

At-Home Practice (Homework)

What: Making specific plans to practice new skills; reviewing this practice with clients; adjusting practice plans as needed.

Why? Getting better usually requires trying new things in real life, not just during treatment sessions.

TIPS FOR ASSIGNING:

- **Teach & PRACTICE the skill in session.** Model the skill first and then make sure client has the opportunity to practice it. Get their reactions—was it helpful?
- **Give a strong rationale linked to their goals.** Make it clear how this at-home practice can help with their stated goals.
- **Make the plan together.** Get their ideas/input/feedback/agreement about the plan. Ask: “Does this seem worth doing?” This is for THEM, not for you. Let them own it.
- **Get specific.** **What** activity/skill is to be practiced; **When** it will be; **How** many days/week, best time of day to practice skill; **How** long will the skill/activity be practiced per time; **Reminder** – what will help remind them to do the activity/skill. **AND WRITE IT DOWN.**
- **Problem-solve potential obstacles.**
 - What could get in the way? How will you remember? What if you don’t feel like doing it?
- **Identify facilitators.** (people or strategies that will help them succeed)
 - Set phone alarms? Place reminders in the environment? Pick a set time every day?
 - Involve a friend or parent?
 - Set up rewards (from self or parents) for their effort.
 - Give them a log to track it. For worksheets or tracking logs, consider having them take phone pictures during the week in case they forget to bring the sheet back.
- **Start it together.** If it is a tracking log, fill out today’s (or yesterday’s) entry together as practice.

TIPS FOR REVIEWING:

- **ALWAYS review.** If not, you are punishing their effort, and communicating it wasn’t important.
- **Praise/shape effort.** If they did something, or even thought about it, you can praise that step.
- **If not done, do together if possible.** Communicates it is important. Gives them practice.
- **If not done:** NOT a failure. A wonderful opportunity to learn better what gets in the way for them. Steps weren’t small enough? Identify obstacles and problem solve? Were there interfering beliefs (“Maybe you didn’t think it would help?”)? Was it a bad idea, or too elaborate?