

Calming Strategies for All Ages

Flower and Bubbles

The student will pretend to have a flower in one hand and a bubble wand in the other. They then slowly breathe in while pretending to smell the flower and slowly breathe out pretending to blow bubbles.



Making Orange Juice: (or Lemonade or Apple Juice):

The student will reach up and pretend to pick fruit from a tree. They then clench their fists to pretend to squeeze the juice from the fruit. Finally they should shake out their hands. This can be repeated until the glass is "full".

3 3 3 Rule:

For this strategy and the following one the student is naming things they can see, touch etc. from the place they are in at that time.

- First, name 3 things you can see.
- Second, name 3 things you can hear.
- Third, move 3 body parts. (An alternative step 3 is to name three things you can touch)

Another version of this is called the **5,4,3,2,1 Strategy**.

- Name 5 things you can see.
- Name 4 things you can touch.
- Name 3 things you can hear.
- Name 2 things you can smell.
- Name 1 thing you can taste.

If you or your child need support with mental health, reach out to a mental health professional.

You can find resources and assistance at FastTrackerMN.org.



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Belly Breathing

Have the student place hands on their abdomen just below the ribs. They should slowly breathe in feeling the movement of their hands, Then, they should hold their breath for a count of two and slowly exhale feeling the movement of their hands again. This can be done for up to 15 minutes depending on need and ability.



Body Scan/ Muscle Relaxation:

- Find a comfortable position: Lie down or sit comfortably.
- Close your eyes: Ask the child to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths.
- Scan the body: Starting from the toes, guide the child to focus on each part of their body, moving upwards slowly (toes, feet, legs, etc.), noticing any sensations, tension, or relaxation.
- Breathe into tension: If they find any tense areas, encourage them to breathe deeply and imagine sending their breath to that area to relax it.
- Finish at the head: Continue until they reach the top of their head, then take a few deep breaths and slowly open their eyes.

Teach children to tense and then slowly relax different muscle groups in their body to release physical tension. As you breathe in, squeeze a certain muscle and focus on it, and as you breathe out, relax your muscles.

Laying on the floor:

Laying on the floor can be an effective calming strategy for children, providing a grounded, stable, and supportive surface. This can help them feel more secure and reduce feelings of anxiety or overstimulation. Try to do any of the activities in this series while lying on the floor. Laying on the floor can become a powerful and simple tool to help children calm down, relax, and manage their emotions effectively.

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Starfish Breathing

- Spread fingers like a starfish: Ask the child to spread their fingers out like a starfish.
- Trace the fingers: Have the child use the index finger of their other hand to trace up and down the fingers of the "starfish" hand.
- Inhale on the way up, exhale on the way down: As they trace up a finger, they should inhale deeply through the nose. As they trace down, they should exhale slowly through the mouth.
- Repeat for each finger: Continue tracing all five fingers, focusing on slow and deep breaths.



Using ice packs as a calming strategy can be very effective, as the cold sensation can help shift the focus away from anxiety and stress. Here are some ways to use ice packs for calming:

Forehead: Placing an ice pack on the forehead can help reduce feelings of anxiety and bring a sense of calm. Splashing your face with cold water can also help a lot.

Back of the Neck: Placing an ice pack on the back of the neck can help cool the body down and reduce anxiety.

Palms: Holding an ice pack in the palms can help distract the mind and provide a calming effect. Holding ice cubes can also work well.

Wrists: Placing an ice pack on the wrists can help cool down the body and calm the nervous system.

Center of the Chest: Placing an ice pack on the chest can help slow the heart rate and provide a soothing sensation

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