

ACADEMIC UNDERACHIEVEMENT

CLIENT PRESENTATION

1. History of Underperformance (1)*

- A. The client's teachers and parents report a history of overall performance that is below the client's chronological age, given the client's measured intelligence or performance on standardized achievement tests.
- B. The client verbally admitted that their academic performance is below their chronological age.
- C. The client has started to assume more responsibility for increasing academic performance to an age-appropriate level.
- D. The client has taken active steps (e.g., studying at routine times, seeking outside tutor, consulting with the teacher before or after class) to improve academic performance.
- E. The client's academic performance has improved to a level expected for their chronological age.

2. Academic Underachievement (2)

- A. The client's teachers and parents reported a history of academic performance that is below the expected level given the client's measured intelligence or performance on standardized achievement tests.
- B. The client verbally admitted that their current academic performance is below their expected level of functioning.
- C. The client has started to assume more responsibility for completing their school and homework assignments.
- D. The client has taken active steps (e.g., studying at routine times, seeking outside tutor, consulting with teacher before or after class) to improve their academic performance.
- E. The client's academic performance has improved to their level of capability.

3. Incomplete Homework Assignments (3)

- A. The client has consistently failed to complete their classroom or homework assignments in a timely manner.
- B. The client has refused to comply with parents' and teachers' requests to complete classroom or homework assignments.
- C. The client expressed a renewed desire to complete their classroom and homework assignments on a regular basis.
- D. The client has recently completed their classroom and homework assignments on a consistent basis.

*The numbers in parentheses correlate to the number of the Behavioral Definition statement in the companion chapter with the same title in *The Adolescent Psychotherapy Treatment Planner*, Sixth Edition, by Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2024).

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- E. The client's regular completion of classroom and homework assignments has resulted in higher grades.

4. Disorganization (4)

- A. Parents and teachers described a history of the client being disorganized in the classroom.
- B. The client has often lost or misplaced books, school papers, or important things necessary for tasks or activities at school.
- C. The client has started to take steps (e.g., using planner or agenda to record school/homework assignments, consulting with teachers before or after school, scheduling routine study times) to become more organized at school.
- D. The client's increased organization abilities have contributed to their improved academic performance.

5. Poor Study Skills (5)

- A. The parents and teachers reported that the client has historically displayed poor study skills.
- B. The client acknowledged that their lowered academic performance is primarily due to their lack of studying.
- C. The client has recently spent little time studying.
- D. The client reported a recent increase in studying time.
- E. The client's increased time spent in studying has been a significant contributing factor to their improved academic performance.

6. Procrastination (5)

- A. The client has repeatedly procrastinated or postponed doing their classroom or homework assignments in favor of engaging in social, leisure, or recreational activities.
- B. The client has continued to procrastinate doing their classroom or homework assignments.
- C. The client agreed to postpone social, leisure, or recreational activities until they have completed their homework assignments.
- D. The client has demonstrated greater self-discipline by completing homework assignments before engaging in social, leisure, or recreational activities.
- E. The client has achieved and maintained a healthy balance between accomplishing academic goals and meeting their social and emotional needs.

7. Lack of Motivation (6)

- A. The client verbalized little motivation to improve academic performance.
- B. The client has often complained of being bored with or disinterested in schoolwork.
- C. The client verbally acknowledged that their academic performance will not improve unless they show more interest and put forth greater effort.
- D. The client has shown more interest in schoolwork and put forth greater effort.
- E. The client's renewed interest and motivation have contributed to improved academic performance.

8. Depression (7)

- A. The client's feelings of depression, as manifested by their apathy, listlessness, and lack of motivation, have contributed to and resulted from their low academic performance.
- B. The client appeared visibly depressed when discussing their lowered academic performance.
- C. The client expressed feelings of happiness and joy about their improved academic performance.
- D. The client's academic performance has increased since their depression has lifted.

9. Low Self-esteem (7)

- A. The client's low self-esteem, feelings of insecurity, and lack of confidence have contributed to and resulted from their lowered academic performance.
- B. The client displayed a lack of confidence and expressed strong self-doubts about being able to improve their academic performance.
- C. The client verbally acknowledged their tendency to give up easily and withdraw in the classroom when feeling insecure and unsure of themselves.
- D. The client verbalized positive self-descriptive statements about their academic performance.
- E. The client has consistently expressed confidence in their ability to achieve academic goals.

10. Disruptive/Attention-seeking Behavior (8)

- A. The client has frequently disrupted the classroom with their negative attention-seeking behavior instead of focusing on their schoolwork.
- B. The parents have received reports from teachers that the client has continued to disrupt the classroom with their negative attention-seeking behavior.
- C. The client acknowledged that they tend to engage in disruptive behavior when they begin to feel insecure or become frustrated with their schoolwork.
- D. The client has started to show greater self-control in the classroom and inhibit the impulse to act out in order to draw attention to themselves.
- E. The client has demonstrated a significant decrease in their disruptive and negative attention-seeking behavior.

11. Low Frustration Tolerance (8)

- A. The client has developed a low frustration tolerance, as manifested by their persistent pattern of giving up easily when encountering difficult or challenging academic tasks.
- B. The client's frustration tolerance with their schoolwork has remained very low.
- C. The client has started to show improved frustration tolerance and has not given up as easily or as often on their classroom or homework assignments.
- D. The client has demonstrated good frustration tolerance and consistently completed their classroom/homework assignments without giving up.

12. Test-taking Anxiety (9)

- A. The client described a history of becoming highly anxious before or during tests.
- B. The client's heightened anxiety during tests has interfered with their academic performance.
- C. The client shared that their test-taking anxiety is related to fear of failure and of being met with disapproval or criticism by significant others.
- D. The client has begun to take steps (e.g., using deep breathing, making positive self-statements, challenging irrational thoughts) to reduce their anxiety and feel more relaxed during the taking of tests.
- E. The client reported a significant decrease in the level of anxiety while taking tests.

13. Excessive Parental Pressure (10)

- A. The client has viewed their parents as placing excessive or unrealistic pressure on them to achieve academic success.
- B. The parents acknowledged that they have placed excessive or unrealistic pressure on the client to achieve academic success.
- C. The parents denied placing excessive or unrealistic pressure on the client to achieve; instead, they attributed the client's lowered academic performance to their lack of motivation and effort.
- D. The client reported that the parents have decreased the amount of pressure that they have placed on the client to achieve academic success.
- E. The parents have established realistic expectations of the client's level of capabilities.

14. Excessive Criticism (10)

- A. The client described the parents as being overly critical of their academic performance.
- B. The client expressed feelings of sadness and inadequacy about critical remarks that their parents have made in regard to their academic performance.
- C. The client acknowledged that they deliberately refuse to do school assignments when they perceive the parents as being overly critical.
- D. The parents acknowledged that they have been overly critical of the client's academic performance.
- E. The parents have significantly reduced the frequency of their critical remarks about the client's academic performance.

15. Family History of Academic Problems (11)

- A. The client and parents described a family history of academic problems and failures.
- B. The client's parents have demonstrated little interest or involvement in the client's schoolwork or activities.
- C. The client expressed a desire for their parents to show greater interest or involvement in their schoolwork or activities.
- D. The parents verbalized a willingness to show greater interest and become more involved in the client's schoolwork or activities.

- E. The parents have sustained an active interest and involvement in the client's schoolwork and implemented several effective interventions to help the client achieve their academic goals.

16. Environmental Stress (12)

- A. The client's academic performance has markedly declined since experiencing stressors within their personal and/or family life.
- B. The client's academic performance has decreased since their family moved and they had to change schools.
- C. The client has not been able to invest as much time or energy into their schoolwork because of having to deal with environmental stressors.
- D. The client has begun to manage their stress more effectively so that they have more time and energy to devote to schoolwork.
- E. The client's academic performance has increased since resolving or finding effective ways to cope with the environmental stressor(s).

17. Loss or Separation (12)

- A. The client's academic performance has decreased significantly since experiencing the separation or loss.
- B. The client verbalized feelings of sadness, hurt, and disappointment about past separation(s) or loss(es).
- C. The client has taken active steps (e.g., socializing regularly with peers, studying with peers, participating in extracurricular activities) to build a positive support network at school to help them cope with the past separation(s) or loss(es).
- D. The client's academic interest and performance have increased substantially since working through their grief issues.

INTERVENTIONS IMPLEMENTED

1. Establish Rapport (1)*

- A. Caring was conveyed to the client through support, warmth, and empathy. The client's concerns were closely listened to and their feelings were reflected to them.
- B. The client was provided with nonjudgmental support and a level of trust was developed.
- C. The client was urged to feel safe in expressing their academic issues.
- D. The client began to express feelings more freely as rapport and trust level have increased.
- E. The client has continued to experience difficulty being open and direct about their expression of painful feelings; they were encouraged to use the safe haven of therapy to express these difficult issues.

* The numbers in parentheses correlate to the number of the Therapeutic Intervention statement in the companion chapter with the same title in *The Adolescent Psychotherapy Treatment Planner*, Sixth Edition, by Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2024).

2. Focus on Strengthening Therapeutic Relationship (2)

- A. The relationship with the client was strengthened using empirically supported factors.
- B. The relationship with the client was strengthened through the implementation of collaborative approach, agreement on goals, demonstration of empathy, verbalization of positive regard, and collection of client feedback.
- C. The client reacted positively to the relationship strengthening measures taken.
- D. The client verbalized feeling supported and understood during therapy sessions.
- E. Despite attempts to strengthen the therapeutic relationship, the client reports feeling distant and misunderstood.
- F. The client has indicated that sessions are not helpful and will be terminating therapy.

3. Refer for Psychoeducational Testing (3)

- A. The client received a psychoeducational evaluation to rule out the presence of a possible learning disability that may be contributing to their academic underachievement.
- B. The client received a psychoeducational evaluation to determine whether they are eligible to receive special education services.
- C. As noted, the client was cooperative during the psychoeducational testing and appeared motivated to do their best.
- D. The client was uncooperative during the psychoeducational testing and did not appear to put forth good effort; they were urged to provide a better effort.
- E. The client's resistance during the psychoeducational testing was interpreted to be due to their feelings of insecurity and opposition to possibly receiving special education services.

4. Refer for Psychological Testing for ADHD/Emotional Factors (4)

- A. The client received a psychological evaluation to help determine whether they have Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which may be contributing to their low academic performance.
- B. The client received psychological testing to help determine whether emotional factors are contributing to their low academic performance.
- C. The client was uncooperative and resistant during the evaluation process; they were urged to provide a better effort.
- D. It was noted that the client approached the psychological testing in an honest, straightforward manner and was cooperative with the examiner.
- E. Feedback was provided to the client, their family, and school officials regarding the psychological evaluation.

5. Obtain Psychosocial History (5)

- A. A psychosocial assessment was completed to gather pertinent information about the client's past academic performance, developmental milestones, and family history of educational achievements and failures.
- B. The client and parents were positively reinforced for being cooperative in providing information about the client's early developmental history, school performance, and family background.

- C. A review of the client's background revealed a history of developmental delays and low academic performance.
 - D. The psychosocial assessment revealed a family history of academic underachievement and failures.
 - E. The psychosocial assessment revealed a history of strong expectations being placed on family members to achieve academic success.
 - F. The psychosocial assessment revealed a healthy family history regarding academic success.
- 6. Refer for Hearing/Vision/Medical Examination (6)**
- A. The client was referred for a hearing and vision examination to rule out possible hearing or visual problems that may be interfering with their school performance.
 - B. The client was referred for a medical evaluation to rule out possible health problems that may be interfering with their school performance.
 - C. The hearing examination results revealed the presence of hearing problems that are interfering with the client's academic performance.
 - D. The vision examination revealed the presence of visual problems that are interfering with the client's school performance.
 - E. The medical examination revealed the presence of health problems that are interfering with the client's school performance.
 - F. The client and their parents have not followed through on a hearing, vision, or medical examination and were redirected to do so.
- 7. Assess Level of Insight (7)**
- A. The client's level of insight toward the presenting problems was assessed.
 - B. The client was assessed in regard to the syntonic versus dystonic nature of their insight about the presenting problems.
 - C. The client was noted to demonstrate good insight into the problematic nature of the behavior and symptoms.
 - D. The client was noted to be in agreement with others' concerns and is motivated to work on change.
 - E. The client was noted to be ambivalent regarding the problems described and is reluctant to address the issues as a concern.
 - F. The client was noted to be resistant regarding acknowledgment of the problem areas, is not concerned about them, and has no motivation to make changes.
- 8. Assess for Correlated Disorders (8)**
- A. The client was assessed for evidence of research-based correlated disorders.
 - B. The client was assessed in regard to their level of vulnerability to suicide.
 - C. The client was identified as having a comorbid disorder, and treatment was adjusted to account for these concerns.
 - D. The client has been assessed for any correlated disorders, but none were found.

9. Assess for Culturally Based Confounding Issues (9)

- A. The client was assessed for age-related issues that could help to better understand their clinical presentation.
- B. The client was assessed for gender-related issues that could help to better understand their clinical presentation.
- C. The client was assessed for cultural syndromes, cultural idioms of distress, or culturally based perceived causes that could help to better understand their clinical presentation.
- D. Alternative factors have been identified as contributing to the client's currently defined "problem behavior," and these were taken into account in regard to their treatment.
- E. Culturally based factors that could help to account for the client's currently defined "problem behavior" were investigated, but no significant factors were identified.

10. Assess Severity of Impairment (10)

- A. The severity of the client's impairment was assessed to determine the appropriate level of care.
- B. The client was assessed in regard to their impairment in social, relational, vocational, and occupational endeavors.
- C. It was reflected to the client that their impairment appears to create mild to moderate effects on the client's functioning.
- D. It was reflected to the client that their impairment appears to create severe to very severe effects on the client's functioning.
- E. The client was continuously assessed for the severity of impairment, as well as the efficacy and appropriateness of treatment.

11. Assess for Pathogenic Care (11)

- A. The home, school, and community of the client were assessed for pathogenic care and concerns.
- B. The client's various environments were assessed for the persistent disregard of the child's needs, repeated changes in caregivers, limited opportunities for stable attachment, harsh discipline, or other grossly inept care.
- C. Pathogenic care was identified, and the treatment plan included strategies for managing or correcting these concerns and protecting the child.
- D. No pathogenic care was identified and this was reflected to the client and caregivers.

12. Attend Individual Educational Planning Committee (IEPC) Meeting (12)

- A. The client's IEPC meeting was held with parents, teachers, and school officials to determine the client's eligibility for special education services, to design educational interventions, and to establish educational goals.
- B. The recommendation was made at the IEPC meeting that the client receive special education services to address their learning problems.
- C. At the IEPC meeting, it was determined that the client is not in need of special education services because they do not meet the criteria for a learning disability.

- D. The IEPC meeting was helpful in identifying specific educational goals.
- E. The IEPC meeting was helpful in designing several educational interventions for the client.

13. Move to Appropriate Classroom (13)

- A. Based on the IEPC goals and recommendations, the client was moved to an appropriate classroom setting to maximize their learning.
- B. Based on the IEPC goals and recommendations, the client has been provided with additional services, including changing to a more appropriate classroom for some academic areas.
- C. Based on the IEPC goals and recommendations, no changes in classroom setting were identified.

14. Consult About Teaching Intervention Strategies (14)

- A. A consultation was held with the client, parents, and school officials about designing effective teaching programs or intervention strategies that build on the client's strengths and compensate for their weaknesses.
- B. The client, parents, and teachers identified several learning or personality strengths that the client can utilize to improve their academic performance; these were summarized.
- C. The consultation meeting with client, parents, and school officials identified the client's weaknesses and intervention strategies that they can utilize to overcome their problems.

15. Identify Academic Goals (15)

- A. The client and parents were assisted in identifying specific academic goals in today's therapy session.
- B. The client's history of academic failure was noted to contribute to their resistance to formulating goals for successful achievement.
- C. It was reflected that the family history of underachievement and academic disinterest has contributed to the client's reluctance to establish academic goals.

16. Refer for Private Tutoring (16)

- A. The recommendation was given to the parents to seek private tutoring for the client after school to boost their skills in the area of their academic weakness.
- B. The client and parents were provided with positive feedback for being agreeable to seeking private tutoring after school.
- C. The client and parents were opposed to the idea of seeking private tutoring; they were urged to recognize this need.
- D. The client and parents reported that the private tutoring has helped to improve the client's academic performance.
- E. The client and parents reported that the private tutoring has not led to the desired improvements in the area of the client's academic weakness.

17. Refer for Private Learning Center (17)

- A. The client was referred to a private learning center for extra tutoring in the areas of academic weakness and assistance in improving their study and test-taking skills.
- B. The client reported that the extra tutoring and support provided by the private learning center have helped improve their performance in the areas of their academic weakness.
- C. The client reported that their performance in the areas of academic weakness has not improved since attending the private learning center.
- D. The client reported that their study and test-taking skills have improved since attending the private learning center.
- E. The client's study skills and test performance have not improved since attending the private learning center.
- F. The client and parents were opposed to the idea of seeking a private learning center for extra tutoring and were encouraged to reconsider this resource.

18. Teach Study Skills (18)

- A. The client was assisted in identifying good locations to study.
- B. The client was instructed to remove noise sources and clear away as many distractions as possible when studying.
- C. The client was instructed to outline or underline important details when studying or reviewing for tests.
- D. The client was encouraged to use a tape recorder to help them study for tests and review important facts.
- E. The client was instructed to take breaks in studying when they become distracted and have trouble staying focused.

19. Utilize Peer Tutor (19)

- A. The recommendation was given to parents and teachers that the client be assigned a peer tutor to improve their study skills and address areas of academic weakness.
- B. The client verbalized a desire and willingness to work with a peer tutor to improve their study skills and academic performance; they were positively reinforced for this willingness.
- C. The client expressed opposition to the idea of working with a peer tutor to improve their study skills and academic performance, and this was processed.
- D. The client reported that the peer tutoring has helped to improve their study skills and academic performance; the benefits of this were reviewed.
- E. The client reported that the peer tutoring has not helped to improve their study skills and academic performance, and this was problem-solved.

20. Teach Test-taking Strategies (20)

- A. The client was provided with a list of effective test-taking strategies to improve their academic performance.
- B. The client was encouraged to review classroom material regularly and study for tests over an extended period of time.

- C. The client was instructed to read the instructions twice before responding to questions on a test.
- D. The client was taught about the need to recheck their work to correct any careless mistakes or improve an answer.
- E. The client was assigned to use new strategies on current assignments as well as upcoming tests.
- F. The client was assigned “Good Grade/Bad Grade Incident Reports” in the *Adolescent Psychotherapy Homework Planner* (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce).

21. Train in Anxiety-reducing Techniques (21)

- A. The client was taught guided imagery and relaxation techniques to help decrease the level of their anxiety and frustration in the taking of tests.
- B. The client was encouraged to utilize positive self-talk as a means to decrease anxiety and reduce frustration in the taking of tests.
- C. The client was taught cognitive restructuring techniques to decrease their anxiety and frustration associated with test-taking.
- D. The client reported that the use of positive coping mechanisms (e.g., relaxation techniques, positive self-talk, cognitive restructuring) has helped to decrease their level of anxiety and frustration during test-taking, and positive feedback was provided in this area.
- E. The client reported experiencing little to no reduction in the level of their anxiety or frustration through the use of relaxation techniques, positive self-talk, and cognitive restructuring and was provided with remedial assistance in this area.

22. Maintain Communication Between Home and School (22)

- A. The parents and teachers were encouraged to maintain regular communication with each other via phone calls or written notes regarding the client’s academic progress.
- B. The client’s teachers were asked to send home daily or weekly progress notes informing the parents of the client’s academic progress.
- C. The client was informed of their responsibility to bring home daily or weekly progress notes from school, allowing for regular communication between parents and teachers.
- D. The parents identified the consequences of the client’s failure to bring home a daily or weekly progress note from school, and this was reinforced to the client.
- E. It was noted that the increased communication between teachers and parents via phone calls or regular progress notes has been a significant contributing factor to the client’s improved academic performance.

23. Assign Self-monitoring Checklists (23)

- A. The client was encouraged to utilize self-monitoring checklists to increase completion of school assignments and improve academic performance.
- B. The client reported that use of the self-monitoring checklists has helped them to become more organized and complete school assignments on time; positive feedback was provided.

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- C. The client has failed to consistently use the self-monitoring checklists and as a result has continued to have trouble completing their school/homework assignments; brainstorming techniques were used to problem-solve.
- D. The client's teachers were consulted about the use of self-monitoring checklists in the classroom to help them complete school/homework assignments on a regular, consistent basis.
- E. Parents and teachers were instructed to utilize a reward system in conjunction with the self-monitoring checklists to increase the client's completion of school/homework assignments and improve their academic performance.

24. Use Assignment Planner or Calendar (24)

- A. The client was strongly encouraged to use a planner or calendar to record school/homework assignments and plan ahead for long-term assignments.
- B. The client and parents were instructed to utilize the "Break It Down into Small Steps" program in the *Adolescent Psychotherapy Homework Planner* (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce) to help the client complete projects or long-term assignments on time.
- C. It was noted that the client's regular use of a planning calendar has helped them complete classroom and homework assignments on a regular, consistent basis.
- D. The client has failed to use the assigned planning calendar consistently and has continued to struggle to complete school/homework assignments.
- E. The client reported that the use of the assigned planning calendar has helped them plan ahead for long-term assignments.
- F. The client's ADHD symptoms have contributed to their failure to use a planner or calendar on a regular basis; solution-focused techniques were used to problem-solve this failure.

25. Develop Study and Recreation Schedule (25)

- A. The client and parents were assisted in developing a routine schedule to help the client achieve a healthy balance between completing homework assignments and engaging in recreational activities or socializing with peers.
- B. The client has followed the agreed-upon schedule and has been able to successfully complete homework assignments and engage in recreational or social activities.
- C. The client has failed to consistently complete their homework assignments because they have not followed the agreed-upon schedule.

26. Teach Time Management Techniques (26)

- A. The client was taught time management techniques, such as setting and recording goals, planning each day in advance, prioritizing tasks, setting clear deadlines for each step in task completion, ceasing multitasking, and saying no to outside distractions.
- B. The client has chosen and utilized time management techniques and has reported positive outcomes.
- C. The client has not utilized identified time management techniques and was provided with remedial feedback.

27. Create Effective Environment (27)

- A. The client and parents were encouraged to create an effective study/work environment that minimizes distractions.
- B. The client and parents identified specific distractions that can be reduced, such as putting cell phone away or on airplane mode, blocking out social media notifications, or studying in a library or quiet place at home.
- C. The client has implemented effective changes to the study/work environment and shared positive outcomes.
- D. The client has not made changes to the study/work environment and was provided with remedial feedback.

28. Teach 5 Second Rule (28)

- A. The client was taught thought stopping techniques or the 5 Second Rule of counting backwards by 5.
- B. The client was shown the “5 Second Rule” video by Robbins and taught how to disrupt pattern of procrastination.
- C. The client was taught to identify distorted thoughts pertaining to procrastination and replace with more reality-based statements.

29. Encourage Positive Reinforcement (29)

- A. The parents and teachers were encouraged to provide frequent positive reinforcement to maintain the client’s interest and motivation in completing their school/homework assignments.
- B. The parents and teachers were challenged to look for opportunities to praise the client for being responsible or successful at school instead of focusing on times when the client failed to behave responsibly or achieve success.
- C. The contributing factors or underlying dynamics that prevent the parents from offering praise and positive reinforcement on a consistent basis were explored.

30. Instruct Parents to Record Responsible Behaviors (30)

- A. The parents were instructed to observe and record three to five responsible behaviors by the client between therapy sessions that pertain to their schoolwork.
- B. The parents were encouraged to reinforce the client for engaging in responsible behavior.
- C. The client was strongly encouraged to continue to be responsible for completing schoolwork in order to build self-esteem, earn parents’ approval, and receive affirmation from others.
- D. The parents’ recognition and reinforcement of the client’s responsible behaviors have been noted to help to ease family tensions and to increase the client’s willingness to complete schoolwork.

31. Identify Rewards to Maintain Motivation (31)

- A. The client was asked to develop a list of possible rewards or positive reinforcers that would increase their motivation to achieve academic success.

- B. The client was directed to sign a written contract specifying the positive reinforcers that are contingent on their achieving specific academic goals.
- C. Contingent application of identified rewards has increased the client's motivation to achieve academic success.

32. Explore/Resolve Family Conflicts (32)

- A. A family therapy session was held to explore the dynamics that contribute to the client's lowered academic performance.
- B. The family members identified stressors that have had a negative impact on the family.
- C. The family members were asked to brainstorm possible solutions to the conflicts that exist within the family and interfere with the client's academic performance.
- D. Marital stressors were identified and assessed to reduce stress for the client.
- E. The family members have now resolved the differences between themselves over how to address the client's learning problems.

33. Read *The Disintegrating Student* (33)

- A. The parents were assigned to read *The Disintegrating Student* (Jannot) to learn effective strategies to help the client manage emotional distress connected to academic performance.
- B. The parents identified key concepts from *The Disintegrating Student* and were encouraged to utilize new knowledge with the client.
- C. The clients have not read *The Disintegrating Student* and were provided with remedial feedback.

34. Conduct Individual Therapy Sessions (34)

- A. Individual therapy sessions were conducted to help the client work through and resolve painful emotions, core conflicts, or stressors that impede academic performance.
- B. The client has resolved their painful emotions, core conflicts, and stressors that impede academic performance; positive feedback was provided in this area.
- C. The client has not sought individual therapy to resolve their painful emotions, core conflicts, and stressors that impede academic performance, and they were redirected to do so.

35. Encourage Parents' Interest in Client's Homework (35)

- A. The parents were encouraged to maintain regular involvement in the client's homework (e.g., attend school functions, review planners or calendars to see if the client is staying caught up with the schoolwork).
- B. The parents were reinforced for implementing a more regular involvement in the client's homework schedule.
- C. The parents have not increased their involvement in the client's homework activity, and their resistance was processed.

36. Design and Implement Reward System (36)

- A. A reward system was developed to help the parents reinforce the client's responsible behaviors, completion of school assignments, and academic success.

- B. The parents were assisted in implementing the reward system to reinforce responsible behaviors, completion of school assignments, and academic success.
- C. Contingency contracts were built into the reward system in order to reinforce the client's responsible behaviors, completion of school assignments, and academic success.
- D. The parents were assigned "Using Privileges as Contingencies and Consequences" in the *Parent Skills Homework Planner* (Knapp & Jongsma).

37. Explore Unrealistic Parental Expectations (37)

- A. A family therapy session was held to explore whether the parents have developed unrealistic expectations or are placing excessive pressure on the client to perform.
- B. Discussion was held with client and parents to identify more realistic expectations about the client's academic performance.
- C. The parents were confronted and challenged about placing excessive pressure on the client to achieve academic success.
- D. The client was seen individually to allow them to express thoughts and feelings about excessive pressure placed on them by parents.
- E. A family therapy session was held to provide the client with an opportunity to express anger, frustration, and hurt about parents' placing excessive pressure on them.
- F. The client and parents were assigned reading from *Overcoming Underachievement* (Peters).

38. Urge Parents to Set Firm Limits for Homework Refusal (38)

- A. The parents were strongly encouraged to set firm, consistent limits and to utilize natural, logical consequences for the client's refusal to do their homework.
- B. The parents were assisted in identifying a list of consequences for the client's refusal to do homework.
- C. The exercise "Attitudes About Homework" in the *Adolescent Psychotherapy Homework Planner* (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce) was assigned to both parents and teenager.
- D. The parents reported that the client has responded positively to their limits or consequences and has begun to complete their homework assignments on a regular, consistent basis; the benefits of this were reinforced.
- E. The client has refused to comply with their parents' request to complete homework assignments, even though the parents have begun to set firm limits; the parents were urged to "stay the course."

39. Assess Parent's Overprotectiveness (39)

- A. A family therapy session was conducted to explore whether a parent's overprotectiveness of the client contributes to their academic underachievement.
- B. The parents were helped to see how a pattern of overprotectiveness contributes to the client's academic underachievement.
- C. The client and parents were helped to recognize the secondary gain that is achieved through a parent's pattern of overindulging the client.

40. Challenge Parents Not to Overprotect Client (40)

- A. The parents were challenged not to protect the client from the natural consequences of their academic performance (e.g., loss of credits, detention, delayed graduation, inability to take driver's training, higher cost of car insurance) and instead were encouraged to allow the client to learn from their mistakes or failures.
- B. The parents were supported as they reported that they have allowed the client to experience the natural consequences of their poor academic performance.
- C. The parents acknowledged that they have protected the client from experiencing the consequences of their academic performance because they didn't want them to fail or repeat a grade; the long-term effects of this pattern were reviewed.
- D. The parents were instructed to follow through with firm, consistent limits and not become locked into unhealthy power struggles or arguments with the client over their homework each night.
- E. The client and parents were taught effective communication and assertiveness skills to learn how to express feelings in a controlled fashion and to avoid becoming locked into unhealthy arguments over homework.
- F. The parents were instructed to read *Negotiating Parent/Adolescent Conflict* (Robin and Foster) to help resolve conflict and issues related to schoolwork more effectively with their son/daughter.

41. Consult School Officials to Improve On-task Behavior (41)

- A. The therapist consulted with school officials about ways to improve the client's on-task behavior.
- B. The recommendation was made that the client sit toward the front of the class or near positive peer role models to help them stay focused and on task.
- C. The teachers were encouraged to call on the client often during the class to maintain the client's interest and attention.
- D. The teachers were instructed to provide frequent feedback to the client to maintain interest and motivation to complete their school assignments.
- E. The recommendation was given to teachers to break the client's larger assignments into a series of smaller tasks.

42. Reinforce Successful School Experiences (42)

- A. The parents and teachers were encouraged to reinforce the client's successful school experiences.
- B. The client was given the homework assignment of making one positive statement about school each day.
- C. All positive statements by the client about school were noted and reinforced.
- D. Positive reinforcement of the client's verbalizing successful experiences at school has increased the frequency of these type of comments.
- E. The client was assigned "Bad Thoughts Lead to Depressed Feelings" in the *Adolescent Psychotherapy Homework Planner* (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce).
- F. The client was assigned "Positive Self-Talk" in the *Adult Psychotherapy Homework Planner* (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce).

43. Place Client in Charge of Task at School (43)

- A. The teachers were encouraged to place the client in charge of a task at school to demonstrate confidence in their ability to behave responsibly.
- B. The client and teachers identified a list of tasks for which the client could assume responsibility at school; this was reviewed and processed.
- C. The client was noted to display an increase in confidence and motivation to achieve academic success after being placed in charge of a task or responsibility at school.
- D. The client failed to follow through in performing the agreed-on task or responsibility at school, and the reason for this failure was processed.

44. Record Positive Statements About School (44)

- A. The client was assigned the task of making one positive statement daily about school and either recording the statement in a journal or writing it on a sticky note to place in their bedroom or kitchen.
- B. The client was compliant with the homework assignment to record at least one positive statement daily about their school experiences.
- C. The client did not cooperate with the homework assignment to record at least one positive statement daily about their school experiences.
- D. After reviewing the positive statements about school recorded in the journal, the client was encouraged to engage in similar positive behaviors that would help make school a more rewarding or satisfying experience.

45. Teach Self-control Strategies (45)

- A. The client was taught deep breathing and relaxation techniques to inhibit the impulse to act out or engage in negative attention-seeking behaviors when encountering frustration with their schoolwork.
- B. The client was encouraged to utilize positive self-talk when encountering frustration with their schoolwork instead of acting out or engaging in negative attention-seeking behaviors.
- C. The client was taught mediational, self-control strategies (e.g., “stop, think, listen, and act”) to inhibit the impulse to act out or engage in negative attention-seeking behaviors when encountering frustration with schoolwork.

46. Explore Past Periods of Academic Success (46)

- A. The client was asked to explore periods of time when they completed schoolwork regularly and achieved academic success.
- B. The client was encouraged to use strategies or organizational skills similar to those that they used in the past to achieve academic success, and they were accepted for the insight.
- C. The client shared the realization that involvement in extracurricular or positive peer group activities increased their motivation to achieve academic success and was accepted for the insight.

- D. The session revealed that the client was more disciplined in their study habits when they received strong family support and affiliated with positive peer groups.
- E. The client recognized that they achieved greater academic success in the past when they scheduled routine times to complete homework, and they were supported for this realization.

47. Examine Past Successful Coping Strategies (47)

- A. The client was assisted in exploring other coping strategies that they used to solve other problems.
- B. The client was encouraged to use similar coping strategies that they used successfully in the past to overcome current problems associated with learning.
- C. The session revealed that the client overcame past learning problems when they sought extra assistance from teachers, parents, or peers.
- D. The client was encouraged as they recognized that they were more successful in completing school assignments in the past when they used a planning calendar to record homework assignments and long-term projects.
- E. The client denied having any past successful coping strategies and was offered tentative examples of such.

48. Identify Positive Role Models (48)

- A. The client was assisted in identifying three to five role models and listing several reasons why they thought the role model was successful in achieving goals.
- B. The client identified their personal goals and was encouraged to begin to take steps to accomplish goals by employing strategies similar to those that their positive role models have used to achieve their goals or success.
- C. The client was assigned “I Want to Be Like . . .” in the *Adolescent Psychotherapy Homework Planner* (Jongsma, Peterson, McInnis, & Bruce).
- D. The client was noted to recognize that many of their positive role models achieved success, in part, by attending school regularly and achieving academic goals.
- E. The client denied awareness of positive role models and was provided with tentative examples.

49. Identify Resource People Within School (49)

- A. The client was assisted in developing a list of resource people within the school to whom they can turn for support, assistance, or instruction when encountering difficulty or frustration with learning.
- B. After identifying a list of school resource people, the client was given the directive to seek support at least once from one of these individuals before the next therapy session.
- C. The client reported that the extra assistance that they received from other individuals in the school helped them to overcome difficulty and learn new concepts or skills.