

Supplemental Guide for Clinicians

If you work with teens, it's likely that you work with stressed teens. The teen years are some of the most stressful periods of development. They are marked by important transitions, such as beginning college, or ending and starting new friendships. The demands on teens' time, energy, and attention increase, and they also face the expectation that they will take on the responsibilities of an adult when they are not always psychologically prepared to do this.

This workbook is for teens struggling with stress and anxiety. Most importantly, it adds to teens' reservoir of healthy coping strategies so that they can let go of, or more easily, outgrow coping strategies that are unhealthy. Teens who rely on unhealthy coping strategies are not at fault. They likely learned these strategies, and perhaps only these strategies, from parents, friends, or the media. This workbook presents alternatives to unhealthy strategies that, when learned and practiced, will reduce stress, increase confidence, and protect self-esteem during the ups and downs of adolescence and into young adulthood.

The activities are simple and straightforward to help ensure that teens learn the skills and are willing to practice them until mastered. The skills come from over forty years of research into stress and how to manage it effectively and are derived from solid principles and proven techniques from cognitive behavioral therapy. At the same time, you do not need to be a cognitive behavioral psychotherapist. Regardless of your particular therapeutic approach, style, and theoretical orientation, you can easily integrate the skills into the psychotherapy you provide.

Using the Workbook in Psychotherapy with Teens

Workbooks are no substitute for thoughtful and resourceful clinicians. Creative and flexible application of the activities in this workbook is the key to effective psychotherapy. We encourage you to select activities based on your understanding of the unique strengths, weaknesses, and difficulties of the particular teen you are working with. For example, although we have striven to make the activities as easy to use as possible, you may wish to further simplify an activity when working with an overly concrete teen or shorten an activity when working with an inattentive teen. Most teens will have the cognitive capacity to benefit from the activities in the workbook. Nevertheless, you may wish to adjust the activities to match the teen's developmental age to ensure that the teen will learn and benefit from each skill.

Last, the activities in this workbook are appropriate for any teen who seeks help for stress and anxiety, although the activities in Sections IV and V are more appropriate for teens who strug-

gle with anxiety disorders. New Harbinger Publications has an excellent collection of workbooks written specifically to assist teens with anxiety disorders. We encourage you to check the New Harbinger Publications website (www.newharbinger.com) for a list of these titles to augment the activities in this workbook.

Organization of the Workbook

We have organized the workbook in a manner similar to the structure of *The Stress Reduction and Relaxation Workbook (2008)*, now in its sixth edition. The early sections introduce fundamental stress-management skills, such as meditation, communication, problem solving, and assertiveness. Later sections take up specific problems some teens struggle with, such as anger or anxiety disorders. Encouraging teens to work through the activities in the order presented in the workbook, from the first activity to the last, is an effective approach when teaching teens stress management, but feel free to mix and match based on your understanding of the particular teen you are working with.

The activities in this workbook are organized into twelve sections; each focuses on a topic, and the activities in that section are specific to that topic. Each activity begins with a brief overview of the skill and how it can help the teen manage stress. The activity then introduces a specific exercise that enables teens to put the relevant skill into practice. Following the first practice exercise, the activity then introduces a second exercise to reinforce what teens have learned and to deepen their understanding and mastery of the skill.

Section I, You Say You're Stressin' but What Does That Mean? presents exercises that help teens identify their particular sources of stress and the typical healthy and unhealthy ways they cope with it. This section then presents exercises that assist them in identifying goals and developing a plan to learn and practice the skills in the workbook. It concludes with an exercise that guides the teen through the process of keeping a stress diary. Teens will use their stress diaries to educate themselves regarding the situations and events that evoke their stress and to measure their progress as they work through the other activities in the workbook.

Section II, Relaxing Your Stressed-Out Body teaches skills to initiate the relaxation response to dampen the physical arousal that accompanies stress and anxiety. The activities are powerful and easy to learn and apply. Teens will also learn how to initiate the relaxation response quickly and automatically.

Section III, Focusing Your Attention to Relax Your Stressed-Out Mind teaches skills to shift attention away from stressful thoughts and feelings in order to calm the body and mind. The activities in this section are simple and easily learned and can quickly give teens a sense of control over excessive stress and anxiety.

Section IV, Working Your Way Through Worry teaches teens skills to manage excessive anxiety. Although not every stressed teen is an overly anxious teen, most will benefit from these activities. The activities teach teens the fundamentals of managing anxiety-evoking thoughts, such as the “shoulds” that tend to add to a teen’s day-to-day stress and anxiety.

Section V, Working Your Way Through Fear teaches skills to decrease avoidance and overcome fears. Although not every stressed teen has an anxiety disorder, the activities in this section will help those who do, as well as illustrate an effective approach to overcoming any tendency to avoid events or situations that are anxiety evoking or stressful.

Section VI, Solving the Problems in Your Life So That You Don't Stress About Them teaches teens an approach to solve day-to-day problems in their lives. An inability to solve problems effectively is a primary source of stress for teens. The activities in this section teach the building blocks of effective problem solving.

Section VII, Communicating Clearly and Saying No teaches teens communication skills to enhance their effectiveness with peers and adults and to lessen the stress that comes with ineffective and sometimes problematic communication. The activities in this section include the basics of effective communication—good listening, I-messages, and assertiveness.

Section VIII, Putting It Off Just Heaps It On teaches skills to decrease procrastination, such as breaking down tasks and cutting corners. Procrastination is common with stressed and anxious teens, and these activities will help teens start tasks they avoid and keep the task moving along. Procrastination only increases stress and anxiety, and teens will benefit from these straightforward skills.

Section IX, Managing Stress That Angers You So You Can Manage Anger That Stresses You teaches skills to manage anger. Many teens dissipate stress through anger outbursts, and these outbursts often result in consequences that only add to their stress. The activities in this section teach teens to recognize their anger triggers and then to replace anger thoughts with more helpful coping thoughts. The final activity in this section helps teens apply these skills to typical anger situations.

Section X, Eating Right, Eating Well—Just Try Not to Eat to Calm Down teaches teens skills to manage the tendency to overeat or eat poorly when they feel stressed and anxious. The activities in this section teach the basics of good nutrition and alternatives to emotional eating.

Section XI, Exercising Your Way to Less Stress teaches teens skills to use exercise as an effective stress-management strategy. The activities in this section teach the basics of developing an exercise plan that is both effective and doable.

Section XII, Space Matters: Creating a Calm Environment teaches teens to objectively examine the role their living environments, generally their bedrooms, can play in increasing or decreasing their stress levels. The activities in this section teach teens the basics of building a calming environment and then how to harness the power of their living environments to calm their bodies and minds.

The book concludes with a section titled *Wrapping Up*. No matter how helpful teens find the activities in this workbook, it is inevitable that they will begin to practice and apply the skills less often or will encounter a stressful event or situation that throws them back into the old and less helpful coping strategies. This section reminds teens that building habits is not a linear process and that getting stuck is normal. The trick is to get unstuck quickly, and having a plan can help.

Using the Activities In and Out of Session

There are a number of ways to use the activities in this workbook as part of an ongoing psychotherapy. You can ask teens to read the material and complete an exercise out of the psychotherapy session, and in the next session, review with them their reactions to the activity and what they learned. Alternatively, you can focus an entire session on the activities themselves. Most activities include at least two exercises, so you can teach and practice the first exercise in the session, and ask the teen to complete the second exercise as a homework assignment.

Most times, you will want teens to practice the exercises out of session in order to strengthen their learning of the skill, even if you only ask them to read an activity and give you a “book report” at the next appointment.

To increase the likelihood that teens complete these homework assignments and learn what you wish them to learn, follow these guidelines:

Provide a rationale linked to teen’s treatment goals. It is essential that a teen whose goal is to reduce stress understand how a particular activity will help. We tend to complete tasks when we understand the benefits of doing them, and teens are not an exception to this rule. If a teen sought psychotherapy for other goals, you may wish to connect the homework assignment to those goals too. For example, for a teen who sought psychotherapy following a recent relationship breakup, you will want to explain how the proposed activity (for example, deep slow breathing) will help manage the emotional aftermath of the breakup itself.

Ask teens to rate their confidence about completing a homework assignment. There may be a number of reasons why teens have low confidence that they will complete a particular exercise assigned as homework. Ask teens to rate their confidence, from 0 percent to 100 percent, and adjust the exercise until they are 90 percent confident (or greater) that they can complete the homework as described.

Discuss obstacles to completing an out-of-session exercise. There may be real or imagined obstacles to completing an out-of-session exercise. Explore possible obstacles to completing the out-of-session exercise, and brainstorm with the teen possible solutions or work-arounds to the obstacles. This is another opportunity to model and practice effective problem solving with the teen (see activities 20, 21, and 22).

Set up the out-of-session exercise as a “no lose” proposition. Explain to teens that they will learn something helpful no matter how well the exercise turns out. This approach is particularly helpful for overly anxious or depressed teens who may hesitate trying an exercise for fear they will fail at it.

Set up the out-of-session exercise as a learning experiment. The objective of any workbook exercise, whether completed in or out of session, is that teens will learn something that will help them manage their stress and anxiety. Setting up an out-of-session exercise as an experiment can pique teens’ curiosity and increase their willingness to try it. Explore with teens their predictions regarding how helpful the exercise might be. For example, for activity 5, Slow Deep Breathing, ask teens to predict their level of stress before and after they practice the exercise.

Always review the out-of-session exercise. If you do not review homework assignments, teens may begin to believe that out-of-session practice is not important. Set aside time in every psychotherapy session to review the homework assignment. Ask teens whether the out-of-session exercise was helpful or not and what change they might make to the exercise that would make it more helpful. Always praise teens for trying the out-of-session exercise, and strive to include out-of-session practice in every psychotherapy session.

Downloadable Worksheets

We recommend that you ask each teen to purchase a copy of the workbook as a resource they can continue to use after finishing treatment with you. All the exercises and all the notes they entered into the workbook in session and out of session will be in one place so that they can easily refer to an activity later when they wish to refresh their memories.

At <http://www.newharbinger.com/40095>, you can download worksheets to accompany certain exercises in the workbook. These worksheets are a great way to help teens organize the exercises and remember to practice. You may also wish to use these downloadable worksheets for exercises you want teens to repeat over the course of therapy with you.

Activity	Worksheet Title
4	My Stress Diary
5	Tracking My Slow Deep Breathing
11	My Sources of Worry
12	Catching My Thinking Mistakes
13	Finding the Evidence
14	Overthrowing the Tyranny of “Should”
17	My Act-Brave Ladder
21	My Brainstorming Worksheet
22	My Problem-Solving Worksheet
23	The Power of Constructive Worry
25	My You-Message Diary
27	My Saying-No Worksheet
28	Breaking It Down
34	My Anger-Management Plan
36	Tracking My Eating Goals
38	My Exercise Schedule
Wrapping Up	Getting Unstuck

As a mental health professional, you play a vital role in teaching teens the skills to help them manage the stress and anxiety they experience in navigating this ever-changing and complicated world. We hope this workbook helps you with your important work. Good luck!

My Stress Diary Worksheet

Keeping a stress diary can help you see patterns in your stress. Once you identify the situations and activities that stress you out, you'll know when to use the relaxation and stress reduction skills you'll learn later. Use the worksheet to keep a diary of the things that stress you out.

Date and time:	
What happened or what is going on?	
What was I thinking?	
How much stress was I feeling (0 to 100)?	
How did my stress make problems for me?	
How did I handle my stress this time?	
What could I do differently to handle my stress if this happens again?	

Tracking My Slow Deep Breathing

Now select a couple of stressful events or situations that tend to happen repeatedly for you at home or at school. Close your eyes and imagine one of these situations, and rate your stress level before you practice on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 being completely relaxed and 10 being highly stressed). Then practice slow deep breathing and rate your stress level *after* your practice. Practice slow deep breathing for two or three minutes at first, and then, over time, increase your practice time until you reach ten to fifteen minutes. If your mind wanders, just refocus your attention on the picture of the word (“mind” or “calm”) in your mind’s eye and continue inhaling and exhaling, slowly and deeply.

Imagined Stressful Event or Situation	Stress Level <i>Before</i> Slow Deep Breathing	Stress Level <i>After</i> Slow Deep Breathing

My Sources of Worry

Below are common situations in which teens have worry thoughts. For each category, describe the situation that triggered this particular worry thought, and describe the specific thought itself, using the words that actually went through your mind when you were in the situation.

Performance (tests, athletics, dating)	
Situation	Worry Thought
Friends	
Situation	Worry Thought

Family	
Situation	Worry Thought
Health	
Situation	Worry Thought

World Events (environmental, political)	
Situation	Worry Thought
Other Types of Worry Thoughts (being late, plane crashing)	
Situation	Worry Thought

Catching My Thinking Mistakes Worksheet

Throughout your day, look for situations in which you feel anxious. Write down the situation and the thoughts that went through your mind. Examine the thoughts for thinking mistakes and identify the thinking mistake. Watch for the three most common thinking mistakes when we are anxious: 1) jumping to conclusions, 2) tunnel vision, and 3) mind reading.

Situation	Thoughts	Type of thinking mistake

Finding the Evidence

Choose a worry thought that is bugging you. Ask yourself the key question: where's the evidence? List the evidence that the worry thought is true and the evidence that the worry thought isn't true. Next, write a new thought that summarizes the evidence as a statement that is more accurate and helpful about the situation.

Thought:

Evidence That the Thought Is True

Evidence That the Thought Isn't True

New thought:

Overthrowing the Tyranny of "Should"

Make a list of the "shoulds" that tend to run through your head and cause you to feel stressed, anxious, or guilty. These thoughts are likely about the kind of friend, student, athlete, or son or daughter you believe you "should" be. Next to each "should," write what will happen or will not happen if you do or don't do the thing you're telling yourself you should do. Is what you gain or lose that important to you?

The "should"	What do you lose if you do the thing you "should"?	What do you gain if you don't do the thing you "should"?	How important is it (0-10)?

My Act-Brave Ladder

For each fear that is holding you back, create an Act-Brave Ladder. Write the name of the fear (for example, dogs) and then all the situations you are avoiding or in which you feel very anxious. Make things easier by breaking down situations into smaller and easier steps.

I want to overcome my fear of:	Anxiety Level (0–10)
Step 1.	
Step 2.	
Step 3.	
Step 4.	
Step 5.	
Step 6.	

My Brainstorming Worksheet

Describe a problem that is stressing you out and write it in the brainstorming worksheet below. You may want to review activity 20 in *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens* to make certain you describe the problem in such a way that there is some chance you can solve it. Remember, you may not be able to solve certain problems, like a teacher who gives you too much homework, but you can solve the problem of how you react to the homework problem or how you approach it. Next, write all possible solutions that come to mind. Remember, effective brainstorming depends on an open mind, so don't eliminate a possible solution too quickly.

Problem	Possible Solutions

My Problem-Solving Worksheet

Describe a problem and then brainstorm all possible solutions. Remember to keep an open mind no matter how silly or impractical the solution. Then, select the solution that makes the most sense and give it a try.

Problem		
Possible Solutions	Pluses	Minuses

The Power of Constructive Worry

If you have trouble sleeping because you worry about unfinished business, constructive worry can help sleep come more quickly. Here are the steps to harnessing the power of constructive worry. Step 1: Before bed, when you are rested and clear headed, list all the concerns (in the Concern column) that might keep you awake at bedtime. Step 2: For each concern, write in the Solutions column the next step you might take to solve the problem. Step 3: Fold the worksheet in half and set it on the nightstand next to your bed. Tell yourself to forget about it until bedtime. Step 4: At bedtime, if you begin to worry, tell yourself that you have dealt with your concerns already in the best way you know how, and more work on the problem will only make matters worse.

Date and time:	
Concern:	Solutions:

My You-Message Diary

You-messages tend to be automatic; the first step to change them is to know when you've fallen into the automatic pattern. Tracking can help. For a couple of weeks, track your you-messages with this diary. Describe the situation (who was there and what happened?) in which you used a you-message. Next, write the you-message you used. Watch for the words "should," "must," "ought to," "need to," "always," and "never." When you see one, circle it.

	Situation	You-message
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

My Saying-No Worksheet

It's stressful when people add things to your plate when it's already filled with too many things to do. An overfull plate increases your stress, particularly when you have trouble saying no to someone who wants to add more to it. Learning to say no will help you feel less powerless when people ask you to do more and you're already doing a lot.

Situation that I want to say no to:

Step 1: State the problem.

Step 2: State how the problem makes you feel.

Step 3: Say no, or request a change.

Step 4: Get the buy-in.

Put it all together:

My Break-It-Down Worksheet

When you're stressed out, it's harder to move things along. You convince yourself that you'll do it later when you have more time or energy. As you put things off, the stress builds, and as it builds, it becomes more difficult to keep moving the project along until you finish it. To lower the stress and keep a project moving along, learn to break a big project into smaller projects or steps.

Project:

Step	Estimated Time to Complete Step

My Anger-Management Plan

In the Anger Scene section of the worksheet, write what is happening and what people are doing, saying, and feeling when you feel angry. Write it like a scene in a movie, and include your anger thoughts and the urges you feel to act in an angry way. In the Anger Rating section, rate the intensity of your anger on a 0 to 10 scale, where 10 is extreme anger and 0 is cool and calm. In the Anger Trigger Thoughts section, write the anger thoughts you likely would have in the scene. Last, in the Anger Coping Thoughts and Actions sections, write coping thoughts and coping actions that you think will help you cool down.

Anger Rating (0–10, where 10 is extreme anger)

Anger Scene

Anger Trigger Thoughts

Anger Coping Thoughts

Anger Coping Actions

Tracking My Eating Goals

Write your three goals for each day, and add a check for each day you successfully accomplished that goal. Remember to set realistic goals. Complete the worksheet each week until eating right and eating well becomes a habit.

Day	Moderation Goal	Healthy Food First Goal	Mindful Eating Goal
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

My Exercise Schedule

Fill in the following schedule each week until your exercise becomes routine. Include a large exercise and a small exercise. Place a check mark each time you exercise or stretch. At the end of the week, add the total number of check marks and give yourself a small reward (call a friend, watch your favorite show, do your nails).

Day	Large Exercise	✓	Small Exercise	✓
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

My Getting-Unstuck Worksheet

Step 1: When it comes to learning to reduce stress and anxiety, different teens get stuck in different ways. Place a check mark next to the ways that apply to you.

Feeling too stressed to practice the activities	
Believing the activities won't help	
Feeling burned out	
Reading the activities without practicing them	
Practicing the activities once or twice, but not consistently	
Making excuses to avoid practicing the activities	
Lack of support from family or friends	
Prioritizing other things over working on reducing stress	
Believing that you can't directly ask for help	
Procrastination	

Step 2: Write down one reason that you suspect you are getting stuck. Then, look through the workbook and write down the activities you're struggling with (by number) and the number of times you will practice the activity. Rate how helpful the activity was in helping you to get unstuck.

Why you're getting stuck:

Activity Number	Number of Times You'll Practice Activity	How helpful was the activity? (0-10, where 10 is totally helpful)