**Name**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Objective**: Explore the challenges and benefits of self-reflection after making a mistake. |

***What to Do When We Make a Mistake***

**Directions:** Making mistakes is a natural thing for humans to do. Read the following text to understand why reflection is important after we realize that we’ve made a mistake.

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| **Why It’s So Hard to Apologize**One of the first things we teach children is to say “I’m sorry” when they hurt someone’s feelings. However, as we become adults, we can become inherently resistant to apologizing, says Amy Ebesu Hubbard, a professor at the University of Hawaii Manoa School of Communication and Information. As adults, we worry about how apologizing affects how others perceive us. We believe, incorrectly, that when we apologize, others might think less of us or we will damage our reputation. These imagined social barriers make us hesitant to apologize. In addition, Karina Schumann, a professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, notes that there are psychological barriers that can prevent people from apologizing. When someone becomes upset with us, our initial reaction is to protect ourselves, so we trick ourselves into believing that we didn’t do anything wrong. “A lot of the time, people don’t apologize simply because these self-defensive processes kick in and they come up with all kinds of reasons why they shouldn’t apologize,” Schumann says. “They push blame onto the other person, they think of excuses, all the situational factors that caused them to behave the way they did.”[[1]](#footnote-2) However, deep down we understand that apologies are right and necessary. Because we can erect social or psychological barriers when it’s time to apologize, reflecting on our actions after we’ve made a mistake can help us see the situation—and ourselves—more clearly. |

1. According to the text, what are some of the social and psychological barriers that impact adult apologies? Jot them in the chart below:

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| --- | --- |
| **Social Barriers** | **Psychological Barriers** |
|  |  |

1. When we make mistakes, it is important that we reflect on our actions. Reflection improves our relationship with the person we hurt, but it also helps us to develop self-awareness and demonstrate the strength necessary to alter any problematic habits or patterns we are developing. Read the chart below for some tips about effective ways to reflecting on your mistakes.

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| **Keys to Effective Reflection After Making a Mistake** |
| **Take ownership for your actions** | Take responsibility for what you did wrong, even if you think there is a reason or an excuse for your behavior. Tell the truth about everything you did. |
| **Think about how your actions affected others** | Think about your actions from the perspective of everyone who was involved. Did your behavior hurt someone emotionally or physically? Did you disrupt their learning, break a promise, or misjudge them?  |
| **Plan a better choice for next time** | Think about what you will do if you are presented with the same situation again. What might you say or do differently? If you keep making the same mistakes over and over again, then you are not effectively reflecting. |
| **Apologize** | Apologize for your behavior. Saying, “I’m sorry” helps others believe that you want to make better choices and helps you hold yourself accountable for making better decisions.  |

Imagine that you made a mistake and are practicing one of the reflection strategies above.

1. How might this reflection strategy “improve your relationship with the person you hurt”?

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1. Additionally, how might how might this same strategy help you “develop self-awareness” and alter your behavior?

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***What to Do When We Make a Mistake* Reflection Questions**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Which of the four keys to effectively reflecting would be the easiest for you to do if you made a mistake? Why?

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1. Which of the four keys to effectively reflecting would be the hardest for you to do if you made a mistake? Why?

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1. Why is it important to reflect after making a mistake? What are some benefits of reflecting on our mistakes?

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**Stamp Your Learning for *What to Do When We Make a Mistake***

**Directions:** Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

Consider a mistake you have made in the past. Then answer the questions below to follow the steps of effective reflecting:

1. How did you take ownership of your actions? If you did not, how could you have taken ownership?

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1. How did your actions affect others?

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1. What is your plan to do better?

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1. Allie Volpe, “Everyone messes up. Here’s how to say you’re sorry,” Vox, March 5, 2023, <https://www.vox.com/even-better/23622442/saying-sorry-apologize>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)