INTRODUCTION

This Behavior Learning Packet consists of text and questions for Student Response. The text explores a particular behavior, provides two stories about students who violated a rule or expectation, explains the consequences, and suggests ways of setting goals and refocusing behavior.

The Student Response asks questions about why it’s wrong to break a school rule, what the students in the stories did that got them into trouble, and how you might reflect on your actions to have a more positive outcome going forward.

HOW TO DO THE ASSIGNMENT

As you read the text and answer the questions, think about what you did and why you did it. When you finish reading the text, write answers to the questions on the Response form.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

“You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.” —C.S. Lewis

If you don’t learn from mistakes, you’ll continue to make the same ones over and again. Everybody makes mistakes at one time or another. Nobody expects you or anybody else to be perfect. But when you make a mistake, you must understand why to avoid making the same mistake again. Understanding our mistakes is how we refocus our behavior so the associated outcomes can be different.
LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES: TWO STORIES

FIGHTING FRANK

Frank loves to fight. It seems that every time you see him, he’s either in a fight, coming from a fight or looking for a fight.

Frank’s teacher, Ms. Jones, tries to help Frank avoid fights. Frank is a good student and a good athlete. “You’d be a terrific student, Frank, if only you’d learn to control your temper,” Ms. Jones said.

Frank got a detention for fighting in class. He served the detention and then came back to class the following week. For a few days, all went well. Then Bobby reached over toward Frank’s desk. “Let me borrow your pencil, OK? I’ll give it right back to you.”

Frank punched Bobby in the shoulder. “Keep your hands off my stuff, you hear?” he yelled. Then he shoved Bobby again. Later Frank found Bobby in the hallway and started hitting him.

The principal suspended Frank for fighting in school. “I’m disappointed in your behavior, Frank,” he told him. “You just don’t seem to learn from your mistakes. Until you can, you’ll keep getting into trouble for the same things, over and again.”

TALKATIVE TINA

Tina likes to talk. As a matter of fact, talking is her favorite form of recreation. Weekends and holidays, she’s on the phone constantly. At school, she talks to her friends before school, during lunchtime, after school, and often during class.

Tina has already served one detention for talking during class. For a while, things went smoothly and Tina was quiet in class.

Then something funny happened during history class. Her friend was sitting nearby. As soon as Mr. Snyder’s back was turned, Tina started. “Did you EVER hear anything like that answer Sean gave? And that outfit he’s wearing! Look at the shoes on Keri over there…”
LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

On and on Tina talked, until the whole class had practically stopped. Everybody was listening to Tina’s conversation. Mr. Snyder asked her to stay after class and gave her another detention.

“Tina you’re going to have to learn from your mistakes. You can’t continue to break the same rule and repeat the same mistakes,” Mr. Snyder said.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

It’s human nature to want to avoid making the same mistakes over and again. Most of us don’t want to make any errors at all. We take pride in doing our work right the first time.

If someone points out that something we have done is not right, we usually feel the need to try again. Sometimes we don’t even need another person to point out our mistakes, we see the mistake ourselves.

Not only do we need to give the right answers in school or do tasks correctly at home, we also need to develop our ability to relate to others. When we work toward improving our social skills, we call it “self-improvement.”

If we don’t learn to control the way we relate to others, there are usually consequences. If we talk and disrupt class, as Tina did, or fight with other students like Frank, we can expect certain consequences.

The consequences are more serious if you continue to break the same rule. One big problem with continued misbehavior is that you develop a reputation for behaving in a certain way. You become “Fighting Frank” or “Talkative Tina.” People begin to identify you with the trait that got you into trouble. Then they expect a certain type of behavior from you and react to you with that trait in mind. You may even get blamed for something you didn’t do because “it sounds like something Frank (or Tina, or you) would do.”

The key is wanting to change. If you want a different journey, choose a different path.
LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

HOW TO LEARN FROM MISTAKES

Start with a list. What are the things people say about you? What kinds of things are you reprimanded for over and again? Have you ever received a detention before today and if so, what for? All these pieces of information will help you decide what mistakes you may be repeating.

Talk to a friend, a teacher or counselor. What behavior do they notice that you may want to change? Listen to what they say and try not to be defensive or make excuses for your actions.

If it’s something you need to stop doing, train yourself to notice when you do it. Ask a friend to remind you when you’re making fun of others, talking in class, being late to school or doing something unproductive or hurtful.

If it’s something you need to train yourself to do, make a reminder for yourself. If you often forget to take your homework to school with you, put it on the kitchen table with a note to remind you to take it with you or set a reminder in your phone.

Set goals for yourself. Goals for improvement can help you learn from mistakes.
STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET 1  LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

NAME:         DATE:

WHAT TO DO

Answering the following questions will help you understand why you are here today and help you reflect on how you may redirect your actions for a more positive outcome. Although your answers are not graded, your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents/guardian may read what you have written.

As you write your answers, be honest with yourself about what you did and why. Honesty in writing your answers reflects your willingness to refocus your behavior and attitude.

Start your answers in the spaces below the questions, continue on your own paper. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If we can’t read what you write, you may be asked to do the packet over again.

1. Why were you asked to complete this packet, “Learning from Mistakes”?

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2. What were the consequences of your mistake?

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STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET 1  LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

3. Describe a situation when you learned something from a mistake you made.

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4. Name another time when you didn't learn from a mistake you made. What were the consequences?

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5. Why is it good that we learn from our mistakes?

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6. How could Frank have learned from his mistakes and changed his behavior?

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7. How may Frank’s teachers and other students see him if he doesn’t learn from his mistakes in the future?

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8. What does Tina need to learn from her mistakes so she can change her behavior?

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9. If you were a school counselor assigned to work with Tina, what could you tell her about learning from mistakes?

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10. Write three goals that will help you to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

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STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET 2  LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

NAME:         DATE:

WHAT TO DO

Answering the following questions will help you understand why you are here today and help you reflect on how you may redirect your actions for a more positive outcome. Although your answers are not graded, your teacher, a counselor, the principal, or your parents/guardian may read what you have written.

As you write your answers, be honest with yourself about what you did and why. Honesty in writing your answers reflects your willingness to refocus your behavior and attitude.

Start your answers in the spaces below the questions, continue on your own paper. Be neat, spell correctly, use good grammar, and write in complete sentences. If we can’t read what you write, you may be asked to do the packet over again.

1. Have you repeated a mistake? Describe the incident that has led to your being here today.

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2. Have you failed to learn from mistakes in the past? Tell about one case where you remember not learning from a mistake you made. What were the consequences?

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STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET 2 LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

3. Why is the ability to learn from mistakes an important sign of maturity?

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4. Imagine you are in charge of a student talent show that was to be performed in two weeks. One of the bands scheduled to play in the show keeps missing rehearsals. What would you, as student leader of this event, do? Explain.

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5. If you were the owner of a sandwich shop and one of your workers kept undercharging the customers, what might you do? You’ve already spoken to her twice about this particular problem and she keeps making the same mistake over and over again.

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6. Imagine that you are a close friend of Frank’s. What can you tell him to help him learn more effectively from mistakes?

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7. How may Frank’s teachers view him if he continues to make the same mistake?

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8. What could Tina do to help herself learn to stop talking in class?

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9. How did your mistake impact you? What were the consequences to you?
To those around you?
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10. Write three goals that will help you learn from mistakes more effectively.

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