

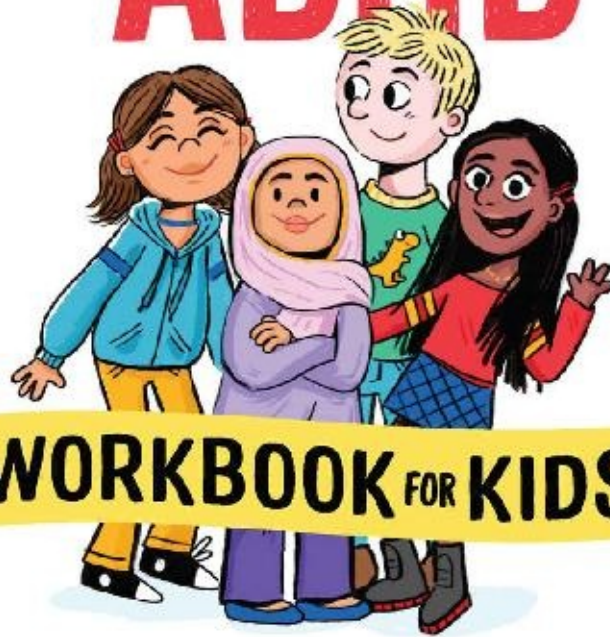
THRIVING with **ADHD**

WORKBOOK for KIDS

60 Fun Activities to Help Children
Self-Regulate, Focus, and Succeed



THRIVING with **ADHD**



WORKBOOK FOR **KIDS**

KELLI MILLER, LCSW, MSW

ILLUSTRATED BY **SARAH REBAR**



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To my favorite “sweet chickens,” Remy and London.



You are my inspiration to write this book and to each day become a better mother and kinder human. Remy and London, you offer so much to the world. There is no doubt you were both born with ADHD to teach the rest of the world how truly special it makes you. I love you both.

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Introduction

FOR PARENTS

CHANCES ARE, IF YOU ARE READING THIS book, you are a parent, relative, educator, counselor, guardian, or therapist of a child with ADHD. Congratulations on wanting to learn more about ADHD and how you can help engage your child, student, or client. It's wonderful that you are being proactive about ADHD. You are making a tremendous difference on behalf of the child you care for.

My name is Kelli Miller, and I'm a licensed clinical social worker. I work with children who have ADHD as well as their caregivers. I'm also the mom of two children with ADHD. Yes, not just one but two children with ADHD! I understand the challenges, the frustration, and the heartache. I've sobbed on my kitchen floor out of pure exasperation. I've had my own meltdowns. And both my kids have been kicked out of IHOP.

I used to fight it—I'd ask myself, why can't my child sit still like *that* little boy or girl who is controlled, quiet, and listening? But as I've come to understand and accept the eccentricities that come with this diagnosis, I've learned how truly special kids with ADHD are. Children with ADHD have gifts that are unique. Their creativity, sensitivity, and humor are parallel to none. Their way of looking at the world is incredibly unique. In retrospect, I can honestly say children with ADHD have been my best teachers.

My goal is to help your child understand that ADHD isn't a "defect" at all, and with the right tools, ADHD can be an asset. In this book, I use what is called a "strength-based approach." That means I like to focus on each child's individual strengths, from which they can build self-confidence. In other words, I'm emphasizing what your child can do right rather than wrong. On some level, children with ADHD understand their limitations and may already be entering the world with negative self-views—this perspective does not help children thrive. We need to lift them up and show them how to live life to the fullest with their ADHD. Learning these skills, particularly at a young age, can be very beneficial.

I understand that as parents or clinicians, our time is limited, and children

can have a low frustration tolerance, so I tried to make the exercises as easy as possible so they can “do it themselves.” I also tried to use minimal equipment and vary the activities. Most importantly, I included only activities that have worked effectively with my own children or patients. Some children will take this book and make it their own. Other children may benefit from a team approach to this book, whereby you might work on activities together. Finally, some activities may feel very easy to your child while others will feel more challenging. That’s okay. Not all activities will resonate depending on your child’s personality and age. The important thing is that your child feels empowered while doing the activities. However you approach it, your child will have a book full of activities designed to help them with the many facets of ADHD, from self-control and organization to getting tasks done and making friends—whatever they need help with.

At times they may need your help or support to complete a given task. You may watch them and wonder why they are doing their homework standing up or putting sticky notes on your bathroom mirror. They may also ask you to come up with rewards for their Homework Jar ([here](#)). That said, your child may want you to do activities with them, or they may want to be left alone with their book and their thoughts—either one is natural as they explore within themselves. What’s important is that they are reading and working toward becoming more successful!

Please note: This book is meant to be a complementary tool to a full treatment program that works best for your child.

Introduction

FOR KIDS

HI AND WELCOME! MY NAME IS KELLI, and I am a therapist who has worked with dozens of kids who have ADHD. I believe that kids should have fun with everything they do and not struggle so hard in school and life. So, I've created this book full of activities, puzzles, games, and tricks to help you learn, get organized, and be the best you can be.

First, I'm going to help you understand what ADHD is. By now I'm sure you've heard these initials quite a bit, and you may be wondering what these four letters really mean. *ADHD* stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. My eight-year-old son, Remy, has ADHD, and he describes it as "a disorder in the brain that causes you to do certain things." He's on to something. ADHD is a condition or a difficulty in the brain's normal functions. It affects people in different ways. You might be more active, jumpy, or preoccupied than other kids. You might struggle to do your homework every night. But I'm here to show you that you can do *exactly* what other kids can do—you just may need more support or tools, which I'll give you, too.

Let's imagine a child who needs glasses. They can see a little bit without the glasses, but once they put the glasses on, they can see so clearly and don't have to strain. It's easier for them with the support of their glasses. In a similar way, my hope is that with education, skills, and fun activities—the support—you can learn smart ways to help focus and manage your ADHD more clearly.

ADHD is a condition you're born with. It is not your fault or something you did. It also doesn't have anything to do with the way you were parented, nor a lack of rules, nor what you ate. You are who you are, and you're awesome.

You are also not alone. Millions of children across the world have ADHD. Many children with ADHD have grown up to be very successful. In fact, one of the best Olympic swimmers in the world, Michael Phelps, has ADHD. Same with American gymnast Simone Biles. Popular musician Adam Levine also has ADHD. Ty Pennington, star of *Extreme Makeover Home Edition*, has ADHD.¹ Finally, check this one out: A boy named Dav Pilkey grew up with ADHD. He

was always getting in trouble in school, and he would escape in his mind by inventing and drawing superheroes. Dav went on to create the Captain Underpants book series!

There are hundreds of CEOs (chief executive officers, or the bosses of companies), teachers, doctors, firefighters, engineers, artists, journalists, and even therapists who have ADHD. Some even say that one of the smartest people ever, Albert Einstein, had ADHD. You can be just as successful and live a wonderful, full life just like other kids without ADHD. And I want to help!

We're going to explore new skills and techniques together that are very entertaining. In fact, you probably won't even notice you're learning! But as you try out these skills, you'll soon see that you are developing new ways to manage your ADHD. If you read and follow the suggestions in this book, you'll feel better and understand more about yourself and how to help yourself. I want you to feel more confident and less frustrated both at school and at home. You ready? Let's begin!

PART ONE



ADHD and Me

In this section, we'll explore what ADHD is, the different types, and how it affects you. This may be your "aha" moment where you say, "Wow! That sounds like me!" or, "Hey, I do that!" You may see how your behavior or actions are related to your ADHD. It may make you feel relieved because you finally understand things about yourself that perhaps you didn't understand before. My hope is that you will learn more about you: what you're already great at and what you may need to improve. Just remember: No one is perfect, and everyone can improve in something. The most important thing is that you're willing to try and to be open to learning new skills!

CHAPTER ONE

UNDERSTANDING AND GETTING TO KNOW MY ADHD

A lot of people don't understand what ADHD is. I want to educate you, and then you can educate others! Again, ADHD is not your fault or something you chose to have. The great news is that once you understand ADHD a little bit more, you will be more aware of how it affects you and what you can do about it. Can I look to you to be my investigator of ADHD? Then you can share what you know with others who don't understand it!

What Is ADHD?

Like we talked about previously, ADHD is a condition in the brain. Brains are extremely complicated. Have you ever heard someone joke that “you don’t have to be a brain surgeon to figure that out”? This means that brain surgery is very difficult and not an easy job. Why? Because there is so much to learn about the brain and its functions. It takes years to learn about the brain and how it works. So, let’s learn a little bit today that will help you understand yourself better (and make you smarter in the process).

There is something in the front of our brains called the frontal cortex. This is the area where the brain gets organized and motivated and manages emotions. It’s also called our executive functioning area. Is there a boss in your family? Well, the executive functioning area is the boss of your brain! But people with ADHD have a delay in the prefrontal cortex or executive functions.² Your mental boss is smart; it just moves at its own pace!

What does this mean for you? I’ll explain: Have you ever traveled on an airplane and your flight was delayed? You probably still got to your destination, but later than you expected. It is the same with ADHD. You can get organized or manage your emotions, but maybe not as quickly as you would like. Interestingly, when you have ADHD, your brain may process things slower, but your thoughts can actually be faster—this is part of what makes your mind race and gives you so many great ideas!

EVERYONE'S DIFFERENT



Most people feel they are different in some way. Some children have parents who are divorced, and so they feel different from their friends. Some kids have braces, others develop very early or very late, and some might have a parent or sibling who died. Some have medical conditions like diabetes. Some may feel like their red hair makes them different. Try not to look at ADHD as something that makes you less than awesome. It just makes you *you*, and you're already awesome just the way you are.

DIFFERENT TYPES

Did you know there are three different types of ADHD? They are called: primarily hyperactive-impulsive, primarily inattentive, and combined type.³ If you are diagnosed with ADHD, you have one of these three types. Why does this matter? Well, if you know what type you are, you can find out exactly how your ADHD affects you and your life. This way you can learn which tools you need to succeed. We'll explore each type later in a little more detail.

A doctor can help you find out what type of ADHD you have and how much your ADHD is impacting your life—whether it's a little bit, somewhat, or a lot. You may not know those answers yet, and that's okay. It's for a doctor and/or your parents to determine.

I like to think of the different types of ADHD as animals. Can you relate to one of the following types?

ADHD, PRIMARILY HYPERACTIVE-IMPULSIVE TYPE “HIGH- SPIRITED HUMMINGBIRD”

This is the most common type of ADHD in children. People with hyperactive-impulsive type ADHD love to be on the move! They like to stand rather than sit. They tend to fidget and squirm. Their teacher may say, “Do you have ants in your pants?” They talk a lot, sometimes fast, and run around a ton. They are also super curious. People with primarily hyperactive-impulsive type have so much to say, they might interrupt others, blurt out answers, and have trouble

controlling themselves.

People with primarily hyperactive-impulsive type ADHD may:

- Like to stand rather than sit
- Fidget and squirm
- Talk a lot
- Speak fast
- Be very curious
- Interrupt
- Blurt out answers
- Have trouble controlling themselves

ADHD, PRIMARILY INATTENTIVE TYPE “DRIFTING DUCK”

Kids with primarily inattentive type ADHD have trouble following directions and staying on task. Doctors call this inattentive ADHD. These people make mistakes because they have difficulty concentrating and organizing their activities and tasks. They don't mean to, but these kids often lose things like their jackets or homework. Dory from *Finding Nemo* said it best when she said, “My thoughts, they leave my head.”

People with primarily inattentive type ADHD may:

- Have trouble following directions
- Have difficulty staying on task
- Have trouble concentrating
- Be disorganized
- Lose things
- Be forgetful

ADHD, COMBINED TYPE “GOING, GOING, GONE GAZELLE”

Kids with combined type ADHD tend to be very creative, smart, and fast. But they may have trouble in school and forget to turn in homework. They're often dreaming about other things and jumping from task to task. And they're always on the move! People with combined type ADHD have both the hyperactive-impulsive type and inattentive type. This means they have a certain number of symptoms of inattention as well as hyperactivity and impulsivity.

People with combined type ADHD may:


- Like to stand rather than sit
- Fidget and squirm
- Talk a lot
- Speak fast
- Be very curious
- Interrupt
- Blurt out answers
- Have trouble controlling themselves
- Have trouble following directions
- Have difficulty staying on task
- Have trouble concentrating
- Be disorganized
- Lose things
- Be forgetful

Which characteristics do you relate to most? Look back at the descriptions we just went over, and go ahead and circle those that maybe you can see a little bit of yourself in. This is just one fun way to determine which type of ADHD you might have.

MORE BOYS OR GIRLS?

Do you think there is a difference in the number of girls and boys who have ADHD? If you guessed no, you are correct. Although boys may be diagnosed more often than girls when they are younger, studies show that girls are often diagnosed later as adults, so it evens out. But ADHD can appear very differently from one person to the next, no matter if you're a boy or girl.

MEDICATION



Some children take medication prescribed by doctors or psychiatrists to help them with their ADHD symptoms. I don't make medication recommendations in this book. Instead, we take a behavioral approach to ADHD. This means we focus on activities that can help your behaviors and actions. Behavior and medication approaches do work together, but it is up to your parents and your doctor to find the right combination for you. Your doctor and parents can give you more information. It's important to know that medication isn't a cure for ADHD, but it may help reduce symptoms.

ACTIVITY 1

What Are My Symptoms?

Have you ever gotten a blood test? The doctors inspect your blood and can check to see your cholesterol levels, iron level, and all that kind of stuff. It's pretty amazing what they can discover.

Well, there is no blood test to see if you have ADHD. The diagnosis is mainly based on ADHD symptoms like those I mentioned before. If you have a certain number of symptoms and it's causing you any difficulty, a doctor can diagnose you.

Check off if you feel any of these symptoms:

- Wanting to run, jump, and play a lot of the time
- Having a hard time sitting still
- Discovering you have an amazing imagination
- Feeling like you could be more organized
- Having difficulty with homework or class assignments
- Feeling slow or having trouble starting something new
- Having trouble listening
- Shifting attention quickly from one activity to another
- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed a lot of the time
- Being able to focus for long periods only with activities that interest you
- Getting frustrated, angry, or upset easily, especially if something is hard
- Having a difficult time not shouting out answers in class

You may feel you relate to all of these symptoms or only a few of them. That's perfectly okay. Learning more about you is the first step to understanding more about you!

HOW TO TALK ABOUT MY ADHD TO OTHERS

If you have difficulty explaining what ADHD is to classmates or adults, you

can just say, “I have difficulty paying attention for long amounts of time”
and/or “I need to move my body a lot.”

ACTIVITY 2

ADHD: True or False?

It's exciting that you are now going to be my investigator in learning more about ADHD. This way, you can be a leader and teach others what you know. Let's start with a little guessing game about ADHD: Are the following statements true or false? You'll know soon!

Circle *True* or *False* after each statement.

1. ADHD isn't a real medical issue. **True / False**
2. Most kids who have ADHD will not have it as an adult. **True / False**
3. Having strict parents will prevent you from getting ADHD. **True / False**
4. If you eat a lot of sugar, you will get ADHD. **True / False**
5. ADHD is something you are born with. **True / False**
6. ADHD is just kids not wanting to do things. **True / False**
7. The United States of America is the only place where ADHD is found. **True / False**
8. If someone with ADHD sneezes on you, you can catch it. **True / False**
9. All kids with ADHD are hyper. **True / False**
10. Children with ADHD are smart. **True / False**

Answers:

1. False. ADHD is a real medical condition diagnosed by doctors or professionals.
2. False. About 75% of kids who have ADHD will have it as adults.
3. False. ADHD is biological and part of your DNA. It doesn't matter about your outside environments, like whether you have strict or relaxed parents.
4. False. Sugar may cause someone to be more hyper or active for a bit, but it won't cause anyone to "get" ADHD.
5. True. ADHD is something you have at birth.
6. False. It might look to other people like you are unmotivated or don't want to do things, but ADHD is a brain condition that sometimes makes things harder to do.
7. False. There are kids who have ADHD in countries around the world.
8. False. ADHD is not contagious, and you can't pass it on to someone else.
9. False. There are three types of ADHD, and one type has no effect on activity level.
10. True. Many kids with ADHD are gifted in intelligence.

ACTIVITY 3

ADHD: What Does It Stand For?

Even though we know *ADHD* stands for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, those words don't define who you are. In fact, let's have some fun with *your* unique qualities. What words can you think of that describe you with the letters *ADHD*? Here's an example:

Active

Dreamer

Happy

Dazzling

Now you try!

A

D

H

D

ACTIVITY 4

I'm Not Scared of *That!*

When you first heard the term *ADHD*, did you get scared? Then maybe you discovered it wasn't so bad and realized that you are still you. Let's draw some pictures of things you were scared of when you were younger but then realized really weren't so scary. For example, 10-year-old Ariana was terrified of the dentist for the first five years of her life. Then, finally, she realized it didn't hurt when she went. In fact, her mom told me she now looks forward to going to her appointments! What can you think of that originally made you nervous but then you realized wasn't so terrible after all? Draw a picture or write the story here.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing or writing. The box is positioned centrally below the text. To the left of the box, there is a vertical light blue bar. Below the box, there is a horizontal light blue bar.

ACTIVITY 5

Look at the Bright Side of ADHD

Have you ever heard the expression “when life hands you lemons, make lemonade”? This means even when you face challenges, look at the bright side. In your life, things can be good or bad depending on your perspective. I want you to look at having ADHD in a positive way. For example, if you get distracted easily, this probably means you’re good at doing many things at once!

I’m going to give you a list of characteristics, and you tell me how each can be looked at as good. I’ve given you some examples:

IF YOU ARE ...	THIS PROBABLY MEANS YOU ARE ...
Distracted	Able to do many things at once
High energy	Ambitious
Sensitive	Able to feel when others are hurting
Strong willed/stubborn	Determined and don’t give up easily
Different	Unique
Talkative	Social

Can you come up with some of your own? You can ask a grown-up to help if you’d like.

IF YOU ARE ...	THIS PROBABLY MEANS YOU ARE ...

YOU DID IT!

Do you feel more educated about ADHD? I hope so! And now you can share what you've learned with others. You've already learned:

- **What ADHD is and what it's not**
- **A bit about how the brain works**
- **ADHD symptoms, myths, and facts**
- **Information about the three different types of ADHD**
- **How ADHD looks in you and how we can spin it to be a good thing!**

Everyone experiences ADHD in a different way, but I hope you see how special you are and how you can use your unique qualities to your advantage. Up next, you'll learn more about these strengths inside you and figure out what things you can work on to take even more control of your ADHD.

Time for a drawing break!

You're learning a lot of new skills, and even though it's fun to learn about how to help yourself, it can feel like a lot at once. Take a few minutes to draw, doodle, or write freely before moving on to the next activity.



CHAPTER TWO

MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

When you think of superheroes, who do you think of? Batman? Wonder Woman? Every superhero is special in their own way. They have powerful abilities—some can fly, others can rappel between buildings—but if you look closer, they also have things they need to work on. For example, Batman is incredible at saving the city when it is in danger, but he also has problems talking to people about how he feels. And Wonder Woman is an amazing warrior, but she has a difficult time admitting when she loses. So, just like the superhero that lives in each of us, you're going to discover the things you are naturally good at and the things in which you could use support.

Part 1: Discovering What I'm Good At

Let's talk about what your strengths are or what comes naturally and easily to you. In other words, a strength is something that you're good at but don't have to try too hard at doing. Everyone has different strengths. I have two kids I work with: Dashiell is amazing at Lego building, great with animals, and super polite. Grace is good at gymnastics, fantastic at soothing crying babies, and great at making people laugh. What are your strengths?

Here is a list of statements. Every time you see a statement that fits you, give it a check mark.

- I have a lot of different ideas.
- I can tell when kids are upset.
- I'm very artistic.
- I love to move around a lot.
- I am interested in a lot of different things and get bored doing only one thing.
- I love telling people my opinions.
- I get really passionate about things I'm interested in.
- I can cook.
- I am great at music.
- I am an amazing builder.
- I have strong emotions.
- I can dance really well.
- I pick great TV shows and videos.
- I have really high energy.
- I play video games very well.
- I type fast.
- I can swim.

- I'm great with animals.
- I like to jump and spin.
- I know history well.
- I'm good at science.
- I am always open to trying new things.
- I am kind to people.
- I'm adventurous.
- I have a wonderful imagination.

Here's more about my strengths (fill in your own ideas):

Everyone with or without ADHD has different strengths, different ways to express excitement and emotions, and unique things that interest them. It's cool to think that no two people are exactly alike in their strengths and differences!

Part 2: Discovering What I Can Work On

So some things may come easily for you, but other things may be more difficult or challenging. You may see kids doing things and think, *Wow. How do they do that?* Or you may think, *I wish I was better at that.* That's okay! Remember, everyone has strengths and things they need to work on. That's part of being a human being!

Which statements describe you?

- It's hard to pay attention.
- I get bored easily.
- I have a hard time sitting still.
- I get in trouble more than other kids.
- I get really mad or frustrated easily.
- It's hard for me to remember things, like my jacket or homework.
- I have difficulty focusing on my homework or schoolwork.
- It's hard for me to wait my turn, and people get upset at me.
- When I get mad, sometimes I yell or hit others.
- I get too close to other people's personal space.
- I cry easily.
- I get mad at myself sometimes.
- I think everyone is making fun of me a lot of the time.
- Things feel harder to me than to other kids.
- I don't make friends easily.
- I want to do better in school.
- I want to make friends and be a better friend.
- I want to feel better about myself.

Can you think of any more? Fill in your own ideas:

Awesome work. You have looked at yourself and figured out some things you are really good at. That's got to feel great! You also pointed out some things you have trouble with or want to do better. Believe it or not, this is great, too—because now that you see what you need to work on, we can explore different activities to help you handle challenges and learn new skills. When you learn how to handle these challenges, that will help you do well in school, make friends, and feel more confident.

ACTIVITY 1

How Do People See Me?

Sometimes we can't see our good qualities as well as others can see them. This exercise will help remind you of your great qualities and how special you are.

What you'll need:

- A few adults who know you well
- A few children who know you well
- A notepad
- A pen or pencil

Take a notepad and a pen or pencil, and ask a few of your favorite adults (such as teachers, parents, or aunts) as well as a few children (such as trusted classmates, siblings, or cousins) their favorite qualities about you. Make sure to write down who said what so you can remember. For example, here is 11-year-old Lexi's:

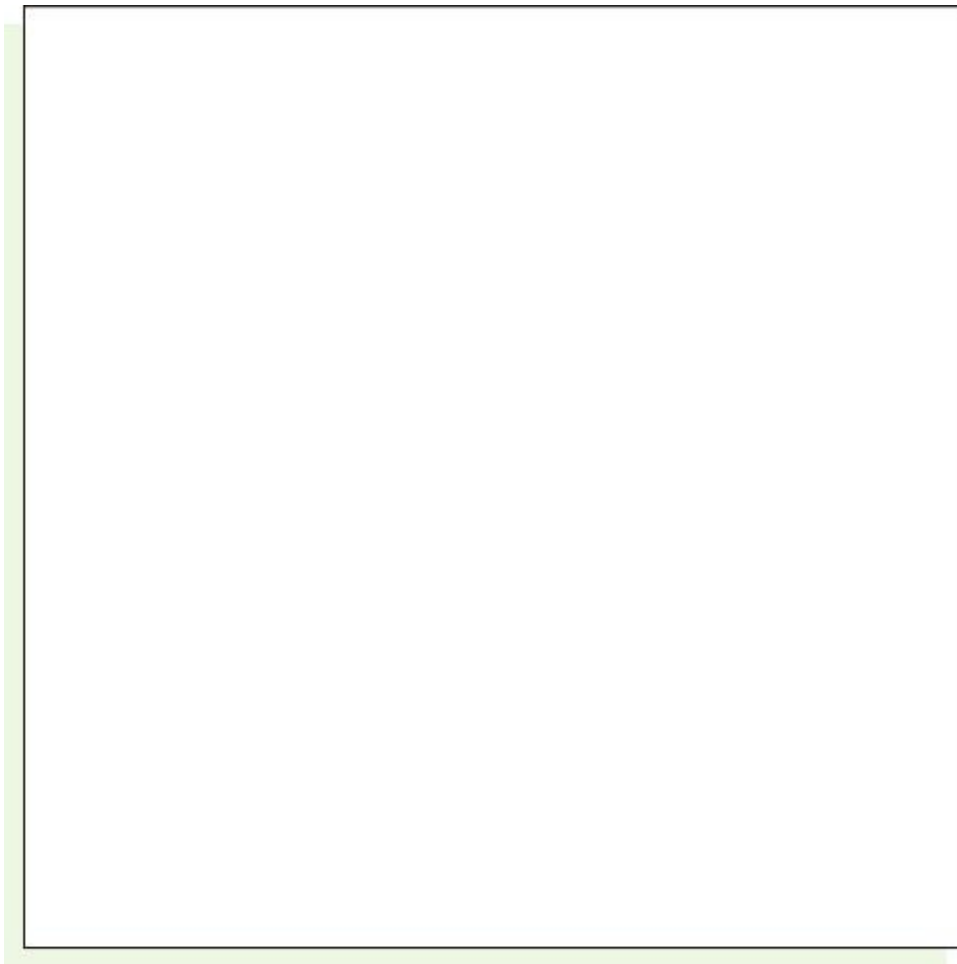
PERSON I ASKED	WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE ME
Mrs. Katz, fourth grade teacher	Kind, funny, and inventive
Fiona, a good friend	Nice, fun, and helpful
Jed, cousin	Polite, friendly, and energetic

Keep this list in a safe place, and you can always go back and look at it when you have a hard day. We all have hard days, and sometimes we need a little boost! This will remind you of what good things others see in you. Think good thoughts—tomorrow will be a better day!

ACTIVITY 2

Creative Self-Portrait

Once you've gathered your list of descriptive words from the last activity, use it to draw a picture of yourself. Write down one of your favorite comments from any person on your list, and draw yourself that way. If you don't have a list yet, you can draw something that you love to do or something you think is special about you. For my example, Mrs. Katz called Lexi kind, funny, and inventive, so maybe Lexi could draw a picture of herself inventing a time machine!



ACTIVITY 3

What Does My Name Say about Me?

Our names are given to us at birth. We have no choice, right? So let's bring some power into our names! Can you think of any adjectives that describe you, using all the letters in your name? For example, here is 11-year-old Abigail's:

Adventurous

Brave

Independent

Gentle

Affectionate

Imaginative

Loving

Create yours here: _ _ _ _ _

WE ARE ALL UNIQUE

Except for maybe identical twins, we all look pretty different from one another. This is what makes us unique on the outside. You may have curly, straight, or wavy hair and blue, brown, green, or hazel eyes. You may even have one blue eye and one brown eye. Just like we are all different physically, we are different emotionally, too. That means some people may be more outgoing, funny, quiet, or active. It's just who we are. There is no right or wrong.



ACTIVITY 4

Self-Collage

Now that you've discovered more about who you are, let's put those unique qualities together in a colorful self-collage, so you can see "the big picture"—your inner and outer traits that make you one of a kind! How will you represent yourself?

What you'll need:

- 2 or 3 magazines
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Large piece of paper or poster board

Look through the magazines you've selected, and cut out words or pictures that you feel describe you. These could be the ones you just checked off on your personality checklist, or they could be totally different. Maybe another word you find describes you perfectly. Have fun, and be creative! Cut out as many as you can find. Then tape or glue your words onto your paper. Have fun with this part; there is no right or wrong way to collage. The most important thing is that the words and pictures you choose represent you and that YOU like the way they look on your paper. Feel free to decorate your collage or add more personality to it with stickers or fun crafts. This is another great activity to help you see yourself in a different and exciting way!

ACTIVITY 5

Awesomeness Box

You're awesome and unique, and hopefully this chapter helped you see how. Let's put all that awesomeness together into a keepsake that you can keep to remind yourself of some of the many traits that make you special.

What you'll need:

- A shoe box (or any small box)
- Tape or glue
- Scissors

Let's take the work you've done and put it into practice! First, look at any of the activities you've already completed in this chapter to help you finish these sentences:

My favorite strengths are:

My favorite personality traits are:

I'm very good at:

People often give me this compliment:

I'm awesome because:

Now, copy these sentences on a piece of notebook paper and glue or tape them on each side of your shoe box. You can decorate your box first or wrap it in wrapping paper if you'd like. Finally, put in a few items that you remind you what makes you feel good. This could be a photo of you doing something you're

proud of, a report card, a karate certificate—anything that reminds you how amazing you are.

ACTIVITY 6

ACTIVITY 7

Famous after Flops: A Matching Game

In case you need some inspiration, I want to share with you some famous people who failed before they succeeded.⁴ I want to show you that just like these famous people, you can achieve ANYTHING with hard work, patience, and perseverance!

Match each famous person with their true story:

**1. ALBERT
EINSTEIN**

A. Was fired from a newspaper company because his editor felt he “lacked imagination and had no good ideas.” He now holds the record for most Academy Awards earned by an individual. (No good ideas? He created Disneyland!)

**2. STEVEN
SPIELBERG**

B. Was publicly fired from her first television job as an anchor in Baltimore for getting “too emotionally invested in her stories.” She went on to become one of the biggest talk show hosts of all time.

3. WALT DISNEY

C. Was rejected by film school multiple times. Since then, he has won three Academy Awards, and his dozens of movies, including *Jaws*, *E. T.*, and *Jurassic Park*, have made more than \$9 billion.

**4. THOMAS
EDISON**

D. She failed to make the 1968 US Olympic figure-skating team. Today, she is one of the premier designers in the fashion industry.

5. FRED ASTAIRE

E. His teachers told him he was “too stupid to learn anything.” He went on to hold more than 1,000 patents and invented some world-changing devices, including the incandescent lightbulb and movie camera. (Thankfully, this inventor didn’t let those teachers stop him, or we might all still be in the dark!)

F. As a child, he had some difficulty communicating

6. VERA WANG

and learning in a “normal” way. This pioneering scientist went on to win the Nobel Prize in physics.

**7. THEODOR
SEUSS GEISEL OR
“DR. SEUSS”**

G. In one of this person’s first auditions, an executive wrote, “Can’t sing. Can’t act. Slightly balding. Can dance a little.” He went on to be a Hollywood and Broadway legend.

**8. OPRAH
WINFREY**

H. This person’s first book was rejected by 27 different publishers. His books now have sold over 600 million copies. (What a different world this would be without *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* or *The Cat in the Hat!*)

Answers: 1-F, 2-C, 3-A, 4-E, 5-G, 6-D, 7-H, 8-B

ACTIVITY 8

Building Self-Esteem

Having self-esteem means having confidence in yourself. Do you have great self-esteem, or do you doubt yourself and your abilities? We all want to feel confident. Surprisingly, one of the best ways to build confidence, or self-esteem, is to do caring acts, also known as “random acts of kindness.” No matter what you call it, it’s simply taking action in a kind way—smiling at someone, complimenting someone, or helping someone. It’s doing something that you know will make someone else feel good. Here are some simple ways you can build self-esteem through kindness:

- Teach something to a younger child.
- Give affection to a pet.
- Help your parents clear the table.
- Say good morning to your bus driver or teacher.
- Compliment a classmate on their skills.
- Help a friend who drops something.
- Say “please” and “thank you” while using eye contact.
- Do chores without being asked.
- Ask if someone wants a hug if they seem upset.

Can you think of others?

YOU DID IT!

What have you learned about yourself? Which activity did you like best? I hope you discovered more about what you're great at and what you can work on. I also hope it was helpful for you to see how some very famous people handled failure before becoming successful. They did not give up, and that's good—can you imagine how the world would be different without their contributions? Hopefully these stories inspire you to never give up on your dreams!

I love the saying “there is always room for improvement!” because we can always better ourselves, no matter who we are. The fact that you are doing these activities shows you're courageous and want to do better. You're off to a great start!

PART TWO

**ADHD Isn't
the Boss
of Me!**

Do you know what self-regulation is? Self-regulation is like self-control. It's knowing your body and feelings and what you need in that moment to help yourself stay cool. For example, you may be disappointed you have to see the movie your brother wants to see instead of what you want to see. With poor self-regulation, you might get really mad and scream. With good self-regulation, you might still get mad, but you'll take deep breaths to calm yourself.

Self-regulation can also help you deal with uncomfortable situations. For example, if you know you are uncomfortable in big, noisy crowds, you can wear headphones to block out the sound. In part 2, I will help you learn more skills for better self-regulation that will help you become the boss of your ADHD.

CHAPTER THREE

MANAGING EMOTIONS

Skills for Anger, Frustration, and Outbursts

Sometimes emotions feel big. REALLY big. Have you ever been REALLY mad? Or REALLY frustrated? The first lesson I want to teach you is to think of emotions like the weather—they both come and go. So, if you're feeling upset or frustrated, remember: You won't feel like that forever.

You can prepare for strong emotions, too, so that you'll know what to do when they occur. In this chapter, we will talk about ways you can manage your emotions so you feel more in control.

ACTIVITY 1

I Spy My Triggers

Have you heard people tell you that they can't stand the noise of fingernails on a chalkboard? It "triggers" them to feel a certain way. Kind of like a thorn hurts when it touches you, triggers make us feel uncomfortable. Everyone has things that annoy or frustrate them, and I'm sure you do, too. The trick is to understand those triggers better, so we can prevent them from happening and deal with them when they do happen. Even though we can't always prevent frustrations from happening, we can have more awareness.

In the meantime, let's talk about Samantha. Samantha is a 10-year-old girl who loves swimming and drawing. Just like everyone else, once in a while, Samantha gets angry. Lately, Samantha has been feeling more upset at her family members because:

Trigger #1: Her sister takes a super long time in the bathroom.

Trigger #2: Her mom is late picking her up from school.

Trigger #3: She can't figure out her homework.

With the weather, it starts to get cloudy before it rains. With emotions, you may begin to feel a little stressed before you get really angry. If you know what causes your anger, just like with the weather, you can prepare for it! Here are some ways that Samantha can try to prepare for her triggers, so she won't get so mad at her family:

Trigger #1: Her sister takes a super long time in the bathroom in the morning.

Solution #1: With Samantha's mom's permission, they could put a timer in the bathroom so Samantha and her sister could get equal bathroom time. If that isn't possible, Samantha could shower at night instead of in the morning, so she doesn't feel as rushed.



Trigger #2: Her mom is late picking her up from school, and she gets bored.

Solution #2: Samantha could bring a book or favorite magazine in her backpack and read that if her mom is late. She could also keep a pencil with her and start her homework at school, so she doesn't have to do as much at home.

Trigger #3: She can't figure out her homework.

Solution #3: After Samantha has tried her best with her homework, if she still has problems, she can ask for help or take a break and come back to it in a few minutes. She can also ask her teacher for extra help or ask her parents to find her

a tutor.

You can see from Samantha's story that there are triggers, and there are solutions. These solutions might not always work, but Samantha should continue to think about ways to help herself and turn to her trusted grown-ups for support.

Now it's your turn. I want you to think about your triggers. What makes you mad, sad, or upset? Write those things below. Remember, there is no wrong or right—you're entitled to share your honest feelings. If you are having trouble coming up with ideas, think about the last time you got upset. What started it?

1.

2.

3.

Now come up with possible solutions to your triggers, or ways to prepare for your personal stormy weather. Try your best, and be creative. If you want, you can also write a few things you could do instead of feeling mad:

1.

2.

3.

EMOTIONS ARE LIKE THE WEATHER

If you know a snowstorm, hurricane, or tornado is coming, you prepare for it, right? Your family may buy extra water or food for the house and make sure the flashlights have batteries, and you may even skip your homework in anticipation that you won't have school! You can prepare for strong emotions, too, so that you know what to do when they occur.



ACTIVITY 2

Anger: True or False?

Anger is confusing. We all get angry sometimes, but we are taught that we shouldn't ever feel it and that it's wrong. It's not wrong to feel angry; it's just wrong to act on it inappropriately. Does that make sense? What I'm saying is, it's okay to feel mad, but it's not okay to hit someone or throw something because we're mad. We also don't want anger to get in the way of making or keeping friends.

Let's test our knowledge with some true-or-false statements about anger:

Highlight *True* or *False* after each statement.

1. Most people feel anger at some point in their lives. **True / False**
2. I can learn skills to control angry outbursts. **True / False**
3. Teachers never feel angry. **True / False**
4. People who are mad always yell. **True / False**
5. If I get angry, I can apologize if I've done something wrong. **True / False**
6. When people yell, they sometimes feel out of control. **True / False**
7. If I think about my anger triggers (or what causes me to be angry) earlier, I might be able to prevent outbursts. **True / False**
8. Only loud people get angry. **True / False**
9. No one is allowed to feel mad, ever. **True / False**
10. Anger is a normal and even healthy emotion. **True / False**

Answers:

1. True. I don't know anyone who has never gotten angry in their lives; do you?
2. True. Learning skills to control anger can help you control outbursts, because you'll have tools to use.
3. False. Teachers would probably laugh if they saw this. They get mad just like the rest of us.
4. False. People can also isolate themselves (go be alone), cry, or do other things if they are angry.
5. True. Apologizing is a great first start to help the situation.
6. True. Often yelling is a sign you've lost control and may have missed your trigger.
7. True. If you can understand what causes you to feel angry, you may be able to prevent it.
8. False. Quiet people *and* loud people can get angry. In fact, any personality can get angry.

9. False. We can't help what we feel, but we can learn to control our behavior.
10. True. Anger is a normal emotion, just like sadness, happiness, confusion, and all our feelings. It can be healthy if we know how to handle it—all our feelings make us human!



CALMING TOOLS

We never know when anger will strike. That's why it's important to keep a few "tools" on hand to help us stay calm in the moment:

Breathe: A few big, slow breaths can bring your body back into a state of relaxation.

Adjust: Lower your shoulders, unclench your fists, relax your face muscles—this can help loosen anger from your body (see Pin the Tail on the Emotion, [here](#)).

Walk away: Stepping away from the action is a great way to defuse a tense situation. Go for a walk and gather your thoughts.

ACTIVITY 3

Pin the Tail on the Emotion

Max loves to play video games. But when it's time to stop, he gets very angry. He doesn't want to stop! He throws things and yells at his parents because he's so mad.

A good way of making a calmer choice when you're angry is to look at what happens to your body when you have a strong emotion.

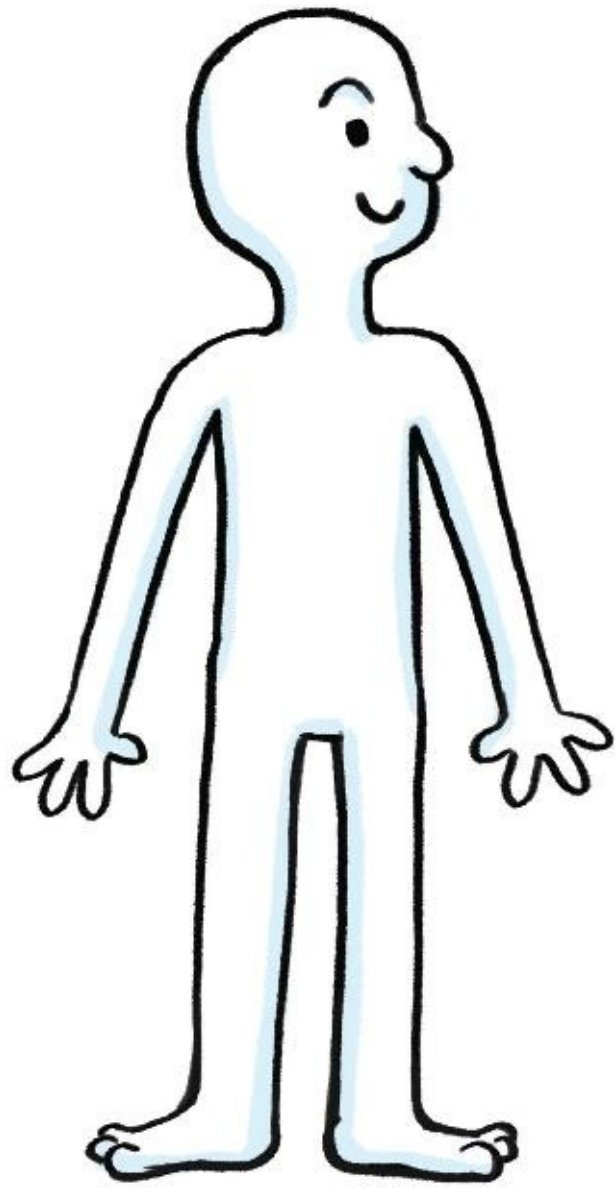
Max could feel his face getting hot, his neck got really tight, and his breathing was short and shallow, like he'd just been running fast. He decided to take some big, deep breaths. He tried to relax his shoulders. Slowly, he began to calm down.

1. Think about what you feel when you're angry. What does your body do? Do you ball up your fists? Do you breathe fast like you've been running? Do you start to cry? Do you clench your jaw or raise your shoulders? Use the drawing on the next page to circle where you feel the anger.
2. Now think about what you can do to relax each "angry" body part. Write it next to the body part.

If we think about how our bodies react when we feel emotions, we can better understand how to control them.

You can do the same exercise when you feel sad and see if there is a difference between sadness and anger in your body.

Next time you begin to feel angry (or sad), think about your body. What is it doing? The important thing to know is that we can make more calm choices when we have calm bodies.



ACTIVITY 4

Elevator Breathing

Do you ever feel like your mind is racing? Like it has a mind of its own and you can't control it?


My dear friend taught me that the mind follows the breath. What does *that* mean? It means if we can slow down our breath, we can slow down our minds. How cool is that? I'm going to introduce you to a wonderful exercise called Elevator Breathing. You can use it when you feel angry, nervous, or upset, or anytime you want to feel more calm.

What you'll need:

- A stuffed animal or other light object

First, lie down on your bed or the floor. Place your stuffed animal or other light object on your belly, right on your belly button. Now, take a deep breath all the way in. Then slowly exhale that breath out. You'll see your stuffed animal moving up and down, just like an elevator. Take at least three deep breaths like this, in and out. Simple but super effective! Remember this one the next time you want to get calm.

MAKE A CALMING CORNER



Did you ever wish you could just get away from it all? Now you can! Make your own calming area in your home. All you need is a corner space or small area and whatever makes you feel relaxed. You can add a blanket, a pillow, some stuffed animals, a music player, books, or your favorite toy. If you have a play tent, this could also work. This can be *your* space, and you can go to it whenever you feel overwhelmed, upset, or disappointed.

ACTIVITY 5

“I” Statements

When we’re upset, we sometimes feel like nobody can understand us. I’m going to teach you a great way to communicate to others when you are upset, so you can learn how to speak calmly even when you don’t feel calm. It’s called an “I” statement. It’s a way of focusing on how *you* feel rather than how you feel about what happened or about the person who made you upset.

Here’s a great example from Dexter. Dexter’s friend Sidney asked if she could borrow his Nintendo video game system for a few days. This was a big deal for Dexter. He played video games every day! But he knew Sidney loved the games, too, and he wanted to give her an opportunity to play, too. So, he lent her his game system for three days. He was eager to get it back. On the third day, Sidney approached Dexter and told him that she couldn’t give back his Nintendo. Dexter asked why. Sidney said her little brother had put two dimes and a penny in the system thinking it was a cash register, and now it wouldn’t work. Dexter was furious. He wanted to yell at Sidney. He wanted to say, “How could you let that happen?” He felt mad that he’d lent the system to Sidney, especially because he was trying to be nice. But instead he used an “I” message:

He said, “I feel very upset that the game system is broken.”

See how he focused on how he felt rather than blaming Sidney or focusing on her as the problem? This way, Dexter was able to express his anger and disappointment without insulting Sidney.

Here is an outline for the “I” message. Try it the next time you get upset.

“I feel when”

“I am upset because”

“I am not happy because”

ACTIVITY 6

Bendable Thinking

Who loves Silly Putty? One of my favorite things to play with as a kid was Silly Putty. You can mold anything. If I made a person but then wanted to make a worm, I could just take my putty, smooth it together, roll it, and voilà, a worm!

In this game, I want you to think of your mind as Silly Putty and make it more bendable. Yes, really! You see, oftentimes we can be rigid or strict with our thinking. For example, let's say we want to play a game with a friend at recess, but they want to play something else. It can be hard to relax and let our friend have what she wants, right? It's difficult when we have our mind set on something and then suddenly have to change it for someone else.

I'm going to challenge your mind to be more bendable. Here's an example:

Ruby really wanted to play dodgeball, but Stella was dead set on playing basketball. Normally Stella would have said something like, "NO! I really want to play basketball. I don't want to play dodgeball." Ruby would have felt sad since she didn't get to do what she wanted to do. In turn, she might not have wanted to return to Stella's house. But Stella decided to use bendable thinking and said, "Okay, Ruby, let's play basketball for five minutes and then dodgeball for five minutes," and Ruby agreed. Bendable thinking saved the day!

In the pictures below, the kids need to make a decision. The best way is to compromise or use bendable thinking. How can YOU use bendable thinking in your own relationships?

THINKING FAST

It can be hard to decide what to do in the moment. The next time you are in a situation like the kids in this activity and not getting what you want, ask yourself: How can I make both people feel happy? Is there a solution so that both people can get what they want?

Look at what's happening in the following pictures. Tell me how the person with the star can be more bendable in his or her thinking:





ACTIVITY 7

Empathy Checks

One of the best ways to understand how other people are feeling and to help us understand our own feelings better is to do an empathy check. It's simple: Imagine what the other person might be feeling. We sometimes call this "putting yourself in someone else's shoes." This can help us have better relationships with others, and it can make us more caring (which is a very nice thing to be, plus it builds confidence).

For example, if your mom is mad at you for not clearing your plate, do an empathy check and imagine what she's feeling. She may be frustrated that she had to ask you several times to clear your plate and it's still not done. Or if your friend at school is upset you sat with someone else at lunch, imagine what he's feeling. He may be hurt you chose another friend over him or that he had to sit alone. Let's do some empathy checks. Think about or write down your answers if you'd like:

1. You got the part in a play that your friend wanted.

Empathy check: How do you think your friend feels?

2. You told your friend you'd be at her house at 3 p.m., and you arrive at 4:15 p.m.

Empathy check: How do you think your friend feels?

3. Your parent asked you to fold the laundry, and you forgot.

Empathy check: How do you think your parent feels?

4. You borrowed your sister's toys without asking.

Empathy check: How do you think your sister feels?


5. Your teacher smiled at you and wished you good morning. You ignored her.

Empathy check: How do you think your teacher feels?

HELPING OTHERS HELPS US

We all have days where we don't feel good about ourselves. This is perfectly normal—it happens to everyone. If you have days where you feel sad, angry, and overall not happy, it can really boost your spirits to go out and volunteer or help someone in need. For example, you can help feed animals in shelters or give out food to the homeless. Volunteering helps us focus on someone else. And by helping, we feel good—it also helps us realize that everyone has their own needs and struggles. If you need ideas for where to volunteer, go to [Volunteermatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org). Also, you can always ask a friend, parent, or teacher if they need any extra help.

JOURNAL



Writing or drawing in a journal or notebook is a great way to help you calm down. You can write your feelings down and why you're upset, or you can draw a picture of what happened and how it made you feel. There is something about putting the pen to the paper that can be very calming. It's kind of like sharing something with a trusted friend. You are unloading your feelings into the book, and this can make you feel more lighthearted. If you worry that someone will see your journal, you can always buy the kind with a lock. I imagine most parents will respect your privacy anyway!

YOU DID IT!

You've learned a lot! You now know:

- **Emotions are not something to be ashamed of but a normal, healthy part of us.**
- **Everyone feels emotions—anger, sadness, happiness, frustration, confusion, the list goes on.**
- **Once you're in tune with what you're feeling and where you feel it, you can be aware of what is happening. This can help you prevent outbursts and be more in control.**
- **Which “triggers” upset you so you can try to prevent them.**
- **Even though anger is normal, you can learn new skills and behaviors to deal with it.**
- **Whether you feel emotions in your stomach, neck, arms, or head, you know how to use that as a signal that you're feeling something strongly and need to pay attention.**
- **Elevator Breathing is a great exercise you can do when you need to calm your body.**
- **To communicate better using the “I” message.**
- **If you're more bendable with your thinking, people will want to be around you more, and they, in turn, will use bendable thinking with you.**

Just like a toolbox, your brain is getting filled with great ideas! Each activity you do is another tool you can use to help you focus and succeed. You've got this!

Time for a drawing break!

You're learning a lot of new skills, and even though it's fun to learn about how to help yourself, it can feel like a lot at once. Take a few minutes to draw, doodle, or write freely before moving on to the next activity.



CHAPTER FOUR

SKILLS FOR FOCUS, ATTENTION, AND LISTENING (EVEN WHEN I'M REALLY BORED)

Sometimes it's hard to pay attention, right? With our mind interested in so many things, it's difficult to just stay focused on what's in front of us. Especially if it's schoolwork or chores. That's part of having ADHD. We often get distracted. It's not that we're *not* focusing; it's that we are focusing on everything at once! So let's learn some strategies to help us focus on one thing at a time. In this chapter, we'll explore ways we can focus and pay attention in all the different areas of our life: school, home, and everything else!

ACTIVITY 1

Private Investigator

In this activity, you are going to be a private investigator in your own life! You are going to try to figure out *why* you get bored, *what it feels like* to be bored, and *if you can catch yourself* before you get bored.

Think about your behaviors when you aren't interested in what your teacher is saying. What do you do? Do you start to wiggle around? Do you play with things under your desk? Look out the window? Talk to friends? Your first job as investigator is to try to be aware of when your boredom starts. That way, if a teacher or parent calls you out and says your name, you won't be as surprised that you weren't paying attention, or you might notice it more quickly. There is no reason to get upset if someone says, "Pay attention"—this is just a gentle reminder to get back on task. Even I need this reminder once in a while!

Now, let's investigate a little deeper by answering some questions. You can write them down or tell an adult.

I get bored when:

When I get bored, I:

Check off all that apply

- Swing my legs back and forth
- Jump up and down
- Whimper or make noises
- Start poking or playing with my classmate to get their attention
- Get up and pace
- Say "I'm bored" out loud
- Start talking to my classmate or whoever is next to me about something else

Things I can do when I get bored that are not disruptive:

- Doodle or sketch
- Make a list of things I need to do to finish my work
- Stand up
- Have a small bowl of food to munch on
- Hold a fidget toy or object
- Sit on a wiggle seat or pillow
- Wipe down my desk or seat
- Listen to quiet music (with headphones if necessary)

Note: You may need permission to do some of these things, and not all will be appropriate when you need to be paying attention. Show your teacher or parent this list. They may have other ideas, too!

WHEN IN DOUBT, PLAY!

Here's some good news: Do you know one of the best things you can do for yourself is play? It's true! If you are feeling bored, overwhelmed, or know you need a break, ask your parent for a 10-minute play break. (Show your parent this part so they know it's for real!) Refer to Break Time Activities ([here](#)) if you need ideas—or just go for it!



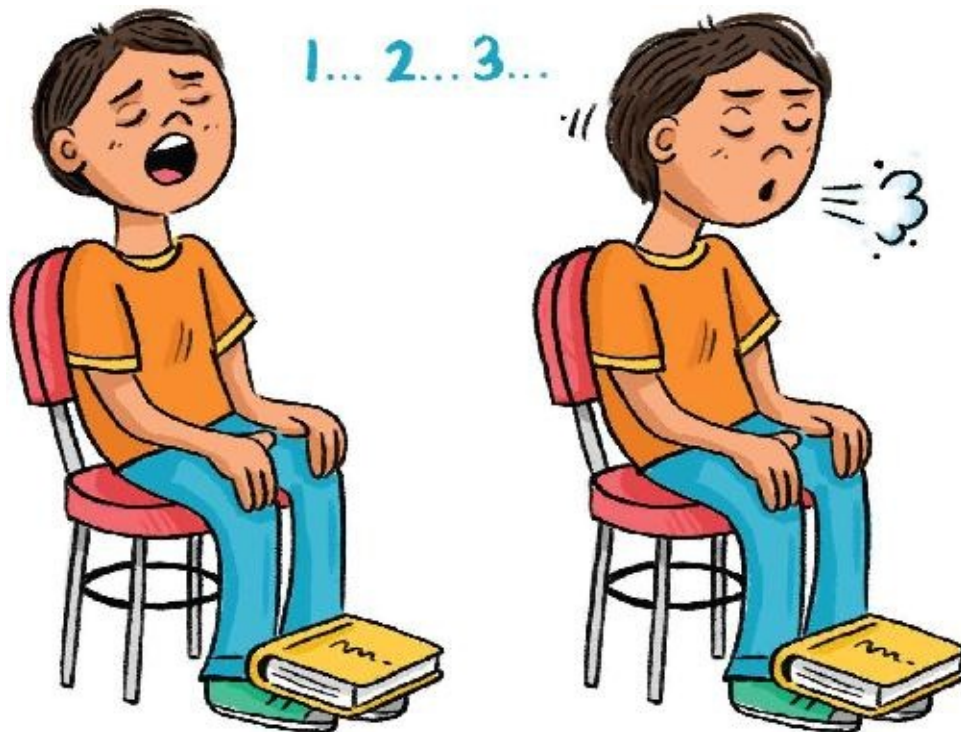
ACTIVITY 2

Anchor Down!

It's hard sitting still, especially in class. Your mind is going 150 miles an hour. That's like a train going full speed ahead. Then, all of a sudden, you have to put on the brakes! Or imagine you are playing kickball outside, and you suddenly have to go inside and do homework. ERK! Let's talk about ways to quiet the brain and switch gears, like when you have to sit quietly in class or a group.

Have you ever seen an anchor attached to a boat? The captain throws the anchor into the water, and it stops the boat from moving. I'm going to teach you an anchoring exercise that you can use when you feel like it's hard to stop moving, when you have to suddenly sit in a group or in the classroom, or when you have to change to a new activity. Here's how it works:

1. Put both feet on the ground. You can even put a book on your feet to secure them down further.
2. Breathe in and out deeply for at least three really big breaths. Focus on the sound of your breath.
3. Now bring your attention back to the teacher or classroom. You will feel calmer and ready to learn!



ACTIVITY 3

Break Time Activities

One of the best ways to get back on track is to take a short 5- or 10-minute break and then come back to whatever you were doing. That way you will be more focused and refreshed. For example, if you are doing your homework and start feeling overwhelmed or bored, what activity could you do for a few minutes and then return to your homework?

Highlight the activities that would help you when you need to refocus:

Color	Do laps around the house or go up and down the stairs	Shape clay	Take a quick shower or bath
Listen to music	Chew gum (if allowed)	Read	Play with an electronic device
Pick out outfits	Get a drink of water	Dance	Play on computer
Trace pictures	Do a cartwheel	Do an art project	Sew
Walk	Look out the window	Talk to a friend	Play with dolls or action figures
Throw a ball	Pet an animal	Do jumping jacks	Snuggle in a blanket
Blow up balloons	Trace stencils	Stretch or do yoga	Give a self-massage
Lie down and relax	Play a quick card game	Compliment a parent	Give someone a hug

ACTIVITY 4

Emergency Focus Cards

Here's a true story: Captain "Sully" Sullenberger is a commercial pilot who had logged over 20,000 flight hours when there was an emergency on one of his flights.⁵ He called the air traffic control deck and reviewed the emergency landing card so he'd remember what to do just in case. He was able to save the flight and its 155 passengers by landing the plane on the Hudson River! Even though he'd been flying for decades, the captain knew it would be smart to review the emergency card so he wouldn't forget any steps.

What if we all had emergency focus cards? In the heat of the moment, or when things feel intense, it's hard to think about what we need to calm down or focus. We need a list to help remind us what to do. So, let's create our own Emergency Focus Cards.

Think about five activities that help you when you need to focus. Maybe these include taking some deep breaths, unclenching your fists, or smiling to yourself. Nine-year-old Ava says that if her teacher allows it, she likes to do wall push-ups (standing push-ups against the wall) in school. What works for you? If you need help, use Break Time Activities ([here](#)) as a reminder.

What you'll need:

- 2 index cards
- Pen or pencil

Write down your top five activities to help you when you feel stressed out, frustrated, or just in need of a break. Choose activities that you imagine doing only for a few minutes, so you can then refocus on what you need to be doing, like homework or paying attention in class. Since your activities may be different for school and home, make one index card for each: home and school. Keep your index card at home where you can access it easily, and keep the one for school in your desk. Tell your parents and teacher about the cards. This way, they can understand what you are doing and even remind you to use the card when necessary.

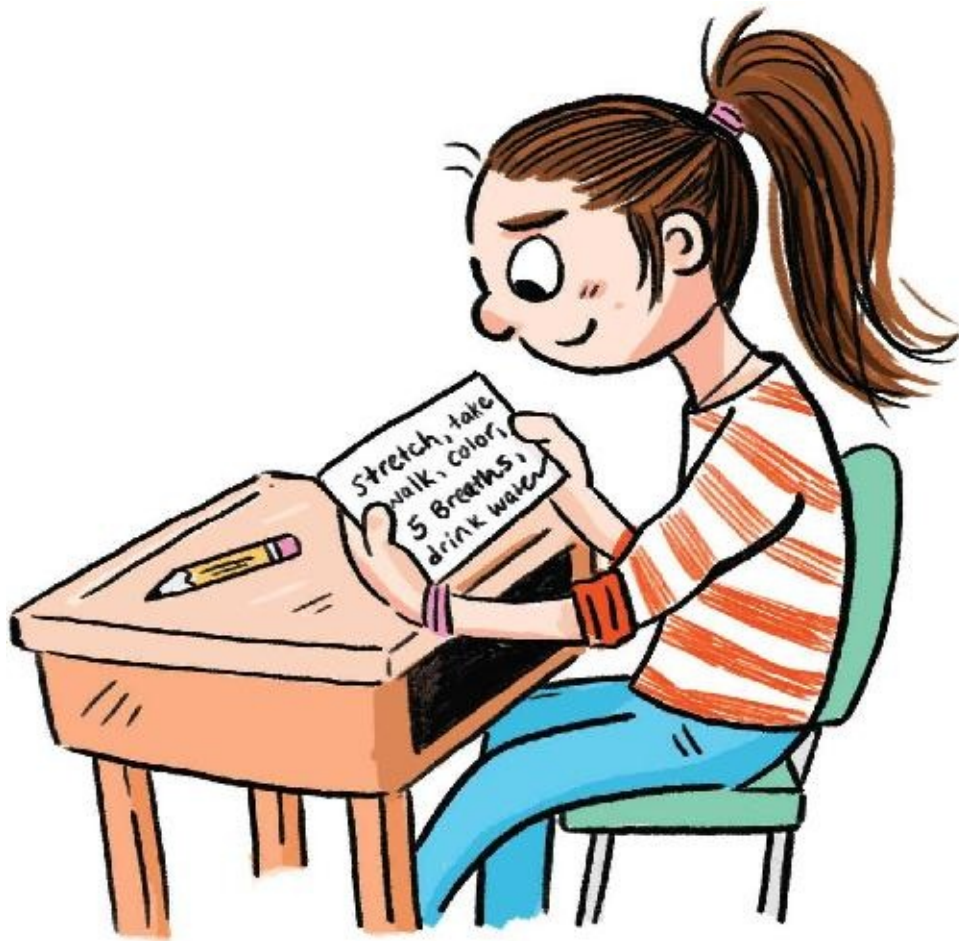
WHERE DO YOU WORK BEST?

Try to find what works best for you to get your schoolwork done. It could be a quiet room with no noise, or it could be a louder room with music on. You can do your work sitting or standing. Any way is okay, as long as it works for you!

HYPERFOCUS: WHAT'S THAT?

Many people don't understand that ADHD isn't about not being able to focus; it's that sometimes we focus hard on one particular thing that interests us. This is called hyperfocus. This means that if we are doing something we enjoy or find rewarding, it's harder for people like us to stop doing it because we're focusing so hard.

Children with ADHD can sometimes hyperfocus on one particular thing. (This explains why you may be able to play video games for hours and hours but have trouble sitting in class.) It seems like the activities that really interest us are able to keep us engaged, but we may have trouble focusing on things that aren't as exciting.



ACTIVITY 5

Homework Jar

Homework can be hard sometimes, right? You're not alone. Eleven-year-old Skyler needed something to help motivate and focus him during homework time. We thought of this idea, which would reward him for doing his work, and he loved it. Want to give it a try? This is a homework technique that can get you excited and able to pay better attention.

What you'll need:

- A clear jar
- Coins, pennies, stones, or anything you want to use to fill your jar
- Three pieces of clear tape or masking tape
- A marker

Here's how it works: Your jar is your prize meter for completing your homework. Every time you start and end your homework, you get to fill your jar. You'll have three levels to your jar, marked by tape. Each time you get to the next level on the jar, you'll get your prize.

Here's the fun part: I want you to think about what you want as your three prizes for doing your homework. It could be a new toy, ice cream, going to a theme park, whatever you decide, but you should work with your parent(s) to choose prizes they will agree to.

Here's how to do it:

1. Write the three prizes you choose on the three pieces of tape. Stick those pieces of tape on your jar—one piece close to the bottom, one piece in the middle, and one piece at the top. Each time you start your homework, place one coin or rock in the jar.
2. Do your homework. (Don't rush—I know you're excited!)
3. When you finish your homework that day, place another coin or rock in the jar.
4. When you get to each line, you can get your prize!

With this activity, you learn that if you work hard, you'll be rewarded!



ACTIVITY 6

Helpful or Harmful?

Sometimes it's hard to know what helps us or harms us when we're trying to get things done, like homework. I've created a list below.

Imagine you are trying to finish a homework assignment before the deadline tomorrow. Which activities below would help you get it done?

Highlight all the activities that would be helpful to you.

Then cross out (or highlight in a darker color) all the activities that would be distracting to you.

Feeling hungry	Sitting	Having a small bowl of food to munch on
Using a timer	Standing	Taking a walk before starting the task
Listening to music	Turning off electronics	Getting a drink of water
Being around other people	Keeping pets away	Closing the door or window
Making a list of things I need to do to complete the assignment	Picturing the goal	Holding a fidget toy or object

Share this list with your family, so they understand which activities are helpful to you and which are harmful when you're trying to finish a task. This way, they can support you!

YOU DID IT!

Paying attention and focusing can be hard when you have ADHD. But if you know what to do, you can get back on task. In this chapter, you learned:

- **How to be an investigator of your body and notice more quickly when you become bored**
- **Activities like Anchor Down! ([here](#)) to help you refocus at school**
- **Ideas for if you need a short break, like chewing gum, tracing stencils, or even doing yoga**
- **How to make and use Emergency Focus Cards so you don't forget those activities**
- **What things are helpful and harmful when you're trying to focus**
- **How to reward yourself for hard work with the Homework Jar ([here](#))**

You accomplished a lot, and hopefully you feel your toolbox of skills filling up. Well done!

Time for a drawing break!

You're learning a lot of new skills, and even though it's fun to learn about how to help yourself, it can feel like a lot at once. Take a few minutes to draw, doodle, or write freely before moving on to the next activity.



CHAPTER FIVE

SELF-CONTROL, MANAGING IMPULSES, AND MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

When you think about self-control, what do you think about? Being quiet in a library? Staying seated in class?

What about when you think of “managing your impulses”? Do you think of not yelling at someone when you are really angry? Not grabbing the cookie off the counter when your dad told you not to?

What does making good decisions mean to you? Is it doing your homework instead of playing video games? Choosing to eat the apple rather than the donut?

Things like self-control are not easy or fun when you'd rather just run and play with no worries. But these are skills that can really help you do well and stay out of trouble! In this chapter, we'll investigate what these issues mean when you have ADHD and how you can learn these skills.

Taking Charge of My Reactions

SELF-CONTROL

Children with ADHD sometimes have difficulty controlling their feelings and actions. That is called self-control. Remember how at the beginning of the book we talked a little bit about how the brain works? Kids with ADHD have brains that work differently from those of kids without ADHD. This can be wonderful, because it gives you your awesome imagination. It also probably gives you the most incredible ideas at the most random times! But it can make things difficult, too, because it can also make it hard to control your feelings and actions.

MANAGING IMPULSES

Have you ever felt the urge to do something and then realized it wasn't a good choice? This is what managing impulses is about. But if this happens to you, it's okay. You're reading this book—that tells me you've got the determination to work on this!

MAKING GOOD DECISIONS

You've heard this one, I bet. Making good decisions is pretty much exactly what it sounds like: making choices that you know will have a good or positive outcome. You know that choosing to study for your test is making a good decision. You realize you'll get a better grade if you study, and you'll better understand the subject by going over it again.

Enough learning—let's try some activities that will help you put this knowledge to work.

ACTIVITY 1

Decision Dice

About two weeks ago I sat with Jorge, a seven-year-old boy, who told me he was upset. I asked him if he felt comfortable to tell me why. He said he made a “bad” decision.

“What do you mean?” I asked Jorge.

“I stole a pack of gum from a store, and the manager caught me,” he said.

“How did that feel?” I asked him.

“Horrible,” he said. “I was embarrassed. I knew it was wrong, but I really wanted that pack of gum. So, I gave him back the gum.”

“What would you have done differently?” I asked Jorge.

Jorge thought for a minute. I saw his eyebrows rise. “Hmmm . . . well, I would have asked my parents if I could use my own money to buy it. It was only \$1.75, and I have \$10.75 saved up.”

“Yes,” I said in agreement. “That does sound like a positive choice.”

Finally, I asked Jorge what he could do if he really wanted something but maybe had to wait for it.

“Oh yeah,” he said. “I can be more patient.”

“Yes,” I said. “That would be good, especially because you know you’ll probably eventually get what you want.”

“And,” he said, smiling, “I could distract myself with another activity!”

“What a great idea!” I said. “What kind of activity are you thinking?”

“I could play with my little brother, clean my room, or walk my dog with my mom.”

“I love that!” I announced.

Do you see how Jorge made a poor decision but then realized how he could do things differently going forward? So, one great thing about looking at poor choices we’ve made in the past is that we can decide how we’d change it in the future.

Jorge had some great ideas for handling things he wanted but had to wait for. A great way to practice this is to play one of my favorite games: Decision Dice!

What you’ll need:

- 1 die
- A sheet of paper
- A pen or pencil

The objects of the game are:

1. To get really good at recognizing the difference between positive and negative decisions, and
2. To have fun!!

How to play:

Roll the die. If you roll a:

ONE: Recall one decision you made that you felt was very smart.

TWO: Think about a decision you made in the past that you would do differently if you made it today.

THREE: Think of a time when you felt someone else made a good choice.

FOUR: Think about how you come up with good decisions (for example, “I ask myself if it’s safe, if it’s kind, and if it’s smart”).

FIVE: Think about a decision you felt was right on a TV show or in a movie.

Six: Make up a story about someone and a decision they made—it could be positive or negative—and write it down or share it with a parent or another family member.

You can also play this game with a family member and talk about your answers.

WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES



Making good choices is one of the best things we can do in life. Every decision won't be perfect, but if we can learn from our mistakes, we can learn to make better choices in the future.

ACTIVITY 2

Feelings Bingo

Kids are always amazed when I tell them they have more control over their feelings than they think. “But how?” they often ask.

Do you want to know the secret? It’s simple. You have to be really in tune with what you’re feeling. All that means is that you need to know your body and mind really well. Just like you may know your favorite video game level really well or almost all of your favorite book’s words, you need to have that same level of understanding with what you’re feeling inside your body.

Don’t worry—it’s easier than it sounds. One great way to learn this skill is to understand what our different feelings mean. An awesome way to do this is to play Feelings Bingo.

What you’ll need:

- A sheet of paper
- A pen or pencil

The object of the game is to get bingo, which is five in a row—vertical, horizontal, or diagonal.

Here’s how you play:

1. Close your eyes and point to any number on the Feelings Bingo board.
2. Find that number on the List of Feelings.
3. On a separate piece of paper, write one sentence about the last time you had that feeling.
4. After you write the sentence, highlight that number.
5. Do this until you have bingo.

You can even take turns playing this game with a parent or friend and tell each other about your feelings instead of writing them down.

Here’s an example. Kuba closed his eyes and picked 6. Then he looked at the List of Feelings and saw that number 6 = angry. Then he wrote one sentence about what made him angry. He said: “Last week when I was at Chuck E. Cheese and I didn’t have enough tickets to get the prize I wanted, I felt angry.” Finally, he crossed off the number on his board to keep track of the numbers he’d picked, and he played again until he got bingo.

he picked, and he played again until he got bingo.

B	I	N	G	O
2	7	13	1	9
19	14	4	5	16
21	23	FREE SPACE	6	8
17	12	24	11	10
22	20	15	25	3

List of Feelings

1. Frustrated
2. Sad
3. Unsure
4. Confident
5. Embarrassed
6. Angry
7. Surprised
8. Amused
9. Shy
10. Guilty
11. Exhausted
12. Sensitive
13. Motivated
14. Excited
15. Determined
16. Envious

17. Friendly
18. Calm
19. Enraged
20. Lonely
21. Depressed
22. Shocked
23. Upset
24. Annoyed
25. Bored

ACTIVITY 3

Positive Police

It's not always easy to catch our brains when we're thinking negatively. Sometimes we're just having a bad day! But I want you to realize that you can be more in control of your thoughts than you think. We just have to learn how to catch our thoughts before they take charge. Imagine you're the police officer trying to catch the bad thoughts and replace them with good ones. Almost like a video game, right? So, your mission: Capture your negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones! Here is a chart with a few examples. Do you have a negative thought that keeps getting in your head? Fill in your own!

NEGATIVE THOUGHT	POSITIVE THOUGHT
I don't do well in school.	I just got an 80% on my math test.
No one likes me.	Carolina just asked me to sit with her at lunch.
My brother is mean to me.	My brother recently shared his dessert with me.

You can be your own positive police officer anytime you need to—just hunt those negative culprits down and replace them with positives!

ACTIVITY 4

Action-Reaction

Sometimes when we're upset or caught off guard, we react with poor choices. We may scream, yell, or even hit out of frustration. It can be hard to think of something else to do when we're so frustrated. A few weeks ago, Oliver, a nine-year-old boy, got so irritated when his older brother Scott grabbed the remote from him that he screamed and hit Scott on the back. He knew this reaction wasn't right, but in the moment, he couldn't think of what else to do. After that happened, Oliver tried the game Action-Reaction because it helped him remember what positive action he could react with next time.

What you need:

- A pen or pencil for the “spinner”

The object of the game is to practice more healthy reactions that we can have when we're frustrated, angry, or upset. Here's how to do it:

1. Lay the pen or pencil over the game board and spin it.
2. Whatever choice you land on, you practice.
3. Think about how you would do it. For example, if you land on “Count to 10,” think about something that upsets you. Would counting to 10 help?
4. Decide which choices work best for you, so you can use them the next time you are upset.



ACTIVITY 5

Choices and Do-Overs

Think of a choice you made that if you could, you'd do over again. It could be something like borrowing something from a friend without asking, or copying someone's homework. How did your choice affect other people? What could you have done instead?

Here is an easy exercise that can help you realize the choice you made, so you can make better choices in the future. Ask a parent to photocopy this sheet so you can use it again and again, or just write it down so you have it on hand.


The choice I made:

Why did I make this choice?

What were the consequences?

What could I have done instead?

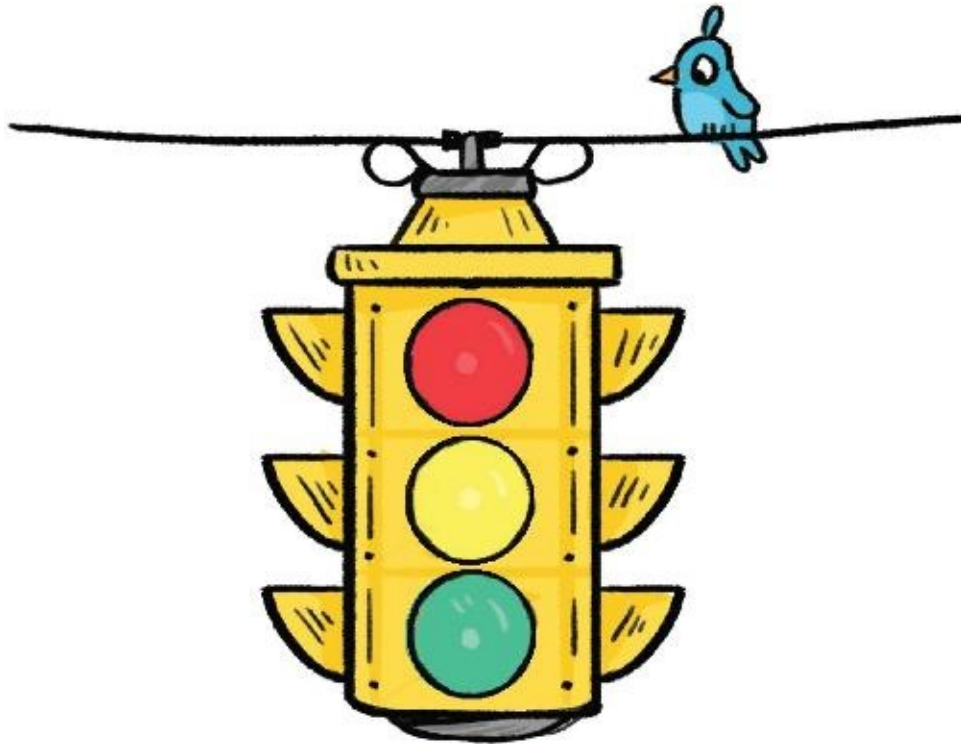
PRESS THE PAUSE BUTTON



One of the best ways to slow down your reaction is to press the pause button on your brain. Yes, you really can! That just means taking a quick break, taking some deep breaths, and pausing before you react or make a decision. Remember, it's always okay to say to someone, "I need some time to think about it."

FOLLOW THE IMPULSE STOPLIGHT

To help you slow down when you are about to do something, think of a red stoplight. You're on red, so stop and think. Then think about yellow, and make sure your impulse is the right one. Then with green, go forward and make your best choice!



ACTIVITY 6

Go, Me!

Remember Elmo from *Sesame Street*? The funny thing about Elmo is that he always refers to himself in the third person. He says, “Elmo likes ice cream!” or “Elmo wants to play!” But Elmo may be on to something smart using his own name!

Now, it sounds super strange, but studies show that when we talk to ourselves in the third person (using our own name), it seems to stick in our brain longer and help motivate us.⁶ So, if you are worried about something, it can help to say your own name and then a positive sentence afterward.

So, if your name is Nicole and you’re worried about the play you’re about to star in, you would say, “Nicole, you got this! Nicole, I know you can do it!”

If you are named Daniel, you can say this when you’re angry and want to calm down: “Daniel, you are okay. Daniel, just take a few deep breaths.”



Now it's your turn:

1. Think about what you're feeling right now. Are you sad? Worried?

Frustrated?

2. Say your own name out loud with whatever you're feeling and something positive to make yourself feel better.

I know it may feel a little silly, but it works. I remember for an important test, I said to myself beforehand, "Kelli, you can do this! Kelli, you know this material!" It helped me calm down and feel better.

The only rule is, make your statement a positive one, like you're talking to a friend. You can use it with whatever feeling you're having. If silliness helps you feel better, go ahead and be silly with it! "Kyle, you might be annoyed with having to clean your room, but at least you don't have to clean a barn full of farm animals!"

WHAT DO I NEED?

Some kids need to use their quiet space when they are mad. Others need to punch a pillow. Some like to take a walk. Learn what works best for you, so you can immediately do that thing when you're upset, and you'll feel better quicker.

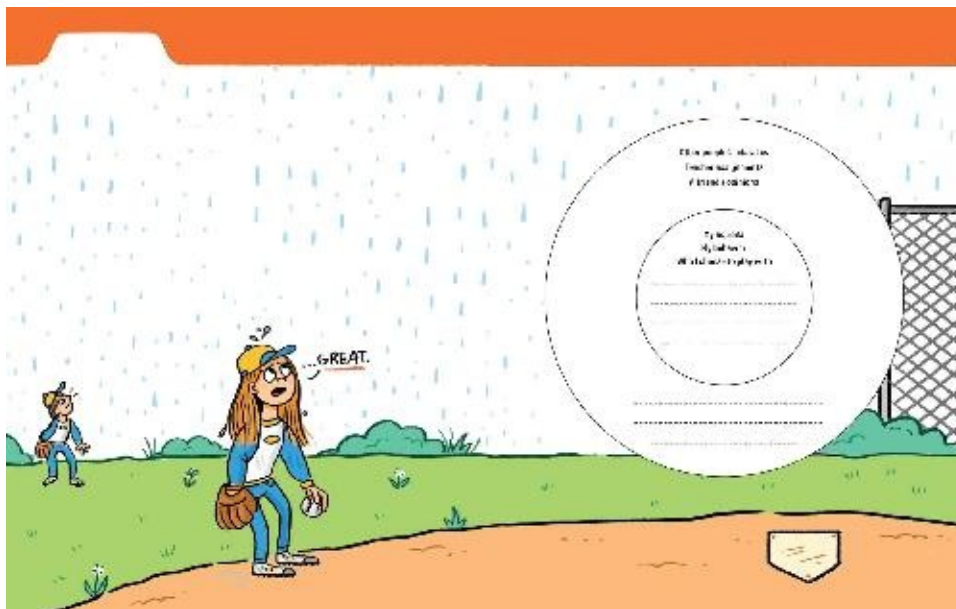
ACTIVITY 7

Control Center

As we grow, we learn that some things will be in our control, meaning we can change them, while other things we aren't able to control. So, for example, if you are planning a park day and it rains, that's out of your control. You can't control the weather. But if someone says something unkind to you, you can control how you react. You can choose to ignore it or tell them it hurt your feelings.

To help see the difference between the two, let's create a control center. I started it for you below.

1. In the middle circle, write some things you can control.
2. In the outer circle, write some things you can't control.
3. Look over the things you can control. How can you control them in a positive way?
4. Look over the things you can't control. What solutions can you come up with to react in a positive way?



YOU DID IT!

Learning to have self-control, managing your impulses, and making good decisions may not come as quickly as you like, but remember: It is possible with some hard work.

You learned:

- **Decision Dice ([here](#)):** This game reminds you that you do make great decisions, and even if you make a poor one, you'll understand how to make a better one next time.
- **Feelings Bingo ([here](#)):** This taught us more about what we're feeling. It may not always be happy or sad. We may feel confused, tired, or bored, and it's helpful to figure out exactly how we feel.
- **Positive Police ([here](#)):** If we have a negative thought or feeling, we can capture that negative thought and replace it with a positive one!
- **Action-Reaction ([here](#)):** This activity taught us simple things to do if we're overwhelmed or mad or need to calm down, such as walk away, take deep breaths, or listen to music.
- **Choices and Do-Overs ([here](#)):** You now understand your own emotions better and how to control them.
- **Control Center ([here](#)):** You learned more about things you can control and things you can't.
- **Go, Me! ([here](#)):** Don't forget to use your name to get through the hard times! *Insert your name here* 'you can do this!

Time for a drawing break!

You're learning a lot of new skills, and even though it's fun to learn about how to help yourself, it can feel like a lot at once. Take a few minutes to draw, doodle, or write freely before moving on to the next activity.



PART THREE



**ADHD and Me
in the World:
Success at
Home, at
School, and
with Friends**

You're now ready to take the next steps in learning how to manage your ADHD. These are the "action" lessons: habits, routines, getting ready for school, friends, communication, and homework.

In the previous chapters you learned about including your strengths and your challenges, in what ways ADHD shows up in you, and how to control and manage your emotions and feelings. You've mastered those concepts! Now you'll be learning how to put all the skills you learned into play. You are certainly ready, and when you learn these skills, you're going to feel great!

CHAPTER SIX

MAKING HABITS AND ROUTINES SIMPLE AND FUN

One of the best things you can do if you have ADHD is to have routines. Why? Our brains can get distracted, so we need the structure of a routine to keep us on course. We need the foundation. Imagine a super tall building like the Empire State Building in New York. If it didn't have a solid structure, it would fall down, right? We also need structure to keep afloat and keep us on track. I have worked with many kids and can tell you from my experience, making a routine is one of the best ways you can set yourself up for success.

ACTIVITY 1

Night-before List

Is getting ready in the morning one of your biggest struggles? If so, I can help you make it easier.

The first thing we'll do is brainstorm things you can do at night to prepare, so you can make the morning less hectic. I helped Jordana, and these were her brainstorm ideas:

The night before, I will:

1. Lay out clothes I will wear the next day.
2. Get backpack ready with schoolwork already inside.
3. Place cereal bowl out.
4. Make lunch or help my parent make lunch.
5. Place jacket near backpack.

Can you think of what your own nighttime list could include?

Things I can do at night to make the morning easier:

You can copy this list on another piece of paper. Keep the list by your bed or dresser, and make a routine of checking it each night before you go to bed. This way you can tackle some of these items at night and have a less stressful morning!



ACTIVITY 2

Morning Map

David is a super funny and creative 8-year-old boy, full of new and innovative ideas. The mornings used to be tough for him, because he'd get distracted and forget all the things he needed to get done. One of the things that helped him was a Morning Map—a chart with a list of pictures of what he needed to do each morning. He put his Morning Map on his mirror so he could see it first thing when he woke up.

Charts with pictures, like this Morning Map, are amazing at jogging our memory and keeping us on track. They can actually be super fun to create as well.

Here's an example. Your list may be different, depending on your routine:



I've made a list with pictures. Any of these may be things that you need to do in the mornings. Ask a parent to make a photocopy of this activity so you can cut out each activity to create your own list, or add your own, to your Morning Map in the order that works best for you.



Add your own:

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ACTIVITY 3

Notes to Self

Routines are great, but it is also helpful to learn ways to remember what we need to do. This helps us keep our routines in place. We already talked about charts to help us prepare at night and in the morning. What are some other ways we can remember things?

I've created a list. Highlight the items that you feel can help you remember your routine or the things you need to do. In the blank squares, fill in your own:

Put sticky notes with messages on your mirror.	Write the message on your hand.	Set an alarm to remind yourself of tasks.	Put the object you need to bring by the door.
Put a note on your backpack.	Set a calendar reminder.	Put a calendar in your room.	Sing a song to remind yourself.
Use a voice recorder to remind you of things.	Take a walk or make up a dance routine to remember.	Put a notebook by your bed for quick notes.	Use a checklist.
Use a visual chart.	Use your Emergency Focus Cards.	Write the due date on top of each assignment.	
Write out your instructions.	Have someone else read the instructions to you.	Schedule a specific time to do what you need to do.	

HELP! SHORTCUTS FOR GETTING OUT THE DOOR



Remember these fun sayings to get out the door and when you return.

IN THE MORNING: *Better Have Fun!*

B = Brush Teeth

H = Homework

F = Food

WHEN I GET HOME: *Home Bound Rejoice!*

H = Homework

B = Brush Teeth

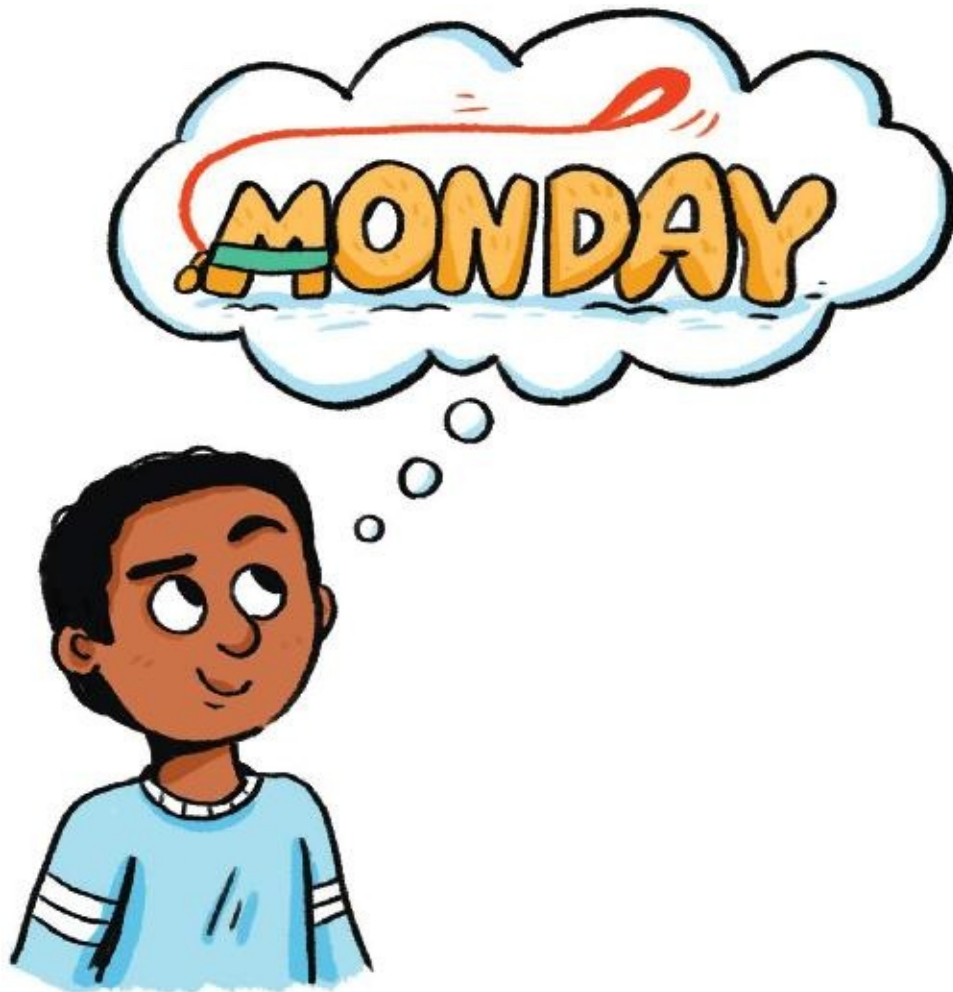
R = Relax

ACTIVITY 4

Picture It

I was at a wedding, and the party planner was able to memorize all 200 guests' names—these were people he'd just met! How? He taught us a secret. He would say a person's name out loud and then imagine something that went with it. For example, he met Susie, a woman in her 70s, and he thought about what described her. He thought, *salt and pepper Susie* because her hair was gray and black. This trick helped him remember Susie's name by what she looked like. Can this help you remember things you need to do? Absolutely—I'll show you how, and you can use this trick for home and school.

First, try to visualize what you want to remember. For example, if you need to bring your field trip money in on Wednesday, imagine a dollar bill with the word "Wednesday" on it. This will help you remember.



Here are some sample events, with my ideas of how I would visualize them.

Try to visualize how *you* would remember them.

1. Science test on Friday

My visualization: an experiment test tube with the word “Friday” coming out of it

Your visualization:

2. Dance recital practice

My visualization: a group of dancers forming a *P* for practice


Your visualization:

3. Walk the dog on Monday morning

My visualization: the word “Monday” attached to a leash

Your visualization:

CHANGING BEHAVIORS



To make things easier for you in your life, you may have to make some changes or pick up on some new behaviors. Change might be hard at first, but it will definitely be easier in the long run. Don't give up—always think about your goal.

ACTIVITY 5

Float: A Bedtime Unwinding Ritual

After a full day going full speed ahead, do you find it's hard to suddenly stop and go to sleep? That's why it's also helpful to have a nighttime routine.

Lila is a sweet and active 12-year-old girl who found it REALLY hard to get to sleep. I taught her this relaxation technique to unwind, and before she could even finish . . . zzzzz.

This routine is very easy. You can either read this next section first before you start or have an adult read it to you while you follow along:

1. Lie down and close your eyes. Feel your whole body, heavy and relaxed, like you're floating in the sea. Leave your worries in the sea to drift away. You are fully relaxed and at peace. Floating.
2. Notice your feet. They feel soft, heavy in the water, and at ease. All the bones in each of your feet are slowly letting go. Focus on each toe and how it is relaxing. Feel each ligament, muscle, and bone loosening up. Your feet should feel like they are sinking more and more into the sea. Take a few deep breaths.
3. Next, go to your ankles. Imagine releasing stress through your ankles. They feel heavy and relaxed. Slowly breathe in and out.
4. Continue up your body to your shins, then your knees. You are letting go of everything in your knees. Imagine your knees sinking into the water underneath you.
5. Continue upward toward your hips. Your hips feel heavy in the water, just like the rest of you. Everything is relaxed.
6. Next, focus on your hands. Imagine each finger releasing every worry you have and letting them go into the water. Take a few deep breaths. Your hands are heavy in the water.
7. Travel up your arms to your shoulders. Your shoulders are getting heavier, along with your stomach and chest. Breathe out all the stress and tension. Imagine everything feels more free and at peace.
8. Continue up to your neck, and loosen all the muscles in your neck. Feel your breath slowing down, and take a moment to see how relaxed you feel.

9. Travel up to your face. Release the tension in your jaw muscles. Relax them and let go, releasing those muscles into the water, too. Travel upward to your nose and eyes. Your eyes should feel heavy and tired. Finally, release all the tension in your head. Breathe it all out slowly. You are fully relaxed.



STOP, DROP, AND BREATHE!

Breathing is so simple—we all do it! But it's also a really valuable tool. You can use this simple breathing trick anytime for anything: stress, frustration, not being able to sleep, or just wanting some relaxation. Here's how:

1. Start by exhaling all the way out.
2. Breathe in slowly for a count of 5.
3. Hold your breath for a count of 5.
4. Release your breath slowly for a count of 5.
5. Repeat as needed.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

To learn any new skill or coping tool, they say it takes 21 days to form the habit. So just remember, if these new skills don't come to you right away, give it a little time and patience. With practice, you'll get better every day.

YOU DID IT!

Incredible job! You've learned a ton of ideas for how to add more routine and structure in your day and new ways to remember things! Routines help us stay focused, motivated, and on the right path. To help you develop and keep routines, you learned:

- **How a night list can make mornings run more smoothly**
- **Picture It ([here](#)), which taught you memorizing techniques to help remember things**
- **Tools and materials you can use to remember things (sticky notes, anyone?)**
- **How to make visual charts for the morning**

As a bonus, you were taught a well-deserved relaxation technique for nighttime. Who knows? You might even learn to look forward to bedtime now!

CHAPTER SEVEN

FRIENDS, COMMUNICATION, AND SPEAKING UP

You've done an amazing job of learning more about yourself and your feelings and emotions. Now let's talk about others. When you understand others, it makes it easier to communicate, express yourself thoughtfully, and get along with friends, family, and teachers.

To understand others, it's important to learn more about how *they're* feeling. In this chapter, we're going to explore the best way to understand how others are feeling, how you can be a good friend, and how to ask for what you need.

ACTIVITY 1

Empathy Drawing: Part 1

My friend Bode has a great understanding of how others are feeling. He has what we call empathy, or the ability to put himself in others' shoes. In my job as a therapist, it's very important to have empathy. That way I can imagine how someone may feel, even if I've never been in that situation before.

One of the best ways to really connect with a friend is to know how they feel. This way, you can be a good friend because you understand what that person needs.

Look at each picture, and write down what you think the person with the thought bubble is feeling. You can be my empathy investigator!



.....





ACTIVITY 2

Empathy Drawing: Part 2

You did an incredible job using empathy to imagine how the people in the previous pictures were feeling. Now your job is to think HOW you could respond and be a great friend to that person in the situation. Write your answers below:







ACTIVITY 3

Friendship: True or False?

Highlight *True* or *False* for these questions about friendships.

1. To be a good friend, I should always do what my friend wants to do. **True / False**
2. If I yell at a friend, I can always apologize. **True / False**
3. If I don't want to play something, I can ask nicely to play something else. **True / False**
4. To show my interest in a friend, I can ask them about what they like to do. **True / False**
5. Smiling is a way to show kindness. **True / False**
6. It's hard to share, so I don't need to do it. **True / False**
7. If people are playing and I want to join, I can always ask. **True / False**
8. I can be mean and still expect people to like me. **True / False**
9. A good friend shows respect to other people's things. **True / False**
10. Most everyone likes to feel special, so I can show them or tell them why they are special to me. **True / False**

Answers:

1. False. To be a good friend is to be kind and respectful. It doesn't mean you have to do everything the other person wants to do.
2. True. If you make a mistake, an apology is always the best first step.
3. True. You can always suggest another activity you want to play instead.
4. True. People love to tell others what they like. When you ask about them, it shows you are interested.
5. True. A smile is always a nice way to express emotion.
6. False. Sharing *is* hard, but in friendships, it's important to compromise and take turns sharing.
7. True. Sometimes people don't realize you want to play with them, so it's always good to ask!
8. False. People don't appreciate people who are mean. They want to be around people who are kind and respectful.
9. True. To earn someone's trust, it's important to show respect or care for their things.
10. True. Showing or telling someone why they are special will most likely put a smile on anyone's face!

ACTIVITY 4

3 True, 1 False

It's not always easy communicating how we feel. Sometimes we may not even know how we feel nor how to describe it, and we may not even want to talk about it. Finn, a 9-year-old, felt pressured and uncomfortable whenever her mom asked why she was upset or anxious. This activity helped her practice expressing herself in a fun way!

What you'll need:

- 3 true facts about how you feel or felt
- 1 false (made-up) fact about how you feel or felt

Prepare your 3 true facts. For example, here are Finn's:

1. I'm feeling sad that no one volunteered to be my partner today in science class.
2. I'm going to Disneyland tomorrow, and I'm super excited.
3. I get very anxious when I see clowns.

Then prepare your false fact. This is the fun part. You can make up anything!

4. I didn't like my dinner, so I gave it to the dog.

Then ask a friend, parent, or relative to guess which fact is the made-up fact. You'd be surprised how many times people get it wrong! But the good thing is, that person will also understand how you feel about the true facts. It's a great way for others to understand more about you. (Maybe you can ask a friend to do this activity with you, so you can understand them better, too!)

HOW AM I DOING?



It's important to think before we make a decision or take action. This sounds simple, but it isn't always easy! One of the best ways to "think before we act" is to recognize what we feel in our own body. Are you tight in the shoulders, which could mean you feel angry or frustrated? Do you have butterflies in your tummy, which could mean you are nervous? If we investigate and figure out what our body is feeling, we can then make better decisions about what we need.

ACTIVITY 5

Polite vs. Demanding

Let's talk a little about polite communication and demanding communication. You may not realize there are two different types of speaking. Polite communication is stating what you need respectfully and nicely. Demanding communication is telling others what you need in a disrespectful or rude way. Highlight whether each statement in bold is polite or demanding:

Mom: "Jack, can you please put your dishes in the sink?"

Jack: "NO! I'm not going to do the dishes, and don't ask me again!"

Polite/Demanding

Mom: "Jack, can you please put your dishes in the sink?"

Jack: "Yes, I can put the dishes in the sink."

Polite/Demanding

Theo and Tess are playing in the basement. Theo has been playing with a toy Tess wanted for a while. Tess turns to Theo:

"Theo, could I please play with that toy now?"

Polite/Demanding

Theo and Tess are playing in the basement. Theo has been playing with a toy Tess wanted for a while. Tess turns to Theo:

"Theo, you've playing with that toy for hours! It's not fair. It's my turn now. Give it to me!"

Polite/Demanding

Aaron saw a group of boys playing dodgeball. He really wanted to join them but felt shy. He walked over to the group and said,

"Hi, I'm Aaron. Would it be okay to join you in your dodgeball game?"

Polite/Demanding

Aaron saw a group of boys playing dodgeball. He really wanted to join them but felt shy. He walked over to the group and said,

"I'm the best at dodgeball. You need to include me, and if you don't, I'll

tell a teacher.”

Polite/Demanding

Which type of communication do you think makes people like us? It's pretty clear that polite communication is a nicer way of talking. Sometimes we might use demanding communication when we are upset, but in the end, we are more likely to get what we want by being polite about it!

ACTIVITY 6

Feel-Good Actions

When I was 12 years old, a group of boys made fun of me outside my French classroom. I was so embarrassed. I wanted to dig a hole, crawl in, and never come out! A blond-haired boy named Andy saw this happening and afterward came up to me. He looked at me, hugged me, and asked me if I was okay. I felt so cared for in that moment. It was one of the nicest things anyone ever did for me, and even though I'm grown up now, I still remember that person's kindness.

Write about a time you felt very cared for or helped by someone:

Now can you think of a way *you* could make *someone else* feel good?

ARE YOU A MIND READER?



Do you sometimes wish you could read other people's minds? Me too! But unless you are psychic, or have the ability to truly read minds, people have to tell you what they are feeling or what they want you to know. So remember, in order for people to understand what *you* need or want, you need to tell them!

ACTIVITY 7

How to Ask for What I Need

Match each picture to the best way to ask for what you need.

Can you please help me complete this?

May I please play with you?

Can you please explain what you said again?

Thank you for this, but I don't like it.

I feel very overwhelmed by my mess. Can you help me figure out the best way to start?









ACTIVITY 8

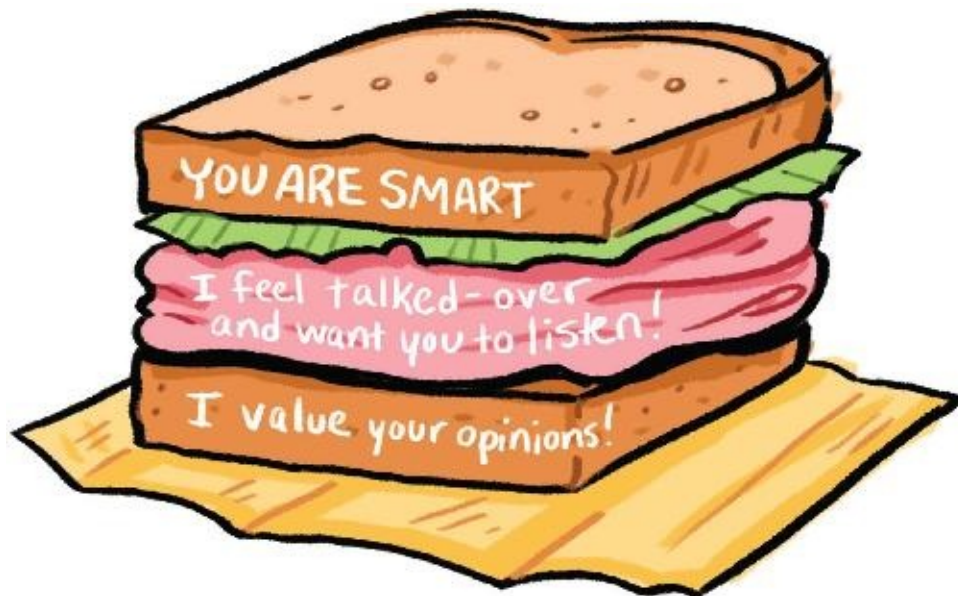
Sandwich Method

It's hard to tell people what we feel. One of my favorite tricks is called the Sandwich Method. You start by saying something nice about the person, then talk about how you feel and what you need, and then you end with another positive statement.

THE BREAD: Say something nice.

THE MEAT: Say how you feel and what you need.

THE BREAD: End with something positive.



Here is Connor's example:

“Ella, I’m really glad we’re on the same soccer team, and I like you. But when you say no one likes me, it makes me sad and hurts my feelings. I hope you can say nice things to me, because I like being your friend.”

ACTIVITY 9

YOU DID IT!

Now you know that empathy, or the ability to imagine what someone is going through, is a wonderful and important trait to have. Anyone can learn it—it just may take some practice. If you have empathy, you will help people feel cared for and appreciated. In this chapter, you learned:

- **Why it's important to understand and pay attention to how people feel**
- **How to be a better friend by understanding more about people's emotions**
- **How you can play a part in being a better friend**
- **How to be polite, rather than demanding, in asking for what you need and want**
- **How to say what you need with the Sandwich Method ([here](#))**

What you've learned here will help you build strong friendships. Excellent work!

Time for a drawing break!

You're learning a lot of new skills, and even though it's fun to learn about how to help yourself, it can feel like a lot at once. Take a few minutes to draw, doodle, or write freely before moving on to the next activity.



CHAPTER EIGHT

A PLAN FOR MAKING PLANS: Homework, Projects, and Long-Term Plans

Homework. Projects. Long-term plans. Yup, just those words can send you into a daze, right? No fear, planning tips are here! In this chapter, we'll explore the best ways to take control of your homework, projects, and long-term plans. You'll understand how to organize and manage your time so things aren't as overwhelming. We'll create charts and puzzles to help you see things differently. You'll get a better understanding of priorities and figure out what needs to get accomplished immediately. You've got this!

ACTIVITY 1

What Type of Learner Am I?

Do you know what type of learner you are? Let's discover if you're a "hearing," "seeing," or "feeling" learner. If you can figure out what type of learner you are, you can understand what you need to succeed in school and learning.

HEARING LEARNER

- Do you understand best when the teacher explains things out loud?
- Are you a great speller?
- Do you have a good sense about how long projects and homework will take?

SEEING LEARNER

- Do you remember things in pictures?
- Do you learn better by watching a demonstration?
- Do people say you have a good imagination?

FEELING LEARNER

- Do you learn best by moving and touching things?
- Do you notice outside noises, lights, etc.?
- Do you sometimes lose track of time?

You may be a combination of these learners, but my guess is that you'll have one main type.

If you're a hearing learner, it can help you to ask for your instructions out loud. Try to do as much as you can from hearing things.

If you're a seeing learner, you may ask for your instructions on paper or to have them demonstrated to you. It might even help you to draw or doodle while you gather information.

If you're a feeling learner, ask permission to move, touch, or exercise while you learn.

ACTIVITY 2

Weekly Homework Chart

I'll admit—this doesn't sound exciting. But it *will* help you remember assignments, and that's exciting (just think how you'll feel when your teacher commends you)! Let me tell you a story: Twelve-year-old Elan struggled with organization. He'd forget what was due and when it was due. Together, we created a weekly homework chart that helped him get on track.

To make your own, you can use the blank chart here and make copies every week. It's simple: Every Monday, fill in the dates for your homework assignments for the week, and write in what is due each day. I've included an example to show you how it's done—use the second one to copy and fill in each week.

	MONDAY Date:	TUESDAY Date:	WEDNESDAY Date:	THURSDAY Date:	FRIDAY Date:
Social Studies	Read chapter 3				
Math		Do problems 40-55			
Writing			Write 2 paragraphs from story		
Science					Sci Fa
Spelling				Study for test!	
Reading					
Other			Lunch money!		

Social Studies					
Math					
Writing					
Science					
Spelling					
Reading					
Other					

ACTIVITY 3

Rocking My Priorities

Ellie is a 10-year-old girl who got overwhelmed by all she had to do. Sometimes she had trouble prioritizing or figuring out what to do first (or even what to do at all!). So together, Ellie and I created a story:

Ellie was walking in a forest. She found three rocks. One rock was super heavy, like a boulder. She could barely lift it, but she did. The second rock she found was about the size of a brick. She could lift it, and it wasn't as heavy as the boulder, but it took a little effort. Finally, she found a pebble. That, of course, was super light, and she was able to carry it with ease.

I then told Ellie to think of what she had to do in school in regard to “rocks.”

The most important things she had to take care of were her boulders. These could be big projects or tests. These were the things that were super important, and, once finished, she'd feel very relieved—like the weight of a boulder was off her shoulders!

The second most important things were her bricks. These were tasks that were important but maybe not as important as the boulders—things like homework or chapter reading. These might need to be done first, but they wouldn't take as much time as the boulders.

Finally, the pebbles were the least important. These included things like extra credit or those things not due immediately—the light and easy stuff.

Can you think of the things in school that are *your* boulders, bricks, and pebbles? Below, match the tasks to the rocks. This will help you recognize what in school are your priorities, which you'll want to give the most attention to.

Science test

Extra-credit reading

Math homework

Optional spelling bee

Social studies diorama project

History quiz

Bonus chapter reading for fun


Book report

3 math problems

Grammar worksheet



ASK FOR HELP OR DO IT YOURSELF (BOTH ARE JUST FINE!)



Sometimes we can do things by ourselves, and that feels great. Other times we may need the assistance of others—that's okay, too! It's up to you to know which one you need. You can always try to do it by yourself, and then if you realize you need help, you can ask for it.

ACTIVITY 4

Picture This

One of the best ways to complete a project is to visualize it first. That means truly imagining or picturing yourself doing that thing before it happens. So if you're nervous about being in the school play, I want you to imagine yourself on the stage. What are you wearing? Imagine yourself as your character, feeling prepared and saying your lines. I want you to hear the audience cheering. See yourself smiling and feeling confident.

You can do the same if you're nervous about a test. Imagine yourself being in the test room. What does the room look like? Who are you sitting next to? Can you touch the desk? What does it feel like? Imagine yourself feeling prepared. You've studied and know the material. Imagine the smell of your pencil and the feeling of the paper. See yourself writing your answers down. I want you to see yourself breezing through the test with ease. You feel calm and happy. Truly visualize yourself passing the test!

Now think about a goal that perhaps you feel overwhelmed or scared about and the positive outcome or result you want to see. Draw that positive outcome. Be sure to include flags, fireworks, cheering fans—whatever you imagine!



ACTIVITY 5

3-Step Planning

Do you have a hard time planning how you're going to do something? If so, you're not alone. Planning is hard for lots of people—even adults. Kids with ADHD can have an especially hard time developing a plan or a goal and an even tougher time following through with it! I'm going to help simplify it for you, so you can easily complete what you set out to do. It takes just three steps:

1. **Come up with an idea, goal, or plan.** For example, Alex's goal was "I want to get better grades."
2. **Take that goal and break it down into smaller goals.** Here are the smaller goals Alex came up with for getting better grades: "Study more regularly. Get more sleep. Ask for help if I need it. Don't wait until the last minute to do projects."
3. **Now break those goals down into even smaller steps.** Alex's smaller goals are: "Set aside a specific time every day to study. Go to bed 30 minutes earlier. Make a list of who I can ask for help. Print out a monthly calendar to see when projects are due. Work on projects for 30 minutes each day."

The key is in the small changes. They make all the difference, because they tell you EXACTLY what to do to succeed in your goal! Can you think of a goal you want to achieve? Break it down here:

1. Your goal:

2. Break it down into smaller goals:

1.

2.

3.

3. Break it down into even smaller (very specific) steps:

1.

2.

3.

Great work!

ACTIVITY 6

Obstacle Maze

Sometimes we have a clear path and can easily get to where we want to go. Other times, there may be obstacles in our way that make it harder for us. Whether you face a little obstacle or a big one, use creativity to get to where you want to go!

Challenge yourself to this obstacle maze, and as you go through, write one solution to each obstacle you come across in your path.



Solution 1:

Solution 2:

Solution 3:

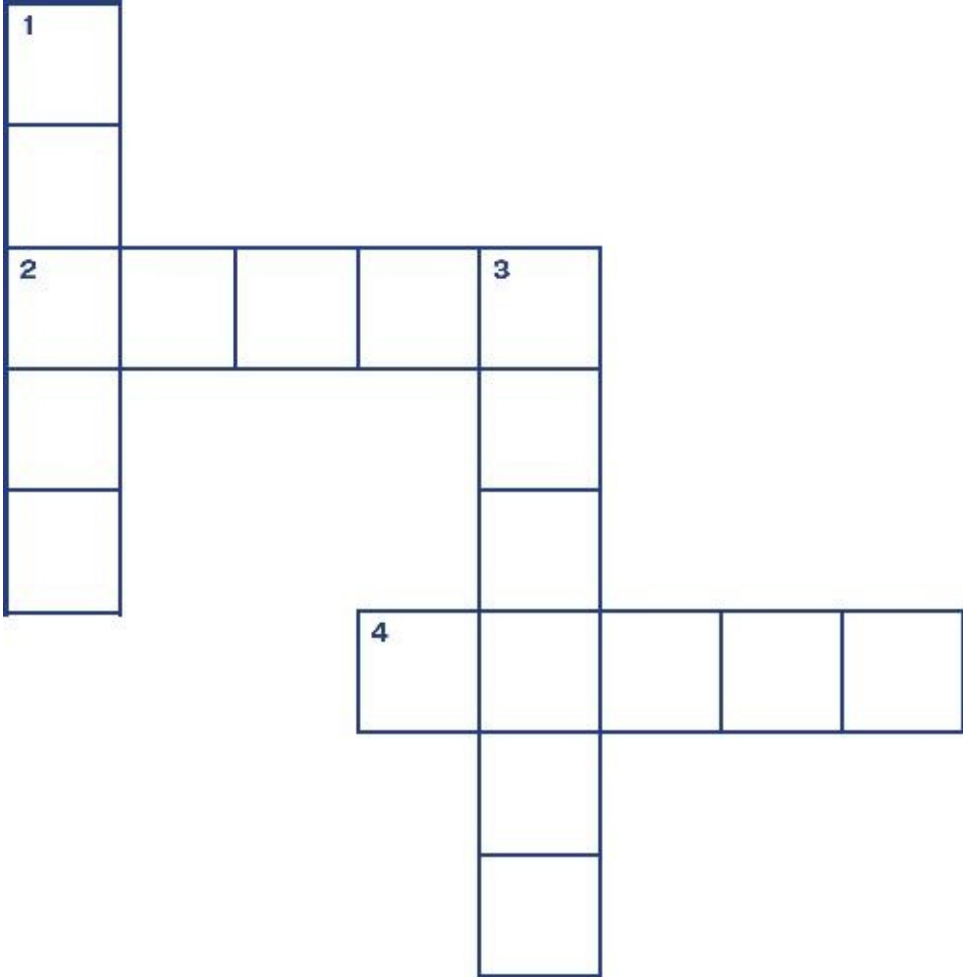
Solution 4:

Solution 5:

ACTIVITY 7

Crossword Puzzle

Even though games are fun, they can also challenge our brains and make us smarter. See if you can fill out this fun crossword puzzle to remind you of the tools you can use to get more organized.



Clues

Down:

1. Setting small steps toward these can help me not get as overwhelmed.
3. If I have a visual chart, it can help jog my -----.

Across:

2. I can set this to remind myself of things I need to do.
4. Writing one of these and sticking it on my mirror is a great reminder.

Answers:

1. Goals
2. Alarm
3. Memory
4. Notes

SMALL GOALS



There's a saying: *How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.* No, you don't have to eat an elephant, but this saying means that even a really big project is possible if you do it in small, manageable steps. For example, if you have a three-page paper due in three weeks (that you are dreading), break it down. The first week, pick your topic and write two paragraphs. This gives you a whole week to do a little bit of work. The next week, make it your goal to write one full page, and the last week, make it a goal to complete the final page. This way you're focusing only on one small goal at a time, and it won't seem so overwhelming.

MONTHLY CALENDAR

It's super helpful to print a monthly calendar so you can see the "big picture." You can find a printout online by searching for "monthly calendar." To plan, write down your assignment's due date and work backward from there to set small goals.

YOU'RE A STAR!

You've done incredible work so far and deserve to be rewarded! One of my favorite systems is the star chart. Simply use the chart below or create your own with fun characters or colors. Every time your parent feels you've done a great job at something, you get a star. After five stars, it's reward time!

Excellent!	Way to go!	Great work!	You should be proud!	Congrats!

YOU DID IT!

After all the hard work you've put in, I hope you see that you can handle homework and projects so much better than before. Just in this chapter, you learned:

- **How you learn best—whether you're a hearing, seeing, or feeling learner**
- **How to create a weekly homework chart to start off the week in a beautifully organized way**
- **How to prioritize your projects by seeing them as three different kinds of rocks. You got the idea that a boulder is the most important, and you'll feel the most relieved getting that project done. The brick comes next in importance, and the pebble is the very last on your priority list.**
- **How to visualize your goals and see them come to life**
- **How to plan a goal in three simple steps and break that plan down into smaller goals**

Plus, with some creativity and hard work, you got through my maze of obstacles, all the while coming up with solutions! Finally, you completed my crossword puzzle to remind you of tools you can use to get organized. You are on fire!

CHAPTER NINE

I AM PREPARED!

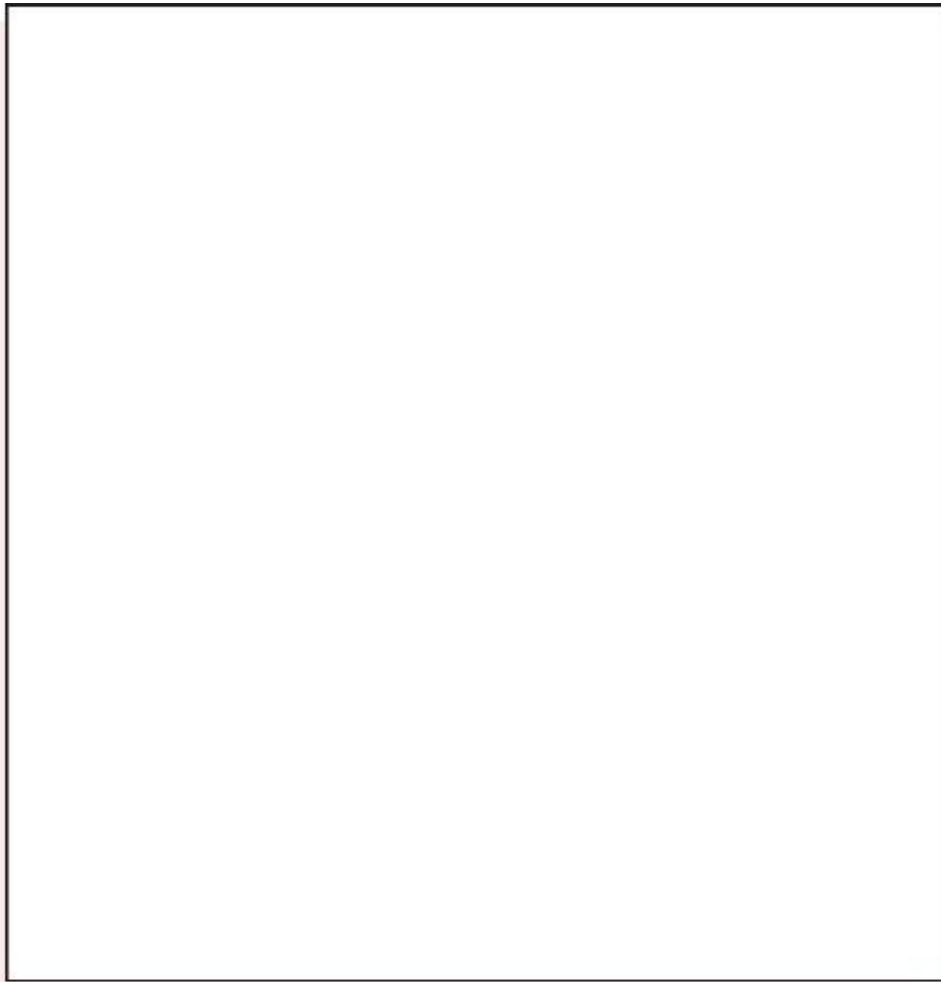
The assignments in this book were no easy feat, but guess what? You did it! You identified your triggers and ways to prevent them. You learned skills for focus, attention, listening, self-control, managing impulses, and making good decisions. You learned about how routines can help you succeed, and you learned new ways of tackling homework. You even learned about communication, friendships, and speaking assertively.

Now we're going to do a few final activities to take everything you learned and cement it into place. Almost there. Well done!

ACTIVITY 1

My Positive Future

What does success look like to you? Doing well in school? Being a doctor, a police officer, an acrobat? Being kinder to friends? Making friends? Or being more polite? You drew yourself at the beginning of the book, and now, because you've come so far, I want you to draw yourself again. This time, draw yourself with all the new skills you've learned. What do you look like, being so successful, going forward?



ACTIVITY 2

Letter to Future Self

About four years ago, I went to an overnight camp for grown-ups. One of the activities they had us do was write a letter to ourselves and seal it in a self-addressed envelope. That same sealed letter we wrote was sent to us exactly one year later. I'll never forget opening up that letter one year to the date later and realizing how much had changed!

I want you to do the same. Write a letter to yourself. Talk about your goals, dreams, fears, friendships, hopes—all of it! Then seal it, address it to yourself with a stamp, and give it to your parent or a trusted teacher. Ask them to mail it to you one year from that date. You will be amazed at what you discover!

Date:

Dear

,

Love,

ACTIVITY 3

Ladder to Success

What is one of your major future goals? To be a veterinarian? A painter? A teacher? An engineer?

Write that goal on the top of your ladder. Now, on each ladder rung leading up to your goal, write a small step that you can do to get there. It could be finishing high school, studying extra hard in a certain subject, or whatever you feel can help you get to your goal. Just know that the steps you take now can definitely help you succeed later—you can do it!



ACTIVITY 4

Recipe for Success

My grandma used to make the most delicious jelly cookies. She used about seven different ingredients to make them. I try to imagine the cookies without any one of those seven ingredients, and I *know* it just wouldn't taste as good. You need *all* the ingredients for it to be the best.

Let's create *your* recipe for success. It takes a lot of things to be successful, so let's think of them all! Here's a sample. Your recipe may need more or less of a certain ingredient, so you decide what it will take for you!

SAMPLE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

3 cups effort

1 cup creativity

1 tablespoon ideas

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup imagination

1 pound leadership

1 pound teamwork

2 teaspoons kindness

1 cup artistic ability

MY RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup

3 tablespoons

1 cup

.....

.....

.....

.....

ACTIVITY 5

Leaping Hurdles

No matter who we are, there will be obstacles in our way to success. That's normal. Life is not a straight and direct path that's always simple. The best way to move through hard times is to figure out a way to get past them.

Let's leap some hurdles. Match each obstacle to the best solution.

**HAVING A HARD TIME
FOCUSING**

Recognizing that sometimes failure is a first step to succeeding and trying again

**SOMEONE SOMETHING
TELLING NEGATIVE US**

Reaching out to friends

FAILING AT A TASK

Taking a quick break

FEELING LONELY

Taking some deep breaths and visualizing success

**GETTING ANXIOUS ABOUT A
TEST**

Surrounding ourselves with positive people

NOTE THE GOOD STUFF!



Did you have a favorite activity in this book? Did something in particular stand out for you? An exercise you did, or something I said? If you like, go back and highlight it, or bookmark the page. This way, you can always go back and refer to it.

ACTIVITY 6

Keep the Games Coming!

Don't stop with this book—the games you have at home can help strengthen your skills, too. Great games you can play to help you with all you've learned throughout this book include:

- Scrabble: helps you organize and plan
- Musical Chairs: helps you listen and focus
- Apples to Apples: helps with thinking about others
- Pictionary: builds time management and creativity skills
- Freeze Tag: helps with focus and attention
- Uno: helps with planning and organization
- Jenga: helps with planning and self-control
- Chess: builds memory and planning skills
- Trivial Pursuit: helps you with perseverance
- Sudoku: builds planning and memory skills
- Simon Says: helps with listening and planning

Keep in mind, games like these can also help you build skills in teamwork, empathy, and—if you lose—even frustration and anger management! Anybody who plays lots of games is probably going to get very good in all these areas—and they're great tools for life and success!

Can you think of any others?

GET INSPIRED!



Is there someone who inspires you or amazes you? Put their picture on your wall as a reminder that you, too, can be incredible. Think about what makes them so amazing. If the person is close to you (a parent, a teacher, etc.), ask them how they were able to achieve what they did. We can always learn from those who inspire us!

YOU DID IT!

NOW TAKE YOUR SKILLS AND SOAR!

I want to personally thank you for all your hard work and effort in completing the exercises and readings in this book. I know that you worked exceptionally hard to better yourself, to improve yourself both at home and at school, and to learn more appropriate ways to interact with others. In this chapter, we learned ways that we can stay on track in the future. In fact, we looked to your future success with activities like My Positive Future ([here](#)), Letter to Future Self ([here](#)), and Ladder to Success ([here](#))—and you fought through the potential obstacles with Leaping Hurdles ([here](#)). Moving forward, you can use the activities in this book (remember to note your favorites) or get ideas from Keep the Games Coming! ([here](#)) to continue strengthening all your wonderful skills.

I think children with ADHD are awesome, and you've given me a wonderful opportunity to work with the people I hold so dear to my heart. Please remember how special you are and what you can achieve, because it is incredible—you have gifts that are unique to you alone. And please remember, you can return to this book anytime you need a refresher in any area. You are amazing, and I know you are going to do great things!

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

I'm so glad you have this book, because the more parents understand about ADHD, the better we can help our children learn and grow to be empowered and feel good about themselves. There will always be people who don't understand—they may be relatives, friends, educators, even fellow diners in the IHOP—and while it can be tempting to offer up a simple “mind your own business,” we can help others understand ADHD by being educated ourselves (and prepared to respond to comments or questions with knowledge, grace, and authority). We are the ambassadors of ADHD, and it's in our power to help others understand how we can all work together to help these wonderful children succeed. We can use this knowledge to help our children's teachers understand them. We can communicate our children's needs and even go so far as to request “a patient teacher who understands ADHD” each year! In reaching out and keeping others in the loop, we are building our child's home team of support.

Now let's talk about you. To be a parent or caregiver of a child with ADHD is extremely difficult. It's exhausting and frustrating and takes a lot of patience and dedication. Each child comes with their own set of needs and issues, which change over time, leaving parents in uncharted territory as we attempt to find support from those who may not fully understand our child's needs. The stress takes a toll. That is why it is pivotal to get support for yourself. I'm a huge advocate of getting a therapist for yourself who understands special-needs children and attending support groups for parents with children who have ADHD. Additionally, there are online ADHD caregiver support groups and specific Facebook groups for parents of children with ADHD. It's essential that you give yourself the self-care you need in order to help your child. Always remember, you are not alone.

Along my own journey as a therapist and the mother of two children with ADHD, I found the following books and websites extremely helpful:

BOOKS:

Brown, Thomas E.. *Outside the Box: Rethinking ADD/ADHD in Children and Adults*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association Publishing, 2017.

DeGangi, Georgia A., and Anne Kendall. *Effective Parenting for the Hard-to-*

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WEBSITES:

AdditudeMag.com

A comprehensive website for parents, adults, and professionals dealing with ADHD, learning disabilities, and related conditions.

Understood.org

A wonderful nonprofit organization that gives personalized resources, free daily access to experts, a secure online community, and practical tips to parents of children dealing with learning and attention issues.

ImpactADHD.com

A community website giving parents the strategies, skills, and expert

guidance needed to manage the reality of ADHD.

CHADD.org

A national nonprofit organization providing education, advocacy, and support for individuals with ADHD.

PODCASTS:

ADHD Experts by ADDitude

ADHD experts give real-life answers to questions submitted by ADHD adults and parents raising children with ADHD.

Parenting ADHD Podcast, with the ADHD Momma by Penny Williams

ADHD management tips and wisdom so you can get ahead of the curve, to parent your child with ADHD successfully.

Taking Control: The ADHD Podcast by RashPixel.FM

Hosts Nikki Kinzer and Pete Wright offer support, life management strategies, and time and technology tips, dedicated to anyone looking to take control while living with ADHD.

Practical ADHD Strategies by Laura Rolands

Led by Laura Rolands featuring practical strategies to help you manage specific challenges related to ADHD.

YOUTUBE CHANNELS:

How to ADHD

Host Jessica, a woman with ADHD, describes what ADHD is and offers suggestions on how to live with ADHD.

ADHD: Essential Ideas for Parents by Dr. Russell Barkley

Dr. Russell Barkley discusses ideas for parents of children with ADHD.

RESOURCES FOR KIDS

(FOR AGES 7 TO 8 YEARS OLD)

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FOOTNOTES

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- ³ “ADD vs. ADHD: The Three Types of Attention Deficit Disorder.” ADDitude. Accessed March 3, 2018. <https://www.additudemag.com/3-types-of-adhd/>.
- ⁴ “29 Famous People Who Failed Before They Succeeded.” *Business Insider*, July 9, 2015. <http://www.businessinsider.com/successful-people-who-failed-at-first-2015-7/#even-spielberg-was-rejected-by-the-university-of-southern-california-school-of-cinematic-arts-multiple-times-3>.
- ⁵ “Chesley B. ‘Sully’ Sullenberger, III: Author, Speaker, Safety Advocate.” Sully Sullenberger. Accessed March 3, 2018. <http://www.sullysullenberger.com/about/>.
- ⁶ “Talking to Yourself in the Third Person Can Reduce Stress and Negative Emotions.” *Science Alert*, July 28, 2017. <https://www.sciencealert.com/talking-to-yourself-in-the-third-person-can-help-you-stay-in-control/>.

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