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A.I.M. Handbook Parent Handbook

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A.I.M. Social Skills Breakdown for Families

Ву

Emery Palm

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Introduction

This handbook was created to allow families, guardians and other people who are around your child to better inform them of the social skills curriculum currently being used in school every day. This handbook will be an overview of the A.I.M. social skills curriculum, how it relates to your student, and how you can incorporate the different skills, language, and continued lessons at home. This social skills curriculum helps students to be mindful, to regulate their own emotions, and to also take responsibility for their behavior, actions, and emotions. By understanding and having knowledge of the curriculum your student is going through you can better help your student to carry over what they're learning at school into their home life. It will also help interactions as they will be able to share with you what they have been learning. Within this document you will find examples of lessons, examples of language that is being used, the main components behind the social skills curriculum and much more.



Components of A.I.M.

A.I.M. stands for accept, identify, and move. This curriculum is made-up of three separate concepts. The curriculum combines the practices of mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy, and applied behavior analysis to teach various social skills concepts. Each of these different components can be taught separately or together within one lesson. This allows teachers to produce and deliver well-rounded social skills lessons for those who struggle with emotional and social challenges. With these lessons it helps students to become more social, work on daily struggles that they may have and also challenges their behavior whether it's before a problem happens, during a problem, or after a problem has happened.

*For more information on AIM look online at their website: www.acceptidentifymove.com

Mindfulness



The first component in this curriculum is mindfulness. With our mindfulness lessons we are practicing students ability to be fully engaged in the moment that inactivity is going on. Through various lessons we go through the process of how to combat distractions, different mindfulness strategies that work for the student and how we can become more mindful each and every day. Students who struggle with social and emotional challenges often

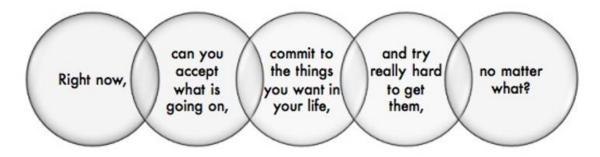
struggle in the area of mindfulness as they are continuously worrying about other things going on around them or things that are upcoming. By being able to practice mindfulness strategies we are allowing students to switch from autopilot to being in the present moment whether it's in the classroom, at home, or during a conversation. Mindfulness can be done through various activities, meditation, or through conversation.

*For more information on kids mindfulness look at examples on YouTube: The Mindfulness Teacher channel

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Acceptance and commitment therapy is when you work with an individual to help them work on learning to accept unpleasant feelings without overreaction or avoidance. Once people are able to accept unpleasant feelings and maintain a reasonable reaction to them, they can fulfill their values and work towards achieving things that are important to them regardless of the negative outcomes experienced in the past. The basis of these social skills curriculum components is derived from acceptance and commitment therapy.

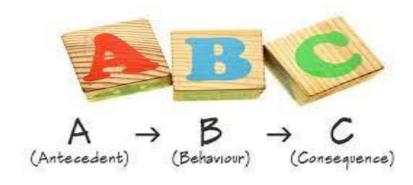
As discussed later, there are six components that go into the A.I.M. social skills curriculum that come from acceptance and commitment therapy. The component begins with the idea that we want to be able to accept the behaviors and all the different components that define us as a person. Then we want to work on different goals to better ourselves or work on those different components of our life. Overall, these lessons work towards helping students become more psychologically flexible and able to learn from different portions of their life.



Applied Behavior Analysis

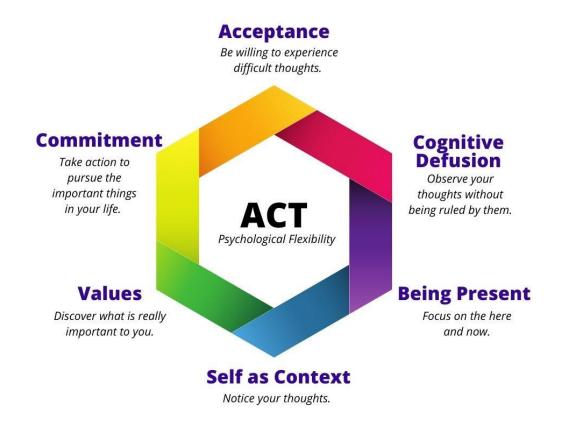
Applied behavior analysis is a way to show that behavior can be predictable. Often, we are talking about the ABC's of behavior: antecedent, behavior and consequence. The antecedent is the action that happens before the behavior whether that action is getting a homework assignment or, being told to get ready for an activity or a non-preferred activity. The antecedent is whatever happens and is documented before the student shows any non-positive behavior. The behavior is the action that follows the antecedent. For example, if the antecedent is the student is getting a homework assignment, the behavior may be crumpling up the paper because the student does not want to complete the assignment. The consequence follows the behavior, whether it's a negative consequence, or a positive consequence, it always is what happens in response to the behavior. For crumpling up the paper, the consequence may

be that the student must come to the teacher table and work on the assignment with the teacher. This shows that it was not purely a negative consequence, but a notice that once receiving the homework the student may have thought that it was too difficult for them, therefore their behavior to crumple up the paper was so they didn't have to complete the assignment. In this example, the consequence would be a positive getting that extra assistance to complete the assignment. By using the ABC's of behavior, we are able to monitor a child's behavior and then use that data to improve and teach them new skills such as how to handle those different antecedents that happen and how we can change our behavior to form a better reaction.



Psychological Flexibility (Hexaflex)

As mentioned, when talking about the three components of the A.I.M. social skills curriculum, there are six different elements derived from the acceptance and commitment therapy. These six different elements create our Hexaflex or a picture of psychological flexibility. These six different elements are the basis of the different lessons that will be taught throughout the school year. They also relate to the different concepts that we want to teach students to understand and be able to talk about.



Present Moment

With the present moment we want to teach students to be able to be mindful and active in the activities going on right now. Present moment activities including things such as guided meditation and example activities where we find how multitasking and thinking about different things makes it harder for us to complete one activity at a time. We talk about in these lessons that being in the present moment allows you to be mindful of what's going on around you and help you to absorb all the information that sometimes we're missing when we focus on things happening before and after our activity. We also talk about being mindful of our actions

in the moment that they're happening. This allows us to recognize when we are not paying attention now because of focusing on something else. Then, strategies are learned to redirect to be more present whether it's in class, a conversation, or during an activity.

Values

Initially, lessons focus on values and the various different types that we can have. Several lessons focus on physical values and mental values and being able to decipher the differences between the two. Then, as lessons continue work focuses on personal values and why people carry these values. Once students define what their personal values are and why they're important, lessons focus on how we can reach those values. For example, the values identified are mental values, such as being a good friend and being honest, lessons focus on how to obtain those values in our day-to-day life. If the value is more physical, such as toys or being kind, lessons focus on helping students to demonstrate that these things are valued to them and recognizing that we value them. Lessons then try to help students with connections to their values and how they relate to them as a person and how they've grown up. Lessons also help prompt thinking about our values when we were younger versus what do we think we're going to value when we're older. Making those guesses and assumptions and how we can work towards those future is critical because it helps to maintain our values in the future.

Committed Action

Depending on their age level, committed action is one that needs to be broken down for students to understand. Committed action focuses on what people need to do to complete their goals. For example, we want to be kind what is our goal or committed action to be more kind throughout the day. Several different activities work on connecting values with the present moment and how we can actively try to be better at our goals and areas of improvement. Lessons help students figure out how to put forth a positive pattern to help them maintain and achieve different goals. Whether it's a small goal like trying not to talk in class or if it's a big goal of trying not to get angry during a game, the work focuses on small steps to help work towards completing their goals.

Self-as-Context

Self as context focuses on commitment, which is put forth to become more positive and move towards fulfilling values as an individual. The curriculum encourages being able to see how we value ourselves and what we see when we look back at ourselves. This is achieved by looking at individual strengths, enjoyable activities, and areas for improvement. The curriculum guides students towards looking at their committed action and their goals to better themselves in areas that may be a struggle. A focus is placed on becoming more aware of who they are as an individual and being proud of the things that they are good at, the things that other people value in you and taking ownership of those aspects that they aren't the most confident in.

Self-as-context is important because many students with social and emotional behavior disorders struggle to see the positive in themselves and/or see the struggles that they may have. A majority of the activities that are completed for this component focus on examples of positives and negatives about us and sharing how that relates to who we are as a person and how that can help or hinder us in an everyday situation.

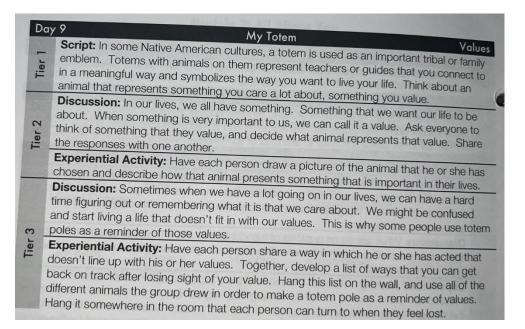
Defusion

Defusion is a critical component for students that are participating in social skills groups, especially for those with intense behaviors. During defusion lessons, the focus is on letting go of needing to be in control or trying to stop those negative thoughts that we have that often lead into a behavior and cause more consequences. The lessons help students learn how to use their thoughts and feelings to create distance between negative thoughts and what's currently going on. The majority of these lessons talk about example behaviors to help make a connection between an everyday activity and what it may be like when going through a behavior. For example, one of the activities that are done at the beginning of this curriculum is blowing bubbles and imagine that the thoughts that are in these bubbles are the negative thoughts that we have. The way that these thoughts can be diffused or gotten rid of is to think about that thought and how it's going to help or how it's going to make things worse. Then bubbles popped making the thought go away. The lesson is that there are still going to be bubbles floating around us that may be positive or negative. However, if we can take control and diffuse that one bubble that was causing us trouble then we're able to take control back in the situation, redirect our behavior and produce a different plan.

Acceptance

The component of acceptance focuses on willingness to accept one's behavior and personal experiences. Along with defusion, the curriculum helps students learn that we carry out the actions, and we are responsible for actions coming out into the world. If it was a positive action or phrase that was said, the curriculum teaches students how to accept positivity and find more ways to use positivity in our daily life. If the action is a negative, the curriculum teaches how to take acceptance in the fact that a mistake was made by choosing the action or phrase and accepting the consequence that will come with it. Once a consequence is accepted, next steps can be taken such as thinking through options for next time, and what would be a better choice that would not be negative and be positive for everyone involved. Along with accepting that sometimes getting upset when things don't go a certain way or when something happens, students need to be able to realize and figure out what different actions that can be chosen next time. Discussion also includes why certain behaviors are negative in the first place and shouldn't be something chosen for the next situation. This helps our students to take ownership over their actions and their words and helps them to better accept their consequences whether they be positive or negative.

A.I.M. Lessons





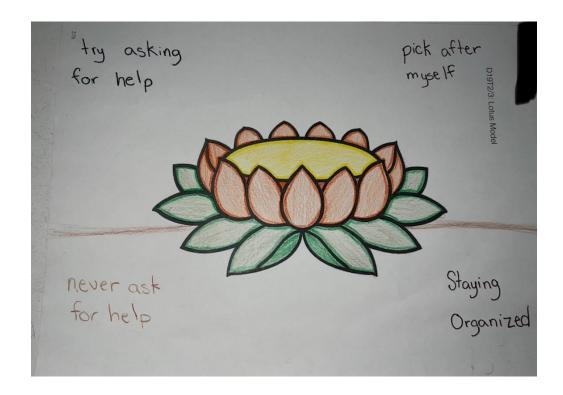
Values Example

Each one of our lessons come in three different discussions or activities. Each lesson focuses on one of the six Hexaflex areas and has a lesson focused on that area. This activity is one that is done over multiple days starting with Tier 1 where we do some research, Tier 2 will work on our more personal values and animals that share characteristics and then finally Tier 3 we work together to define our list of characteristics with our animals that helped describe who we are on our totem pole.

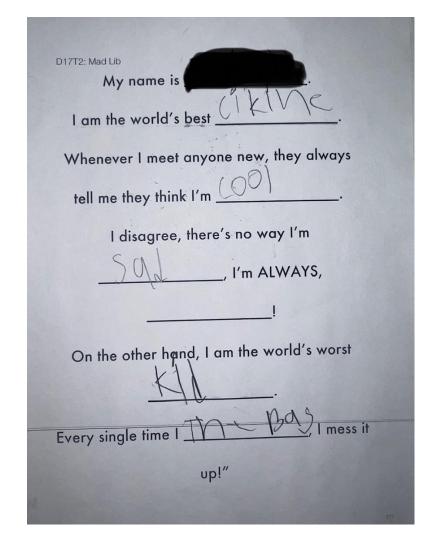
Committed Action Example

This lesson required us to visualize a muddy pond and how it would be going into this pond. After this visualization we then use a template to create our own personal lotus and describe our "mud" or things that we struggle with or are bad at. Above the mud where we see the colorful and pretty flower are how we can overcome those "mud" items.

Day	No Mud, No Lotus Committed Action
Tier 1	Script: Imagine a shallow, murky, muddy pond. You really want to swim in the pond, but the mud is just too gross. This dirty pond is the home of a beautiful flower called a lotus. This flower begins to grow at the bottom of muddy ponds like this. It slowly works its way through all the mud, and finally breaks through the water to the surface. When you have a struggle today, think of how you are like a lotus flower blooming.
"Tier 2	Discussion: Sometimes in life, we all go through hard times, like the muddy, murky water that a lotus flower must go through. But, if you keep your values in mind and remain committed to achieve your goals, you will make it through the muddy times and reach the light.
	Experiential Activity: Draw or color a picture of a lotus emerging from the muddy water. Above the lotus, write or draw a representation of the value you experienced because you were willing to go through the hard times.
ır 3	Discussion: Following T2, talk more about what kinds of "mud" everyone experiences when they are moving toward their values, trying to achieve their goals. What are obstacles in your life?
"Tier 3	Experiential Activity: Take out each member's picture of a lotus flower. Ask the participants to add to this drawing. In the water, have them write or draw some of the obstacles or difficult times they have encountered.



Day 17 Mad Lib You Self-as-Context Script: Throughout our lives, we are constantly faced with evaluations about ourselvesfrom ourselves and from others. Evaluations are like stories about who you are. Sometimes they are true, and other times they are not. Think about some of the stories you've told or heard about yourself. Do they always show the real you? Discussion: Have your ever played Mad Libs? What is the fun or silly thing about them? Will two people ever fill out the story the same way? Imagine a time that you and someone else remembered a story in completely different ways. Share those experiences with each other. Experiential Activity: Create a Mad Lib that is full of self-evaluations, such as the following: "My name is _. I am the world's best _. Whenever I meet anyone new, they always tell me they think I'm . I disagree, there's no way I'm . I'm ALWAYS. ! On the other hand, I am the world's worst _. Every single time I _, I mess it up!" Are any of those sentences who you really are? When we're talking about the evaluations that you or other people use to describe you, it's called self-as-content. This is not WHO you ARE, this is what someone THINKS about how you act. Discussion: Following T2, have a discussion. Sometimes, we can forget that these stories aren't really who we are. Think about one of those stories someone else has told about you. What parts were just evaluations? What parts were true? 3 Experiential Activity: Have each member of the group share a time that they felt someone evaluated them unfairly. Discuss how they feel that evaluation does not represent who they really are. Brainstorm ways to handle situations where someone might be evaluating you unfairly without blowing up or losing your cool.



Self-as-Context Example

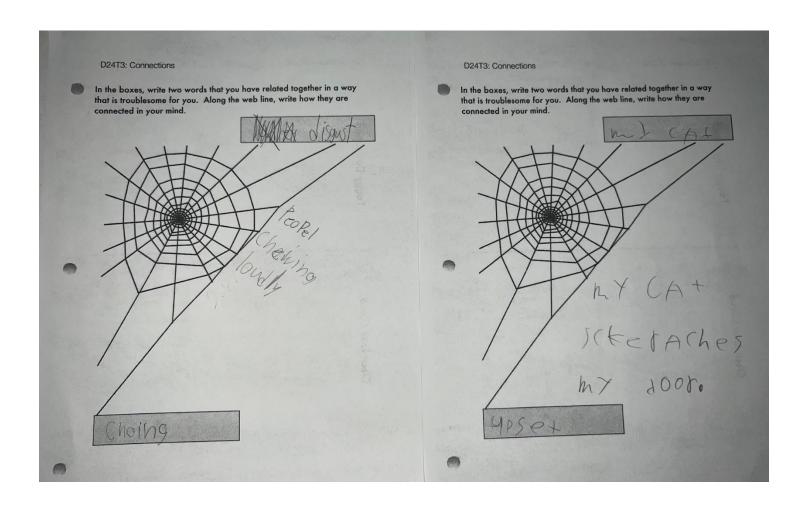
For this lesson we talk about evaluating ourselves and how we see ourselves. Then we talk about how when you play mad libs you are evaluating a story blankly and guessing. Students then were asked to listen while the teacher read the mad lib and they were to fill in the blank with a word. Once finished we talked about "does this match how you think of yourself" "is it correct or wrong."

Day 24 Word Web Defusion Script: Words, thoughts, feelings, and actions can be connected in ways we never even realize! Sometimes the ways we relate words together makes sense to use, but other times we make relationships between words that don't make sense or even make our lives seem harder! Discussion: Words and language are all interconnected, but it is through our own experiences that we give meaning to those words and the way they relate to one another. How could this be a challenge in your life? How could this be a benefit? Experiential Activity: Stand in a circle with each person holding a card with something different written on it. Get a ball of yarn, and have the first person hold on to the end, say what is written on his or her card, and toss the ball to someone else. That person should say his or her word, explain how it relates to the previous word, and toss it to the next person. Continue until everyone has had at least one chance to relate their card to Discussion: Think of two words or ideas that are connected in a way that makes you feel bad or upset. Maybe you have related "math" and "dumb" together so whenever you go to math you think about being dumb. Is all of that real, or is it just something your mind has made up? Experiential Activity: Have each participant think of two words or ideas that they have

related together that sometimes causes them pain or sadness. How does this "mind meld" interfere with your valued life? Are those two ideas really connected in that way?

Defusion Example

This lesson talks about connecting our words, thoughts, feelings, and actions. We talk about how all these things connect and intertwine like a spider web. We then chose two words, a feeling and thing. Using the web, we connected the feeling and thought and explained how they connect together.



Defusion Example

This lesson we talked about our feelings how we can change from one emotion to another. We talked about specifically the word stupid and how that makes us feel when we are called this. In order to change this mad, sad, upset feeling lets change stupid into anything else through pictures or words. Students choose to make it into fun pictures or happy phrases.

Day 29 From Miserable to Magical Script: Have you ever been in a situation where you or someone else was really sad or mad, and then all of a sudden, something makes them start laughing? Suddenly all of those sad or angry thoughts are different, they are funny or silly or just not as serious. Our thoughts and feelings can change at the drop of a hat! Discussion: Who doesn't like when someone calls them "stupid" or says that something they do is "stupid?" Raise your hand if you've ever had the thought, "I am stupid." Share with one another the kinds of feelings that come up when you look at the word on the page. A lot of those feelings may not be very good, but remember, we can change the way we relate to words, how we feel when we see they can change. Experiential Activity: Give each person a piece of paper with the word "stupid" printed on in in a large, plain font. Ask each member of the group to take out markers or crayons or paints, and turn that word "stupid" into a picture of a unicorn. What feelings come up when you look at that word now? Always remember, a word is only a word. Discussion: What is another word that causes you a lot of pain when you see it or think it? Have each person share a word that is hard for them to hear. Can we transform these words too? Experiential Activity: Have each person write their personal miserable word on a piece of paper in large, plain writing. Then have them use art materials to turn that word into something they love (maybe an animal or a game or a toy). Does that word hurt so much

to look at now, or does it make you feel something different?



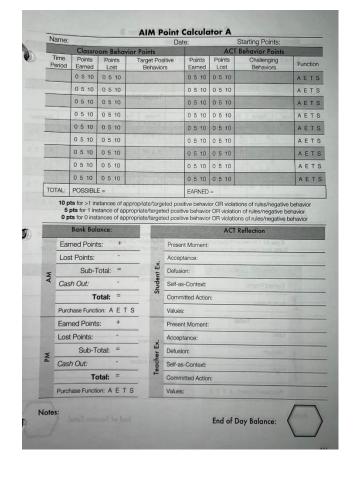
A.I.M. Data Collection

Na	PFQ Children's Psychological Flexibility Questionno	Modality: □ Written □ Oral				
FOL	ections: Read or listen to the following questions. each one, say how much you feel that way by choosing a circle.				- WHILE	en d'Orai
Iter	Question	NEVER	A LITTLE	SOME-	A LOT	
1	I always notice things around me and what people say.		BIT	TIMES	A LOI	ALL THE TIME
2	If I think something, that doesn't mean it's true.	0	1	2	3	4
3	There are things that I really care about.	0	1	2	3	4
4	If I do something bad, then I am a bad person.	0	1	2	3	4
5	I notice when my body feels different.	0	De itur	2	3	4
6	When I mess up, I get mad at myself.	0	1	2	3	4
7	Nothing matters that much to me.	0	1	2	3	4
8	If I cry it means that I'm wrong or bad.	0	1 300	2	3	4
9	It's OK to be scared.	0	1	2	3	4
10	I notice my thoughts and feelings, but that is not me.	0	1	2	3	4
11	I miss seeing stuff happen or hearing what people say.	0	1	2	3	4
12	My thoughts don't make me do what I do.	0	1	2	3	4
13	Everything I think and feel must be real.	0	1	2	3	4
14	It's OK to feel mad.	0	1	2	3	4
15	I know what I want to work for today.	0	1	2	3	4
16	If I lose I try again right away to do better.	0	1	2	3	4
17	I give up when things are too hard.	0	1	2	3	4
18	I worry a lot about stuff I did or need to do.	0	1	2	3	4
19	If I get angry, it means I messed up.	0	1	2	3	4
20	My thoughts and feelings tell me what to do.	0	1	2	3	4
21	I am what other people say about me.	0	1	2	3	4
	If I did something wrong, that doesn't make me bad.	0	1	2	3	4
	Grown-ups tell me what is important to me.	0	1	2	3	4
	I try really hard every day.	0	1	2	3	4

At the beginning of the school year the following questionnaire is given to families and to the child to fill out as best as they can. The results of these surveys help to figure out which areas in the Hexaflex the child is strong in and the areas they may need more support and more directed lessons towards. This survey is given at least twice a year to watch for growth and share with families and child about the skills they have gained and the remaining skills which need more support.

Example Point Sheet One

A.I.M. point sheets focus on the positive moments from the day via earned points. Each classroom or case manager will set up their own personal point system where they document how you lose points. For example, eloping (leaving the designated area) the child would lose 50 points, hitting would lose 25 points and refusal would be 5 points. The child's goal is to have more positive moments then challenging behaviors in order to earn more points and prizes.



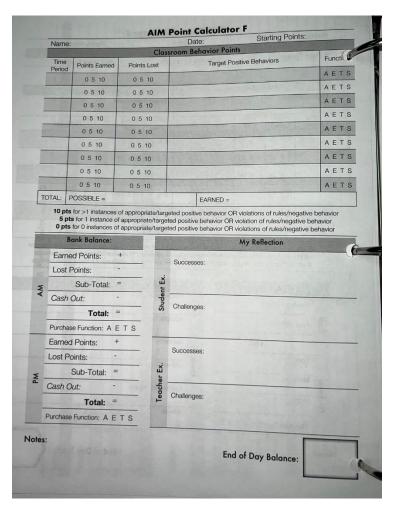
19 P (19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19	of the ACT hexaflex like a tally! Include moments of inflexibility by recording an X. Tally Key:								
P	A	D	S	V	C	X			
Present Moment	1		Colf on	Value	Committed Action	Inflexibility			
	Service 1	MAIS!	My ACT Monit	or	- William				
Moi	nday					with .			
	and patholical and								
Assumpt 1	TOTAL STATE OF THE								
Tues	day	THE LEW CO. MASS	TERRESPONDED IN THE	Incred/ [] t	ebull passes Fig.	INTERNATION			
	28/10								
Wednes	day	ential Section		AND THE PARTY OF	The bar	San commen			
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D	Acceptance	Defusion	Self-as- Context	Values	Committed Action	Inflexibility			
Present Moment	HOWAY L. J. TO S. J.		benchpilla vinis			AMITON .			
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Moment	ek's Total FLEX	IBLE Momen	ts: Thi	s Week's To	tal FLEXIBLE	Moment:			

Example Point Sheet Three

This example focusses more on sharing the positives rather than the challenging behaviors. It follows the same system as the other point sheets but with more of a reflection on the bottom. During this reflection, the student is sharing their successes from the day what they did good and what are some of the challenges that they faced. The teacher is also then sharing the successes they noticed and the challenges they noticed.

Example Point Sheet Two

This example focuses more on the times each day a child is showing different areas of the Hexaflex in a challenging moment. At the end of the week, it is totaled up and reviewed which areas the child was strong in and which area they showed few examples. These points sheets help to determine what lessons are needed to support the child.



A.I.M. Language to Use

A.I.M. has examples of phrases to use in positive and negative situations that relate back to the Hexaflex and the different components that the lessons are revolving around. Listed below are some examples of different phrases to say in a positive situation and in a negative situation.

Acceptance

Positive

- -I see you are accepting that's its time to (X)
- -I know you want me to help you now, so thanks for accepting, I will be there soon.

Negative

- -I know you really wanted (X) to happen. Accepting we have to do work is part of the day
- -You have to accept that everything is not going to be perfect. And that's okay.

Defusion

Positive

- -You let go of your disappointment and did not lose points. Way to go!
- -Great job not responding to those comments/thoughts. Good defusion!

Negative

- -Are you letting those thoughts control you? Why don't you defuse them?
- -You don't need to be fused to that thought now. We have other things to do.

Self-as-Context

Positive

- I noticed that you seem ok right now being who you really are.
- -I like how you put that mess in the back of your mind for now and are focused on it right now.

Negative

- Are you acting like the real you right now or is this behavior just the thoughts you have?
-Are these thoughts just what other people say, or is this TRUE?

Values

Positive

- I really like the way you are doing (X). You must be working towards getting stuff you value from the store later today.
- You are getting really close to getting your (X). Keep chasing those values.

Negative

- -(Remember) for what you are working?
- Do you value buying (bad behavior point removal), or buying (stuff in the store)?

Present Moment

Positive

- -Way to block out those distractions right now. Hold on to the present.
- -Way to block out those distractions right now. Hold on to the present.

Negative

- Are you right here right now, or have you drifted into the past to worry about (X)?
- Worrying about the future or what you think is happening is not part of the present.

Committed Action

Positive

- -I love how you came back and did (X) after you fell off the path towards your values.
- -You are doing a great job staying committed to your values. Its hard sometimes but you are keeping on track.

Negative

- -Can you jump over this mess and stay committed to your value?
- -Doing (X) is not being committed to your values. Those are still your values, right?