

# Activity Selection

Use This When:

To introduce mood-elevating activities into the child's day.



For Child

## Objectives:

- to emphasize the link between positive activities and feeling good
- to note that doing more things with someone we like is a good way to enjoy activities
- to explain that we can make ourselves busy so that we don't have time to worry or feel bad
- to discuss helping other people; it makes them and us feel good

## Steps:

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Educate in types of mood-lifting activities</b>	Discuss with the child that today you will focus on activities that can all help get our minds off of bad feelings and make us feel better. These are activities that: 1) we enjoy, 2) are done with someone we like, 3) keep us busy, or 4) help someone else.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Illustrate connection between activities and feelings</b>	Help the child to grasp that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• doing activities we enjoy can make us feel good</li><li>• doing activities we do not enjoy (or doing nothing) can make us feel bad</li></ul> You may start by telling the child about a time when doing things you (or a boy or girl you know) did not like made you feel bad, and then doing something you liked made you feel better.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Illustrate how activities can be mood-enhancing for the child</b>	Demonstrate that activities, feelings and actions are connected for the child personally. To help make this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask the child to identify 2-3 examples of times when he/she felt bad, then did something enjoyable, then felt better.</li><li>• Discuss these experiences with the child.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Generate simple pleasant activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Ask the child to list 10 (or less, depending on time) easy-to-do activities that he/she can do to elevate his/her mood.</li><li>2) Encourage the child to come up with as many as he/she can</li><li>3) Make suggestions if the child has trouble thinking of activities.</li><li>4) The activities must be:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• simple,</li><li>• free,</li><li>• do-able almost any time, and</li><li>• virtually guaranteed to make the child feel good.</li></ul>The list might include such activities as calling a friend, throwing a ball outside, spending time with a pet, remembering a fun experience, or stretching.</li></ol>

## Steps:

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Practice one activity together</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Make sure that the list above includes at least one simple activity that the child can do with you right now.</li><li>2) Assist the child in picking one to try.</li><li>3) Have the child rate his/her mood on a 10-point scale or similar (e.g., 1=very low, 10=very high) before and after the activity.</li><li>4) Engage in the activity the child picked.</li><li>5) Discuss with the child the effect of the activity on his/her mood ratings.</li><li>6) Emphasize to the child that the purpose of doing these activities is to help the child discover:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• which activities really are mood enhancers for the child, and</li><li>• that using these activities to feel better is under his/her control.</li></ul></li></ol>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Increasing activities with someone the child likes</b>	Combine (a) involvement in pleasant activities with (b) building social relationships. The social element can be introduced with a personal story illustrating how joining with a friend in a mutually enjoyable activity can make a person feel really good.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Introduce benefits of staying busy</b>	Introduce the idea of "staying busy, getting involved" as a way of feeling good. This concept may also be introduced using personal stories.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Explain benefits of helping others</b>	<p>Tell the child that helping others in a meaningful way, and seeing the effects one's help produces, can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• increase one's sense of primary control and personal efficacy, not to mention life purpose</li><li>• reduce self-focus, and thus perhaps reduce susceptibility to depression</li><li>• provide distraction from repeated rumination, which helps to relieve depressed mood</li></ul> <p>Again, personal stories (or from a boy or girl you know) are helpful.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Practice Assignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage the child to try to do one of the simple pleasant activities the child has listed in session in the coming days.</li><li>• Ask the child to write down what activity he/she chose, and then rate how he/she felt before and after the activity.</li><li>• The formality of activity scheduling can vary from using the list of activities which from which the child can choose, to an hour-by-hour daily schedule of pleasant and necessary (e.g., homework, chores) activities.</li></ul>

## Helpful Tips:

- Remember to praise often
- Remember to review often, by asking questions
- Brief any caregivers, teachers, or other adult figures who may be involved
- Simplify these steps if you have to
- This material can be covered in more than one session/meeting