



#LIBERTYSTRONG

Newsletter from your Clinical Team

In this issue:

- Attentional Concerns
- What is ADD?
- Coloring Sheet
- Improving Initiation, Planning and Organization
- Executive Functioning Strategies
- Strategies for Learners with Attentional Needs
- Resources
- Journaling Prompts for April

How are we doing and what would you like to see in the Clinical Newsletter?

We want to connect with you! Please let Angie Huber know what you would like to see in the newsletter. We will do our best to meet your request. Send any requests to aahuber@fcps.edu.

When should I be concerned about attentional concerns?

By: Angie Huber, School Social Worker Liberty MS

For years, I have heard many students and parents referring to someone having ADHD (Attentional Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) because the person is having trouble focusing or are impulsive. On the other hand, I have also heard people saying someone does not have ADHD because he/she can hyper focus for a long time on something preferred. It is challenging to research attentional concerns without ADHD popping up? The bottom line is that all attentional concerns are not due to an ADHD diagnosis. When are attentional concerns normal? If someone's attentional symptoms are more than normal, what are the options for reducing the concerns, feeling less frustrated and feeling more success with academic and social difficulties. How could you find the underlying causes?

I will start by saying that CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder) has a lot of information about ADHD. It is a great site to visit and offers numerous resources. Their fact sheet has a good amount of information. [CHADD- About ADHD Fact Sheet](#) If someone finds that they do have ADHD, the person will have numerous options for treating their difficulties with attention. However, it is a personal decision and could involve medication, behavioral interventions, counseling and executive functioning skill development to name a few.

Not all attentional concerns meet the diagnosis of ADHD. People of all ages have attentional concerns for various reasons. Attentional concerns can be observed as inattentive, impulsive/ hyperactive or a combined presentation. Attentional concerns can be inconsistent or isolated to only certain situations. Everyone has times when they feel distracted. People often become concerned and want to investigate more thoroughly when these times seem to occur more often than not and are causing distress. Anxiety, depression, learning disorders, sensory problems, medications, life events, medical concerns, stress and trauma can cause concerns with attention. What if you are concerned about your ability to focus, what should you do? First, consult with a medical professional to ensure that there are no underlying health concerns. They can also send checklists to the school for the teachers or work to obtain a full perspective of what is occurring in all areas of someone's life. The [Connors Parent Rating Scale](#) is one assessment widely used to assess clinical concerns. Some children can hyper focus on preferred tasks, such as video games or Lego's because they are highly interesting and stimulated but cannot focus on less preferred tasks for longer than 5 minutes.

The bottom line is that attentional concerns are not something to ignore. When ignored, other symptoms often develop due to having untreated problems continuing to disrupt day to day functioning. If you are concerned, there is probably a reason. If you are concerned about your child, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher and school staff. We have resources and/or could help give you our perspective from the school setting in comparison to other children and could also develop strategies if needed for improvement to be seen.

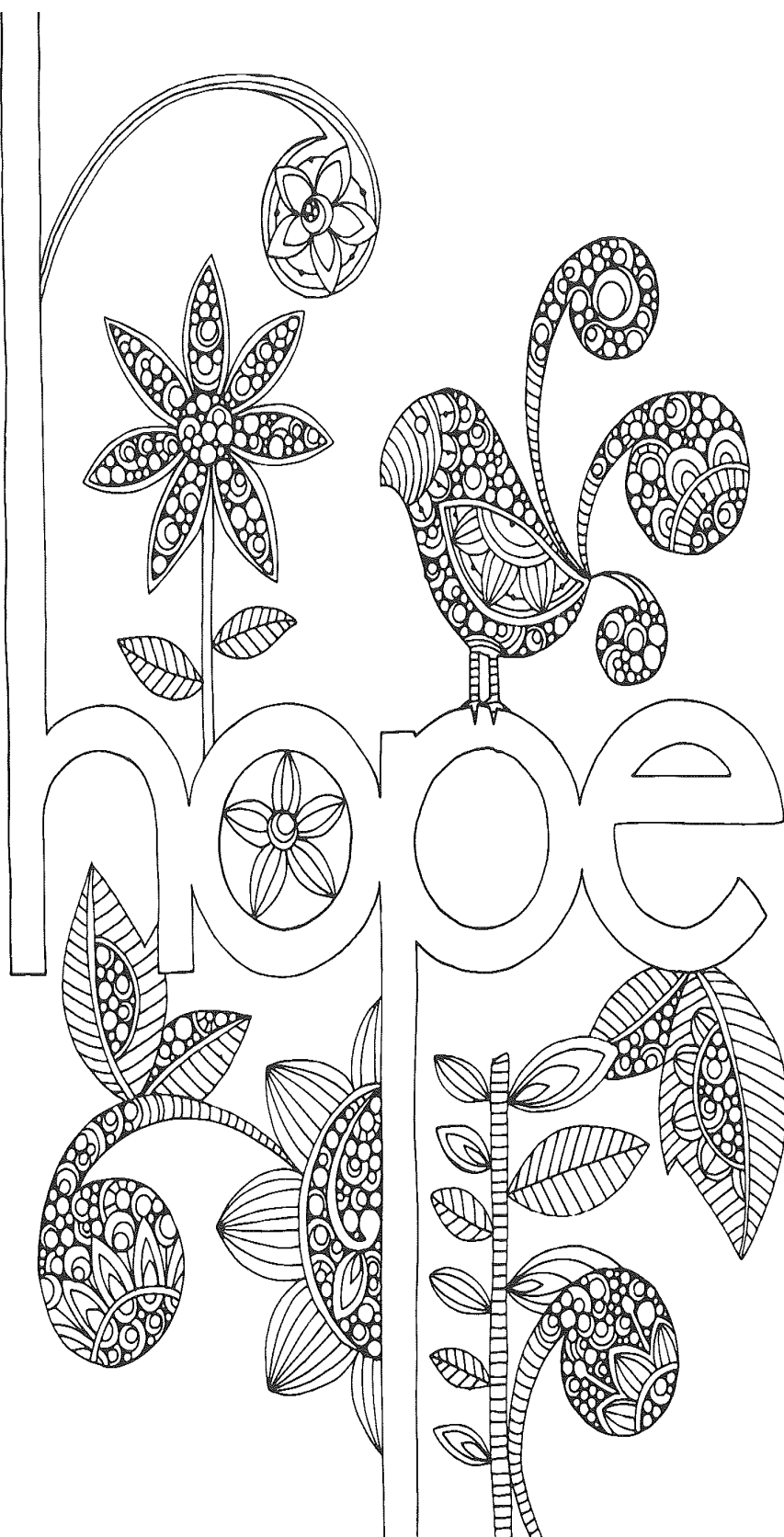


WHAT ADD IS ACTUALLY



- FOCUSED ON TOO MANY THINGS
- HYPER FOCUSED
- RESTLESS
- IMAGINATIVE
- FRUSTRATED
- SPONTANEOUS
- PASSIONATE

Enjoy this coloring page for stress relief!!!



How to Improve Initiation, Planning, and Organization?

By: Joanna Wheeler, School Psychologist Liberty MS

Difficulty with initiation? Initiation refers to the ability to begin or get started on a task or activity and to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.

Increase environmental structure: Increased structure in the environment or in an activity can help with initiation difficulties. Building routines for everyday activities is often important, as routine tasks and their completion become more automatic, reducing the need for independent initiation. Provide appropriate supportive signals or cues that remind the student to initiate an activity (i.e. alarm or digital planner).

Reduce overwhelm: Problems with initiating may be exacerbated by the child's sense of being overwhelmed with a given task. Tasks or assignments that seem too large can interfere with a student's ability to get started. Breaking tasks into smaller, more structured steps may reduce his or her sense of being overwhelmed and increase initiation.

Structure problem solving: Children who demonstrate difficulties thinking of ideas may benefit from learning a structured, systematic approach to idea generation. Practice solution brainstorming with your student. Evaluate the possible effectiveness of the solutions.

Provide a hard copy (written or visual) of routines.

It can be helpful to increase awareness around the difficulty with initiation. As the student becomes metacognitively aware of his or her own difficulties getting started, he or she can then participate more actively in using strategies.

Set goals for time: Some children benefit from having time limits set for completing a task.

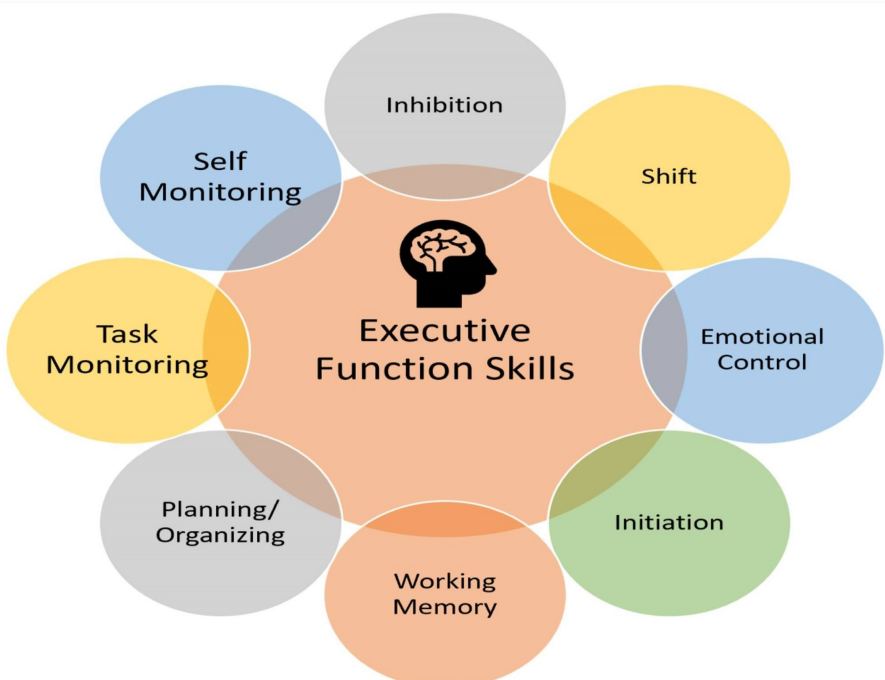
Difficulty with planning, goal setting, and organization? Planning encompasses the ability to anticipate future events, set goals, and develop appropriate steps ahead of time to carry out a task or activity.

Provide examples of planning: It is often helpful to provide examples of how students might plan differently to complete the same task. In this way, the student can see options for alternative methods. Students with difficulties planning may benefit from having a binder or “cookbook” of steps for common routines or assignments. They might have a section for approaches to specific types of math problems, writing assignments, or reading materials and can reference the plans as needed.

Model planning: Parent modeling is an important means of teaching good planning skills. Parents can discuss plans for the day at the breakfast table or verbalize their thinking about how to approach a series of errands. The use of the student's planning guide for the parent's multistep activities may serve as a good model. Developing an overall plan for the day, week, month, and year with a calendar can also serve as a useful exercise.

Cont on pg 8

Executive Functioning Strategies for Students



Strategies for Learners with Attention Issues



www.thepathway2success.com

Give clear, one-step directions



Teach students to check-in with themselves



Incorporate movement during lessons



Give brain breaks between lessons



Set a timer for work sessions



Provide fidgets (and teach how to use them)

Use visuals as reminders and supports



Provide flexible seating options



Play attention-boosting games



Incorporate hands-on learning activities



Use student interests in lessons



Use a chime before giving important information

Clipart by Kate Hadfield & Sarah Pecorino

TYPES OF ATTENTION



SUSTAINED ATTENTION

Holding and maintaining attention over a period of time, necessary for the focus and concentration needed in learning, listening, and paying attention during conversations or instructions.

SELECTIVE ATTENTION

Paying attention to specific input by the brain's ability to select the input we pay attention to. Consciously, and unconsciously, we are able to select the input which is most important.

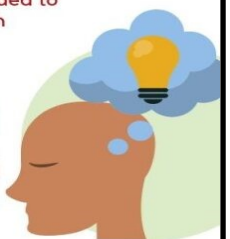


ALTERNATING ATTENTION

The ability to switch or immediately transfer focus from one activity to another. Switching points of concentration is needed to make sudden switches in alternating attention in tasks which require different cognitive skills.

DIVIDED ATTENTION

One's ability to focus on two or more things at the same time. Simultaneously concentrating on various factors is evidenced by driving and holding a conversation simultaneously.



WWW.THE OT TOOLBOX.COM

Your students can check out Ms. Huber's google classroom to see many cool things to do, learn about or to use to cope!

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSMKer3dWvdXMgM3d3sdf_nnsAKWIHjsrXeGtWCtcqkIQdmqao7b5gVQAUT16Nk1p9kED56KcuAqH0b/pub?start=false&loop=false&delays=3000&slide=id.g8e48443adc_0_0



VIRTUAL ZEN DEN

[Sounds and Music](#)

[Meditation and Grounding Exercises](#)

[Visual Relaxation](#)

[Live Animal Cams](#)

[Yoga](#)

[Something Interesting](#)

[Pixar Short Film: La Luna](#)

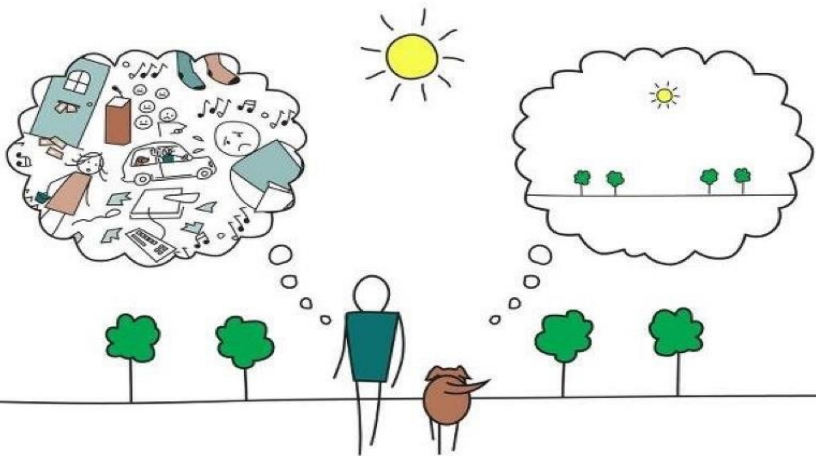
[Pixar Short Film: Piper](#)

[Pixar Short Films: Day and Night](#)

[Pixar Short Films: Partly Cloudy](#)

[Art and Creativity](#)

[Games and Puzzles](#)



Mind Full, or Mindful?



Don't forget to stop and smell the flowers!!

More resources that you may find helpful!

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) is excited to offer access to their library resources.

Their library is open for pick-up, on Wednesdays, by appointment only, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Skill, Not Will: The Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach Webinar for Families

Join us for the important session to learn some key strategies from the Collaborative Problem Solving® approach to manage challenging behavior.

The Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach:

- Promotes the understanding that challenging kids lack the skill (problem-solving, flexibility, and frustration tolerance) - not the will - to behave

Focuses on collaborating with the child/youth/young adult to solve the problems leading to challenging behavior and building the skills they need to succeed.

Avoids void the use of power, control, and motivational procedures and instead

Presented by staff from United Methodist Family Services: Carmen Dailey, Organizational Learning Manager, and CPS Certified Trainer.

Friday April 9, 2021 10 - 11:30 a.m.

[Register for Skill, Not Will: The Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach Webinar for Families](#)

COVID-19 Vaccines and the Vaccination Process in Fairfax County: A Webinar for Families

Join the Fairfax County Health Department and the Fairfax County Public Schools Parent Resource Center for important updates about COVID-19 and the vaccines that have been developed to help prevent disease.

Topics will include:

- COVID-19 impacts (health, economic, education)
- The vaccine
- Community immunity: What is it and How do we get there?
- Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines— how they work and their effectiveness
- Safety of vaccines
- Vaccination process: Eligibility and How to register

Tuesday April 13: [Session in Spanish – Register here](#)

Tuesday April 20: [Session in English – Register here](#)

Tuesday May 4: [Session in Vietnamese – Register here](#)

Tuesday May 11: [Session in Korean – Register here](#)

Tuesday May 18: [Session in Arabic – Register here](#)

Sessions are subject to change or cancellation based on number of registrations

Encouraging Positive Behaviors at Home Series: Minimizing Prompts and Maximizing Your Child's Independence

- Parents/guardians will be provided an overview of prompting and self-monitoring

Parents/guardians will review general strategies to increase student independence with specific tasks such as completing homework, doing chores, etc.

Thursday April 22, 2021, 10 - 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 - 8 p.m.

[Register for Minimizing Prompts and Maximizing Your Child's Independence](#)

Try these activities for your student!

⇒ Liberty Middle School Afterschool Program

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>

⇒ Fairfax County Park Authority Programs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

For more social-emotional resources and lessons please visit the LS Clinical Team's website (see the link below works best in Google Chrome):

<https://sites.google.com/view/liberty-ms-clinical-team/mental-wellness-topics>

some new videos added

FCPS Special Education Conference 2021

The 16th Annual Special Education Conference will be held virtually on Saturday, April 17, 2021. The conference will include a combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) sessions supporting our conference's theme: The time for inclusion is now.

Parents and community members will be able to register online. In addition, FCPS educators, administrators, and preservice teachers will be able to register online and earn recertification points for attending the conference.

Conference Highlights:

- Guest speakers and FCPS staff presentations
- A Student Strands for youth ages 14-22
- Sibshops for students in grades 7-12
- An Exhibit Hall with FCPS and community resources

Inclusive Schools Presentations

Each year our conference draws an audience of parents, educators, administrators, preservice teachers, and community members eager to hear the latest research, strategies, and trends in the education of students with learning challenges, special needs, and disabilities.

Saturday, April 17, 2021 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

[Register for The Special Education Conference 2021](#)

Finding and Riding the Emotional Regulation Wave: Strategies to Help Relieve Family Stress

COVID-19 has left our families stressed and feeling out of control. Join experts from Formed Families Forward for a review of how and why children and youth respond to stressors in different ways. Gain strategies for supporting your family through difficult times.

Webinar Highlights:

- Strategies for strengthening family relationships and building self-regulation tools

Strategies for supporting the social-emotional needs of children and youth in hybrid and virtual learning settings.

Presented by staff from Formed Families Forward, Kelly Henderson, Ph.D., Executive Director, and Beth Spivack MSW, Family Support and Outreach Director.

Friday April 23, 2021, 10 - 11:30 a.m.

[Register for Finding and Riding the Emotional Regulation Wave: Strategies to Help Relieve Family Stress](#)

Resources:

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please call [911](#) or access one of the mental health resources below:

- ⇒ **Reach out to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, teacher, coach, etc.); <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>**
- ⇒ **Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the [Crisis Link](#) Hotline at or call them at 703-527-4077**
- ⇒ **Chat online with a specialist at [CrisisChat.org](#) or [ImAlive.org](#)**
- ⇒ **Call an emergency mental health center at 703 573-5679 (Merrifield Center), 703-536-2000 (Dominion Hospital), or 703-289-7560 (INOVA emergency services)**
- ⇒ **CR2 – 844-627-4747**
- ⇒ **Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital**

Call 911

Encourage him or her to generate a prediction regarding how well he or she expects to do in completing a task or activity. Structure planning and organization efforts around the stated goal.

Involve student in planning: Active, maximal involvement of the student in the development of plans is important. The use of a planning guide may be necessary to reduce the organizational and working memory demands of this multistep process.

Verbalize planning strategies: Have student verbalize a plan of approach at the outset for any given task, whether it is an everyday chore or routine or an academic activity. The plan can be broken down into a series of steps, arranged in sequential order, and written down as a bullet list. The plan can be guided interactively with a parent or teacher to achieve sufficient detail and to increase the likelihood of success. The student might be asked to develop more than one plan for a task or activity to increase his or her awareness of alternative approaches.

Strategic planning can be practiced with familiar, everyday tasks. The student might develop a plan for completing familiar routines such as getting ready for school in a more efficient manner. Developing plans for meaningful, complex activities (e.g., his or her own birthday party, baking his or her favorite treat) provides inherent motivation for the child. Teach use of timelines: Teach the student to develop timelines for completing assignments, particularly long-term projects or term papers. The student may need assistance in budgeting his or her time to complete each step or phase in larger projects or tasks. Break long-term assignments into sequential steps, with timelines for completion of each step and check-ins with the teacher.

Break down complex tasks into smaller steps: Worksheets or desk work may seem overwhelming for the student, and he or she may need additional structure to get started. Worksheets can be separated into smaller problem sets, or divided on the page with a marker and prioritized for approach

Work on complex tasks one step at a time: Given the particular difficulty of managing complex, long-term assignments, students with organizational difficulties often benefit from working on only one task, or one step of a larger task, at a time. Tasks may need to be broken down into smaller steps to facilitate organization and planning. Long-term assignments, such as term papers or projects, are often insurmountable for children with organization and planning difficulties. Because such tasks can feel overwhelming, the student may not begin work until the night before the assignment is due. It may be necessary to break down longer assignments into smaller, sequential steps and to develop a timeline for completion of each step. At each step, it is important to review what has been accomplished and to plan for the next step.

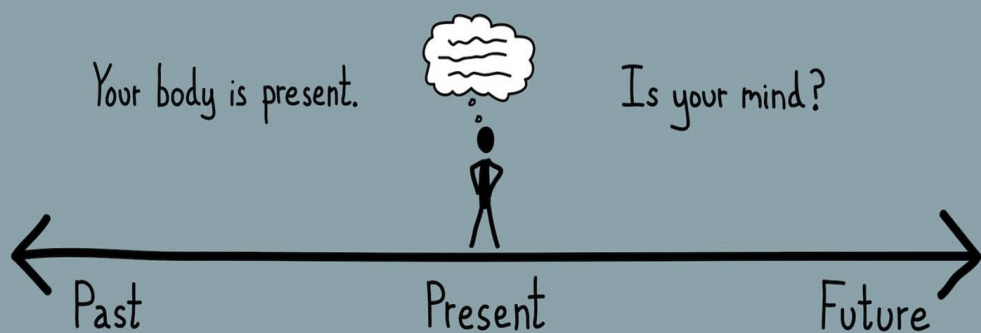
Provide organization time at beginning and end of day: The student may need extra organization time at the outset or the end of the day. He or she might review his or her assignment notebook or planner with her parents each morning and perhaps with a designated teacher at the end of the school day.

Teach pretask organizational strategies: Call to the student's attention the structure of new information at the outset of a lesson or lecture. It may be helpful to provide an outline or list of major points prior to the lesson. Preview the organizational framework of new material to be learned in a bulleted or outline format to increase appreciation of the structure and enhance the student's ability to learn associated details.

Difficulty advocating or communicating? This may include speaking up to parents, teachers, or peers.

Model appropriate communication. Allow students to hear how you process and navigate communication. After modelling communication, ask your student to help you identify what went well in the conversation, and if you were able to communicate your needs/goals effectively. What could you do differently?

Have your student practice communication for small needs/goals and work up to bigger things. It is important to encourage them to use their communication skills while you monitor outcome.



Counseling is often a good approach to help people to work through struggles that they are having in their life. Many feel comfortable with the idea of counseling and many do not feel comfortable. One of the benefits of counseling is that it can help you to find solutions or to problem solve more quickly than without it. However, some still may not be comfortable and to add to the challenges of becoming comfortable with the idea of counseling, during COVID, it is difficult to find counselors who are not meeting virtually, as some do not feel comfortable with meeting virtually. A good alternative is to use journaling. Here are some journal prompts for April.

ARE
YOU
OK?



JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR APRIL

APRIL

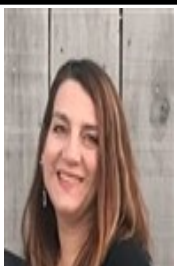
JOURNAL PROMPTS

1. Your biggest dream
2. What place do you consider your home?
3. What are you most grateful for?
4. The most important qualities in a friend
5. One thing you need to stop doing
6. One thing you need to start doing
7. How are you feeling today?
8. Three things you and your best friend have in common
9. Your life story in five sentences
10. A place you have never visited
11. How important is fame?
12. What is a "perfect" day?
13. How do you make decisions?
14. Describe kindness
15. 10 things you should always have
16. The word that you overuse
17. A pun
18. How would you like to be described?
19. Your favorite song to sing
20. Would you like to know about the future?
21. How do you show people you care?
22. Your last important decision
23. Something that is always easy for you
24. A motto to live by
25. Happiness is...
26. Organized or messy?
27. A recent compliment
28. Where you want to be?
29. A happy moment
30. Your preferred method of communication



Made by Elizabeth McNair / Life of Lovely

Angie Huber,
School Social Worker
aahuber@fcps.edu



Joanna Wheeler,
School Psychologist
jwheeler@fcps.edu

