



ATTENDANCE SCIENCE

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

School Avoidance and Refusal

A four-unit certificate course · Work through this alongside the course

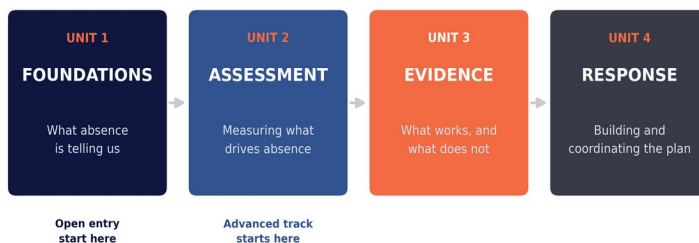
Name: _____ Organization: _____

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Attendance USA, Inc. · Developed by Dr. Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, Founder & CEO

THE COURSE IN FOUR UNITS

School Avoidance and Refusal · Attendance Science™ Certificate Course



Each unit carries its own knowledge check · Case labs run across Units 2 to 4

Version 1.0 · September 2026

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is the working half of the course. The deck teaches; this book is where you apply what you learn to a real case on your own caseload. Keep one student in mind from the first page and carry that student through all four units. By the last page you will have a classification, an assessment set, an evidence-informed plan, a coordination map, and a step-down schedule for that student.

Unit	What You Will Do Here	Pages
1. Foundations	Classify a real case by type and tier. Test your own team's default assumptions	Worksheets 1.1 to 1.3
2. Assessment	Select an instrument set, run a function screen, and record where informants disagree	Worksheets 2.1 to 2.4
3. Evidence	Match an intervention to the function, and write the honest version of what you can promise	Worksheets 3.1 to 3.3
4. Response	Build the plan, name the owners, and set the re-screen date	Worksheets 4.1 to 4.4

BEFORE YOU START

Choose a real case, and change the student's name here. Everything you write in this workbook should be usable on Monday. If you have no active case, use one that closed in the last year and ask what you would do differently now.

Case reference name or code for this workbook:

SAFETY COMES FIRST, IN EVERY UNIT

If at any point in this work you identify self-harm, hopelessness, or a safety risk, stop the worksheet and act under your school or organization's crisis protocol, with same-day involvement of a licensed mental health professional. That obligation sits above every classification decision in this course, at every tier.

UNIT 1

FOUNDATIONS

What absence is telling us

Unit 1 is the open-entry unit. If you have completed Level 1 certification, you can move quickly here and start the advanced track at Unit 2. Complete Worksheet 1.1 either way, because the rest of the workbook builds on it.

Worksheet 1.1 · Your Case at Intake

Case reference	<i>name or code you will use throughout</i>
Age and grade	
Current attendance rate	<i>percent of enrolled days attended, this term</i>
Attendance last term	<i>so you can see the direction of travel</i>
Absence pattern	<i>which days, which periods, which weeks</i>
Who first raised it	<i>and how long after the pattern began</i>
What has been tried	<i>list every step already taken</i>
What changed when	<i>any event that lines up with the start of the pattern</i>

In one sentence, what does this student's absence pattern suggest that the total absence figure does not?

Worksheet 1.2 · Classify by Type

Work through the four types in order. Rule each one in or out with evidence, not impression.

Type	Ask Yourself	In, Out, or Unsure
Truancy	Is the absence concealed from the caregiver? Is distress absent from the picture?	
Withdrawal	Is the caregiver keeping the student home, or not pressing for attendance? Is there a caregiving, economic, or belief-based reason?	

Type	Ask Yourself	In, Out, or Unsure
Avoidance	Is something in the environment driving this: a setting, a person, a route, a schedule, an unmet access need?	
Refusal	Is the student showing emotional distress about attending, with the caregiver aware?	

Your classification, and the single piece of evidence that decided it:

What would have to be true for you to be wrong? Name the evidence that would change your mind.

Worksheet 1.3 · Place the Case on the Tier Model

Use the Tiered Attendance Threshold Model from the course deck. Record the tier, and then record what the tier obliges you to do that you are not doing yet.

Tier	0, 1, 2, or 3
What placed it there	<i>absence percentage, presentation, or duration</i>
Tier response owed	<i>what the model says should already be in place</i>
Gap	<i>what is owed and missing</i>

CHECK YOUR TEAM'S DEFAULT

Most teams have a default classification they reach for under pressure. Naming it is the fastest way to stop it deciding cases for you.

When our team is busy, we tend to classify ambiguous cases as:

UNIT 2

ASSESSMENT

Measuring what drives absence

Unit 2 is where the advanced track begins. You will build an assessment set for your case, run the function screen, and record the disagreements between informants rather than resolving them silently.

Worksheet 2.1 · Select Your Instrument Set

Mark the instruments you will use, and write what decision each result will inform. An instrument with no decision attached to it should not be administered.

Instrument	Question It Answers	Using It?	Decision It Will Inform
SNACK	What type of attendance problem is this?		
SRAS-R	What function is maintaining it?		
ISAP / ISAP-P	What symptom and context profile sits behind it?		
SCREEN	How strong is the emotional response to school?		
PSSB©	How strong is the bond to school?		
Family Stability Index™	How stable is the household?		

Which instruments require permission or a qualified administrator in your setting, and who will secure that?

Worksheet 2.2 · The Function Screen

If refusal is in the picture, work the four functions. Score your impression now, then compare it against the instrument result when you have it.

Function	Evidence in This Case	Your Rating (1 to 5)	Instrument Result
1. Avoidance of negative affectivity	Generalized distress tied to school itself, not to one class or person		

Function	Evidence in This Case	Your Rating (1 to 5)	Instrument Result
2. Escape from social or evaluative situations	Distress tied to a specific demand: a test, a presentation, a peer group		
3. Pursuit of attention	Distress resolves once a caregiver is present		
4. Pursuit of tangible reinforcement	Something outside school is more rewarding than school		

Where your impression and the instrument disagreed, and what you did about it:

Worksheet 2.3 · The Three-Source Check

The register, the student, and the caregiver will not agree. The disagreement is the finding. Record it.

Source	What It Says About the Absence	What It Cannot Know
The register		Partial-day absence, recording practice, what happened at home
The student		What the school has recorded, what the caregiver is carrying
The caregiver		What happens inside the school day

Name the largest disagreement between your three sources, and what you think explains it:

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT THIS GAP

Parents in the ISAP-P validation rated symptoms higher than their children on every one of the 13 scales. In a Belgian study of 4,344 students, self-reported and officially registered unauthorized absence correlated only weakly, with the largest underreporting among boys, students in vocational tracks, students from lower-income households, and students from homes where another language is spoken. A Danish clinical study found 27 percent of young people whose parents reported significant absence had no absence at all in the school record.

Worksheet 2.4 · Assign the ASC-AR Code

Category	<i>T, W, A, or R</i>
Function	<i>for refusal cases: 1, 2, 3, or 4</i>
Tier modifier	<i>.0 to .3</i>
Full code	<i>for example AS-R1.3</i>
Reclassify if	<i>the specific finding that would change this code</i>
Review date	<i>when this code will be re-examined</i>

UNIT 3

EVIDENCE

*What works, and what does not***Worksheet 3.1 · Match the Intervention to the Function**

Write the response your case's function calls for, then write the response your team would have reached for without this course. Compare them.

Function	Evidence-Supported First Response	What Your Team Would Have Done
AS-R1, negative affectivity	Anxiety-management skills, graded exposure, CBT with a licensed provider	
AS-R2, social or evaluative escape	Resolve the specific stressor; graded re-entry to that setting	
AS-R3, attention	Caregiver contingency management; predictable scheduled attention	
AS-R4, tangible reinforcement	Contingency management reducing the reward value of staying home	
AS-A, environmental or systemic	Safety and climate repair; address the access barrier directly	
AS-W, withdrawal	Family engagement and resource navigation, with an FSI™ screen	

Worksheet 3.2 · The Five Mechanisms Check

Five mechanisms recur across effective intensive programs. Check your plan against each.

- ☐ Graded exposure: is the return stepped, with a defined first step the student can actually take?
- ☐ Educational scaffolding: are academic demands calibrated to current capacity, or waiting at full load?
- ☐ Therapeutic peer milieu: is there a group setting where this student is not the only one returning?
- ☐ Systems coordination: has the home school been prepared for the return, by name and by date?
- ☐ Transitional space: is there an intermediate setting, or is the only option all or nothing?

Which mechanism is missing from your plan, and what would it take to add it?

Worksheet 3.3 · The Honest Promise

Write what you can truthfully tell this family about what the evidence supports. Use the numbers from Unit 3.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS YOU SAYING

- CBT-based approaches produce a meaningful advantage over ordinary care for attendance, with a controlled effect size of 0.44
- Wellbeing and attendance can move at different speeds. A plan that improves how a student copes before it improves the register has not failed
- Severe, long-standing cases move slowly. In one cohort of 84 students with severe chronic absence, attendance rose from 6 percent to 30 percent over about a year
- Intensity is not the same as effectiveness. One trial found a manual-based program using five times the clinical hours produced no better attendance than ordinary care

In your own words, what you will tell this family about what to expect, and by when:

What you will NOT promise, and why:

UNIT 4

RESPONSE

Building and coordinating the plan

Worksheet 4.1 • Run SALT on This Case

SALT comes before the plan is written, not after. Complete all four before you fill in Worksheet 4.2.

S • Strengths: what is already working for this student, however small?

A • Areas of focus: what must change first for anything else to be possible?

L • Limitations: what can this school not solve alone? Name at least one.

T • other Theories: what else could explain this pattern that you have not tested?

Worksheet 4.2 • The Plan

First step for the student	<i>small enough to succeed this week</i>
Academic adjustment	<i>what load changes, and for how long</i>
Family action	<i>what the household will do, agreed with them</i>
School adjustment	<i>what the building changes: route, room, schedule, staff</i>

Clinical involvement	<i>who, and by when</i>
What success looks like at 6 weeks	<i>in a number and in a description</i>

Worksheet 4.3 · Coordination Map

Every Tier 3 case needs named owners. A plan with no name against a line is a plan nobody owns.

Piece of the Plan	Named Owner	By When	How We Will Know
Classification and re-screening			
School-side adjustments			
Family engagement			
Clinical or licensed provider			
Community or external partner			
Overall case coordination			

Who on this map does not yet know they own their piece, and when will you tell them?

Worksheet 4.4 · Monitoring and Step-Down

A Tier 3 case that never steps down is a case that has become a category. Set the review now.

Re-screen date	<i>6 to 9 weeks from today</i>
What will be re-screened	<i>attendance, PSSB®, function, family stability</i>
Step-down criteria	<i>what has to hold, and for how long</i>
Escalation trigger	<i>what would move this case up rather than down</i>
Who reviews	<i>named person, not a role</i>

ATTENDANCE IMPROVED AND THE BOND DID NOT

Watch for this pattern at review. A student whose attendance rises while their bond scores stay flat has complied rather than recovered, and is at high risk of relapse. Treat it as an unfinished case, not a success.

Your Course Action Plan

The last page is the one your organization will see. Write five commitments you will carry back, with a date and an owner against each. Commitments without a date are intentions.

#	Commitment	Owner	By When
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Suggested Commitments, If You Need a Starting Point

- Adopt the four-category classification as the first step in every high-absence case review
- Add a PSSB® screen to the Tier 2 intake process
- Add a three-source check to intake, so the register is never the only voice in the room
- Secure permission for one published instrument, and train two people to administer it
- Name a coordinator for every open Tier 3 case, and put the name in the record
- Schedule a 6 to 9 week re-screen and step-down review for every open Tier 3 case

Reflection

What did you believe about school avoidance and refusal before this course that you no longer believe?

Who showed up for you, in a way that changed what you thought was possible?

 A rising tide raises all boats. (Attendance Science™)