



Parenting Like A Pro

10 Hacks to support Mental Health (Theirs and Yours)

Jennifer Mundy, LMFT
Senior Mental Health Clinician

Do Less

Let Kids Do More

If the adult, through a fatal misunderstanding, instead of helping the child to do things for himself, substitutes himself for the child, then that adult becomes the blindest and most powerful obstacle to the development of the child's psychic life.

-Maria Montessori

We don't allow children to do things for themselves and then when they do - we critique it and correct it.



Tell Less

Ask Reflective Questions

How can I support you without doing it for you?

What do you need to help you get started?

What do you think you could try first?

Can you show me how you do it?

What did you learn from trying that?

How would you like to solve this problem?

What could you do differently next time?

What do you feel most proud of in what you did?

Show it

Visual Cues

Make things explicit. Make them easy to see.

Making things visual provides children with a concrete reference.

This allows children to have some independence and responsibility.

It protects your relationships - by hopefully removing the nagging.

Promotes transitions - helps them understand what comes next.

Helps us not cut corners - reminds us that consistency is important.

Visual Schedules

Morning Routine

Cut out the morning routine pictures and paste them in the order you like to get them done! This is a useful tool to help you get ready in the morning!



Make Your Own!



Visual Schedule



Build it

Support Networks

Adolescents who have access to multiple trusted adults report higher levels of well-being, emotional stability and lower levels of depression and anxiety. (Center for Promise, Boston University).

Studies consistently show that children who have mentors are more likely to perform well academically, avoid risky behaviors, and have higher self-esteem. Mentors provide additional emotional support and guidance that complements the parenting role, particularly during adolescence.



5 Adult Rule

The idea behind this rule is that no single adult can meet all of a child's emotional and developmental needs, so having multiple caring adults creates a network of support.

Can you name 5 adults your child could turn to if they had something really difficult they needed to talk about?

Can they? Encourage them to reach out.



Step by Step Gradual Exposure

Gradual exposure is a technique used to help people overcome fears or anxieties by slowly and gently introducing them to the thing they are afraid of, starting with the least intimidating part.

The job of the parent is to be positive, encouraging and supportive. You cannot fail a gradual exposure.

The first step is identifying the fear, trigger or thing that is being avoided.

Identify It

Can you order my dinner for me?

I don't want to drive myself, you should just drop me off.

Do you think there is a dog in that park?

Can you go upstairs with me?

What if everyone laughs at me

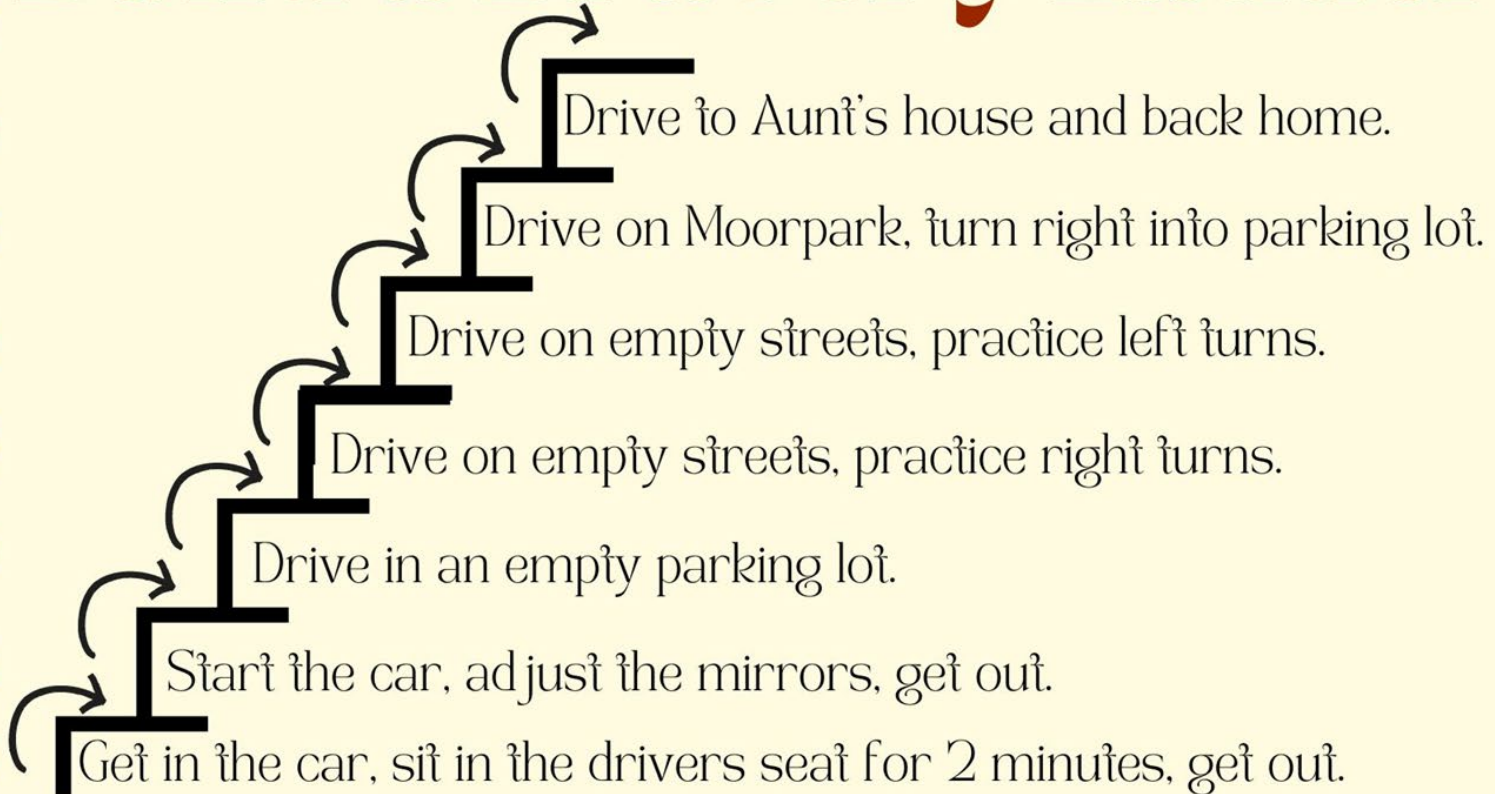
Tell my coach I can't go to practice today

I have a stomach ache, I'll go to school tomorrow

No one is going to this party, it's dumb.

That bug may get too close to me

Build a Bravery Ladder



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The Parent's Role In Building Bravery

Support, even the smallest steps

Provide positive feedback

Be ready to repeat steps over and over or even step back

Celebrate



Quality vs. Quantity

Practice Makes Permanent

Where should we encourage our student to focus?

Can we broaden our focus from a specific class or task to their overall education?

Practice makes permanent - keep trying.

Get comfortable with doing things wrong.



Life Skill Checklist



Life Skill Checklist

For more information on supporting your student with life skills, check out these resources:

Adulting 101 by Josh Burnette and Pete Hardesty
Your Turn - How to be an Adult by Julie Lythcott-Haims
Dad, How do I? on YouTube and TikTok

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|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check the oil in your car | <input type="checkbox"/> Water and care for plants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stain treat laundry | <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce yourself to new people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a daily schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Calculate the tip at a restaurant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a simple meal | <input type="checkbox"/> Unclog a drain or toilet with a plunger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change a tire | <input type="checkbox"/> Refill windshield washer fluid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Write a professional email | <input type="checkbox"/> Address an envelope and mail a letter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a budget | <input type="checkbox"/> Save files to the cloud |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open a bank account | <input type="checkbox"/> Check a smoke alarm and replace battery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use public transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a microwave safely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a doctor appointment | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set up online bill payment | <input type="checkbox"/> Set a table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Send an online calendar invite | <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel snow or rake leaves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take notes during a lecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Order food in person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understand basic first aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap a gift |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Navigate a map or GPS | <input type="checkbox"/> Check and reset a circuit breaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use a fire extinguisher | <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce yourself at a professional event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Replace a light bulb | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean up after a spill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check tire pressure and add air | <input type="checkbox"/> Use basic tools (hammer/screwdriver) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sew on a button | <input type="checkbox"/> Write a thank you note |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read and follow a recipe | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up voicemail and respond to calls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wash dishes or load a dishwasher | <input type="checkbox"/> Wash a car |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answer job interview questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Start a load of laundry with proper setting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a combination lock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean a bathroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Memorize 3 important phone numbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change sheets and make a bed | <input type="checkbox"/> Learn to apologize |
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Life Skill Checklist





Milestone vs. Touchpoint

Milestone: Focuses on the achievement or end result of growth

Touchpoint: Focuses on the process of development, particularly the moments of struggle or regression leading up to a milestone.

Touchpoints



Predictable periods of developmental regression and progress.

- A child suddenly becoming clingy or regressing in potty training before learning a new social skill.
- A teen experiencing emotional volatility before adapting to increased independence or new responsibilities.



Screen Saver of the Mind

Just like a screensaver activates when you're not using the computer, the DMN "kicks in" when your brain isn't focused on a specific task. It engages in background processes like daydreaming, recalling memories, or thinking about yourself and others.

The DMN helps keep your mind active and prepared, even when you're not consciously thinking about something specific, like the screensaver preserving the computer's function when idle.



Purpose

Process emotions, form memories and
build a sense of self

The DMN is important for creativity,
emotional regulation, problem solving and
personal growth



Support the DMN



Encourage play without screens

Allow boredom, Avoid curating every moment

Social interactions - conversations, games, time together

Mindfulness





Default Mode Network

People with anxiety and PTSD have overactive DMN. This is the seat of responsibility and insecurity, and can be a punishing force. The most effective antidote to this is Mindfulness. The way DMN works is that it uses resources from the brain to focus and ruminate internally. You can short circuit the system, by shifting all of your brain's energy from internal to external. Many people use work or substances, or other things of that nature to silence their DMN. Using 5 senses exercises can help to silence this.

Combat an overactive DMN

Focused Activity

Mindfulness

Positive Social Interactions

Exercise

54321 Mindfulness



When To Seek Help

Withdrawing from social activities or appearing down for more than 2 weeks

Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight

Self-harming actions such as cutting or burning

Severe Mood Swings

Threatening to kill self or making plans to do so

Repeated use of drugs or alcohol

Extreme out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors

Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits

Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason

Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still

<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Teens-Young-Adults/How-to-Help-a-Friend>



Questions for a Therapist

Do you treat families dealing with our specific issue?

Do you have special training in working with families/children/teens?

Have you seen clients with similar issues to mine?

Why does your theoretical orientation work?

What can I expect in my first session?

What age client do you typically treat?

My family's problem is_____, how would you go about treating that?

How do you seek peer consultation?

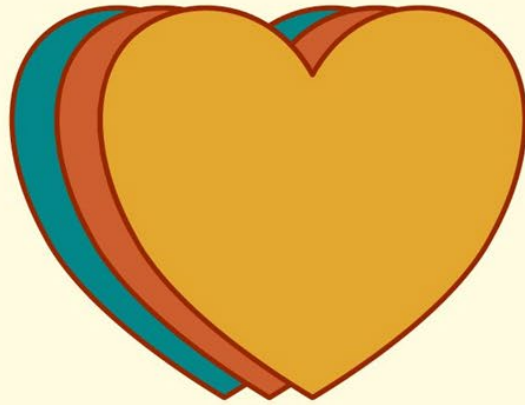
What is a typical session like?

How will you engage my family in therapy?

What types of therapeutic activities do you use to work with families?

How long do you anticipate therapy may take?





Thank you!