



Az Family Life Counseling & Coaching

ADHD | Academic | Behavior | Confidence

How to Enhance and Support Your Child's Change Process

Best Strategies

Session frequency impacts duration of treatment - The sessions will build on each other. If there is too much lag time between sessions, your child will struggle to remember or connect the information learned. This creates a need for backstepping to review, and then less time for new learning ultimately prolonging treatment and need for additional sessions.

1. **Remember that change is tough** -REAL change is a process. It includes a whole lot of pre-change mental preparation as well as mess-ups and setbacks. Please read about the stages of change on the next page.
2. **Show interest** - Ask about what your child learned. Allow your child the right to not share. This means they see the session as their own, as private, and that is a good thing for driving change.
3. **DO NOT Use counseling/coaching as an "I told you so"** - It is incredibly important that your child sees the coach/counselor as a neutral party. Do not place us in the position of sides. If your child sees us as yet another adult here to repeat what Mom and Dad said, we will lose their openness and they are much more likely to fake progress.
4. **DO NOT Report a laundry list of "should have", "didn't", and "still hasn't" in front of your child.** Although it may be very true, and driving you nuts, your child is hearing you and these comments break them down more than inspire them.
5. **DO NOT Treat a setback as an all out failure.** **One of the biggest destroyers of progress is reacting to a set-back with "oh great, nothing has changed, now we are back to square one."** It is incredibly natural, normal and sometimes automatic for the brain to go back to old habits, especially when tired or stressed. A set-back is a sign that your child is overwhelmed. It is also an opportunity to help them compare and contrast the old behaviors with the new.
6. **Learn, learn, learn, learn** - Your child has a unique neurology. Learn, learn, learn about it

You Are The Most Powerful Person In Your Child's World

Value effort, over result. This is most powerful thing you can do to propel success. Studies show that the ability to recover and try again after a failure is EXTREMELY POWERFUL in driving success.

Read about the "**growth mindset**" from the work of Carol Dweck from Stanford

(<https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>) Her studies have shown a profound impact on achievement from one simple change. Praise, notice, and value the process of trying regardless of resulting achievement (or lack thereof).



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Stages of Change

Quick fixes don't stick. We work very hard to move your child through the natural process of change in order to create long lasting change. This will take patience, and it could take time.

Below is the process of change, discovered through clinical research, and developed into a therapy called *Motivational Interviewing* by William Miller, Ph.D. and Stephen Rollnick, Ph.D. Our kids must move through every step for sustained progress. If we require our kids to jump straight to the action stage, the change will not be life-long. What stage is your child in?

Precontemplative

“There is no problem. Nothing is wrong. Everything is as it should be.”
(not behaving different yet)

Contemplative

“Maybe things could be better. Maybe there is a problem. No, no, there isn't a problem. Well, ya, maybe a change is need. No, no changes. Well, maybe.”
(not behaving different yet)

Preparation

“I'm not saying there is problem or need for change, but IF there was, how would I do something different? What would people think of me? Who would help? How do I even know I could do it successfully? How do I know I won't crash and burn and then get yelled at again.”
(still not behaving different yet)

Action

“Ok, lets TRY this, but I'm going to TRY it without telling anyone because I don't want people to make me feel even worse if I don't succeed. Well, I will tell one person, the person that won't throw it in my face if I crash and burn.”
(try out new behaviors)

Maintenance

“I like the change, but it's hard to stop myself from going back to old habits. I'm trying, and I'm messing up less and less.”
(sticking with the change)