

# Weekly Chart



Activity

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Weekend


If I earn \_\_\_\_\_ points for the week I can \_\_\_\_\_.

Let's



Play  
Catch

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Come



get  
a  
hug!

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Let's



go to the  
park!

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Let's



get  
creative!

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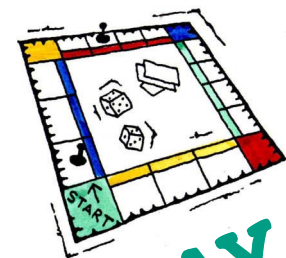
Did you  
know...



I love you!

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Let's



PLAY  
A GAME!

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**It's Time  
to Build a**



**T  
Snowman!**

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**time!**

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*Let's Bake  
Cookies!*



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**Want to**



**read a book  
with me?**

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**Just because  
I love you. . .**



©Association for Comprehensive NeuroTherapy

**Just because  
I love you. . .**



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## RECOGNIZING ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder affects 3-5% of children in the United States. According to Dr. Edward M. Hallowell in his book, *Driven to Distraction*, only 1/3 of the ADHD population outgrows it; the remaining 2/3 have it throughout adulthood. ADHD makes it very difficult to learn in school when younger and to achieve at work when older. Often people have great trouble living up to their potential. Adults with ADHD are often unemployed or underemployed. Adolescents and young adults often drop out of school before completing high school or college. People with ADHD are more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs than people without ADHD.

### HELPFUL INFORMATION

The name of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder can be confusing because not everyone who has it is hyperactive. There are three types of ADHD:

- inattentive type
- hyperactive-impulsive type
- combined type (both of above symptoms prevail)

For all types of ADHD, there are problems in at least two settings, like home or school or work. Symptoms of ADHD can range from mild to severe.

**In the people who have the inattentive type, you can see a combination of:**

- difficulty paying attention
- making careless mistakes
- losing things
- easily distracted by noises

**In the people who have the hyperactive-impulsive type, you can see a combination of:**

- fidgeting or squirming
- talking too much
- difficulty waiting turns
- interrupting others.

No one knows the exact causes of ADHD, but there have been numerous studies done that point to genetic and/or nervous system factors as the greatest contributors to ADHD. Most people with ADHD will have at least one close relative who also has ADHD. (Many adults first realize that they have ADHD when one of their children is diagnosed with ADHD). ADHD is not caused by poor parenting practices. ADHD has nothing to do with intelligence – people with ADHD can be very smart. ADHD isn't anyone's fault. ADHD can take a great

toll on self-esteem. People with ADHD can get a lot of negative feedback from teachers, families, employers and others. They are often misunderstood and labeled as lazy, defiant, odd or bad. It's hard to feel good about yourself when you get that kind of feedback regularly.

### HELPFUL STRATEGIES

If you think that you or someone you're close to has ADHD, find a mental health professional who has training and experience with diagnosing ADHD. To look for a mental health professional, you can start by talking to friends, family members, or your spiritual advisor.

- Teachers and school counselors can also be a resource.
- Your family physician should always be consulted.
- Your insurance company can tell you who their preferred professionals are in your area.
- Local chapters of CHADD (see below) can also be helpful. If medication is prescribed, learn all you can about the medication, including benefits as well as possible side effects and risks.

People with ADHD who get proper treatment find it easier to learn, pay attention, finish things, and get along with others. Once a correct diagnosis is made, people with ADHD begin to feel better about themselves because they have an explanation about why certain things have been so hard for them. Studies show that children who are prescribed medication for ADHD are much less likely to abuse alcohol and drugs later in life than the children with ADHD who do not take medication. The sooner the correct diagnosis is made and treatment begins, the sooner the person's self esteem can improve. However, it is never too late to make an accurate diagnosis, and even adults can benefit from the knowledge of the disorder and available treatments.

### Resources

#### Books

- Hallowell, Edward M., *Driven to Distraction*

#### Internet Sites

- CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder) is a national organization that represents people with ADHD for education, advocacy, and support. Families and friends are welcome. They have local chapters all around the country. For more information, see [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org).
- National ADDA (Attention Deficit Disorder Association) [www.adda.org](http://www.adda.org) or call (800) 487-2282
- Learning Disabilities Association of America [www.ldanar.org](http://www.ldanar.org) or call (412) 341-1515
- AD-IN (Attention Deficit Information Network), Inc. [www.capecod.net/~awelles](http://www.capecod.net/~awelles) or call (617) 455-989

#### Websites

- <http://borntoexplore.org>
- [www.rural.net/bobseay/homepage.html](http://www.rural.net/bobseay/homepage.html)
- <http://adhdnews.com>
- [www.oneadplace.com](http://www.oneadplace.com)

## HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND COPE WITH STRESS

**What is Stress?** It is a natural part of life. Life without any stress would be dull and boring, but too much of it becomes unpleasant and tiring. Stress is a physical and psychological response to a demand, a threat, or some kind of problem that requires a solution. It stimulates you and increases your level of awareness. The body's reaction to stress is called the "fight or flight" response. These responses occur whether the stress is positive or negative in nature. Positive stress provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue talents. However, continual exposure to negative stress lowers the body's ability to cope in general.

**Recognizing Stress:** Short-term reactions to stress include faster heartbeat, increased sweating, rapid breathing and tense muscles. Long-term responses may include digestive problems, fatigue, increased blood pressure, or headaches. At the same time, a person may experience psychological responses such as fear, worry, depression, irritability or despair. Excess stress can seriously interfere with your ability to perform effectively. It can affect your health, vitality and peace-of-mind, and personal and professional relationships.

### Helpful Strategies

The art of stress management is to keep yourself at a level of activity that is healthy and enjoyable. Stress is a process that builds, so try to be aware of its early signs and make the necessary changes. Everyone handles stress differently, some better than others.

- **Express yourself** - We need someone to talk to who will simply listen.
- **Talk it over with yourself** - We often have no control over the unpleasant events that happen in our lives, but we can *change what we say to ourselves about these events*. All our feelings are greatly affected by what we say to ourselves. **Avoid:**
  - Catastrophizing ("This is the worst thing that ever happened to me...")
  - Generalizing ("my dog doesn't like me therefore, no one will...")
  - Projecting ("I'm sure this isn't going to work out...")  
Instead, try telling yourself "I am loved and safe"  
Practice talking nicely to yourself.
- **Start Exercising** - Walk your dog, go dancing, or join a gym. Slowly increase your exercise level to include at least 20 minutes of exercise (preferably aerobic), 3-5 times per week.

**Eat healthy** - Reduce alcohol and sedatives. Reduce consumption of caffeine and refined sugar. Increase consumption of whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables.

- **Get in touch!** Hug someone, hold hands or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to relieve stress.
- **Practice rest and relaxation** - Take six deep breaths. Breathe slowly and deeply in through your nose, and out through your mouth. Use your imagination to place yourself on the beach, or in some other pleasant place from the past. Close your eyes and imagine the scene in detail, including all your senses. In just a couple of minutes you can re-experience the pleasure of actually being there. Get at least 7 hours of sleep nightly.
- **Learn to laugh** - Rent a comedy video and watch it with others (you'll laugh more).
- **Stretch** - Stand up. Raise your arms above your head. Stretch left and hold 1-2-3-4. Stretch right and hold. Repeat the stretch several times.
- **Stop smoking** - Nicotine is a stimulant, and it can increase anxiety.
- **Seek Professional help** - If your stress your level becomes severe, seek help from a mental health professional who can help determine the best course of treatment for you.

### Resources

#### Internet sites

- [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com) (in association with [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))

#### Books and Cassettes

- Hendricks, Gay. *Conscious Breathing: Breathwork for Health, Stress Release and Personal Mastery* (audiotape).
- McKay, Matthew, et al. *Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook*.
- Miller MD, Emmett E. *The 10-Minute Stress Manager* (audiotape).

## WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

The origins of mental illness have been debated for centuries. In modern times the prevailing views have largely fallen on either side of two opposing theories: *Nature versus Nurture*

The *nature* viewpoint states that heredity/genetics alone determines whether one will develop illness or pathology. Hence, there is a ‘built-in’, predetermined vulnerability to stress and other negative events which will create greater likelihood of the development of the disorder.

The *nurture* viewpoint reflects the *tabula rasa* model, which presumes we are born essentially as ‘blank slates’, and that detrimental early life experiences will be the causative factor of illness later on. These may include exposure to trauma, abuse or neglect in the first weeks, months or years of life; usually involving a parent or primary caretaker.

More recently, it has been widely accepted in psychology circles that it is probably a combination of both: genetic vulnerability and profound early life experiences.

We now are able to look at mental illness biologically, thanks to medical imaging technology, which enables scientists to ‘see’ clinical depression in the brain. They have also been able to trace how early life experiences can change certain brain structures, through the overactivation of certain chemicals and hormones, in response to stress, for example. This information has changed how depression is viewed and treated.

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### Effective Strategies

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The newest wave of **antidepressant medications** helps correct the chemical imbalance associated with this disorder. Certain forms of focused psychotherapy treatments, such as **cognitive behavioral therapy**, have also been shown to reduce this imbalance.

Lifestyle habits are also key in helping manage this disorder, especially at the biological level; such as proper and adequate sleep, regular exercise; and daily exposure to outdoor light. Our primitive brains have evolved in this environment over millions of years on earth, and so it is no wonder that our well-being continues to depend on them.

- **Regular sleep cycles:** Going to bed and waking up at approximately the same times each day will help get to all stages of sleep, especially slow wave (deep) sleep which is important for mood regulation. Drugs and alcohol should be avoided, including caffeine, which can interfere with deep sleep.

- **Regular exercise:** Exercise increases endorphin release which elevates mood, increases pain tolerance, and potentiates better sleep. Regular exercise has been shown to reduce depression, even with no other treatments.
- **Exposure to light:** Twenty minutes a day outside, preferably in the morning, will help reset the ‘body clock’ in preparation for the days activities. In some climates, this may be difficult. A specially designed ‘light box’ (10,000 lumens) can be an effective substitute.

There is growing evidence that other kinds of experiences may also affect the biology of depression—i.e., the value of close interpersonal relationships; finding meaning/purpose in life; through the healthy, direct expression of emotions; learning and practicing effective coping skills; setting and achieving goals- however small; and opening up stored feelings, during therapy sessions or during the process of writing feelings in a journal.

### Resources

#### Internet sites:

- [www.unitedbehavioralhealth.com](http://www.unitedbehavioralhealth.com)
- [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- [www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com)

## STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH GRIEF

Grief is a normal though painful response to loss. We experience this following the loss of friends and family through death, divorce, misunderstandings and relocations. We can also experience grief in response to loss associated with physical illness or injury, job loss, or other significant loss from any cause. Children are affected by loss and will need the support of adults who may also be grieving. When grieving, we may experience decreased appetite, difficulty sleeping, frequent tearfulness, difficulty concentrating, anger, and/ or a sense of isolation. Grief is a highly personal experience. There are no set stages or feelings that all people go through in response to all losses. One point that can be made is that our responses, thoughts and feelings come and go with varying intensity across time. There is no “right” way to grieve.

### Helpful Strategies

#### **Make time work for you.**

Time passes without regard to what we do with it. In the process of grief, it is important that you acknowledge your experience: your thoughts, feelings, and changes in behavior across time. Anniversary dates and milestone events in our lives will often recall a loss we have had. When this happens, it is helpful to recognize it and talk about it.

#### **Balance your time and ask for help.**

Solitude can be an important element of grief for many people. Nonetheless, it is essential that we balance solitude with community. Return to and maintain as much of your routine as you can. In addition to their usual contacts, ask friends and family to call you at scheduled intervals (three months, six months, and a year after the loss or an important date that you can anticipate an increase in your feelings of loss).

#### **Attend to your physical needs and appearance.**

It is important that you get rest and

nourishment. While restful sleep and normal appetite take some time to return, you should try to eat small meals and sleep at night. Maintain daily hygiene.

#### **Ask for practical support.**

Most people want to be helpful, but it is not always easy to know what to do in response to loss. Ask for help with childcare, grocery shopping, housekeeping, and other tasks, especially in the early stages of your grief.

#### **Avoid numbing your pain.**

Do not use drugs or alcohol to avoid difficult thoughts or feelings.

#### **Avoid making life-changing decisions.**

Give yourself some time to adjust to your loss before you make other significant changes.

#### **Maintain hope.**

While it rarely happens as quickly as we wish, we do progress through our grief. Having done so, we may be changed in unpredictable but meaningful ways that contributes to our own or another’s growth.

### Resources

#### **Internet sites**

- GriefNet and KIDSAID [www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)

#### **Books**

- Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*
- Kübler-Ross, E. *On Death and Dying*

## RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO DEPRESSION IN YOUR CHILD

Many people believe that children do not experience depression. However, the evidence shows that even young children can and do experience depression. The signs of depression can be different in children than in adults. A child or adolescent might not always seem sad, so depression can be hard to recognize. Causing trouble at home or school can indicate depression, often without the child realizing it. Here's what you can look for to see if your child is depressed.

### Identifying Clues

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness, or crying
- Hopelessness
- Less interest in activities and/or friends
- Inability to enjoy previously pleasurable activities
- Frequent complaints of physical illness, such as headaches or stomach aches
- A change in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Increased irritability and/or anger
- A change in activity level, either more or less
- Thoughts of, or talking about death, suicide, or self destructive behavior
- Trouble concentrating
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Low self esteem
- Talk of or efforts to run away
- A change in school attendance and/or performance
- Isolation such as staying in the room and avoiding family contact
- Fascination with violent/destructive games

Depression is a real and serious illness that usually requires professional help. Early diagnosis and treatment are very important and parents are usually the first to recognize that their child has a problem. However, asking for professional help can be hard.

Parents often blame themselves and believe that others will too. It may be helpful to know that about five percent of children and adolescents in the general population suffer from depression at any given time. It is unusual to see depression in preschool and early school aged children, but it does occur. During childhood, the number of boys and girls affected are about the same. By adolescence, twice as many girls as boys are diagnosed.

Professional help really can help. Treatment usually consists of individual and family therapy. Antidepressant medication may also be used.

### Helpful Strategies

Parents should try to find a mental health professional who has training and experience working with children, adolescents and/or families. It is also important to find someone that you and your child feel comfortable with.

There are a number of places to look for mental health professionals, but you should know about your health insurance benefits as well (for example, many benefits will not pay for professionals who are not on the insurance company's preferred list).

- To look for a professional, you can start by talking to friends, family members, or your spiritual adviser
- Your child's teachers or school counselor can be a resource
- Your family physician should always be consulted
- Your insurance company can tell you their preferred professionals in your area
- The Employee Assistance Program through your employer will also have referrals for you
- The local mental health association is a resource

### Once You Get Help

- Don't blame yourself.
- Learn all you can about depression.
- If your child is prescribed antidepressant medication, help make sure he or she takes it.
- Become educated about medications that your child is taking and their actions and effects

## Resources

### Internet sites

- National Depressive and Manic-depressive Association: [www.ndmda.org](http://www.ndmda.org)

### Books

- Dubuque, Nicholas and Susan. *Kid Power Tactics for Dealing with Depression*
- Dubuque, Susan. *A Parent's Survival Guide to Childhood Depression*
- Cobain, Bev. *When Nothing Matters Anymore: A Survival Guide for Depressed Teens*
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. *Your Child, Emotional, Behavioral and Cognitive Development from Infancy Through Preadolescence*
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. *Your Adolescent, Emotional, Behavioral and Cognitive Development from Early Adolescence Through the Teen Years*



## RECOGNIZING POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric condition that can occur following exposure to a life-threatening event. Trauma exposure can sometimes be so overwhelming that people are unable to fully absorb the experience at the time it occurs. In some circumstances this leads to constant “reliving” of the event, avoidance of things associated with the trauma, and feeling anxious or irritable. Recent research suggests that this kind of constant state of stress results in chemical changes in the brain perhaps making trauma survivors more vulnerable to other conditions such as depression.

### Symptoms To Watch For

- Nightmares or flashbacks
- Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings and activities associated with the trauma
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying awake
- Exaggerated startle response
- Outbursts of anger

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### Helpful Strategies

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- **Remember to breathe.** When we receive a shock, we often take a sudden but shallow breath in. When we are under stress our breathing may become more shallow resulting in increased tension in our bodies. Taking deep breaths helps our bodies to relax.
- **Monitor your self talk:** “Of course I’m feeling overwhelmed; what happened was too big to manage all at once.”
- **Schedule time** for recalling the stressful event for limited periods of time.
- **Plan time daily** for a small act of self-care such as listening to a favorite song or taking a walk.
- **When thoughts or feelings intrude** try to acknowledge them to yourself and tell someone else. These intrusions flood you temporarily to allow you to absorb what has happened a little at a time. The intensity and duration of these intrusive thoughts and feelings will decrease over time, especially if you do not try to avoid them altogether.
- **Talk** with someone who can listen.
- **Ask for help.** If the first source doesn’t help, ask someone else.
- **Make lists** of things to do and work on one task at a time.
- **Rest.** A good night of sleep helps to restore the body and increases energy needed to work through traumatic events.
- **Give yourself permission to laugh and to cry.**
- **Try to eat small meals** that include protein. Avoid caffeine and sugar.
- **Avoid use of alcohol or drugs** in an effort to cope.

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### Notes on Treatment

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If posttrauma symptoms have been present for more than three months and you have not already done so, seek an assessment with a mental health professional. Treatment selection depends on many factors including how long symptoms have been present, how severe the symptoms are and whether there are complications such as a co-occurring depression or substance abuse problems. Treatment may include individual, group or family therapy as well as medication. A mental health professional can assist you in determining the best course of care for you

### Resources

#### Internet sites

- National Center for PTSD: [www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)
- Sidran Traumatic Stress Foundation: [www.sidran.org](http://www.sidran.org)