

20

Parents Mental Health Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Examine Your Worries

2 · Are Your Worries Hurting You?

3 · Are Your Worries Hurting Others?

4 · Use Visual Metaphors to Accept Your Worries

5 · Visual Metaphors Log

6 · Setting Boundaries

7 · Handling Criticism

8 · Release Self-Blame

9 · Problem-Solving

10 · Emotion Regulation

11 · Checking the Facts

12 · Anger Management

13 · Work on Your Ability to Say NO

14 · Overcoming Depression

15 · Daily Mood Tracker

16 · Self-Care Routine

17 · Time Management

18 · Mindfulness Exercises for Busy Parents

19 · What Is Your Parenting Style?

20 · Nurturing Your Relationship with Your Child

How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

Contents

Examine Your Worries	4
Are Your Worries Hurting You?	10
Are Your Worries Hurting Others?	13
Use Visual Metaphors to Accept Your Worries.....	16
Visual Metaphors Log	20
Setting Boundaries	21
Handling Criticism	24
Release Self-Blame	26
Problem-Solving	29
Emotion Regulation	32
Checking the Facts.....	34
Anger Management.....	35
Work on Your Ability to Say NO	41
Overcoming Depression	44
Daily Mood Tracker	49
Self-Care Routine	50
Time Management.....	52
Mindfulness Exercises for Busy Parents	56
What Is Your Parenting Style?	59
Nurturing Your Relationship with Your Child	63
Reparenting Yourself.....	66
Self-Compassion Worksheet	68

Examine Your Worries

Step 1: List Your Worries

Take a few moments to write down all the worries that come to mind. These could be specific concerns or more general anxieties. Don't censor yourself - write down everything that you are currently worried about. The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ **Safety:** Fear of your child getting hurt or injured.
- ☐ **Health:** Concerns about your child's physical and mental well-being.
- ☐ **Education:** Worries about your child's academic progress and success.
- ☐ **Socialization:** Anxiety about your child making friends and fitting in socially.
- ☐ **Discipline:** Challenges related to setting limits and enforcing rules.
- ☐ **Screen Time:** Worries about the negative effects of excessive screen time.
- ☐ **Bullying:** Fear that your child may be bullied or become a bully.
- ☐ **Peer Influence:** Concerns about your child being negatively influenced by peers.
- ☐ **Independence:** Worries related to fostering independence while ensuring safety.
- ☐ **Sleep:** Challenges around establishing healthy sleep patterns for your child.
- ☐ **Nutrition:** Worries about providing a balanced diet and addressing picky eating habits.

- ☐ **Developmental Milestones:** Concerns regarding your child's developmental progress.
- ☐ **Performance Pressure:** Anxiety about your child's achievements and comparing them to others.
- ☐ **Time Management:** Challenges in balancing work, family, and personal responsibilities.
- ☐ **Sibling Rivalry:** Worries about sibling conflicts and fostering healthy relationships.
- ☐ **Technology and Online Safety:** Concerns about internet safety and online interactions.
- ☐ **Future Success:** Anxiety about your child's future career and life opportunities.
- ☐ **Financial Stability:** Worries about providing for your child's material needs and education.
- ☐ **Cultural Identity:** Worries about raising a child with a strong sense of cultural identity.
- ☐ **Parenting Judgment:** Anxiety about being judged by other parents or feeling inadequate.
- ☐ **Separation Anxiety:** Worries about your child struggling with separation from you.
- ☐ **Struggling Relationships:** Concerns about the impact of parenting on your relationship with your partner.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Step 2: Rate Each Worry's Importance and Impact

Next, assign each worry a rating on a scale of 1 to 10 for its importance (how much it matters to you) and impact (how much it affects your daily life). This will help you prioritize your worries and identify those that require more attention.

Worry: _____

Importance: _____/10

Impact: _____/10

Worry: _____

Importance: _____/10

Impact: _____/10

Worry: _____

Importance: _____/10

Impact: _____/10

Step 3: Explore the Underlying Causes

For each worry, try to delve deeper into the underlying causes or triggers. Ask yourself why these worries exist and what circumstances contribute to them. Consider any past experiences, beliefs, or external factors that may have influenced these worries.

Example:

Worry: *Financial insecurity*

Underlying causes:

- *Recent job loss*
- *Limited savings*
- *Fear of not being able to provide for family*

Worry: _____

Underlying causes:

Worry: _____

Underlying causes:

Worry: _____

Underlying causes:

Step 4: Evaluate the Probability

For each worry, assign a probability rating (low-medium-high), indicating how likely you believe each concern is to occur. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers; this exercise aims to help you objectively assess the likelihood of these worries.

Possible outcome	Probability	Reasons
e.g., My child experiencing difficulties making friends	low	Children vary in their social skills, and some may find it harder than others to make friends. My concern stems from wanting my child to develop meaningful relationships.

After completing the chart, take a moment to reflect on the ratings you assigned. Are there any worries that you believe are highly probable, but in reality, may not occur as frequently as you think? Are there others that you initially dismissed, but could actually happen more often than you anticipated?

Are Your Worries Hurting You?

If you worry too much, you might experience physical, emotional, cognitive, or even behavioral symptoms. The following are common symptoms associated with worrying. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

Physical Symptoms:

- ☐ Increased heart rate
- ☐ Muscle tension and aches
- ☐ Fatigue or difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Headaches or migraines
- ☐ Digestive issues (e.g., stomachaches, nausea)
- ☐ Sweating or trembling
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Emotional Symptoms:

- ☐ Feeling anxious or overwhelmed
- ☐ Irritability or mood swings
- ☐ Restlessness or agitation
- ☐ Frequent feelings of fear or apprehension
- ☐ Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- ☐ Feeling on edge or constantly alert
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Cognitive Symptoms:

- ☐ Excessive worry or rumination
- ☐ Catastrophic thinking (expecting the worst-case scenario)
- ☐ Racing thoughts or intrusive thoughts
- ☐ Trouble making decisions
- ☐ Difficulty with memory or forgetfulness
- ☐ Negative self-talk or self-doubt
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Behavioral Symptoms:

- ☐ Avoidance of certain situations or activities
- ☐ Increased reassurance-seeking from others
- ☐ Changes in appetite (overeating or loss of appetite)
- ☐ Nail-biting or other nervous habits
- ☐ Difficulty relaxing or sitting still
- ☐ Social withdrawal or isolation
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Reflect on how these symptoms affect your daily activities, such as work or relationships by filling out the following chart:

Symptom	Frequency	Intensity (1-10)	Comments
<i>e.g. Muscle tension</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>I notice that my muscles often feel tense and knotted up, especially in my shoulders and neck. This physical tension can be quite uncomfortable and even painful at times.</i>

Are Your Worries Hurting Others?

1. How do your worries affect your mood and overall well-being?

2. Have you noticed any changes in other people's behavior or mood when you're visibly worried?

3. Do you find yourself frequently seeking reassurance from others regarding your worries?

4. Are you unintentionally projecting your anxieties onto your children's experiences or future outcomes?

5. How often do you discuss your worries with your children/partner/others, and in what manner?

6. Have there been instances where your worries have prevented you from engaging in activities with your children/partner/others?

7. How do you think your worries might be influencing your children's sense of security or self-confidence?

Brainstorm ideas to reduce the impact of your worries and stress on other people:

Person/ Relationship	How is your worrying affects them	What can you do?
<i>e.g. Spouse</i>	<i>My constant worrying puts a strain on our relationship.</i>	<i>- Explore healthy outlets for my worries, such as writing in a journal, engaging in physical exercise, or seeking professional help - Express gratitude to my spouse for their understanding and patience during times of worry.</i>

Person/ Relationship	How is your worrying affects them	What can you do?

Use Visual Metaphors to Accept Your Worries

Instructions:

1. Begin by finding a quiet and comfortable space where you won't be disturbed.
2. Take a few deep breaths, allowing yourself to relax and let go of any tension.
3. Look at the metaphoric images below and choose one or more images that resonate with you the most and write down their corresponding numbers.

Metaphoric Images:

1. Tree with Swirling Leaves:

- Picture a majestic tree with branches extending towards the sky, and imagine its leaves swirling and twirling gently in the breeze. Notice the colors, shapes, and movements of the leaves.
- As you observe the swirling leaves, bring to mind the worries or concerns that have been bothering you. Recognize each worry and acknowledge their presence without judgment. Allow yourself to fully experience the emotions associated with these worries.
- Imagine that each worry is represented by a swirling leaf. See how the leaves dance and move freely, symbolizing the transient nature of worries. Recognize that just like the leaves, worries come and go, and they do not define you.
- Reflect on the impermanent nature of both the swirling leaves and worries. Just as leaves eventually fall and new ones grow, worries also evolve and change over time.

- With each breath out, visualize yourself releasing one of the swirling leaves, representing the release of a specific worry. Feel a sense of lightness and relief as you let go of these concerns, allowing yourself to be present in the here and now.

2. Waves in the Ocean:

- Picture in your mind's eye a vast ocean with gentle waves rolling in and out. Observe the colors, movements, and sounds of the water.

- As you visualize the ocean, bring to mind the worries or concerns that have been occupying your thoughts. Accept that these worries exist and that they are causing you distress.

- Visualize each worry being represented by a wave in the ocean. Imagine the worries rising and falling, just like the waves. Notice how they come and go, constantly changing in size and intensity.

- Shift your focus from trying to control or eliminate your worries to accepting their presence. Embrace the idea that worrying is a common human experience and that it's okay to have these thoughts and concerns.

3. Leaves on a Stream

- Visualize a stream flowing gently in front of you. Imagine yourself sitting beside the stream, watching as the water passes by.

- Now, imagine that each of your worries or troublesome thoughts is like a leaf floating on the surface of the water.

- As each leaf floats by, silently acknowledge it (e.g., "there's a worry about work", "there's a fear about health", etc.), and watch it continue to float downstream and away from you.

- Avoid getting caught up in any one particular leaf or thought. Instead, simply observe them all as they come and go, without trying to change or control them.
- If you find yourself getting tangled up in a particular worry or thought, imagine yourself gently letting go of it and allowing it to float downstream with the rest.
- Continue to focus on your breath and the stream, letting the leaves (worries) pass by without getting caught up in them.

4. Passengers on the Bus

- Imagine yourself sitting on a bus as it travels along a scenic route. You are the driver of this bus and have full control.
- As you visualize yourself driving, notice that there are several passengers on the bus. Each passenger represents a worry or troublesome thought that you have been holding onto.
- Take a moment to observe each passenger without judgment. Notice their appearance, their demeanor, and how they are behaving.
- Remind yourself that each passenger has their own unique concerns and fears, but they are all just thoughts and do not define you as a person.
- As the bus continues down the road, acknowledge the presence of these worries by silently telling yourself what they are (e.g., "There's the worry about work", "There's the fear of rejection").
- Allow yourself to feel any emotions that may arise as you acknowledge these worries, but remember to maintain a sense of detachment, knowing that these thoughts do not have to control your actions or wellbeing.

- As the bus keeps moving, remind yourself that you have the power to decide how much attention you give to these worries. You can choose to let them stay on the bus or gently ask them to step off one by one, acknowledging that they exist but no longer serving you.

5. Clouds Passing By

- Visualize yourself lying on a soft green field or beach with the blue sky above you.

- As you look up at the sky, imagine that the clouds passing overhead represent your worries or troubling thoughts.

- Observe the clouds one by one - notice their size, shape, and color. Acknowledge each cloud as a thought, but do not engage with it or try to push it away.

- Instead, just watch the clouds passing by and let them go. Imagine saying to yourself, "There goes the worry about work," or "There goes the fear of failure."

- If other thoughts come into your mind, acknowledge them, label them, and then let them go, allowing them to be carried away like the clouds.

- Notice how the clouds move across the sky and gradually disappear over the horizon.

- Similarly, acknowledge that your thoughts will come and go, and that it is natural to have them.

- Continue to observe the clouds for several minutes, noticing how they change and transform.

Visual Metaphors Log

Date	Metaphor used	How you felt before (1-10)	How you felt after (1-10)	Notes
e.g., Monday	Clouds Passing By	Anxious (8)	Less anxious (5)	The metaphor allowed me to see my anxiety as transient.

Setting Boundaries

1. What specific challenges or issues are you currently experiencing as a parent?

Examples: Difficulty enforcing rules, feeling overwhelmed by constant demands, lack of personal time or space, feeling disrespected by your child's behavior, etc.

2. How do these challenges or issues impact your well-being and overall emotional state?

Examples: Increased stress levels, frustration, feelings of guilt or inadequacy, decreased patience or enjoyment in parenting, etc.

3. Reflect on instances where you have felt that your personal boundaries were being crossed by your child or others involved in parenting.

Examples: Disrespectful language or behavior, disregard for household rules, invasion of personal space, etc.

4. How do you typically respond when your boundaries are crossed? Do you communicate your needs effectively, or do you tend to avoid confrontation?

Examples: React with anger or frustration, withdraw emotionally, avoid addressing the issue, etc.

5. What fears or concerns do you have about setting boundaries with your children?

Example: Fear of upsetting or angering your child, concerns about being too strict, fear of being perceived as a bad parent, worries about your child's reaction, concerns about being inconsistent, etc.

6. Consider the impact of not setting clear boundaries on your relationship with your child and your own well-being.

Examples: Strained relationship with your child, increased resentment or frustration, neglecting self-care, reduced energy levels, etc.

7. In what ways can setting appropriate boundaries benefit both you and your child?

Examples: Promote mutual respect, improve communication, foster healthier relationships, increase personal well-being, teach your child important life skills, etc.

8. List three practical steps you can take to set and maintain boundaries in your parenting role.

Examples: Clearly communicate and reinforce household rules, schedule dedicated personal time, express your needs and expectations assertively, seek support from other caregivers, etc.

Handling Criticism

1. Recognizing the Criticism:

- Describe the specific criticism or feedback you received.

- Reflect on how it made you feel and how it impacted your thoughts and emotions.

2. Understanding the Intentions:

- Consider the possible intentions behind the criticism. Was it meant to be helpful, corrective, or simply expressing an opinion?

- Reflect on whether the person delivering the criticism might have had good intentions, even if their approach was less than ideal.

3. Evaluating the Validity:

- Assess the validity and relevance of the criticism. Are there any elements that you agree with or can learn from?

4. Learning and Growing:

- Identify any potential learning opportunities or areas for personal growth that you can extract from the criticism.

- Set realistic goals or action steps to address any valid points raised.

Release Self-Blame

1. Identify the self-blaming thoughts:

Take a moment to reflect on the specific thoughts or beliefs that contribute to your self-blame as a parent. Following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ "I'm not doing enough for my child."
- ☐ "I always make mistakes as a parent."
- ☐ "Other parents seem to handle things much better than I do."
- ☐ "My child's behavior issues are entirely my fault."
- ☐ "I can't provide the same opportunities as other parents."
- ☐ "What if my child ends up resenting me for my parenting mistakes?"
- ☐ "I should be able to anticipate all of my child's needs."
- ☐ "My child's struggles reflect my incompetence as a parent."
- ☐ "I should be able to fix every problem my child faces."
- ☐ "I should have prevented my child from making certain mistakes."
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Challenge negative thoughts:

For each self-blaming thought you identified, write down evidence that contradicts or challenges it. Look for alternative explanations or perspectives that may provide a more balanced view.

Self-blaming thought: _____

Challenge it:

Self-blaming thought: _____

Challenge it:

Self-blaming thought: _____

Challenge it:

3. Acknowledge your efforts:

Make a list of all the things you have done well as a parent. This could include instances where you showed love, support, or made positive choices for your child. Recognize your strengths and achievements.

4. Practice self-compassion:

Write a letter to yourself, as if you were speaking to a close friend who is experiencing similar parenting challenges. Offer words of kindness, understanding, and encouragement. Remind yourself that you are doing the best you can with the resources and knowledge you have.

Problem-Solving

1. Identify the Problem:

Clearly define the issue or challenge that you are facing as a parent.

Example: My toddler is having tantrums and I'm not sure how to handle them.

2. Brainstorm Possible Solutions:

List as many potential solutions or strategies as you can think of, without judging or evaluating them at this stage.

Example:

- *Use calming techniques like deep breathing or counting.*
- *Get down to eye level and empathize with the child's emotions.*
- *Give choices to the child to offer a sense of control and autonomy.*
- *Distract the child with another activity or object.*

3. Evaluate the Pros and Cons:

Consider the potential advantages and disadvantages of each solution. This step helps you assess the feasibility and potential effectiveness of each option.

Solution	Pros	Cons
e.g., Give choices to the child to offer a sense of control and autonomy.	Can empower the child and reduce power struggles.	May not work if the child is too upset or rigid in their thinking.

4. Choose and Implement a Solution:

Based on your evaluation, select the solution(s) that seem most suitable for your situation. Begin putting your chosen solution(s) into practice.

5. Reflect and Adjust:

Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen solution(s) and make any necessary adjustments or modifications.

Example: After a few tantrums, I noticed that Solution 2 was particularly effective for my child, and I decided to focus more on empathizing with their emotions and offering comfort first before moving on to other strategies.

Emotion Regulation

1. Physical Sensations:

What physical sensations do you experience when you feel this emotion?
(e.g., increased heart rate, tension in the body)

2. Emotion:

What emotion are you experiencing right now? (e.g., anxiety, sadness, loneliness)

3. Triggering Event/Example:

Describe a specific situation or event that led to this emotion. Be as detailed as possible.

4. Thoughts and Beliefs:

What thoughts or beliefs arise in your mind when you experience this emotion? (e.g., "I'm not good enough," "This always happens to me")

5. Unhelpful Coping Strategies:

What are some unhelpful ways you have tried to cope with this emotion in the past? (e.g., avoidance, overeating, excessive alcohol consumption)

6. Healthy Coping Strategies:

List some strategies that can help you effectively manage this emotion in a healthier way. Consider techniques such as:

- ☐ Deep breathing exercises
- ☐ Practicing mindfulness or meditation
- ☐ Using positive self-talk and challenging negative thoughts
- ☐ Engaging in physical activity or exercise
- ☐ Expressing yourself through journaling or creative outlets
- ☐ Seeking support from friends, family, or a therapist
- ☐ Taking time for self-care activities

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

7. Future Action Plan: Choose one or two healthy coping strategies from the list above and outline how you plan to apply them in future situations when you experience this emotion.

Checking the Facts

Emotions can sometimes cloud our judgment and make situations seem more intense than they actually are. By checking the facts, you can gain perspective and reduce the intensity of your emotions.

1. Identify the event that triggered your emotion. Write down as many details as you can recall.

2. Consider what assumptions or interpretations you have made about the situation. Write them down.

3. Assess whether your emotions and their intensity match up with the actual facts of the situation, or if they are based on your assumptions. Write down your thoughts on this.

Anger Management

1. Identify Triggers:

Take a moment to reflect on situations that commonly trigger your anger or frustration. Becoming aware of your triggers can help you anticipate and manage your emotions more effectively. The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ Lack of sleep or fatigue.
- ☐ Constant interruptions or feeling overwhelmed with responsibilities.
- ☐ Disobedience or defiance from children.
- ☐ Arguments or conflicts with your partner or other family members.
- ☐ Feeling unappreciated or undervalued as a parent.
- ☐ Financial stress or worries.
- ☐ Dealing with challenging or difficult behaviors from your child.
- ☐ Feeling judged or criticized by others for your parenting decisions.
- ☐ Picky eating or struggles with mealtime.
- ☐ An untidy or chaotic living environment.
- ☐ Sibling rivalry or constant fighting among children.
- ☐ Dealing with a child's emotional outbursts or meltdowns.
- ☐ Parenting disagreements or conflicts with co-parent or ex-partner.
- ☐ Dealing with teenage rebellion or independence-seeking behaviors.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Practice Deep Breathing:

When you feel anger rising, take slow and deep breaths to activate your body's relaxation response.

- Inhale deeply through your nose, counting to four.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth, counting to six.
- Repeat this process several times until you feel a sense of calmness.

3. Take a Timeout:

If you find yourself getting overwhelmed with anger, give yourself permission to take a brief break.

Step away from the situation, find a quiet place, and take a few minutes to collect your thoughts.

Use this time to engage in calming activities. Following are some examples. Check off the ones you think will help or add more to the list:

- ☐ Deep breathing exercises.
- ☐ Listen to a calming meditation audio that guides you through relaxation techniques.
- ☐ Engage in adult coloring books or printouts to focus your attention and promote relaxation.
- ☐ Journaling. Write down your thoughts and feelings without judgment or editing.
- ☐ Listening to calming music.
- ☐ Taking a walk outdoors.
- ☐ Yoga or stretching exercises.
- ☐ Counting slowly from one to ten, focusing on each number and your breath between each count.

- ☐ Imagining yourself in a peaceful and calming environment, such as a beach.
- ☐ Engaging in a hobby.
- ☐ Reading a book or magazine.
- ☐ Playing with a stress ball or fidget toy.
- ☐ Taking a warm bath or shower.
- ☐ Engaging in a physical activity (Dance, jump rope, or participate in other forms of exercise to release tension).
- ☐ Making a cup of herbal tea.
- ☐ Watching a funny video or TV show.
- ☐ Writing a letter (not to be sent), expressing your thoughts or frustrations and allowing yourself to vent.
- ☐ Reach out to a trusted friend or family member who can provide comfort and guidance.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

4. Use "I" Statements:

Instead of resorting to angry outbursts, work on expressing your needs and concerns assertively.

Try using "I" statements to express your feelings constructively.

Start your sentences with "I feel" followed by an emotion and explain the reason for your feelings.

- Identify a specific situation where you would like to practice assertiveness. It could be related to setting boundaries with your child, communicating with other parents or caregivers, or handling conflicts within the family. Describe the situation below:

Example: My child wants to use their smartphone at the dinner table, and I want to set a boundary around device usage during meals.

Situation:

- Practice assertive communication by using "I" statements. Write down what you would like to say to express your needs or concerns in the situation you identified earlier. Focus on being clear, direct, and respectful:

Example: "I feel strongly about having device-free dinners as it allows us to connect and enjoy each other's company. Let's create a rule that during mealtime, we all put our phones away and focus on being present."

Assertive Communication:

- Consider potential obstacles or challenges that might arise when expressing yourself assertively. Think about how you can overcome these barriers or seek support from others:

Example: If my child becomes upset or resistant, I will remain calm, explain the reasons behind the rule, and offer alternative activities or conversations during mealtime to make it more engaging.

Obstacles and Solutions:

- Think about appropriate consequences that can reinforce the boundary you are setting. Consequences should be fair, proportional to the behavior, and consistent. Write down a few potential consequences that you believe would be effective in reinforcing the boundary you want to establish.

Example: If my child chooses to use their smartphone at the dinner table despite the boundary, they will lose device privileges for the rest of the evening or until the next mealtime. Additionally, we may opt for alternative consequences such as assigning extra household chores or reducing screen time privileges for a certain period.

Consequence:

- Role-play the situation with a trusted friend, partner, or even in front of a mirror. Practice delivering your assertive message while being mindful of your tone, body language, and facial expressions.

- After role-playing, reflect on how it felt to assert yourself. Did you notice any changes in your confidence or emotional state? Write down your observations:

Example: I felt more empowered and confident in expressing my needs. Although there was initial resistance, I noticed that my child eventually understood and respected the boundary I set.

Observations:

Work on Your Ability to Say NO

1. What are your top priorities at the moment?

2. Identify situations where you struggle to say no:

3. Before you say yes, reflect on the following questions:

- Is this request aligned with my values and priorities?

- Do I have the time and energy to take on this request?

- Will saying yes compromise my well-being?

- Can I negotiate terms that work better for me?

- What are the potential consequences of saying no?

4. Develop alternative responses. Brainstorm alternative responses that are polite, yet firm, when saying no. The following are some examples:

- ☐ “I know that you’d like us to go out together tonight, but I’m tired. I won’t be able to join you.”
- ☐ "I appreciate the offer, but I'm unable to commit to it at this time."
- ☐ "I wish I could help, but my schedule is already quite full."
- ☐ "Unfortunately, I have to decline due to other commitments."
- ☐ "I'm afraid I can't help out this time, but I appreciate being included."
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

5. Use the following chart to keep track of situations where you wanted to say no but didn’t.

Situation	Reason for Not Saying No	Outcome/Consequence	What you could have said instead
e.g., Working overtime	Fear of losing job or disappointing boss	Experienced burnout and neglected personal life	"I understand the situation, but I'm concerned about my current workload and the potential impact on my personal life. Is there any possibility of delegating some tasks or finding alternative solutions?"

Situation	Reason for Not Saying No	Outcome/ Consequence	What you could have said instead

Overcoming Depression

1. Self-reflection on symptoms:

Reflect on the symptoms you experience when feeling depressed. The following is a list of common symptoms. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

Physical symptoms:

- ☐ Low energy or fatigue
- ☐ Changes in appetite or weight
- ☐ Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- ☐ Physical aches and pains that have no clear cause
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Emotional symptoms:

- ☐ Feeling sad, empty, or hopeless
- ☐ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- ☐ Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Cognitive symptoms:

- ☐ Negative or pessimistic thoughts
- ☐ Difficulty remembering or focusing
- ☐ Dwelling on past failures or mistakes
- ☐ Difficulty seeing a positive future
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Behavioral symptoms:

- ☐ Withdrawing from social activities or hobbies
- ☐ Avoiding responsibilities at work or home
- ☐ Irritability or restlessness
- ☐ Using drugs or alcohol to cope with feelings

☐ _____

☐ _____

Reflect on how these symptoms impact your daily life and parenting responsibilities.

2. Identifying triggers:

Identify situations or factors that may trigger or worsen your depressive symptoms. The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to or add more to the list:

- ☐ Lack of sleep or disrupted sleep patterns
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed by parental responsibilities
- ☐ Financial stress or strain
- ☐ Relationship conflicts or marital problems
- ☐ Balancing work and family demands
- ☐ Feelings of isolation or lack of social support
- ☐ Difficulty managing behavioral issues in children
- ☐ Constant worry about children's well-being
- ☐ Loss of personal identity or sense of self outside of being a parent

- ☐ Impact of life transitions (e.g., becoming a new parent, empty nest syndrome)
- ☐ Coping with the loss of a child or miscarriage
- ☐ Coping with a child's academic challenges or school-related stressors
- ☐ Struggling with body image changes after pregnancy
- ☐ Dealing with the demands of single parenting
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Consider ways to reduce exposure or manage those triggers.

3. Setting attainable goals:

Make a list of all the areas in your life that are important to you. These should be the areas that align with your values and bring you a sense of fulfillment.

Example:

- *Family*
- *Household tasks*
- *Personal growth*

For each area set small, achievable goals for yourself each day.

Example:

- Family: *Spend quality time with my child for at least 30 minutes each day, engaging in activities they enjoy.*

- Household tasks: *Set aside 15 minutes each day to declutter and clean one area of the house, focusing on one small task at a time.*

- Personal growth: *Read a few pages of a book or listen to a podcast that interests me for 10 minutes each day.*

4. Engaging in physical activity:

Incorporate regular exercise or physical activity into your routine. Start with moderate activities like walking or gardening and gradually increase intensity or duration as tolerated. The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones you want to try or add more to the list:

- ☐ Take a brisk walk around the neighborhood.
- ☐ Do a 10-minute workout video during naptime or after the kids go to bed.
- ☐ Dance to your favorite upbeat songs while doing household chores.
- ☐ Play an active game with your children, like tag or hide-and-seek.

- ☐ Incorporate short bursts of exercise, such as jumping jacks or lunges, during TV commercials.
- ☐ Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible.
- ☐ Go for a bike ride with your family on weekends.
- ☐ Join a local sports league or fitness class to have designated exercise time.
- ☐ Set up an obstacle course in your backyard or living room for a fun workout.
- ☐ Do a quick yoga or stretching routine first thing in the morning.
- ☐ Take a 15-minute power walk during your lunch break at work.
- ☐ Include gardening or yard work in your routine to get moving and enjoy nature.
- ☐ Schedule a workout session with a friend to combine exercise and socializing.
- ☐ Make use of 10-minute breaks throughout the day to do a few bodyweight exercises like squats or push-ups.
- ☐ Find online workout classes or tutorials that can be done from the comfort of your own home.
- ☐ Turn off the car a few blocks away from your destination and walk the rest of the way.
- ☐ Invest in a stationary bike or treadmill so you can exercise at home when the kids are asleep.

Remember, even small amounts of physical activity can have significant benefits for your overall well-being. Choose activities that you enjoy and fit into your schedule for a better chance of sticking to them.

Daily Mood Tracker

Rate your mood on a scale of 1-10 and note down any significant events or thoughts that may have influenced your mood. Over time, this can help you identify patterns and triggers, and provide insight into how your daily activities affect your emotional well-being.

Date	Mood (1-10)	Significant events that influenced your mood	Thoughts	Compassionate thought
<i>e.g., Monday</i>	8	<i>Feeling overwhelmed with work and household responsibilities</i>	<i>"I'm not doing enough; everything seems to be falling apart."</i>	<i>"I'm only human, and it's okay to ask for help or take some time for self-care."</i>

Self-Care Routine

Brainstorm some ideas to help you take care of your body in order to decrease symptoms associated with your worrying or stress. The following are some ideas. Check off the ones you may try or add more to the list:

Exercise:

- ☐ Take a brisk walk or jog in nature.
- ☐ Try a new exercise class or sport that interests you.
- ☐ Incorporate strength training exercises into your routine, such as lifting weights or doing bodyweight exercises.
- ☐ Explore online workout videos or apps for guided workouts at home.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Sleep:

- ☐ Establish a consistent bedtime routine, including activities like reading or taking a warm bath before bed.
- ☐ Create a relaxing sleep environment by ensuring your bedroom is cool, dark, and free from distractions.
- ☐ Practice good sleep hygiene, such as avoiding screens before bed and keeping a consistent sleep schedule even on weekends.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Nutrition:

- ☐ Prioritize whole, nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains.
- ☐ Plan and prepare meals in advance to support healthy eating habits.
- ☐ Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day.
- ☐ Incorporate stress-reducing foods into your diet, such as omega-3 fatty acids from sources like salmon or walnuts.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Relaxation activities:

- ☐ Practice deep breathing exercises when feeling stressed or anxious.
- ☐ Explore mindfulness-based activities like meditation.
- ☐ Engage in creative outlets like painting, writing, or playing a musical instrument.
- ☐ Spend time in nature, whether it's going for a hike, gardening, or simply enjoying a peaceful walk in the park.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Note: *These suggestions may vary in their effectiveness for different individuals. Feel free to experiment and find what works best for you.*

Other changes in your life that you can make:

Time Management

1. List Your Responsibilities:

- Write down all the responsibilities and tasks that you typically have as a parent. This could include things like childcare, household chores, work commitments, personal self-care, etc.

2. Prioritization grid:

- Create a grid with four quadrants labeled as "Urgent and Important," "Important but not Urgent," "Urgent but not Important," and "Not Urgent and Not Important."

- List your tasks within each quadrant according to their priority. Focus on completing tasks in the "Urgent and Important" quadrant first, then move on to the other quadrants.

Urgent and Important	Important but not Urgent
Urgent but not Important	Not Urgent and Not Important

3. Allocate Time Slots:

- Divide your day into manageable time slots, such as hours or half-hours. Assign specific tasks or responsibilities to each time slot based on their priority level. Be realistic about how much time each task will take and leave some buffer time for unexpected situations.

Time	Activity

4. Pomodoro technique:

- Set a timer for 25 minutes and focus on one task during that time.
- After 25 minutes, take a short break (around 5 minutes) to recharge.
- Repeat this cycle three to four times and then take a more extended break of 15-30 minutes.
- This technique helps improve focus and productivity by breaking tasks into manageable increments.

5. Delegate and involve your children:

- Identify tasks that your children can help with, considering their age and capabilities.
- Involve them in age-appropriate household chores or simple tasks, such as setting the table or tidying up their room.
- Delegating tasks not only lightens your load but also teaches children responsibility and fosters a sense of contribution.

6. Practice saying 'no':

- Learn to set boundaries and say 'no' when necessary.
- Prioritize your commitments and avoid taking on additional responsibilities that may overwhelm you.
- Remember that it's okay to decline certain requests or delegate tasks to others.

Mindfulness Exercises for Busy Parents

1. Breathing Exercise:

- Set aside a few minutes each day to focus on your breath.
- Find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, feeling your belly rise.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth, noticing the sensation of the breath leaving your body.
- Repeat this process several times, bringing your attention back to your breath whenever your mind starts to wander.

2. Body Scan:

- Find a quiet moment when you can lie down or sit comfortably.
- Close your eyes and bring your attention to your body.
- Starting from the top of your head, slowly scan down through your body, paying attention to any sensations or areas of tension.
- Notice any physical sensations without judgment, simply observing what you feel.
- If you notice any areas of tension, consciously relax those muscles as best as you can.

3. Mindful Walking:

- Whenever possible, take a break from your daily tasks and go for a walk.
- As you walk, bring your attention to the sensation of your feet touching the ground.
- Notice the movement of your body and the rhythm of your steps.
- Pay attention to your surroundings, the sounds, smells, and sights around you.
- Engage your senses and allow yourself to fully experience the present moment.

4. Gratitude Practice:

- At the end of each day, take a moment to reflect on three things you are grateful for.
- Write them down or mentally acknowledge them.
- Focus on the emotions associated with gratitude and allow yourself to fully appreciate these positive aspects of your life.

5. Mindful Eating:

- Choose one meal or snack of the day to eat mindfully.
- Before you begin eating, take a moment to observe the appearance, smell, and texture of the food.

- Slowly take small bites, savoring each bite and paying attention to the flavors and textures.
- Notice the sensations in your body as you eat, and try to eat without distractions, fully engaging with the act of nourishing yourself.

Note:

Mindfulness is about being present and non-judgmental. Pick one or two exercises that resonate with you and commit to practicing them consistently.

It's okay if you feel your mind wandering during these exercises; gently guide your attention back to the present moment.

With regular practice, you'll find that mindfulness can help you cultivate a sense of calm and wellbeing, even in the midst of a busy parenting life.

What Is Your Parenting Style?

1. Authoritarian Parenting Style:

Description: Authoritarian parents tend to have strict rules and expectations. They demand obedience and may use punishments or threats to control their children.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you find yourself setting strict rules and expecting complete obedience from your child?

- How do you feel about using punishment and discipline as a way to maintain control?

- Are there any potential drawbacks or negative effects you have noticed with this parenting style?

2. Permissive Parenting Style:

Description: Permissive parents are lenient and have few rules or boundaries. They often prioritize being a friend over an authority figure and may struggle with setting limits.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you find it challenging to set clear boundaries and enforce rules with your child?

- How do you feel about taking on the role of a friend rather than an authority figure?

- What potential consequences or challenges have you noticed that may arise from this parenting style?

3. Authoritative Parenting Style:

Description: Authoritative parents balance warmth and nurturing with clear expectations and discipline. They promote independence and foster healthy communication with their children.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you strive to set clear rules and expectations while maintaining a warm and supportive relationship with your child?

- How do you handle discipline and consequences in a fair and consistent manner?

- What benefits have you observed with this parenting style, and are there any areas you feel you can improve upon?

4. Uninvolved/Neglectful Parenting Style:

Description: Uninvolved parents are largely detached and disengaged from their child's life. They may provide the basic necessities but lack emotional support and involvement.

Reflection Questions:

- Do you find yourself disengaged or detached from your child's life?

- How do you feel about providing emotional support and involvement in your child's activities and interests?

- Are there any areas where you feel you could improve your level of involvement and support?

Note: These parenting styles are not fixed categories, and most parents exhibit a combination of styles. Understanding your parenting style can help you make intentional choices in shaping your child's development.

Nurturing Your Relationship with Your Child

1. Spend Quality Time Together:

- Set aside dedicated time each day for one-on-one interactions with your child.

- Actively listen to your child, showing genuine interest in what they have to say.

- Engage in activities that your child enjoys. Following are some ideas. Check off the ones you think you can try or add more to the list:

- ☐ Play board games or card games together.
- ☐ Have a picnic at a local park or in your own backyard.
- ☐ Go for a nature walk and explore the outdoors.
- ☐ Bake cookies or make a delicious treat together.
- ☐ Have a movie night with popcorn and their favorite films.
- ☐ Create and decorate a scrapbook or memory box.
- ☐ Plant and tend to a small garden or indoor plants.
- ☐ Set up an obstacle course in your living room or backyard.
- ☐ Take a bike ride or go for a family hike.
- ☐ Have a family game night with fun and interactive games.
- ☐ Create art together, such as painting or drawing.
- ☐ Play a sport together, like soccer, basketball, or tennis.
- ☐ Have a family book club and read books together.
- ☐ Volunteer together at a local charity or community event.
- ☐ Visit a local zoo or aquarium and learn about different animals.
- ☐ Build a puzzle or complete a challenging brain-teaser.
- ☐ Make homemade crafts, like jewelry or DIY decorations.

- ☐ Have a family storytelling session, where each person takes turns telling a story.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Express Love and Affection:

- Show physical affection regularly, such as hugs, kisses, and gentle touches.

- Use words of affirmation and encouragement to express your love and appreciation for your child's unique qualities and accomplishments.

- Celebrate milestones, both big and small, to reinforce your child's sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

Following are some ideas to express love and affection towards your child. Check off the ones you want to practice or add more to the list:

- ☐ Offer physical affection through hugs, kisses, and cuddles.
- ☐ Verbalize your love through saying "I love you" and giving compliments.
- ☐ Listen actively when your child speaks, showing that their thoughts and feelings matter.
- ☐ Show interest in their interests and hobbies, even if you don't share them.
- ☐ Leave surprise notes or drawings in their lunchbox or room.
- ☐ Show appreciation for their efforts and contributions.
- ☐ Advocate for their needs and support their goals and aspirations.
- ☐ Share stories and memories from your own childhood experiences.
- ☐ Express gratitude for the joy and meaning they bring to your life.
- ☐ Provide reassurance during times of uncertainty or distress.

- ☐ Display affection through small tokens of appreciation, such as their favorite snack or toy.
- ☐ Engage in laughter, play, and lighthearted moments together.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

3. Support Emotional Development:

- Teach your child healthy coping mechanisms for managing stress, emotions, and conflicts.
- Validate and acknowledge their feelings, helping them understand and express their emotions appropriately.
- Encourage empathy and understanding towards others by modeling empathy in your interactions with them.

4. Encourage Independence and Autonomy:

- Provide age-appropriate responsibilities, allowing your child to develop a sense of competence and self-reliance.
- Offer choices when appropriate, allowing your child to make decisions and learn from the consequences.

Reparenting Yourself

Exercise 1: Inner Child Visualization

The concept of the inner child refers to the emotional and psychological aspects of our childhood selves that continue to influence us in adulthood. It represents our unique experiences, needs, fears, and desires from our early years. Understanding and reconnecting with our inner child can be a valuable part of personal growth and healing.

- Find a quiet, comfortable space where you can relax and close your eyes.
- Take a few deep breaths and allow yourself to settle into a relaxed state.
- Visualize yourself as a child, perhaps at a significant age from your past.
- Imagine offering this inner child understanding, compassion, and love.
- Engage in a dialogue with your inner child, acknowledging their experiences and offering reassurance and support.
- Reflect on how you can provide the care and nurturing that your inner child may have needed.

Exercise 2: Self-Nurturing Activities

- Make a list of activities or experiences that bring you comfort, joy, and a sense of security.

- Identify moments from your childhood when you might have missed out on these nurturing experiences.
- Commit to integrating these self-nurturing activities into your daily or weekly routine.
- As you engage in these activities, intentionally recognize that you are providing yourself with the care and attention you deserve.
- Reflect on how these activities make you feel and the impact they have on your well-being.

Self-Compassion Worksheet

Exercise 1: Self-Compassionate Letter

- Find a quiet place where you can reflect and write.
- Begin by addressing yourself with kindness, using phrases such as "Dear [your name],"
- Write a letter to yourself as if you were writing to a dear friend who is going through the same challenges you're facing.
- Acknowledge the difficulties and stress you're experiencing as a busy parent.
- Offer words of understanding, encouragement, and compassion.
- Remind yourself that it's okay to make mistakes and that you're doing the best you can.
- Express self-kindness and remind yourself of your strengths and resilience.

Exercise 2: Self-Compassion Break

- Find a quiet moment when you can pause and take a few deep breaths.
- Recognize and acknowledge any difficult emotions or situations you're currently experiencing as a busy parent.
- Repeat a set of compassionate phrases to yourself, such as:
 - May I be kind to myself in this challenging time.
 - May I offer myself understanding and acceptance.
 - May I remember that I am not alone in facing these struggles.
- Allow yourself to feel the warmth and kindness of these phrases as you repeat them silently or out loud.

Exercise 3: Savoring Moments of Joy

- Reflect on moments of joy or accomplishment, no matter how small, that you experience as a busy parent.
- Take a few moments to truly savor and appreciate those moments, fully immersing yourself in the positive feelings they bring.
- Notice any physical sensations associated with these moments, such as a smile or a warm feeling in your chest.
- Allow yourself to cultivate gratitude for these joyful moments, recognizing that you deserve these positive experiences amidst the challenges.

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No diagnosis under this title · No diagnosis is established by the title.
- ICD-11 CDDR: · No diagnosis is established by the title.
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 56, 58, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Assess duration, distress/functional impairment, cultural and medical context, substance/medication effects, and relevant differential diagnoses before assigning any diagnosis.

Document-specific corrections

- Pages [2] · Frame · Parents Mental Health · using the DSM/ICD status below; add duration, impairment, exclusions, and differentials without reproducing criteria. The title alone must never be treated as a diagnosis.
- Pages [1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 39, 49, 50, 67] · Treat the Parents Mental Health ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly.
- Pages [11] · Differentiate parental stress from a mental disorder; assess caregiver and child safety, coercive family dynamics, substance use, severe mood symptoms, and developmental/contextual needs before applying behavior or communication exercises. Apply this specifically to the workbook's Examine Your Worries, Are Your Worries Hurting You?, Are Your Worries Hurting Others?, Use Visual Metaphors to Accept Your Worries sections.
- Pages [1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 14, 33, 35, 36, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 56, 58, 63, 66, 68, 69] · Review all medical assertions in Parents Mental Health with a qualified medical professional; distinguish psychoeducation from individualized advice and add referral thresholds, contraindications, and medication/procedure cautions appropriate to this population.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Treat the Parents Mental Health ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly. custom/unvalidated unless evidence is supplied confirm no third-party item wording was adapted

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Differentiate parental stress from a mental disorder; assess caregiver and child safety, coercive family dynamics, substance use, severe mood symptoms, and developmental/contextual needs before applying behavior or communication exercises.

Crisis and current resources

- U.S.: call or text 988; chat at <https://988lifeline.org/>. Immediate danger: local emergency services. International resources must be separately verified for the intended country and dated.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>