



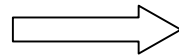
**THINKING SKILLS INVENTORY (TSI; revised 9/12; © MGH)**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Solving problems and responding to life's demands requires thinking skills. If a child doesn't have the skills to handle a problem or meet an expectation,, the result will likely be some form of challenging behavior. The particular form of challenging behavior (aggression, screaming, whining, defiance, shutting down, crying, etc.) is not important. What is important is identifying the situations or demands that consistently trigger the child (we call these *problems to be solved*) and the skills the child lacks that s/he would need to handle those problems more adaptively (we call these *skill deficits*).

*Problem to be Solved + Skill Deficit*



*Challenging Behavior*

**Part 1: Identifying Problems to be Solved**

**Instructions:** Specify the situations in which the child's maladaptive behavior occurs. Think of when, where, with whom, and over what issues the difficulties arise. What triggers the child? What are the settings or events (sometimes called antecedents or precipitants)? What are the chronic problems causing frustration for the child or the adults around the child? List the specific situations on the next page. These situations are called your Problems to be Solved!

Hint: Some common examples include: getting up in the morning, food choice and timing, clothing choice, brushing teeth, curfew, bedtime, screen time, homework, getting down to work in class, staying in one's seat, talking out in class, competitive games at recess, group attendance, taking medicine, and recreation time.

**Problems to be Solved**

**Which Plan will you use for now?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

After you have identified the Problems to be Solved, decide which ones will be best addressed with Plan B. To help you decide which problems are best for Plan B, use the following guidelines:

- If you have a good relationship with the child, start with the problems causing the most frequent challenging behavior or the most severe behavior.
- If you don't have a good relationship with the child, start with the problems that are likely to be easiest to solve, or that the child will be most invested in solving.

For the problems that won't get Plan B right away, indicate whether you will use Plan A or Plan C.

**PART 2: Assessing Thinking Skills**

**Instructions:** Now that you have identified the specific situations in which the child tends to have the most difficulty, it is time to identify why. Below is a list of thinking skills required to solve problems, be flexible, and tolerate frustration. Many children with social, emotional and behavioral challenges will have deficits in some of these areas. The skills are organized into five categories. Use this list to help you figure out which skill deficits are contributing to the child’s challenging behavior, and which skills represent areas of strength for the child that you may be able to rely on when problem-solving.

Please rate the extent to which each skill is a strength or challenge to the child by **marking an “X”** in one column for each skill. Provide examples of times when you have seen this skill present as strength or difficulty for the child.

<b>Executive Functioning Skills</b>	<i>Consistent Strength</i>	<i>Sometimes a Strength</i>	<i>Depends</i>	<i>Sometimes Difficult</i>	<i>Consistently Difficult</i>
Handles transitions, shifts easily from one task to another <i>Example:</i>					
Sticks with tasks requiring sustained attention <i>Example:</i>					
Does things in a logical sequence or set order <i>Example:</i>					
Keeps track of time; correctly assesses how much time a task will take <i>Example:</i>					
Reflects on multiple thoughts or ideas at the same time <i>Example:</i>					
Maintains focus during activities <i>Example:</i>					
Ignores irrelevant noises, people, or other stimuli; tunes things out when necessary <i>Example:</i>					
Thinks before responding; considers the likely outcomes or consequences of his/her actions <i>Example:</i>					
Considers a range of solutions to a problem <i>Example:</i>					

<b>Language Processing Skills</b>	<i>Consistent Strength</i>	<i>Sometimes a Strength</i>	<i>Depends</i>	<i>Sometimes Difficult</i>	<i>Consistently Difficult</i>
Expresses concerns, needs, or thoughts in words <i>Example:</i>					
Is able to tell someone what's bothering him or her <i>Example:</i>					
Understands spoken directions <i>Example:</i>					
Understands and follows conversations <i>Example:</i>					

<b>Emotion Regulation Skills</b>	<i>Consistent Strength</i>	<i>Sometimes a Strength</i>	<i>Depends</i>	<i>Sometimes Difficult</i>	<i>Consistently Difficult</i>
Thinks rationally, even when frustrated <i>Example:</i>					
Manages irritability in an age-appropriate way <i>Example:</i>					
Manages anxiety in an age-appropriate way <i>Example:</i>					
Manages disappointment in an age-appropriate way <i>Example:</i>					

<b>Cognitive Flexibility Skills</b>	<i>Consistent Strength</i>	<i>Sometimes a Strength</i>	<i>Depends</i>	<i>Sometimes Difficult</i>	<i>Consistently Difficult</i>
Is able to see "shades of gray" rather than thinking only in "black-and-white" <i>Example:</i>					
Thinks hypothetically, is able to envision different possibilities <i>Example:</i>					
Handles deviations from rules, routines, and original plans <i>Example:</i>					
Handles unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, and novelty <i>Example:</i>					
Takes into account situational factors that may mean a change in plans (like, "If it rains, we may need to cancel the trip.") <i>Example:</i>					
Interprets information accurately/ <u>avoids</u> over-generalizing or personalizing ( <u>Avoids</u> saying "Everyone's out to get me," "Nobody likes me," "You always blame me," "It's not fair," "I'm stupid," "Things will never work out for me.") <i>Example:</i>					

<b>Social Skills</b>	<i>Consistent Strength</i>	<i>Sometimes a Strength</i>	<i>Depends</i>	<i>Sometimes Difficult</i>	<i>Consistently Difficult</i>
Pays attention to verbal and nonverbal social cues <i>Example:</i>					
Accurately interprets nonverbal social cues (like facial expressions and tone of voice) <i>Example:</i>					
Starts conversations with peers, enters groups of peers appropriately <i>Example:</i>					
Seeks attention in appropriate ways <i>Example:</i>					
Understands how his or her behavior affects other people <i>Example:</i>					
Empathizes with others, appreciates others' perspectives or points of view <i>Example:</i>					
Understands how he or she is coming across or being perceived by others <i>Example:</i>					