of ADHD

Goal:
To introduce individuals to other participants and facilitator. To provide hope and encouragement for individuals to commit themselves to understanding, coping, and learning how to manage with ADHD.

Objectives:
After attending this session, participants will:

1. Have received an orientation to the group

2. Have a basic understanding of the definition of ADHD and symptoms (etiology, prevalence of the disorder, treatment options, managing stress -- more in depth later)

3. Practice relaxation exercises, e.g., deep breathing (assigned for homework)
SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF ADHD

Welcome & Introductions

A. Group leader introduction

B. Group member's introduction

- Personal stories: What brought you to this group?

- Goals: What do you want to get out of this group?

1. Name one of your biggest problems that you'd like to work on here.

2. Refer to Goals and complete.
GOAL SETTING

*Program Goals*

1. Goal: ________________________________________________

Steps to take to reach that goal:

a. ________________________________________________

b. ________________________________________________

2. Goal: ________________________________________________

Steps to take to reach that goal:

a. ________________________________________________

b. ________________________________________________

c. ________________________________________________

3. Goal: ________________________________________________

Steps to take to reach that goal:

a. ________________________________________________

b. ________________________________________________

c. ________________________________________________

1. A goal should be **measurable**
2. A goal should be **realistic**
3. A goal should be **behavioral**
4. A goal should be "**I**" – centered
5. A goal should be **desirable**

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Session 1

C. Overview of Class

♦ **Ground rules** and format of the group

1. Confidentiality
2. Length of class
3. Focus of class is teaching skills you can use –
4. Respect for other group members (*no insulting of group members, name calling, interrupting*)
What is ADHD?

Overview:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Believed to be a neurological disorder
- ADHD and ADD are often used interchangeably – ADHD is the official diagnosis used from the diagnostic manual, but ADD is commonly used
- Individuals often present in their physician's office with symptoms that may include: *(discussed in more detail later on in this section)*
  - Lack of focus
  - Disorganization
  - Restlessness
  - Difficulty finishing projects
  - Losing things
- Adults with ADHD may have difficulties at work, at home, and in their personal relationships

Question for group:

What behaviors and/or issues arise that you have concerns about?
What is ADHD?  (continued)

There are two different domains of problems with ADHD -- inattention and/or hyperactivity – impulsivity. A person can have problems in one or the other area.

A. Attention Problems:

- People with attention problems have trouble sustaining attention over time (attention) and with selective attention – focusing on what is most important and tuning out what is not relevant (distractibility)

- May not have had behavior problems in school (if there were only problems with attention). Problems with attention may have gone unnoticed by the teacher, but the person always felt that something was wrong. The teacher may have labeled them "lazy" or "unmotivated".

Examples of attention problems:

| Mind is Elsewhere          | Often seen as not listening, daydreaming, often called ditzy, spacey, scatter brained, "earth to _______; in relationships, the partner often interprets this as not caring ("You're not listening, you don't care what I say.") |
| Disorganized              | Messy desk, paying bills late, misplacing items, papers scattered, lost, and/or carelessly handled |
| Forgetful                 | Missing appointments, forgetting to bring lunch |
| Lacks Follow-Through       | Not following through with requests, starts many tasks but does not finish them |
| Careless Mistakes         | Careless mistakes on work projects, homework, tests – (doesn't go back and check for errors) |
| Avoidance of Tasks        | Avoids tasks that require sustained effort (often complains of boredom) |
| Narrow or Hyperfocus      | Alternatively, person may appear to hyperfocus. This is a part of the difficulty with shifting attention and with prioritizing – the person will focus on a detail and miss the big picture. Or the person might get so hyperfocused that she/he doesn't know what's going on around them or doesn't know when it's time to stop. |
**Attention Problems (continued)**

- **Potential Advantages** (of ADHD) *if channeled and used productively:*

  1. Flexibility

  2. Ability to rapidly shift attention: People with ADHD are often good at jobs / situations that require a person to rapidly shift attention from one thing to another (e.g., journalist, Emergency Room doctor, fireman/woman, head of a department/CEO)

  3. Awareness & Memory: Notices and stores many different kinds of information

**B. Hyperactivity – Impulsivity**

*Examples of Hyperactivity:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always On the Go!</th>
<th>As a child, always on the go – as if driven by a motor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restlessness / Nervousness</td>
<td>As adult, this can become more internalized, less obvious to others: internal feeling of restlessness; fidgeting; nervous habits, such as biting fingernails, twirling hair, pacing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Potential Advantages of Hyperactivity:** when channeled, this energy can be used to accomplish a great deal; may be perceived as having "endless energy"
Hyperactivity – Impulsivity (continued)

Examples of Impulsivity: Acting quickly without thinking through or anticipating consequences, then regretting it later – acting rashly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abrupt Conversational Changes</th>
<th>When talking to someone, person with ADHD may make abrupt topic changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interrupts</td>
<td>May interrupt others or blurt out answers before a question is finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impatient</td>
<td>Difficulty delaying gratification: low frustration tolerance, wants it right now – impatient. This can lead to problems with anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recklessness</td>
<td>Reckless behavior / thrill-seeking may have negative consequences such as reckless driving or speeding, gambling, impulse buying, poor business decisions, having affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Problems</td>
<td>Difficulty sustaining jobs (has history of underemployment, frequent job changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with Relationships</td>
<td>Difficulty sustaining relationships (marriage, partners, children, friends, co-workers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential Advantages of Impulsivity:

1. Adventurous
2. Willing to take risks
3. Spontaneous
4. Entertaining (the class clown)
Hyperactivity – Impulsivity (continued)

C. Other Diagnostic Facts about ADHD:

♦ Related problems: possible low self-esteem, frequent and rapid changes in mood, problems managing anger

♦ ADHD starts in childhood (if it has only occurred as adult, it's not ADHD)

♦ Famous people have had ADHD: Michael Phelps

Etiology (What Causes ADHD?)

A. Psychoneurological --

1. Neuropsychological dysfunction: frontal lobe (located right behind the forehead) may be underactive. It's the part of the brain that manages executive functioning. Executive functioning has to do with staying focused in spite of distractions, inhibiting responses that would be off task or inappropriate, and planning/maintaining appropriate responses for a period of time. Other parts of the brain are involved as well.

2. Neurotransmitter imbalances: neurotransmitters are the chemicals that allow brain cells to communicate with each other (neurons); most likely involves Dopamine and Norepinephrine neurotransmitters.

B. Genetic: Passed down in families; studies on twins support the fact that ADHD is highly genetic

C. (Possibly) brain injury: to developing brain during pregnancy

1. Exposure to toxins during pregnancy (especially alcohol and nicotine)
2. Maternal toxemia
3. Minor physical injuries to the developing fetus
4. Anoxia / hypoxia during delivery of the fetus
Prevalence of ADHD in the adult population in the United States is estimated to be 5%

(approximately 11 million adults in the US in 2005)

(Source: Russell Barkley, ADHD in Adults: History, Diagnosis, and Impairments, ContinuingEdCourses.com)
Diagnoses

Sources of information for diagnosis for children, adolescents and adults would include:

- Developmental, medical, and family history
- Social history
- Physical evaluation
- School / work performance
- Interviews with or information from parents or significant others
- Diagnostic checklists

It is estimated that more than 80% of adults with ADHD have at least one other disorder (for example: depression or other psychiatric diagnosis)

(Source: Russell Barkley, ADHD in Adults: History, Diagnosis, and Impairments, ContinuingEdCourses.com)
(ADHD) Diagnoses (continued)

Mental Health Disorders often associated with ADHD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Could be result of struggling with ADHD or could be the cause of attention problems instead of ADHD. Identify whether symptoms are worse vs. better with time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>25% co-morbidity with anxiety disorders. Common symptoms: restlessness, irritability, impatience, sleep disturbances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar Disorder</td>
<td>Hypomania hardest to distinguish from ADHD. &quot;Up&quot; moods in ADHD often have quality of excitement rather than euphoria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panic Disorders</td>
<td>Type of anxiety disorder in which individual experiences recurrent, unexpected panic attacks. Heart pounding, palms sweating, the unreasonable fear that something terrible is about to happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</td>
<td>Obsessions: recurrent and persistent thoughts, impulses or images that caused marked anxiety or distress Compulsions: repetitive behaviors (hand washing, ordering, checking things -e.g., turning off stove, iron, lights, etc.) or mental acts (e.g., counting, praying, or repeating words silently) that individual feels driven to perform in response to an obsession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(ADHD) Diagnoses (continued)

### Mental Health Disorders often associated with ADHD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Persons with ADHD sometimes overuse substances as part of impulsivity and difficulty tolerating frustration. Sometimes may have different (paradoxical) responses than others to substances (e.g., using cocaine but feeling relaxed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Co-morbidity may be up to 30%; symptoms in common: academic problems (poor grades, teacher comments/complaints about performance, behavior problems). Example: may have difficulty reading – not because they can’t learn/understand, but because they can’t sustain focus due to ADHD. Disruptive behaviors tend to increase with age (with learning disabilities); ADHD tends to be noticed earlier and remains constant over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial</td>
<td>Adults with ADHD are more likely to have Anti-social Personality Disorder (APD). Actions which indicate a disregard for others are more likely to indicate APD (e.g., breaking the law, &quot;conning&quot; others, and lack of remorse).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borderline</td>
<td>Symptoms: impulsivity, substance abuse, impaired relationships, angry outbursts, affective instability, feelings of boredom. In ADHD patients, impulsivity is short-lived, situational, and thoughtless (such as running a traffic light, interrupting others) rather than having the compulsive nature of, (for example) binging or shoplifting which is typical of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). Anger in ADHD seems to be quick to rise and quick to cool. In BPD there is a more constant and brooding quality to anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phobias</td>
<td>Manifested by persistent fears that are excessive or unreasonable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Treatment Options

Will be covered in detail in next session (Session 2)

A. Education

1. Naming and understanding the problem is extremely important in ADHD

2. Magazine for families and adults with ADHD is called Attention (published by CHADD)

3. Newsletters available with latest research findings (http://www.russellbarkley.org/newsletter.html)

4. Community resources: CHADD (chadd.org)

B. Medication (more in depth information in Session 2)

1. Psychostimulants and other medication not only improve attention but also inhibit problem behaviors.

2. Landmark study sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health was completed in 1999 which showed that 82% of children were normalized with medication, with only 15-18% still meeting ADHD criteria. There are not as many such large-scale studies for adults; however, the studies that are available indicate that medications are probably not as effective for adults but still can be useful.
**ADHD Treatment** *(Continued)*

**C. Learning Adaptive Skills**  
*(Will be covered in "compensatory strategies" in Sessions 3 & 4)*

**D. Therapy**

For secondary psychological problems (interpersonal problems/couples therapy, anger management, substance abuse treatment, low self-esteem, sense of failure).
Stress and Relaxation Responses

In closing: Management of stress is important for individuals with ADHD because many lead a harried and scattered lifestyle.

By learning to relax, you can
- Lessen the impact of stress
- Increase concentration
- Lessen impulsivity

A. What is stress?
1. What are some of the words you would use to indicate someone is stressed?
2. Put very simply: Stress is created by our need to adapt to change, whether that change is positive or negative

B. What causes stress?
1. Major life events: "What are some life events that are stressful?" (Note: Include positive, e.g., weddings, birth of child)
2. Daily life hassles (e.g., parking hassles, traffic, dog getting out of the yard, etc.)
3. Discussion for group: "How might the symptoms of ADHD cause stress for you in your life?"

Examples:
- losing things
- feeling misunderstood
- disorganization
- not filing your taxes on time
- not remembering to pay traffic tickets
- missing or being late to appointments
- relationship problems
- academic and vocational difficulties
- other examples (for discussion)
Stress and Relaxation Responses (continued)

C. Stress vs. Relaxation Response

1. We have inherited our nervous system from prehistoric times. Back then we faced life or death situations more commonly. For example, if a tiger was charging you, you needed to be able to respond immediately – this is called the fight or flight or the stress response (part of the sympathetic nervous system). Once the emergency was over, our bodies would go back down to baseline and, physiologically, everything would return to normal.

2. In modern day life, we rarely face life or death situations. Instead, we have stress, either major life events or the daily hassles that we talked about before. Stress engages the same fight or flight response, but in a less extreme and more chronic or sustained way. Stress is cumulative, and when it reaches a certain level, we begin to experience symptoms (either physical or psychological).

3. The way to counter stress is by using a relaxation technique. This activates a different part of the nervous system (parasympathetic) which helps us relax rather than respond to emergencies. Diaphragmatic or deep breathing is the foundation of the Relaxation Response and all relaxation techniques.

Deep breathing exercise:
(try to practice these exercises at least once a day)
Breathe and Settle
Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

I invite you to make yourself comfortable. Sit back in your chair, have your back straight but not stiff. Your head straight, resting on your shoulders. Feet planted firmly on the ground.

Allow your hands to be relaxed, in your lap, or resting gently, palms up, at your sides.

And now, take several long, slow, deep breaths, breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth... in through the nose and out through the mouth. And as you exhale, blow as if you are blowing out a candle... but ever so slowly so the flame only flickers, but does not go out... PAUSE

And now allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm, feeling the cool air as it enters your nose... and the warm air as you exhale. Inviting your attention to flow with your breath. PAUSE

If it is comfortable, allow your eyes to close, or simply leave them softly focused, as you take these few moments to turn your attention from outside to inside yourself. PAUSE

Become aware now of your stomach, as it expands on the in-breath and relaxes and lets go on the out-breath, expands and lets go... breathing in... and release... PAUSE

Continued...
**Breathe and Settle / Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise (continued)**

If your mind wanders, as minds tend to do; or if you are distracted by sounds in the room, or by my voice, simply acknowledge to yourself…”Thinking”… “Wandering mind”…and bring your attention back to your breath:  PAUSE

And now, bring your attention to the area of your body where you experience pain…tension…or tightness, and imagine that area of pain softening and releasing with each out-breath…Breathe in…and release… PAUSE

And now as we prepare to end this time for relaxation, allow your attention to gently return to your breath…feeling the rise and fall of your abdomen…and expand from your breath to include your entire body…becoming aware of yourself sitting on the chair …opening your eyes and slowly becoming aware of other images in the room…chairs…tables, other faces…breathing and sitting with full awareness of this moment and time.

And now, stretch your arms out in front of you, feeling the life in your hands and arms, breathe deeply, release, and return fully alert and awake to the present moment.

© Hope Sasek, *Managing Stress Using the Breath, the Body, and the Mind Workshop*, 8/96
Closing - Session 1

- **Wrap Up** (time for Q&A)
- **Homework:** stress management options:

Relaxation techniques:

- practice relaxation / deep breathing exercise for 5 minutes once a day.
- Practice body stretches or yoga

Mind-focusing exercise:

- Focus on something positive happening in the present

Physical self-care

- Practice exercise three times a week
- Treat yourself: take a nap, hot bath, get a massage or haircut
- Eat breakfast
- Pay attention to pain or illness, get assistance to take care of yourself

Practice routines:

Structure pleasant times you can count on with friends, partner and/or kids

Talk with your family about what is working well

Have consistent family meetings to check in with each other, resolve difficulties, and share feelings and experiences. Include a positive activity at the beginning and end of your meeting.
SESSION 2: Treatment Options

Goal:

To provide information on several treatment options for symptoms associated with ADHD. Various treatment options include: medication, psychotherapy/education, and self-care techniques.

Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will:

1. Have a basic understanding of types of ADHD medications and their side effects.

2. Understand benefits of psychotherapy to help alleviate or lessen the symptoms associated with ADHD.

3. Have received tips for self-care (alone or in combination with the other treatment options)

4. Be aware of the benefits of relaxation exercises (special emphasis in this class -- assigned for homework in last week's session)
SESSION 2: TREATMENT OPTIONS

1 Welcome & Check-In:

A. Welcome & Check-in
   ♦ Any problems or questions you would like to raise?

B. Relaxation Exercise

Breathe and Settle
Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

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And now, stretch your arms out in front of you, feeling the life in your hands and arms, breathe deeply, release, and return fully alert and awake to the present moment.
C. Introduce Topic of Treatment Options for ADHD

As we have discussed in the first session, ADHD is characterized by a prolonged history of inattention, impulsivity, and varying degrees of hyperactivity. It is important to remember that all of these symptoms are normal human characteristics – they are part of our "human-ness."

- We are all forgetful and inattentive at times
- Sometimes we experience nervousness and become fidgety
- We all are impulsive to some degree
- For many adults, restlessness or hyperactivity may be less important than the ability to start a task, concentrate on its execution, and finish it in a timely manner without procrastination
- ADHD is not diagnosed by the mere presence of the above mentioned characteristics but from the degree to which these symptoms are manifested

**ADHD is an over-abundance of normal characteristics**
SESSION 2: TREATMENT OPTIONS

Medications

20 min.

We know that ADHD is a medical condition that affects the metabolism of the brain. Causes are usually based on one or more of the following abnormalities:

- Neurological
- Genetic
- Brain Injury (that occurred during pregnancy)

Treatment with medications (also referred to as pharmacological) is the oldest and most thoroughly studied treatment of ADHD. It is important to know how and when ADHD is treated with medication.

- Medications must be prescribed by a licensed physician

- Look for physicians that specialize in treatment of ADHD. Doctors often experiment with several different medications and different dosages to determine most effective therapy. The correct dosage is extremely individual and not always predictable.

- Course of treatment depends on the pattern and severity of symptoms, attitude toward treatment, patient's developmental level, and whether or not the patient has multiple or coexisting psychiatric conditions (in addition to ADHD). These may include: Oppositional and Aggressive Conduct Disorder, Anxiety, Depression, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, and Learning disorders.
Medications (Continued)

♦ Your physician will likely coordinate multiple therapies. For example, he/she may prescribe a particular medication and suggest psychotherapy as a course of treatment in addition to medication. It is important, therefore, that the patient and medical professional decide appropriate treatment together.

♦ Individuals respond positively to ADHD medications: eliminating or greatly reducing symptoms associated with ADHD.

♦ There’s no magic formula. Age, body weight, severity, etc., are not determining functions for determining what drug will work best. It may take some trial and error to find the best combination.

♦ Medications are not the answer to all – but important factor in care (not used as a last resort). In addition to alleviating most or all of the symptoms of ADHD, medications can also make other accompanying treatment more effective.

Medications Prescribed for ADHD

The major groups of medications that improve ADHD symptoms include: stimulants, antidepressants, and alpha-blockers. However, most studies indicate that stimulants have the best results for ADHD patients (effective for behavior and learning disorders). People on this type of medication usually experience improvement in:

- Attention span / concentration
- Impulsivity
- Memory
- Motor coordination
- Aggression (e.g., less anger, fewer outbursts, less disruptive verbal behavior)
- Mood, social functioning
- Less restlessness
- "On-task" behavior (e.g., improved ability to focus and concentrate on a task or project)
- Better drug compliance (adhering to physician's prescribed time and dosage instructions)
**Medications (Continued)**

Most common medications found effective for ADHD symptoms:

- Concerta
- Adderall
- Focalin
- Clonidine
- Guanfacine
- Strattera
- Wellbutrin

**How Safe are the Drugs used for Treating ADHD?**

Stimulants have been used for over 50 years in the treatment of ADHD and related symptoms. Side effects are usually mild and easily manageable. However, a few concerns require special mention, including:

**Side Effects**

- Appetite suppression and insomnia (may require regular monitoring)
- Tachycardia (palpitations or racing heart)
- Increased blood pressure
- Mild stomach upset or headache

Most children and adults respond well to stimulants, however, since adults often have co-existing depression and low self-esteem, antidepressants are often prescribed. Stimulants and antidepressants together require strict monitoring by a physician (to prevent toxicity).

Undesirable drug side-effects need to be addressed as they can cause adverse physical and mental health problems and can also greatly impact whether treatment will be successful or not.
Compliance

Patients often fail to take medications as prescribed, which affects successful treatment. Chaotic households or families with a lack of basic resources are often poor risks for successful drug therapy (particularly for children).

Contraindications:

Some factors affecting the patient or the patient’s family caution against the use of stimulant drug treatment. A few conditions that may accompany ADHD may not respond positively to stimulant medications. These include:

- Thought disorder or psychosis
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Substance abuse
- Liver or cardiac dysfunction

What medication can and can’t do:

- Medication enables the system to function more appropriately
- **YOU** are still in charge
- Medication allows nervous system to send its chemical messages more efficiently – skills and knowledge function more normally
- Medications **DO NOT** provide skills or the motivation to perform
Medications alone are not usually sufficient in treating ADHD. Medications may remove some of the symptoms; however they may have no effect on functioning which requires learning new skills. Multi-modal therapy combines medication and therapy treatments. This combination is believed to provide the best treatment possible and is recommended by most clinicians.

Therapy often focuses on one or more of the following: self-esteem, stress management, time management, organizational skills and behavior management. It may include: individual counseling, support groups, and/or classes; books & other publications (or a combination of any of these).

Acquiring new skills through therapy and education help the person with ADHD improve (or negate) problems and/or chronic difficulties are often associated with:

- Social adjustment (e.g., interpersonal relationships, communication)
- Negative behaviors and thoughts (e.g., self-esteem, self-image)
- Academic / work performance skills deficits (may improve somewhat from medications but often the effect is not enough)
- Stress reduction (likely helped by medications but learning behavior control along with drug therapy is most likely to succeed.)
- Attention, memory, distractibility, impulsivity, focus, concentration, anger management, procrastination (addressed under Medication section above)

Prevalence of substance abuse as ways of coping and self-medicating results in problems in personal, interpersonal, and work life (we'll talk more about this in Session 3).
Self-care begins with an overall awareness and understanding of ADHD and treatment options. Future class sessions will address the following key elements critical to treating ADHD. These include enhancing or improving:

(suggestions from group on other self-care techniques?)

- **Time Management & Organizational Skills** (Session 5)
  - Scheduling Activities.
  - Strategies for Planning at Work
  - Problem-Solving Skills
  - Reducing Distraction and Increasing Focus
  - Increase sleep (if sleep deprivation has been a problem for you)

- **Stress Reduction** (Sessions 1 & 2)
  - Managing stress is very important for individuals with ADHD because many lead a harried and scattered lifestyle. ADHD symptoms can exacerbate the feeling of being "stressed to the max" or feeling out of control – use relaxation skills and self-care tips (previously discussed in Session 1 - Overview of ADHD).
  - By learning to reduce stress you can increase concentration and lessen impulsivity.

- **Self-Talk** (Session 4)
  Use positive "Self-Talk." Say to yourself "easy does it," (or other such phrases to calm yourself and to keep from getting angry, frustrated, and help lessen (negative) impulsivity.

- **Relationships, Communication & Self-Esteem** (Session 4 will emphasize strategies to use in family, social, & professional situations)
We discussed in the first session the importance of relaxation exercises in combating or relieving the effects of stress and help with related symptoms of ADHD.

- The way to counter stress is by using the Relaxation Response. This activates a different part of the nervous system (parasympathetic) which helps us relax rather than respond to emergencies.

Relaxation response:
The relaxation response slows the heart rate and breathing, lowers blood pressure, and helps relieve muscle tension. In this way, it can help you slow down, reduce stressful feelings, and refocus your thoughts.

Technique (adapted by The Permanente Medical Group Regional Health Education from Herbert Benson, MD):
- sit quietly, in a comfortable position, with eyes closed.
- become aware of your breathing. Breathing slow and steady, concentrate on breathing from your abdomen and not your chest.
- with each exhalation, say a word or phrase silently or aloud. Or you may focus your gaze on a stationary object, or on your breath. This will help you refocus when your thoughts become distracting.
- continue this for 10 to 20 minutes. As distracting thoughts enter your mind, don’t dwell on them. Just allow them to drift away.
- sit quietly for several minutes until you are ready to open your eyes.
- notice the difference in your breathing and pulse rate.

Don’t worry about whether you are successful in becoming relaxed. The key to this exercise is to remain passive, to let distracting thoughts slip away like waves on a beach.
Diaphragmatic or deep breathing is the foundation of the Relaxation Response and all relaxation techniques. We began deep breathing practice at our last session.

Deep breathing:
Can bring out a feeling of calm when it is purposefully done. It can help you let go of stress and worries and focus quietly on the present moment.

Technique:
Place both hands on the lower part of your stomach and breathe in so that the incoming air expands your belly gently against your hands. Your stomach muscles should be relaxed. Then, gently push with your hands as you exhale slowly. If you prefer, imagine a balloon in your stomach that inflates when you inhale and deflates when you exhale. Practice this several times. Finally, breathe in and then try to imagine the tension and stress leaving your body as you exhale. Be patient and gentle with yourself.

Other types of relaxation techniques:

- Meditation: allow yourself more down-time in order for you to collect your thoughts (to "regroup")

- Exercises such as Yoga help with overall mind-body well-being (includes elements of meditation, deep breathing, stretching, building "core" strength)

- Imagery (also a form of meditation)

- Acupuncture
6 Other ADHD Treatment Factors:

- ADHD is a chronic, lifetime disorder needing some form of treatment across the lifespan

- Naming and understanding the problem is extremely important in coping with ADHD

- Compensatory strategies are key in coping with ADHD

- True measurement of whether or not treatment is working: *Is there improvement in your quality of life?* (This is often determined by conversations and observations involving you, your physician, family members, and other relationships).

Closing - Session 2

- **Wrap Up** (time for Q&A)

- **Homework:** *(Practice relaxation techniques discussed)*

  Deep Breathing

  Relaxation response
Goal:

To educate participants on the definition of impulsivity and the many ways it may affect their lives. To introduce behavioral skills for managing impulsivity, including anger management and substance abuse.

Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will have:

1. An understanding of impulsivity and the role it plays in their lives
2. Learned the negative and positive aspects of impulsivity
3. Been given skills for managing impulsivity in an appropriate way
4. Participated in a class exercise that highlights the pull to respond impulsively
5. Learned about two of the most troublesome forms of impulsivity; anger and substance abuse
6. Have participated in class relaxation exercise
SESSION 3: MANAGING IMPULSIVITY

1 Welcome Participants and Introductions:

A. Welcome participants & check in

B. Relaxation exercise – Concentration Activity
   (Body Scan Head to Feet - Concentration Practice)

   Body Scan Head to Feet with Calming Affirmations – Concentration Practice

I invite you to make yourself comfortable. You may want to loosen any tight or restrictive clothing.

Allow your back to be straight, but not stiff, your head resting on your shoulders and your feet resting on the floor. Allow your hands to be relaxed in your lap or resting gently with palms up at your sides.

Allow your eyes to close, if this is comfortable, or leave them softly focused.... as you slowly shift your attention from outside to inside yourself.

[Pause]

Now, take several long, slow, deep breaths, breathing in deeply and exhaling fully.

Feel your stomach expand as you breathe in and relax, and let go as you breathe out.

[Pause]

Breathe in....and release.

And now, begin to let go of noises around you. If you are distracted by sounds in the room, or perhaps my voice, simply notice ....sounds.... distractions.... and gently bring your attention back to your breath.

[Pause]

Now, bring your attention to the top of your head, becoming aware of your scalp....and forehead....Notice any tightness or tension you may be holding there and, as much as possible, allow that tightness to soften and release as you exhale. Now, bring your awareness down to your eyebrows and the area around...
your eyes, again noticing any tension you are holding....and, as much as possible, simply letting that tension go.

Allow your awareness to move down to your cheeks, your mouth and jaw....You may want to swallow as you breathe in, and release.  

[Pause]

Allow your awareness to continue down to your neck and throat, letting these muscles soften and relax.

As you continue to breathe, bring your awareness to your shoulders and let them slightly move up and around.... and, as you exhale, feel the tensions roll off your shoulders and away ....Allow this sense of relief to spread downward into your arms and hands, and out your fingertips.   [Pause]

Now bring your attention into your chest, and just listen to your heartbeat.... Give your stomach permission to settle gently....and allow all your internal organs to relax.

Moving your awareness now to your upper back....the area between your shoulder blades and your shoulders....softening....releasing...on down to your mid-back....your lower back...with each out-breath, letting go just a little bit deeper.

And now, feel your weight on the chair or cushion and allow yourself to sink in just a little bit more....with each out-breath, gently letting go.

Move your attention down into your legs, your thighs....to your knees, calves, ankles, and into your feet.  You may want to wiggle your toes a little, feeling the sensation of your toes against your socks, and then allow your feet to relax.  

[Pause]

And now, expand your awareness to include your entire body.  If you notice any tension remaining, imagine letting it go in a wave, from head to toe.

Breathe deeply and, as you exhale, allow any remaining tension to simply drain away.   [Pause]

Now, as you continue to breathe, repeat to yourself: “I allow my body to relax and let go.”  [Pause]

“My breath is calm and steady.”   [Pause]

And now, allow your attention to return to your breath.  Feeling your body rise, as you breathe in and relax, and let go as you breathe out.

Continuing to breathe, slowly expand your awareness to include your entire body....becoming aware of yourself sitting in the chair.

Take a deep, full breath, bringing in all of the energy of the present.  Exhale fully and, when you are ready, open your eyes and return your attention and your awareness to the present.

C. Introduce Topic of Impulsivity

- **Definition of impulsivity** outlined in Session 1: *Acting quickly without thinking through or anticipating consequences, then regretting it later; acting rashly.*

- Brainstorm examples of impulsivity and consequences. If people feel comfortable, they can share from their personal experience.

**Examples might include:**

1. Blurting out inappropriate information
2. Sharing intimate details with acquaintances or relative strangers
3. Pulling out of a parking spot without checking to see if it’s safe
4. Leaving work hours early because it’s a beautiful day
5. Rushing through a job and making careless mistakes
6. Ruining a new piece of equipment because you didn’t take the time to read the instructions.
7. Having an insatiable need for sex, alcohol, food, excitement, and shopping sprees. This feeds the overwhelming craving for intense experiences and avoids the feeling of boredom.
Impulsivity – Positive & Negative Benefits

There are many benefits to impulsivity that shouldn’t be overlooked:

- A strong desire for closure which often leads to getting the job done
- The ability to take risks where others would play it safe
- Excitability can be contagious in a work setting and is particularly well suited for sales and public relations
- An animated ADHD person can hold everyone’s attention during presentations
- Spontaneity and creativity has resulted in many great innovations

Reducing Negative Aspects of Impulsivity

We have seen examples of the negative and positive aspects of impulsivity. When it’s negative, what are ways to increase choice?

- Brainstorm things you have tried or seen others do
- "Putting On The Brakes" (table follows)
Reducing Negative Aspects of Impulsivity (continued)

"Putting On The Brakes"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Body Language</th>
<th>Become more attuned to body language. Check with others to see if you have said or done something, which is out of line.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Cravings</td>
<td>With effort a person with ADHD can learn to say &quot;No&quot; to their cravings, while tuning in to the simpler pleasures of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redirect Attention</td>
<td>When faced with cravings, try waiting even a few hours and it often passes. When it is difficult to say &quot;No&quot; to the impulsive urge, redirect the craving and your attention by saying &quot;Yes&quot; to something more constructive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete Projects</td>
<td>Impulsivity often results in many projects being started, but few completed. Break a job into smaller pieces and tackle them one at a time. Give yourself small rewards for each small piece and a big reward upon completion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued . . .
Reducing Negative Aspects of Impulsivity *(continued)*

"Putting On the Brakes"

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journal</strong></td>
<td>Writing brings ideas to the visual level allowing for optimum inspiration coupled with restraint. For instance, if you are angry and want to call the person you are angry at, write about it instead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Think Things Through</strong></td>
<td>Postpone every decision by a day so you have time to think things through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work</strong></td>
<td>Seek a work environment in which Impulsivity is an asset (sales, inventor, marketing, writer, and entrepreneur).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct</strong></td>
<td>Partner with a detail person who can “reality test” your innovative ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't</strong></td>
<td>Don’t over-extend yourself. Think before you volunteer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combat</strong></td>
<td>When bored midway through a project, approach it from a different angle to rekindle interest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reducing Negative Aspects of Impulsivity (Continued)

Practice Exercise:

Find a position that is comfortable. Don’t move for 5 minutes, no matter what. If you have an itch or your nose runs, ignore it.

At the completion of 5 minutes ask the group:

- “How was that for you?
- "What did it feel like to not respond impulsively?”
Anger as a Form of Impulsivity

Two of the most troublesome forms of impulsivity are anger and substance abuse.

## Anger Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Controlling Temper</strong></th>
<th>Those with ADHD can have problems with temper due to feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. Avoid dealing with temper when it is active. Wait until you are calm whenever possible. Leave the situation if you have to.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use a Time Out</strong></td>
<td>Establish and use a time out signal in the family or activate a time out at work, in public, or with friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What's Behind the Anger?</strong></td>
<td>Look to see what is behind the anger—fear, confusion, worry, helplessness—and express that feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use &quot;I Messages&quot;</strong></td>
<td>Use “I messages” rather than inflammatory “you messages”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid Fighting Words</strong></td>
<td>Avoid fighting words such as “never” and “always”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>Use problem-solving technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compromise</strong></td>
<td>Be willing to negotiate and compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determine Your Needs</strong></td>
<td>Determine what you need to feel better and meet those needs whenever possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reward Yourself</strong></td>
<td>Congratulate yourself on getting what you need assertively and without rage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuous Learning</strong></td>
<td>Take an Anger Management class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handling Anger: For many of us, anger is one of those "uncomfortable" feelings that we have learned to either deny ("I don't feel that irritated, annoyed or mad.") or to ignore ("Well, saying anything won't help. I'll feel better in the morning.")

Unfortunately, however, when we don't give ourselves permission to feel our anger, it often comes out in other ways—in a burst of rage over a small incident or in our own physical illness or depression. Recognizing when we feel stress and anger building and learning effective ways of managing the tensions and uncomfortable feelings we have each day will assist us emotionally and physically.

A simple checklist for learning to handle anger is:

**Listen To Your Warning Signals**

- **Body signals:** such as clamming up, blushing, shallow breathing, shaking, muscular tension, headaches, laughing for nothing, a rise in voice pitch and many more. Look for your own.

- **Feeling signals:** Anger is usually the second emotion we have. The first may be hurt, disappointment, frustration. What feelings usually precede your anger?

- **Mind signals:** We all have thoughts that are activated in stressful situations. Often these thoughts take the form of expectations which increase our tension ("S/He should have done that by now." "S/He doesn't care about what I need.")

Or, we may evaluate and judge ourselves or another ("This is too much. I'm losing control" or "S/He's always doing this to me. S/He's out to get me.") What are your mind signals?

**Become Aware Of How You Usually React**

- **Act out or explode:** scream, kick, hit or abuse, verbally blame or insult.

- **Internalize or implode:** over/under eat, get sick, withdraw, get depressed, neglect yourself or your kids, sleep, don't sleep, take drugs/alcohol.

**Decide On A Plan. What Can You Do Instead?**

- **Take responsibility:** These are your feelings, caused by your reactions. (Instead of saying, "He's making me mad..." say, "I feel very disappointed/threatened/annoyed.")

- **State your Feelings and Needs Out Loud:** Use "I" statements.

- **Take a "Time Out"** to calm yourself down before trying to resolve the situation.

- **Direct Action:** Do something to release the angry energy in positive ways.

- **Prevention:** Practice stress reduction techniques regularly to keep your stress levels down.

- **Congratulate yourself!! Praise your efforts and successes.**
### TRIGGER THOUGHTS / COPING STATEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHOULD:</th>
<th>TRIGGER THOUGHT</th>
<th>COPING STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entitlement Fallacy</td>
<td>&quot;Because I want something very much, I should have it.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I have the right to say no, and so do you.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Fallacy of Fairness</td>
<td>&quot;You're not being fair.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Our needs are equally important.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Fallacy of Change</td>
<td>&quot;I can control your behavior.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;People only change when they want to/&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conditional Assumptions</td>
<td>&quot;If you really loved me, you would do what I want.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Disappointing someone doesn't mean you don't care.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Letting-It-Out Fallacy</td>
<td>&quot;People who hurt me should be punished.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I can protect my relationship by communicating assertively.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BLAMERS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLAMERS:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Good-Bad Dichotomizing</td>
<td>&quot;You're right/wrong, good/bad/&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assumed Intent</td>
<td>&quot;You meant to hurt me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Magnifying</td>
<td>&quot;always, never, every, all. . .&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Global Labeling</td>
<td>&quot;You #&amp;*%@!!!&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Managing Anger – Kaiser Permanente
IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

- Anger is a feeling just like any other feeling. It is not pathological. Anger is often influenced by stress levels, trigger thoughts, misperceptions, past experiences, blood sugar levels, and personal belief-systems. Anger is a subjective reaction to a situation. Anger is a cue to problem solving.

- Anger is a feeling; aggression is an action. You have personal choices regarding your actions. Verbal aggression is aggression; it simply doesn't leave the visible marks as physical aggression does.

- Problem-solving and negotiating are better than blaming. Taking personal responsibility for your life is better than blaming others for your circumstances.

- If you ever have had a thought, a feeling, or an impulse, and not acted on it, you already have a model for anger management.

- Taming your anger involves either reducing distress or replacing trigger thoughts (or both). You can expand your repertoire of coping skills and distress reduction techniques.
TIME OUT SIGNALS

1. Body - sweating / tight gut / surge of adrenaline
2. Thoughts - hot thoughts / trigger thoughts
3. Actions - pacing floor / making fist / raised voice

If you are doing any of the above and can’t stop immediately, take a time-out.

When two people want to make commitment to change patterns of anger that occur when they are together, a contract is in order. The following suggested outline provides a framework for making the kind of changes that will benefit you both.

Time-Out Contract

When I realize that my (or my partner’s) anger is rising,
I will give a "T" signal for a time-out and leave at once. You might Say something like "I need some time to calm down." No parting shots!

I will return in one hour. I will take a walk to release the anger energy and will not drink or use drugs while I am away. I will try not to focus on resentments.

When I return I will start the conversation with "I know that I was partly wrong and partly right." I will then admit to a technical mistake I made.

If my partner gives a "T" signal and leaves, I will return the sign and let my partner go without hassle, no matter what is going on. I will not drink or use drugs while my partner is away and will avoid focusing on resentments. When my partner returns, I will start the conversation with "I know I was partly wrong and partly right." I will admit a technical mistake I made.

__________________________  __________________
Name                        Date
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Skills for Understanding, Coping, & Managing

Session 3: Managing Impulsivity

Are you "under" STRESS?

Name ____________________________

STRESS SYMPTOMS

I know I'm under stress when I... (✓)

☐ Cry more than usual
☐ Can't sleep
☐ Eat more than usual
☐ Am irritable
☐ Resort to the use of alcohol/drugs
☐ Have "physical complaints"

☐ Have difficulty concentrating/focusing
☐ Sleep more than usual
☐ Don't feel like eating
☐ Am on the move all the time — fidgety
☐ Become overly sensitive
☐ Don't feel like doing anything
☐ Other ____________________________

STRESS REDUCERS

When I see these "symptoms," I will... (✓ and be specific)

☐ Go for a walk ____________________________ for ____ mins.
☐ Read a good book ____________________________ for ____ mins.

☐ Exercise ____________________________ for ____ mins.
☐ Listen to music on the ____________________________

☐ Use relaxation techniques ____________________________
☐ Take some time for myself by ____________________________
☐ Do something I'm skilled at ____________________________ for ____ mins.
☐ Talk to my friend, therapist, doctor, someone else named ____________________________
☐ Say "No" to ____________________________
☐ Confront the situation by ____________________________
☐ Limit certain behaviors ____________________________
☐ Prioritize my responsibilities # 1 ____________________________
☐ # 2 ____________________________
☐ # 3 ____________________________

☐ Other ____________________________
Substance Abuse as a Form of Impulsivity

Statistic of lifetime prevalence of chemical dependency in adults who had been diagnosed with ADHD:

**Substance abuse**

Overall, approximately 10-25 percent develop difficulties with over-use, dependence upon, or even abuse of legal (i.e., alcohol, tobacco) or illegal substances (i.e., marijuana, cocaine, illicit use of prescription drugs, etc.), with this risk being greatest among those who had conduct disorder or delinquency as adolescents.

Despite these risks, note should certainly be taken that upwards of half or more of those having ADHD do not develop these associated difficulties or disorders.

(Source: http://www.russellbarkley.org/factsheets/adhd-facts.pdf)

**Cigarettes**

*Earlier age at initiation of smoking:*

“By the age of seventeen, 46 percent of the individuals initially diagnosed as hyperactive reported daily cigarette smoking, compared to 24 percent of their age-mate controls.

By adulthood, 35 percent of the hyperactive group continued to report daily cigarette smoking, compared to just 16 percent of the control participants.”

(Source: https://www.chadd.org/Membership/Attention-Magazine/View-Articles/ADHD-and-Smoking.aspx)
Substance Abuse as a Form of Impulsivity  (continued)

- Cocaine, caffeine and nicotine have the same effect as psycho stimulants in dealing with ADHD symptoms resulting in higher incidences of abuse

- Studies have found no correlation with ADHD children on medication and later substance abuse

- ADHD children and teens however have a higher incidence with earlier onset of substance abuse when not treated

- Factors contributing to substance abuse:
  1. Low self-esteem
  2. Impulsivity
  3. Attempt to self-medicate
  4. Depression
  5. Repeated failures and low tolerance for frustration

- Similar factors exist in ADHD resulting in less positive response in substance abuse treatment without treating the ADHD

Group discussion: how has using substances been helpful and/or detrimental in your lives?
Closing - Session 3

- **Wrap Up** (time for Q&A)
- **Homework:** Continue to practice relaxation & stress reduction techniques discussed over past these past three sessions
Goal:

To provide information on the effect that ADHD has on relationships and self-esteem, along with tips for avoiding or correcting communication problems at home, at work, and in social situations.

Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will:

1. Understand the common pitfalls that occur in relationships and communication

2. Have learned solutions for use with their spouse or partner

3. Have received tips for improving communication and performance at home, work, in social situations, and on the phone

4. Have role played specific problems and solutions to better integrate the material

5. Understand the connection between self-esteem, mood and ADHD
SESSION 4: RELATIONSHIPS, COMMUNICATION, & SELF-ESTEEM

1 Welcome & Check-in

A. Welcome & Check-in

B. Relaxation Exercise

Breathe and Settle
Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

I invite you to make yourself comfortable. Sit back in your chair, have your back straight but not stiff. Your head straight, resting on your shoulders. Feet planted firmly on the ground.

Allow your hands to be relaxed, in your lap, or resting gently, palms up, at your sides.

And now, take several long, slow, deep breaths, breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth…in through the nose and out through the mouth. And as you exhale, blow as if you are blowing out a candle…but ever so slowly so the flame only flickers, but does not go out…PAUSE

And now allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm, feeling the cool air as it enters your nose…and the warm air as you exhale. Inviting your attention to flow with your breath. PAUSE

If it is comfortable, allow your eyes to close, or simply leave them softly focused, as you take these few moments to turn your attention from outside to inside yourself. PAUSE
Become aware now of your stomach, as it expands on the in-breath and relaxes and lets go on the out-breath, expands and lets go...breathing in...and release...PAUSE

If your mind wanders, as minds tend to do; or if you are distracted by sounds in the room, or by my voice, simply acknowledge to yourself...”Thinking”... “Wandering mind”...and bring your attention back to your breath: PAUSE

And now, bring your attention to the area of your body where you experience pain...tension...or tightness, and imagine that area of pain softening and releasing with each out-breath...Breathe in...and release... PAUSE

And now as we prepare to end this time for relaxation, allow your attention to gently return to your breath...feeling the rise and fall of your abdomen...and expand from your breath to include your entire body...becoming aware of yourself sitting on the chair ...opening your eyes and slowly becoming aware of other images in the room...chairs...tables, other faces...breathing and sitting with full awareness of this moment and time.

And now, stretch your arms out in front of you, feeling the life in your hands and arms, breathe deeply, release, and return fully alert and awake to the present moment.
**C. Introduce Topic of How ADHD impacts relationships and communication**

*Common pitfalls:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Pitfall</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Listening</strong></td>
<td>A tendency to not listen when spoken to directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distracted</strong></td>
<td>Being distracted during conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tune In / Tune Out</strong></td>
<td>A tendency to tune in and out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Auditory</strong></td>
<td>Many ADHD people have an auditory processing problem which leads to a delay in processing information. Also, meanings of words spoken can be different to the ADHD person leading to miscommunication, misinterpretation and misunderstanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued . . .*
How ADHD impacts relationships and communication / Common pitfalls (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>There can be problems with word retrieval due to a disorganized filing system in the brain. The same word can be misfiled or filed differently each time. This leads to a person appearing more hesitant or unsure while he searches for the right word during conversations. During the search, impulsivity kicks in and can result in a random, inappropriate, or incomplete thought. An unintended or unrelated message is then communicated.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Follow-Through / Not Finishing Projects</td>
<td>Not following through on instructions and failing to finish work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interrupting / Intruding | - Blurring out answers before questions have been completed  
- Interrupting or intruding on others’ conversations |
| Difficulty Controlling Emotions | A difficulty in regulating emotions |
| Talk – Talk - Talk | Talking excessively! |
2 Solutions with Your Spouse or Partner:

- Spend a minimum of five minutes per day with your partner alone talking about pleasant things.
- Set up specific times to talk about the impact ADHD has had on your relationship. Decide what you want to do about it. *What needs to change?*
- List your complaints and recommendations on paper so you won’t forget. Brainstorm how to reach your goals.
- Resolve to follow through.
- Maintain a master calendar and check it against each other’s appointment books often.
- The non-ADHD partner should avoid compensating for the ADHD person as this can lead to dependency, resentment and low self-esteem.
- Avoid common role-related patterns that occur in ADHD relationship: doer vs. non-doer; victimizer vs. victim; nagger vs. ignorer.
- If the organized spouse takes on jobs requiring organizational skills, it is important that the ADHD person then accepts and does a household chore of equal merit.

*continued . . .
Solutions with Your Spouse or Partner: (continued)

☑ Priorities may vary between a couple and the ADHD person is likely to gravitate towards jobs that are more stimulating or have an emotional impact. One solution is that each partner makes a priority list of the most important daily and long-term issues. The lists are compared and negotiated so that both people feel they are getting their needs met.

☑ Schedule half an hour per week in which the spouse/partner lists what needs to be done. The ADHD person gives a plan of action verbally while his/her spouse/partner writes it down. Avoid correcting, judging, organizing or reminding.

☑ Vent your anger at ADHD; not the person.

PRACTICE EXERCISE:

♦ Role play a specific problem and solution

♦ Debrief
3 Solutions to Use in Home with Family Members:

♦ Stop “on the run” conversations

♦ Set up a message center in a prominent place like the kitchen or next to the phone. This should include a bulletin board, calendar, paper and pens, mail slots.

♦ Designate quiet zones away from where the TV and stereo are. Set aside time periods for quiet; the TV goes off, the phones are off. Establish a family signal or cue for initiating a moment of silence if the noise level is too high or emotions are getting out of control.

♦ Stop long-distance conversations, such as yelling up the stairs or from one room to another

♦ Use a stop-look-listen-speak procedure. If a conversation is in progress, wait to be invited in. If someone is doing something requiring concentration, (reading, cooking, paying bills), don’t interrupt.

♦ During meals eliminate unnecessary distractions. Have the phones put away, the TV and stereo go off, the dog is put in another room. Make a “no arguments” rule at the table.
Solutions to Use at Work:

- When applying for a job, rehearse the interview and make a list of questions to ask.

- Try and determine what impact ADHD has on each function of the job.

- Decide when accommodations may be needed. For example, you may need a quiet space rather than an open cubicle to concentrate on your work.

- Ask for the accommodation, but stress that your employer will get the most from you with that accommodation.

- Request specific instructions on complicated tasks. Stop and listen to what is being asked or said. Ask for clarifications if you don’t understand. Get instructions in writing if possible or write them down.

- Priorities may vary between you and your employer. The ADHD person is likely to choose and prioritize a task that is more stimulating over mundane tasks. Determine how your employer would prioritize the job and use this as your rule of thumb.

- Stay involved in discussions. There is no need to rush to the “bottom line”.
**Solutions to Use at Work (Continued)**

**Practice exercise:**

*Role play a specific work-related problem and solution.*

*Debrief.*
5 Solutions to Use in Social Situations:

♦ Carefully choose situations in which you can practice social skills (i.e. small gatherings, large parties, sports events, work-related events).

♦ Try to notice both verbal and nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expression, and tone of voice.

♦ A silent signal from a friend can help remind you of a social skill you are working on.

♦ It’s common for ADHD adults to be passionate and intense in their conversations, especially when something is of interest to them. This can result in an invasion of someone’s physical and emotional space.

♦ Watch that you are not wandering or monopolizing the conversation. Take turns to keep the discussion interactive.

♦ Use a stop watch set for 5-minute intervals to remind you to stop talking.

♦ Ask questions to draw the other person out. Send a message that you are interested in what is being said by leaning forward, nodding your head, and maintaining eye contact.

continued. . .
Solutions to Use in Social Situations (continued)

♦ Ask questions to clarify the content and stay involved in the conversation. But remember, too many questions can be distracting.

♦ Ask that something be repeated if you missed portions of the conversation.

♦ Ask the speaker if they are finished before jumping in when someone else is talking.

♦ Paraphrase what you’ve heard for clarity.
Solutions to Use While on the Phone:

♦ Without visual clues, we lose the ability to process the meaning of words. Problems occur in trying to filter out background noise. Make your calls in a quiet, distraction-free place.

♦ Should you receive a call which catches you off guard, excuse yourself by saying you have to switch phones, or return the call later. Take a few minutes to compose yourself and/or switch to a quiet area.

♦ Rehearse and write down what you’re going to say before you make a call.

♦ Keep your notes in front of you.

♦ Stick to your agenda to avoid a wandering conversation.
**Self-Esteem and Mood:**

ADHD adults are likely to have frequent mood swings, depression, anxiety, and alcohol and drug problems, due to a lifetime of struggling with the effects of ADHD. Mood effects how you think about yourself and self-esteem.

**What can be done to offset these problems?**

- Discover where you have been affected by ADHD and take classes that are appropriate as an adjunct to this class. There are classes on depression, anxiety, stress management, anger management, etc. that will be helpful.

- One study indicated that participants who had been professionally diagnosed with ADHD were more accepting, less resigned and used more positive problem-solving that those who had never been treated. With a good evaluation, you will know where your focus needs to be.

- Remember this is a neurodevelopmental and genetic condition, not a moral failing or a weakness in character.
Self-Esteem and Mood (Continued)

♦ Self-Talk

Use "Self-Talk." We’ve all heard the phrase, “easy does it,” which is an example of a powerful tool that many people have found to be helpful when dealing with difficult circumstances. Most of our self-talk, though, is a matter of passively picking up various phrases that we have heard other people use.

For example, if you drop a pencil, you might say to yourself something like, “What a klutz you are.” This type of negative self-talk can affect how you feel about yourself. Self-talk becomes more useful when you create your own phrases and use them to guide you through challenging circumstances. These key phrases can be memorized and then used to guide your efforts when faced with a challenge.

Avoid negative self-talk by using steps for examples of phrases that might help you cope with stress and organize your time.

Avoid NEGATIVE Self-Talk

"I'm a klutz!"

"I can't do it . . . I'm no good!"

"I'm a dummy"

"I'll never get this . . . I'm not smart enough"
Using Self-Talk Constructively

1. Create a phrase that will help you deal with stress, organize your effort, etc.
2. Practice it out loud.
3. Start rehearsing it silently to yourself.
4. Then imagine you are in a situation where you could use it, and say it silently to yourself.

Now when a situation arises, you'll have the right phrase to guide your efforts.

EXAMPLES:

A. When in highly stressful situation, or when you first feel your anger beginning to get the best of you: “Breathe,” “Don’t sweat the small stuff,” “Be cool,” “This too, will pass.”

B. When trying to organize your time schedule, a task, or a project:
- “FIRST plan my work, THEN work my plan,”
- “First things first,”
- “One step at a time”
- Change “shoulds” to “coulds” or “I’m choosing to do this” or “I want to do this” (rather than “I have to do this”).
- As you complete a task, “Okay, good job, done with that.”

C. When reading instructions:
- “This is a path, I’ll follow it one step at a time.”
- “What’s the first instruction?” (Read it & Do it),
- “Okay, what’s next on this path?”

D. When you’ve made an error, treat yourself gently & honestly without pressure.
- Avoid negative self-talk: “Dummy,” “I’ll never get it right.”

Try phrases like these instead:
“Well, I found out that didn’t work; what could I do instead?”
“Oh, well,” or “So what,” “That’s the way it goes,” smile to yourself and go on.

Do you tend to be a perfectionist? Consider: “This IS good enough.”

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Closing - Session 4

- **Wrap Up** (time for Q&A)

- **Homework:** Practice 1 or 2 of the communication techniques discussed in this session and share outcome/results at next session *(optional).*
SESSION 5:
Time Management, Planning & Getting Organized

Goal:

To provide information on ways to help compensate for problems associated with ADHD. Instruction will cover ways to reduce distraction, increase focus, problem-solving skills, time management techniques, planning long-term projects, and workplace accommodations to maximize performance.

Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will:

1. Have learned ways to reduce distraction and increase focus in "real life" situations (e.g. family / social and workplace)

2. Be aware of specific techniques for daily activity scheduling and problem-solving skills

3. Have received tips for improving time management, and long-term project planning

4. Be aware of workplace accommodations to maximize job performance (e.g., creating environments for optimum efficiency, technological aids, desk organization, managing voice & email messages, etc.)
SESSION 5: TIME MANAGEMENT, PLANNING, & GETTING ORGANIZED

Welcome & Introductions:

A. Welcome

B. Check-In:
   - How are relaxation exercises going; was everyone able to do it? How did it feel? Any problems?
   - Problem-solve ways that you can complete this assignment at home during the coming week
   - Have you created a phrase that will help you deal with stress, organization, etc.? Have you been practicing "self talk?"

C. Relaxation Exercise

Breathe and Settle
Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

I invite you to make yourself comfortable. Sit back in your chair, have your back straight but not stiff. Your head straight, resting on your shoulders. Feet planted firmly on the ground.

Allow your hands to be relaxed, in your lap, or resting gently, palms up, at your sides.
And now, take several long, slow, deep breaths, breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth…in through the nose and out through the mouth. And as you exhale, blow as if you are blowing out a candle…but ever so slowly so the flame only flickers, but does not go out…PAUSE

And now allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm, feeling the cool air as it enters your nose…and the warm air as you exhale. Inviting your attention to flow with your breath. PAUSE

If it is comfortable, allow your eyes to close, or simply leave them softly focused, as you take these few moments to turn your attention from outside to inside yourself. PAUSE

Become aware now of your stomach, as it expands on the in-breath and relaxes and lets go on the out-breath, expands and lets go…breathing in…and release…PAUSE

If your mind wanders, as minds tend to do; or if you are distracted by sounds in the room, or by my voice, simply acknowledge to yourself…”Thinking”… “Wandering mind”…and bring your attention back to your breath: PAUSE

And now, bring your attention to the area of your body where you experience pain…tension…and tightness, and imagine that area of pain softening and releasing with each out-breath…Breathe in…and release…PAUSE

And now as we prepare to end this time for relaxation, allow your attention to gently return to your breath…feeling the rise and fall of your abdomen…and expand from your breath to include your entire body…becoming aware of yourself sitting on the chair …opening your eyes and slowly becoming aware of other images in the room…chairs…tables, other faces…breathing and sitting with full awareness of this moment and time.

And now, stretch your arms out in front of you, feeling the life in your hands and arms, breathe deeply, release, and return fully alert and awake to the present moment.
D. Introduce Topic of Activity Scheduling

♦ Remember, last week we talked about how people with ADHD tend to be disorganized and have trouble following through. Today, we're going to talk about and practice ways to help you compensate for those problems. These include time management and planning long-term projects.
Daily Activity Scheduling:

External structure is important. You might want to try one at a time and figure out which ones work for you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Structure – Scheduling Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily planners</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different daily planners work for different people. It takes trial and error to find one that works for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Checklists</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;To Do&quot; list: Notes to yourself; keep notepads in strategic places (car, bathroom, by your bed) so when an idea hits you or you want to remember something, you can capture it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Color-coding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different colored envelopes, folders, pens, highlighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rituals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example, doing the same thing (such as, looking at your schedule, doing your exercises) at the same time every day; bedtime rituals: writing in a journal, reading a spiritual book, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Daily Activity Scheduling / External Structure Ideas (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some people respond best to visual things, some to sound, and others to touch. Visual reminders include “Post-its”, placing what you need to bring with you right next to the door, 3-minute egg timers, digital timers, and digital clocks. Things that remind you using sound include alarm clocks, buzzers, and programmable watches or phones. Or you might respond best to a vibrating pocket alarm.</td>
<td>Choose someone to be your partner/coach. Give that person permission to remind you about time. Vow to yourself that you will start/stop when that person tells you time is up. No fudging allowed. Thank the person for helping you. The use of “people aids” is somewhat controversial. Some people pay someone to be their coach or ask a spouse or friend to help them. You can choose a temporary coach to help you with a problem area when other methods haven’t seemed to work. You certainly don’t want to overuse this method, especially if your spouse is your coach, you may end up feeling nagged. Remember that you are the one who is ultimately responsible for making sure you take care of your business, not your coach, friend, or spouse. Also, make sure you check with your spouse, partner, roommate, etc., to make sure your compensation strategies are not creating problems for them or annoying them (e.g., post-its everywhere).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Daily Activity Scheduling / External Structure Ideas** (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Items</th>
<th>Suggestions from the group?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have you tried <em>any of the above</em> before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which were helpful for you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Daily Planners / Computer Scheduler

There are two slightly different approaches to planning your daily schedule in more detail: one with a daily planner, the other with a smartphone.

A. Daily Planner:

Steps to follow when scheduling your day:

♦ Set aside the same time each day to work out your schedule

♦ Write down all the things you need or want to do that day. There can be a section in your daily planner for this purpose, or you may wish to simply use a blank sheet of paper.

♦ Add up how much time it will take to do each item. Remember that everything will probably take longer than you expect it to. This is true for most people, but it’s especially true for people with ADHD. Research has shown that people with ADHD have trouble estimating time. Don’t over schedule yourself. If others are making demands on you, learn to say “no” if you won’t have time to do it right. Ask for some time to think it over before you make any commitment.

♦ Don’t forget to schedule time for meals, relaxation time, fun, and exercise – things that are important for your health and well-being

♦ Number things in order of priority, underline the most important ones in colored pen, or use different colored highlighters/ink for different priority levels

♦ You can rewrite the list in order of priority if you want to
Daily Planner (Continued)

♦ Make sure you include some time to take a break and relax between projects. Make sure you actually do take a break when it is scheduled.

♦ Put the daily planner/list where you will see it (on the wall, on your desk, whatever works for you).

♦ Don’t do low-priority tasks until you’ve completed the high-priority tasks for the day.

♦ Cross out each item as you complete it.

♦ Congratulate yourself for each completed item.

♦ If you haven’t been able to finish everything, don’t stress out about it. This is why it is important to prioritize. You’ve done the most important things. The other things can wait until tomorrow.
B. **Computer Scheduling Programs**

*When scheduling your day with a computer schedule all of the above (under Daily Planner) still applies, but these are the things that you would do differently if you used a smartphone:*

- At the start of each day, open up your phone calendar and type in what you need to do. On the first day of the week, you may wish to review the whole week and make any additions/changes that are necessary.

- Open your calendar a few times a day to check your progress.

- At the end of the day, check to see what you wanted to accomplish that day. Congratulate yourself for the things you have completed.

- Look at tomorrow’s schedule. Make revisions and additions if necessary.

- You may have tried some of these things and they didn’t work. This can be frustrating!

- It takes practice to get used to doing something new, especially something that is difficult. There is something called the Premack Principle – linking a pleasurable activity with a not-so-pleasurable activity – and you can use this as a way of increasing the likelihood that you will create and follow a schedule.

- Everyone needs extra motivation to do things that aren’t fun – not just people with ADHD. It can be easier to do something when you’re doing it along with a group. An example would be exercising: going to a gym and working out with other people in a group (or just with one other person) makes it more likely that you’ll actually do it and encourages you to put more effort into it.
Problem-Solving Skills:

If this time management stuff has not yet worked out for you, what can you do to increase the chances that it will work in the future?

The thing to do is problem-solve. That’s what we’re going to talk about next.

One advantage of ADHD is that you have lots and lots of ideas. Sometimes it may seem as though you have so many ideas that it’s hard to settle on one and do anything constructive with it. However, when you are trying to solve a problem and you get stuck, your ability to come up with lots of ideas can really help you.

- Identify the problem
- Brainstorm. Try to come up with lots of alternatives. Write them down.
- Examine each idea: What are the likely results/consequences of each?
- Decide which idea sounds like the best. Try that one.
- Evaluate the results. Did you accomplish what you wanted to accomplish?
- If it didn’t work, check back to the list of ideas.
- Out of the ideas that are left, choose the one that sounds like the best. Try that one.
- Evaluate the results.
Problem-Solving Skills (Continued)

- Watch out for impulsivity and emotional blocks (such as telling yourself you’ll never be able to do it). Those are some of the things that can get in your way when you’re trying to solve a problem. A good thing about ADHD is that you can come up with lots of ideas.

- Maybe in the past, other people have said negative things about your brainstorming ideas so you learned to keep them to yourself. This is a time to not edit -- to use your ADHD and ignore that voice inside you that says, “That’s a stupid idea, Joe.” This kind of negative self-talk is a way that you may have internalized what other people said about your ADHD symptoms.

- Also remember – there are some problems that are not solvable. When you come up against one like that, the result is that you’re likely to feel stressed unless you accept the fact that it is not solvable. If you tend to feel overwhelmed when you are under stress, you may want to attend a stress management class and learn how to cope with stress more effectively.

People with ADHD are often good at brainstorming and coming up with many ideas!
Did any feelings come up for you when we were talking about these time management and problem-solving techniques?

Throughout your lives, you may have had a lot of frustration and other emotions associated with not completing projects, forgetting to do things, being late all the time, and other time management kinds of issues. Any comments about that?
Focus:
Ways to reduce distraction and increase focus:

♦ In meetings, taking notes may help you to ignore internal distractions. It will also help highlight what you need to remember.

♦ Record meetings to help you recall important points later

♦ In class or at a meeting, sit at the front of the room to avoid being distracted by the movements of others.

♦ Try to keep your desk neat so there are fewer distractions

♦ Work or study in a quiet place where you are unlikely to be interrupted. Put up a “do not disturb” sign if you can. If no quiet place is available, use headphones or some other means of blocking out sounds that interfere with your concentration.

♦ At work or in school, ask that directions/instructions be given to you both orally and in writing.

♦ Recycle all the mail you possibly can. Scan it once and toss it.

♦ Don’t be a perfectionist. Just get the task done. Everybody makes mistakes.

♦ Re-evaluate your use of the TV. Are you spending a lot of time watching? What about the internet?
Workplace Accommodations:

The following workplace accommodations are suggestions only and are not intended to be a legal specification of mandatory employer accommodations. Employees may wish to conduct further research concerning ADHD-related accommodations and discuss these with their employer to maximize their performance.

A. Job Requirements
   - Examine your job and your duties: Which parts do you well? Which parts of your job do you feel you could do better with assistance or special accommodations?
   - Prepare a list of ideas that could help you with tasks that cause you the most difficulty

B. Workplace Setting
   - Get organized (use day planners, planning software, etc.)
   - Create a quiet working environment, if possible
   - Adjust lighting accordingly (decrease distraction, increase productivity)
   - Look for ways to improve efficiency (desk organization systems, schedules, voice mail, etc.)

C. Managing Others with ADHD Challenges
   - Arrange more frequent (brief) meetings
   - Plan short-term goals (to assist with long-term objectives)
   - Divide projects into small, manageable tasks
   - Provide regular positive feedback
   - Build on strengths & expertise to reach desired outcomes
   - Ensure that job expectations are clear and concise
   - Arrange more frequent performance reviews
   - Job performance criteria should be clear and distinct

continued . . .
Workplace Accommodations (continued)

D. Communication

- Frequent communication – follow up in writing
- Prepare notes based on important conversations/meetings for future reference
- Keep a stack of index cards or "sticky notes" at your desk to "jog" your memory
- Use a coach or buddy system to have someone remind you of important dates and deadlines

E. Smartphones and tablets can be useful!

- For recording
- Calendars
- Alarms
- Notetaking for ideas and reminders

F. Classes / Training

- Time management workshops
- Work, desk & file organizational systems

Problem-solving, time management, organizational skills, technological aids, and reducing distractions help with common ADHD obstacles in the workplace
Possible Strategies to Compensate for Specific Symptoms

Try some of these and see which work for you:

➤ Distractibility

- Flashing light, instead of ringer on phone
- Use quiet work areas as necessary
- Partial work-at-home, if more productive
- Flextime to allow working during times of less distraction
- Headphones to minimize distractions
- Private office
- Find office mates with similar work styles
- Use periods of closed-office-door to minimize distractions
- Turn off cell phone when possible

➤ Hyperactivity

- Transfer to job with more physical activity
- Midday physical activity period
- Take breaks for brisk walks
- Work in varied locations
- In extended meetings, take a bathroom break, use self-massage
- Consider “work table” that permits standing while doing “desk work.”
- Consider work area that includes space for pacing

➤ Organization, Planning, Tenacity

- Use other work team member(s) to provide structure
- Frequent, brief supervisory check-ins; frequent communication (email, voicemail, memo) re: task/goal progress
- Emphasize use of check lists for task management
- Frequently review priority lists, especially if receiving input from multiple sources
- Use sample forms, letters, etc. rather than re-inventing the wheel
- For presentations/talks, etc. don’t “wing it” – Prepare (use outlines, index cards)
• Obtain time/task/file management & organization training
• Use coach to help develop organizational skills

➡️ Paperwork Problems

• Use clerical support
• Minimize paperwork requirements of job –write less when possible
• Job task exchange – ex: phone duties instead of filing
• Try to touch/read each piece of paper only once

➡️ Memory Problems

• Use written reminders of verbal conversations
• All written materials should be brief & clear
• Personal recorder for verbal notes/ideas/meetings
• Use your Day planner!
• Regularly post notices of meetings & events

Discussion: What is real freedom?

I’ve suggested that you use some very detail-oriented techniques and given you all sorts of new rules to follow. I’ve told you to clean up your desk, take notes on everything, and ask for written directions from your boss. Being told what to do or following rules can be very hard for any adult, especially one with ADHD.

♦ Do these things represent assaults on your freedom, or are they ways to free yourself from some of the problems you’ve been having? Let’s talk about that.
Closing - Session 5

- **Wrap Up** (time for Q&A)

- **Homework** *(suggestion)*: Try out a daily planner or computer program of some type and report back next week on how well it worked for you.
SESSION 6:  
Planning for the Future

Goal:

To provide hope, encouragement, and direction to course participants on planning for the future. Educational component will be emphasized such as available resources, establishing a support network, goal setting, ongoing coping, and learning how to manage with ADHD!

Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will:

1. Participants will be aware of a variety of resources including: community, clinical, support groups, and legal resources for people associated with ADHD.
2. Be aware of the pros and cons of "coming out" as an adult with ADHD.
3. Understand legal, work, academic, and emotional issues associated with ADHD.
4. Have identified next steps and future goals.
SESSION 6: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

1 Welcome & Check-In

A. Welcome & Check-in

♦ Any questions, insights, thoughts, ideas about last week’s session on Time Management?

B. Relaxation Exercise

Breathe and Settle
Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise

I invite you to make yourself comfortable. Sit back in your chair, have your back straight but not stiff. Your head straight, resting on your shoulders. Feet planted firmly on the ground.

Allow your hands to be relaxed, in your lap, or resting gently, palms up, at your sides.

And now, take several long, slow, deep breaths, breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth…in through the nose and out through the mouth. And as you exhale, blow as if you are blowing out a candle…but ever so slowly so the flame only flickers, but does not go out…PAUSE

And now allow your breath to find its own natural rhythm, feeling the cool air as it enters your nose…and the warm air as you exhale. Inviting your attention to flow with your breath. PAUSE
If it is comfortable, allow your eyes to close, or simply leave them softly focused, as you take these few moments to turn your attention from outside to inside yourself. PAUSE

Become aware now of your stomach, as it expands on the in-breath and relaxes and lets go on the out-breath, expands and lets go…breathing in…and release…PAUSE

If your mind wanders, as minds tend to do; or if you are distracted by sounds in the room, or by my voice, simply acknowledge to yourself…”Thinking”… “Wandering mind”…and bring your attention back to your breath: PAUSE

And now, bring your attention to the area of your body where you experience pain…tension…or tightness, and imagine that area of pain softening and releasing with each out-breath…Breathe in…and release…PAUSE

And now as we prepare to end this time for relaxation, allow your attention to gently return to your breath…feeling the rise and fall of your abdomen…and expand from your breath to include your entire body…becoming aware of yourself sitting on the chair …opening your eyes and slowly becoming aware of other images in the room…chairs…tables, other faces…breathing and sitting with full awareness of this moment and time.

And now, stretch your arms out in front of you, feeling the life in your hands and arms, breathe deeply, release, and return fully alert and awake to the present moment.
Where To Go From Here: ADHD Resources

A. Community Resources

- CHADD
  https://www.chadd.org/

- Support Groups

- Internet websites
  http://www.russellbarkley.org/index.html
  http://www.adhdmarriage.com/

- Coaches (discuss pros and cons of coaches)

- Books


Kelly, Kate, & Ramundo, Peggy, You Mean I’m Not Lazy, Stupid or Crazy?! Scribner, NY, (1993).


- Community colleges (learning disability assessments, academic accommodations)
B. Clinical Resources

- Psychiatry Groups:
  o Depression and Anxiety
  o Anger Management
  o Relationship-Oriented groups
  o Assertiveness, Self-Esteem

- Behavioral Medicine Groups
  o Stress management
  o Movement groups (tai chi, yoga, meditation, etc.)

- Pathways for those unsure

C. Personal / Legal Resources

- "Circle of Supports" exercise
- Friends, family, job, church, etc.
Strengthening Social Support

Directions: Write your first name in the center of the circle. In each wedge or section of the “pie”, write the names of the persons who offer you support. Put the most supportive people towards the center, least supportive people towards the outside of the circle and the people who are not supportive, yet part of your social network outside of the circle, by the appropriate section.
- Americans w/Disability Act (ADA) and what it does, and doesn't cover

- "Reasonable" accommodations

“Adults with ADHD are also eligible for accommodations in their workplace or educational settings under the Americans with Disabilities Act provided that the severity of their ADHD is such that it produces impairments in one or more major areas of life functioning and that they disclose their disorder to their employer or educational institution. Adults with the disorder may also require counseling about their condition, vocational assessment and counseling to find the most suitable work environment, time management and organizational assistance, and other suggestions for coping with their disorder.”
(http://www.russellbarkley.org/factsheets/adhd-facts.pdf)
An important element in learning to cope with this disorder is naming and understanding the problem. This likely will include discussions with friends, family, and professional relationships about ADHD:

- Discussion of pros and cons
- Legal issues
- Job issues
- Academic issues
- Emotional issues – shame, relief, etc.
As we discussed in the last session, ADHD is a chronic lifetime condition needing some form of treatment across the lifespan. Strategies covered in Session 3 provide many ideas for coping with symptoms of ADHD. Establish systems to improve memory and concentration:

- Remembering to remember

- Yellow dot systems as cues
  - place cues in places accessed 3-5 times per day (more frequent, habituate too quickly – less frequent, don’t serve purpose as reminder)
  - Change location of yellow dots once every two weeks to prevent habituation

- Planning to plan
  - Schedule time to review how things are going
  - Set up systems for specified period of time, then re-examine at end of that period (to trouble-shoot, to discard)

A. Discussion of next steps

- Quality of Life Inventory
## Quality of Life Inventory

**HEALTH** is being physically fit, not sick, and without pain or disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is HEALTH to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your HEALTH?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SELF-ESTEEM** means liking and respecting yourself in light of your strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, and your ability to handle problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is SELF-ESTEEM to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your SELF-ESTEEM?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GOALS-AND-VALUES** are your beliefs about what matters most in life and how you should live, both now and in the future. This includes your goals in life, what you think is right or wrong, and the purpose or meaning of your life as you see it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are GOALS AND VALUES to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your GOALS AND VALUES?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**MONEY** is made up of three things. It is the money you earn, the things you own (like a car or furniture), and believing that you will have the money and things that you need in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is MONEY to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the MONEY you have?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
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</table>

**WORK** means your career or how you spend most of your time. You may work at a job, at home taking care of your family, or at school as a student. **WORK** includes your duties on the job, the money you earn (if any), and the people you work with. (If you are unemployed, retired, or can't work, you can still answer these questions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is WORK to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your WORK? <strong>(If you are not working, say how satisfied you are about not working)</strong></td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PLAY** is what you do in your free time to relax, have fun, or improve yourself. This could include watching movies, visiting friends, or pursuing a hobby like sports or gardening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is PLAY to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the PLAY in your life?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
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<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**LEARNING** means gaining new skills or information about things that interest you. **LEARNING** can come from reading books or taking classes on subjects like history, car repair, or using a computer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is LEARNING to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your LEARNING?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
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</table>

**CREATIVITY** is using your imagination to come up with new and clever ways to solve everyday problems or to pursue a hobby like painting, photography, or needlework. This can include decorating your home, playing the guitar, or finding a new way to solve a problem at work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is CREATIVITY to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your CREATIVITY?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**HELPING** means helping others in need or helping to make your community a better place to live. **HELPING** can be done on your own in a group like a church, a neighborhood association, or a political party. **HELPING** can include doing volunteer work at a school or giving money to a good cause. **HELPING** means helping people who are not your friends or relatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is HELPING to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the HELPING you do?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very</td>
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<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LOVE is a very close romantic relationship with another person. LOVE usually included sexual feelings and feeling loved, cared for, and understood. (If you do not have a LOVE relationship, you can still answer these questions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is LOVE to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the LOVE in your life? (If you are not in a LOVE relationship, say how satisfied you feel about not having a love relationship).</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FRIENDS are people (not relatives) you know well and care about who have interests and opinions like yours. FRIENDS have fun together, talk about personal problems, and help each other out. (If you have no FRIENDS, you can still answer these questions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are FRIENDS to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your FRIENDS? (If you have no friends, say how satisfied you are about having no friends).</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CHILDREN means how you get along with your child (or children). Think of how you get along as you care for, visit, or play with your child(ren). If you have no CHILDREN, you can still answer these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are CHILDREN to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your CHILDREN? (If you have no CHILDREN, say how satisfied you are about having no friends).</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

RELATIVES means how you get along with your parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and in-laws. Think of how you get along when you are doing things together like visiting, talking on the telephone, or helping each other out. (If you have no living RELATIVES, mark "Not Important" and do not answer the question about being satisfied).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are RELATIVES to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your RELATIVES?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOME is where you live. It is your house or apartment and the yard or area around it. Think about how nice it looks, how big it is, and your rent or house payment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is HOME to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your HOME?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

NEIGHBORHOOD is the area around your home. Think about how nice it looks, the amount of crime in the area, and how well you like the people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is NEIGHBORHOOD to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your NEIGHBORHOOD?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

COMMUNITY is the whole city, town, or rural area where you live. (It is not just your neighborhood). COMMUNITY includes how nice the area looks, the amount of crime, and how well you like the people. It also includes places to go for fun like parks, concerts, sporting events, and restaurants. You may also consider the cost of things you need to buy, the availability of jobs, the government, schools, taxes, and pollution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is COMMUNITY to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your COMMUNITY?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SPIRITUALITY is your sense of connection to something larger than yourself. It may involve organized religion or a personal belief system. It may involve particular practices such as prayer or meditation, or just a general sense of wholeness and meaningfulness to your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is SPIRITUALITY to your happiness?</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with your SPIRITUALITY?</td>
<td>DISSATISFIED</td>
<td>SATISFIED</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Very</td>
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<td>A Little</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- First specify area of functioning to improve, then
  - Identify how ADHD can hinder/help that area
  - Look for specific steps

♦ Identify what would be the easiest next step to take
♦ Identify what would be the next step which would be most important (e.g., have the most useful effects; must be a feasible step, even if difficult)
♦ Decide whether to aim for easiest or most important (either one is okay; discuss need to maintain motivation, avoid feeling helpless)

B. most helpful thing learned in group?

♦ Focus on a single specific behavior or attitude to cultivate
♦ State out loud commitment to continue (that specific behavior or attitude)

  - *Specify Where, When, What will be done

  - Specify how long commitment will hold for

(specifying where/when/what beforehand increases the probability that intentions will become actions)
## GOAL SETTING

**Goal:** __________________________________________________________

**Commitment:** _____________________________________________________

(e.g. “I strongly intend to accomplish this, because . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm going to implement this goal (e.g. at my desk; in the living room; in the car; standing on line at the store)</td>
<td>I'm going to implement this goal (e.g. at 7:00 daily; whenever the phone rings; whenever someone asks me for something)</td>
<td>I'm going to do to implement this goal (e.g. breathe deeply; notice what I'm thinking/feeling; relaxing my face; saying ‘thank you’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Daily, at a set time**
- **Daily, whenever the specified opportunity occurs**
- **Monday**
- **Tuesday**
- **Wednesday**
- **Thursday**
- **Friday**
- **Saturday**
- **Sunday**

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Closing - Session 6

- **Wrap Up** (time for Q&A)
  - ADHD Resources
GOAL SETTING

Program Goals

1. Goal:
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

Steps to take to reach that goal:
   a. _________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________
   c. _________________________________________________

2. Goal:
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________

Steps to take to reach that goal:
   a. _________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________
   c. _________________________________________________

3. Goal: ______________________________________________

Steps to take to reach that goal:
   a. _________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________
   c. _________________________________________________

GOAL SETTING

1. A goal should be **measurable**
2. A goal should be **realistic**
3. A goal should be **behavioral**
4. A goal should be "I" – centered
5. A goal should be **desirable**
For many of us, anger is one of those "uncomfortable" feelings that we have learned to either deny ("I don't feel that irritated, annoyed or mad.") or to ignore ("Well, saying anything won't help. I'll feel better in the morning.")

Unfortunately, however, when we don't give ourselves permission to feel our anger, it often comes out in other ways—in a burst of rage over a small incident or in our own physical illness or depression. Recognizing when we feel stress and anger building and learning effective ways of managing the tensions and uncomfortable feelings we have each day will assist us emotionally and physically.

A simple checklist for learning to handle anger is:

**Listen To Your Warning Signals**
- **Body signals:** such as clamming up, blushing, shallow breathing, shaking, muscular tension, headaches, laughing for nothing, a rise in voice pitch and many more. Look for your own.
- **Feeling signals:** Anger is usually the second emotion we have. The first may be hurt, disappointment, frustration. What feelings usually precede your anger?
- **Mind signals:** We all have thoughts that are activated in stressful situations. Often these thoughts take the form of expectations which increase our tension ("S/He should have done that by now." "S/He doesn't care about what I need.") Or, we may evaluate and judge ourselves or another ("This is too much. I'm losing control" or "S/He's always doing this to me. S/He's out to get me."). What are your mind signals?

**Become Aware Of How You Usually React**
- **Act out or explode:** scream, kick, hit or abuse, verbally blame or insult.
- **Internalize or implose:** over/under eat, get sick, withdraw, get depressed, neglect yourself or your kids, sleep, don't sleep, take drugs/alcohol.

**Decide On A Plan. What Can You Do Instead?**
- **Take responsibility:** These are your feelings, caused by your reactions. (Instead of saying, "He's making me mad..." say, "I feel very disappointed/threatened/annoyed.")
- **State your Feelings and Needs Out Loud:** Use "I" statements.
- **Take a "Time Out"** to calm yourself down before trying to resolve the situation.
- **Direct Action:** Do something to release the angry energy in positive ways.
- **Prevention:** Practice stress reduction techniques regularly to keep your stress levels down.
- **Congratulate yourself!!** Praise your efforts and successes.
### TRIGGER THOUGHTS / COPING STATEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHOULD:</th>
<th>TRIGGER THOUGHT</th>
<th>COPING STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entitlement Fallacy</td>
<td>&quot;Because I want something very much, I should have it.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I have the right to say no, and so do you.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Fallacy of Fairness</td>
<td>&quot;You're not being fair.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Our needs are equally important.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Fallacy of Change</td>
<td>&quot;I can control your behavior.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;People only change when they want to/&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Conditional Assumptions</td>
<td>&quot;If you really loved me, you would do what I want.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Disappointing someone doesn't mean you don't care.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Letting-It-Out Fallacy</td>
<td>&quot;People who hurt me should be punished.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I can protect my relationship by communicating assertively.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BLAMERS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLAMERS:</th>
<th>TRIGGER THOUGHT</th>
<th>COPING STATEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Good-Bad Dichotomizing</td>
<td>&quot;You're right/wrong, good/bad/&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Our needs conflict; she is not wrong, and I'm not right.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assumed Intent</td>
<td>&quot;You meant to hurt me.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;No mind reading. Check it out.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Magnifying</td>
<td>&quot;always, never, every, all. . .&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I won't exaggerate; I'll go for accuracy.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Global Labeling</td>
<td>&quot;You #<em>&amp;@</em>!!!&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;No name calling; be specific.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Managing Anger – Kaiser Permanente

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IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

1. Anger is a feeling just like any other feeling. It is not pathological. Anger is often influenced by stress levels, trigger thoughts, misperceptions, past experiences, blood sugar levels, and personal belief-systems. Anger is a subjective reaction to a situation. Anger is a cue to problem solving.

2. Anger is a feeling; Aggression is an action. You have personal choices regarding your actions. Verbal aggression is aggression; it simply doesn't leave the visible marks as physical aggression does.

3. Problem-solving and negotiating are better than blaming. Taking personal responsibility for your life is better than blaming others for your circumstances.

4. If you ever have had a thought, a feeling, or an impulse, and not acted on it, you already have a model for anger management.

5. You will not be angry if either component in the equation is mission. Taming your anger involves either reducing distress or replacing trigger thoughts (or both). This class will expand your repertoire of coping skills and distress reduction techniques.

DISTRESS (PAINFUL AROUSAL)  
+ TRIGGER THOUGHTS  

= ANGER
TIME OUT SIGNALS

1. Body - sweating / tight gut / surge of adrenaline
2. Thoughts - hot thoughts / trigger thoughts
3. Actions - pacing floor / making fist / raised voice

If you are doing any of the above and can't stop immediately, take a time-out.

When two people want to make commitment to change patterns of anger that occur when they are together, a contract is in order. The following suggested outline provides a framework for making the kind of changes that will benefit you both.

**Time-Out Contract**

When I realize that my (or my partner's) anger is rising, I will give a "T" signal for a time-out and leave at once. You might say something like "I need some time to calm down." No parting shots!

I will return in one hour. I will take a walk to sue up the anger energy and will not drink or use drugs while I am away. I will try not to focus on resentments.

When I return I will start the conversation with "I know that I was partly wrong and partly right." I will then admit to a technical mistake I made.

If my partner gives a "T" signal and leaves, I will return the sign and let my partner go without hassle, no matter what is going on. I will not drink or use drugs while my partner is away and will avoid focusing on resentments. When my partner returns, I will start the conversation with "I know I was partly wrong and partly right." I will admit a technical mistake I made.

__________________________  _______________________
Name                        Date

* Managing Anger, Kaiser Permanente
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Skills for Understanding, Coping, & Managing

Are you "under" STRESS?

Name ______________________

STRESS SYMPTOMS

I know I'm under stress when I...(✓)

☐ Cry more than usual
☐ Can't sleep
☐ Eat more than usual
☐ Am irritable
☐ Resort to the use of alcohol/drugs
☐ Have "physical complaints"

☐ Have difficulty concentrating/focusing
☐ Sleep more than usual
☐ Don't feel like eating
☐ Am on the move all the time—fidgety
☐ Become overly sensitive
☐ Don't feel like doing anything
☐ Other ______________________

STRESS REDUCERS

When I see these "symptoms," I will... (✓ and be specific)

☐ Go for a walk ___________________________ for ___ mins.

☐ Read a good book ___________________________ for ___ mins.

☐ Exercise ___________________________ for ___ mins.

☐ Listen to music on the ___________________________

☐ Use relaxation techniques ___________________________

☐ Take some time for myself by ___________________________

☐ Do something I'm skilled at ___________________________ for ___

☐ Talk to my friend, therapist, doctor, someone else named ___________________________

☐ Say "No" to ___________________________

☐ Confront the situation by ___________________________

☐ Limit certain behaviors ___________________________

☐ Prioritize my responsibilities # 1 ___________________________

# 2 ___________________________

# 3 ___________________________

☐ Other ___________________________
Using Self-Talk Constructively

1. Create a phrase that will help you deal with stress, organize your effort, etc.
2. Practice it out loud.
3. Start rehearsing it silently to yourself.
4. Then imagine you are in a situation where you could use it, and say it silently to yourself.

Now when a situation arises, you’ll have the right phrase to guide your efforts.

**EXAMPLES:**

A. When in highly stressful situation, or when you first feel your anger beginning to get the best of you: “Breathe,” “Don’t sweat the small stuff,” “Be cool,” “This too, will pass,”

B. When trying to organize your time schedule, a task, or a project:
   “FIRST plan my work, THEN work my plan,”
   “First things first,”
   “One step at a time”
   Change “shoulds” to “coulds” or “I’m choosing to do this” or “I want to do this” (rather than “I have to do this”).
   As you complete a task, “Okay, good job, done with that.”

C. When reading instructions:
   “This is a path, I’ll follow it one step at a time.”
   “What’s the first instruction?” (Read it & Do it),
   “Okay, what’s next on this path?”

D. When you’ve made an error, treat yourself gently & honestly without pressure.
   - Avoid negative self-talk: “Dummy,” “I’ll never get it right.”

Try phrases like these instead:
   “Well, I found out that didn’t work; what could I do instead?”
   “Oh, well,” or “So what,” “That’s the way it goes,” smile to yourself and go on.

*Do you tend to be a perfectionist? Consider: “This IS good enough.”*
Ways to Reduce Distraction and Increase Focus

♦ In meetings, taking notes may help you to ignore internal distractions. It will also help highlight what you need to remember.

♦ Record meetings to help you recall important points later.

♦ In class or at a meeting, sit at the front of the room to avoid being distracted by the movements of others.

♦ Try to keep your desk neat so there are fewer distractions.

♦ Work or study in a quiet place where you are unlikely to be interrupted. Put up a “do not disturb” sign if you can. If no quiet place is available, use headphones or some other means of blocking out sounds that interfere with your concentration.

♦ At work or in school, ask that directions/instructions be given to you both orally and in writing.

♦ Recycle all the mail you possibly can. Scan it once and toss it.

♦ Don’t be a perfectionist. Just get the task done. Everybody makes mistakes.

♦ Re-evaluation your use of the TV. Are you spending a lot of time watching?
Possible Strategies to Compensate for Specific Symptoms

Try some of these and see which work for you:

A) Distractibility
   1) Flashing light, instead of ringer on phone
   2) Use quiet work areas as necessary
   3) Partial work-at-home, if more productive
   4) Flextime to allow working during times of less distraction
   5) Headphones to minimize distractions
   6) Private office
   7) Find office mates with similar work styles
   8) Use periods of closed-office-door to minimize distractions
   9) Turn off cell phone or beeper when possible

B) Hyperactivity
   1) Transfer to job with more physical activity
   2) Midday physical activity period
   3) Take breaks for brisk walks
   4) Work in varied locations
   5) In extended meetings, take a bathroom break, use self-massage
   6) Consider “work table” that permits standing while doing “desk work.”
   7) Consider work area that includes space for pacing

C) Organization, Planning, Tenacity
   1) Use other work team member(s) to provide structure
   2) Frequent, brief supervisory check-ins
      -- Frequent communication (email, voicemail, memo) re: task/goal progress
   3) Emphasize use of check lists for task management
   4) Frequently review priority lists, especially if receiving input from multiple
      sources
   5) Use sample forms, letters, etc. rather than re-inventing the wheel
   6) For presentations/talks, etc. don’t “wing it” – Prepare (use outlines, index
      cards)
   7) Obtain time/task/file management & organization training
   8) Use coach to help develop organizational skills

D) Paperwork Problems
   1) Use clerical support
   2) Minimize paperwork requirements of job – write less when possible
   3) Job task exchange – ex: phone duties instead of filing
   4) Try to touch/read each piece of paper only once

E) Memory Problems
   1) Use written reminders of verbal conversations
   2) All written materials should be brief & clear
   3) Personal recorder for verbal notes/ideas/meetings
      -- use tape counter so you kind locate your place on the tape
   4) Use your Day planner !!!Regularly post notices of meetings & events
Directions: Write your first name in the center of the circle. In each wedge or section of the “pie”, write the names of the persons who offer you support. Put the most supportive people towards the center, least supportive people towards the outside of the circle and the people who are not supportive, yet part of your social network outside of the circle, by the appropriate section.
GOAL SETTING

Goal: __________________________________________________________

Commitment: ____________________________________________________
(e.g. "I strongly intend to accomplish this, because . . .")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m going to implement this goal (e.g. at my desk; in the living room; in the car; standing on line at the store)</td>
<td>I’m going to implement this goal (e.g. at 7:00 daily; whenever the phone rings; whenever someone asks me for something)</td>
<td>I’m going to do to implement this goal (e.g. breathe deeply; notice what I’m thinking/feeling; relaxing my face; saying ‘thank you’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Daily, at a set time**

- **Daily, whenever the specified opportunity occurs**
  - Monday
  - Tuesday
  - Wednesday
  - Thursday
  - Friday
  - Saturday
  - Sunday
Bibliography

Information for course materials was adapted from the following resources:

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