

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS OF MAKING IT IN SCHOOL

GOALS OF THE EXERCISE

1. Recognize that all behavior has consequences.
2. Identify the unconscious goals of underachievement.
3. Identify the hidden fears of achievement.
4. Establish strategies necessary to attain future goals.

ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR WHICH THIS EXERCISE MAY BE MOST USEFUL

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Attention-Seeking Behavior
- Career Planning
- Responsible Behavior Training
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS EXERCISE WITH STUDENT(S)

Every action has consequences. Behaviors that are repeated have consequences that make students feel better or validate their internal view of the world. Many actions have both positive and negative consequences; for instance, skipping a day of school (a strategy for underachievement) may give the student time to relax and watch TV (positive consequences) but also create more work to be completed upon his or her return to school and additional frustration trying to keep up with class discussions (negative consequences). The student who uses a successful school strategy (e.g., working for high grades) may feel a sense of accomplishment, be recognized by teachers and parents, and viewed by peers as smart (positive consequences) but may have higher expectations imposed, be viewed by peers as nerdy, and may have to do more work to maintain a high level of performance (negative consequences).

This activity will help the student recognize the reinforcing consequences of his or her behavior, the unconscious goals of underachievement, and the underlying fears of achievement. Once the reinforcing consequences are identified, the student will be free to determine if current self-defeating behaviors are likely to achieve his or her long-term goals and future expectations. Positive strategies for achievement can then be substituted for strategies that currently contribute to underachievement.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS OF MAKING IT IN SCHOOL

All behaviors have consequences. Responsible behavior in school helps you successfully complete assignments, achieve better grades, and make progress toward your future goals. Irresponsible behavior in school results in lack of knowledge and failure to reach your long-term goals. However, each behavior has some positive and some negative effects; for instance, although paying attention and raising your hand to participate results in increased knowledge and positive relationships with your classmates and teacher, this self-control takes time and effort. When you weigh the positive and the negative effects of your current behavior, you will be able to determine whether your actions contribute to or detract from the results you want to achieve.

Review the following list of strategies for personal and school achievement and underachievement and add some of your own ideas or strategies. Brainstorm the positive (Good News) and negative (Bad News) consequences of each strategy and record your ideas. Analyze your behavior and compare the strategies you use now to the strategies you will need for meeting your short- and long-term goals.

Strategies for

Personal Achievement

Good News

Bad News

Raising my hand in class:

Teacher appreciates my self-control.

I have to wait my turn.

Listening to instructions:

I know what I'm supposed to do.

I don't get to fool around in class.

Write the good news and bad news consequences for each strategy.

Doing my homework:

Attending school regularly:

Studying for an exam:

Participating in class discussions:

Asking the teacher for help:

Getting tutoring:

Working with a mentor:	_____	_____
Getting an A:	_____	_____
Testing out in math:	_____	_____
Taking accelerated classes:	_____	_____
Belonging to an academic club:	_____	_____
College acceptance:	_____	_____
Getting a good job:	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Strategies for Underachievement

Good News

Bad News

Skipping school:	<i>A day of leisure</i>	<i>More work to complete at school</i>
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Write the good news and bad news consequences for each strategy.

Forgetting homework:	_____	_____
Not participating in class:	_____	_____
Daydreaming:	_____	_____
Being a couch potato or video-game nerd:	_____	_____
Being tardy for class:	_____	_____
Refusing help from the teacher:	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Strategies I Am
Currently Using**

How This Helps Me

How This Hurts Me

**Strategies I Will Need in
the Future**

How This Will Help Me Achieve My Goals

PERSONAL BEST

GOALS OF THE EXERCISE

1. Measure goal achievement in personal terms.
2. Break long-term goals into smaller achievable segments.
3. Affirm self for progress made toward long-term goals.
4. Recognize goal achievement as an ongoing process.

ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR WHICH THIS EXERCISE MAY BE MOST USEFUL

- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning Difficulties
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Responsible Behavior Training

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS EXERCISE WITH STUDENT(S)

A personal best is an achievement signifying the student's best effort to date. Emphasizing personal best can help students with various talents and abilities to experience a sense of accomplishment as they work toward both short- and long-term academic, socioemotional, athletic, or personal goals. Each short-term goal reached becomes a new personal best accomplishment.

This exercise reinforces the idea that goal achievement should be measured in terms of personal progress, not by competing or comparing oneself with family members or other students. Ask the student to select a skill he or she would like to improve (e.g., cursive writing, math, technology competence, spelling, or a foreign language). Assist the student in determining a baseline level of performance (current level of functioning), a specific long-term goal, and a general short-term goal that can be used to identify and track progress (e.g., incrementally increasing legibility, speed, or, fluency; improving test scores; or increasing length of workouts or practice sessions).

Review the "Personal Best" activity with the student during each counseling session to ensure the student's up-to-date completion of the chart and graph, affirm the student for the progress made, and encourage the student's continued effort toward the long-term goal. This activity can be used to track progress toward goal achievement in several skill areas if student motivation and circumstances warrant.

PERSONAL BEST

Choose an activity or academic subject in which you would like to improve. Determine how you are going to measure your progress (e.g., grade, work sample, self-assessment, time on task, coach's rating). Before you begin to work, measure your performance on the subject or skill you have chosen to improve. This will be your baseline level of performance. If you are trying to improve your spelling scores, your baseline may be only two or three correct words on a quiz. If you are measuring your improvement in jumping rope, your baseline may be 5 or 10 jumps. As you study or practice, your skill will improve and you will achieve higher levels of performance. Each improved level that you measure is a personal best.

Record your improvement in scores, grades, or another method of assessment as you progress weekly or monthly throughout the year. Use the Personal Best Graph to record progress in one area of skill development. Shade in the graph and record the date of each personal best on the graph to measure both short- and long-term goal achievement.

Example

PERSONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Subject/Activity	Unit of Measurement	Baseline/Date	Date and Improved Grade or Score
<i>Cursive writing</i>	<i>Handwriting samples</i>	<i>9 / 1: Name only</i>	<i>10 / 1: Writing whole alphabet and 25 words</i>
	<i>Letter to parent</i>		<i>12 / 1: 50 words</i>
	<i>Class assignments</i>		<i>3 / 1: 200 words</i>
			<i>6 / 1: All assignments legible and in cursive</i>

Short-Term Goal	Long-Term Goal	Percent of Progress Toward Goal
<i>Increase speed and legibility</i>	<i>All assignments legible and in cursive</i>	<i>10 / 1: 10%</i>
		<i>12 / 1: 50%</i>
		<i>3 / 1: 75%</i>
		<i>6 / 1: 100%</i>

PERSONAL BEST GRAPH

Tracking My Personal Progress

Shade or color in the graph and record the date as you progress toward your goal.

Example

Baseline:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Goal Achieved:
<u>9/1</u>	<u>10/1</u>	<u>12/1</u>	<u>3/1</u>	<u>6/1</u>

PERSONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Subject/Activity	Unit of Measurement	Baseline/Date	Date and Improved Grade or Score
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Short-Term Goal	Long-Term Goal	Percent of Progress Toward Goal
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

PERSONAL BEST GRAPH

Tracking My Personal Progress

Shade or color in the graph and record the date as you progress toward your goal.

Baseline:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:	Goal Achieved:
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

