

### ***Making Your Own Calm Down Kit***

Help your child create his/her own calm down kit. A calm down kit or distress kit is something prepared in advance so it's available to help in the moment you need it. Use it to keep things you want to remember, in a location that is easily accessed when needed.

#### **Items that give kids a brain break**

- Puzzle
- Books to read
- Blank notebook and writing utensils
- Coloring books
- Scratch art doodle pad
- Small chalk board
- Magna-Doodle or Etch-a-Sketch
- Photo album

#### **Items to squeeze & keep hands busy**

- Fidgets like Tangle Jr. or puffer ball
- Rubik's Cube
- Play dough or silly putty
- Stress balls
- Bubble wrap
- Bag of tissue paper to rip
- Scarves or fabric scraps
- Spinning top

#### **Items to support breathing & relaxation**

- Bottle of bubbles
- Pinwheels
- Straws with cotton balls or pom poms

#### **Items for olfactory sensory input**

- Calming essential oil spray
- Smelling bottles
- Scratch and sniff stickers

#### **Items for auditory sensory input**

- Noise cancelling headphones
- MP3 player with music
- Audiobooks

#### **Items for oral motor sensory input**

- Chew toy or chew necklace
- Chewing gum, hard candies, or lollipops
- Snacks with a variety of textures
- Whistle, harmonica, party blowers, or similar

### **Items to visually calm**

- Visual calm down cards
- Sensory bottle or calm down jar
- Light up toys
- Flashlight
- Plastic snow globe
- Kaleidoscope
- Hourglass

### **Items to get kids moving**

- Book of yoga poses/yoga activity cards
- Skipping rope

## **MORE CALMING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN**

### **QUICK WAYS TO CALM DOWN**

- Imagine your favorite place - it's like taking a mini vacation wherever you are
- Think of any of your favorites: favorite movie, color, place, animal, person, season, music.
- Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, cow, dog, etc...)
- Squeeze something (play dough, clay, silly putty, your fists, a stress ball)
- Give yourself a regulating hug: place your right hand across your heart and put your palm against your body with your hand under your armpit. Take your left arm across the body towards the right and hold your own deltoid or upper arm close to your shoulder for a calming self-hug.
- Play soothing music.
- Engage in rhythmic activities (knitting, crocheting, biking, swimming, dancing).
- Think of the things you look forward to in the next week (person you will see, activity, etc.).
- Picture people you care about and look at pictures of them.
- Say a coping statement – “I can handle this”, “The feeling will pass”.
- 54321 Grounding--in this, you focus on some aspect of the physical world, rather than on your internal thoughts and feelings. This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.
  - Take a deep belly breath to begin.
  - **5 - LOOK:** Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the picture frame.
  - **4 - FEEL:** Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel the hair on the back of my neck, or I feel the pillow I am sitting on.
  - **3 - LISTEN:** Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud.
  - **2 - SMELL:** Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favorite smells.
  - **1 - TASTE:** Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favorite thing to taste.

- Take another deep belly breath to end.

"5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Blast Off!"  
Grounding Technique



Find 5 things you can see



Find 4 things you can touch



Find 3 things you can hear



Find 2 things you can smell



Find 1 thing you can taste

Blast Off!

## BREATHING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN

### DEEP BREATHING USING PROPS

- **Use bubbles:** Blowing gently to create bubbles is a good way to be playful and breathe deeply. Children have to blow carefully and slowly to make the bubbles, which is why this can help children take deep breaths.
- **Use a stuffed animal to practice deep breathing:** Have the child lay down on their back and put a stuffed animal on their belly. Have them breathe in and move the stuffed animal up, then breathe out and bring the stuffed animal back down. This helps teach children to use their belly to take big deep breaths. Another alternative is to use a weighted stuffed animal.
- **Use a pinwheel:** Children can practice breathing out slowly or more quickly, using the speed of the pinwheel as a measure. Then they can figure out which way works and feels best for them.
- **Use a feather:** Get some colored feathers and pick out one feather to use. It could be a color that they love or one that makes them feel calm. Breathe in and hold it for a count of 3, then breathe out going up on one side of the feather and down the other side.
- **Hoberman Sphere:** Breathe in and expand the sphere, breathe out and push the sphere back in (this mirrors what should happen to their belly)



### CREATIVE PROPS TO MAKE

- **Floating Ball:**  
<https://allfortheboys.com/floating-ball-activity/>
- **Dragon Breathing:**



<https://babyccinochildren.com/blog/2012/02/14/fire-breathing-dragons/>

### BREATHING USING YOUR IMAGINATION

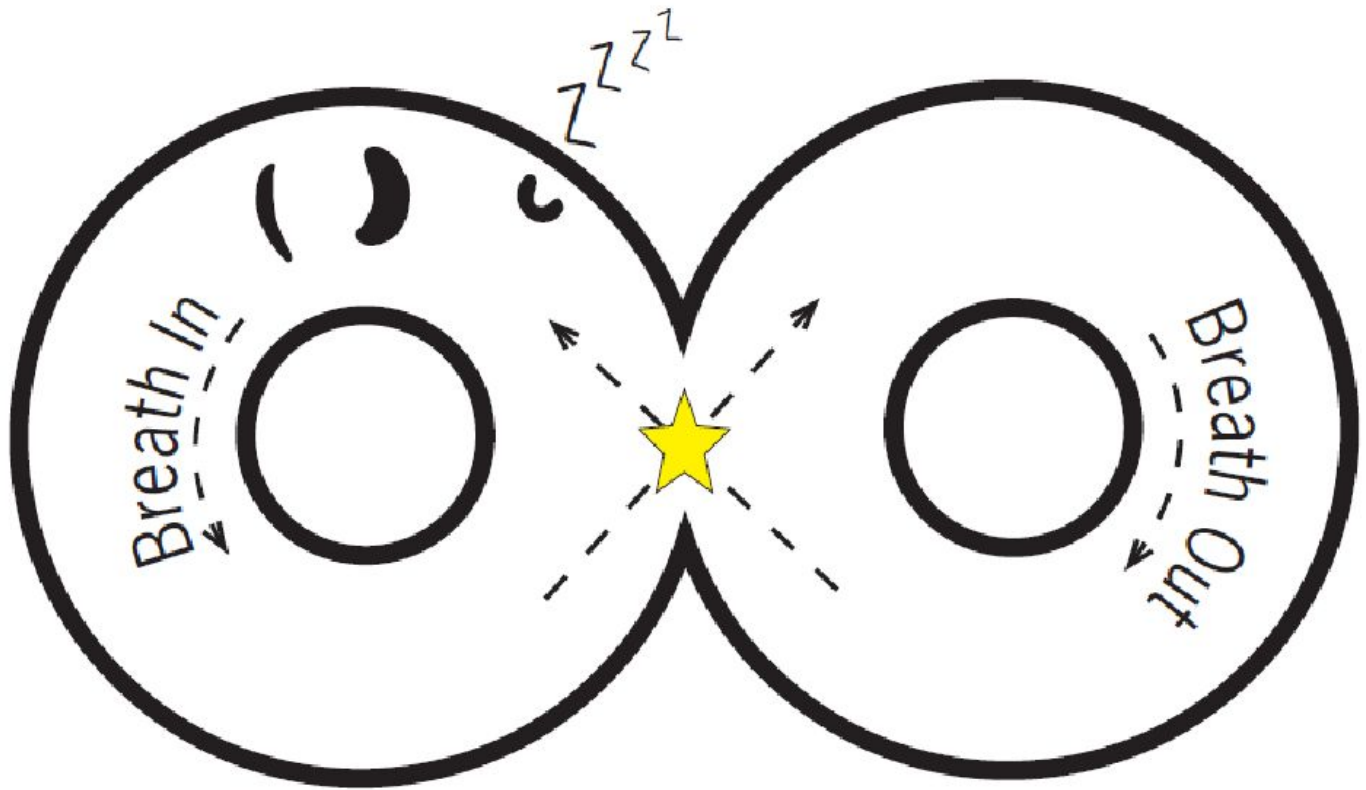
- Breathe in like a flower, breathe out like you are blowing out birthday candles.
- Pretend your belly is like a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.
- Smell the soup, cool the soup or smell the hot cocoa, cool the hot cocoa
- Darth Vader Breathing - Pretend you have a straw in your mouth, suck in through the straw and breathe in. Breathe out like Darth Vader.
- Ocean Breathing - breathe in and imagine a wave rolling in, breathe out and imagine it rolling out.
- Color breathing - Breathe in and imagine a calm, happy, positive color. Breathe out and imagine a color that represents stress, anxiety, etc. leaving your body.
- Soft Belly - Say to yourself "soft" as you breathe in and "belly" as you breathe out.

### ANIMAL BREATHING

- **Whale breath:** Sitting criss-cross applesauce, sit up tall and take a deep breathe in, Hold it while you count to 5 with your fingers then tilt head up to blow it out of blowhole. You can also put your hands up on top of head to create the blow hole to “blow” out.
- **Snake Breath:** Breathe in, pause, breathe out slowly making hissing sound as long as you can.
- **Bunny Breath:** You can do this breathing either while sitting, or add movement to it. Sitting version - make “bunny” hands in front of chest and take quick sniffs like a bunny. Movement version - start in a squat and hop forward while taking quick bunny sniffs.
- **Bumblebee Breath:** Breathe in and pretend you are smelling a flower. As you breathe out, make humming bee sound. Try different ways to make the sound - longer or shorter, high or low sounds.

***DEEP BREATHING USING SHAPES***

# Lazy 8 Breathing



Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.

## BACK TO BACK BREATHING



Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start - that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, and then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. Their partner should feel the expansion in their partner's back each time they breathe in and then try to sync their own breathing so that both partners are breathing in time together.

## TUMMY BREATHING



Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply through your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

## ELEPHANT BREATHING



Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

## BUBBLE BREATHING



Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Begin by imagining you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and then, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace or love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.



## BALLOON BREATHING



Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky.

## SHOULDER ROLL BREATHING



Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

## TAKE 5 BREATHING



Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.

## BUMBLEBEE BREATHING



Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.

# Quick ways to CALM down!

## Sea Life Sensory Solutions.



### Puffer Fish Puff

Puff your cheeks like a puffer fish!

Fill your cheeks with air and hold for 5 seconds.



### Clam Cuddle

Cuddle yourself like a clam.

Place your hands on the opposite shoulders and squeeze.



### Turtle Tongue

Poke your tongue out like a turtle pokes out its neck.

Stick your tongue out and quickly hide it again.



### Starfish Stretch

Stretch out like a starfish.

Place your arms up over your head and stretch out wide. Stretch your legs out wide too.





## Drain

Extend arms out, pretending your arms are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a "sssshhh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.



## S.T.A.R.

**S**mile, **T**ake a deep breath **A**nd **R**elax. Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and in when the air goes out. Also help children learn to exhale slower than they inhale.



## Pretzel

Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe.



## Balloon

Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbbpbbpbb" sound.

## RELAXATION ROUTINE

1. SIT ON A CHAIR...

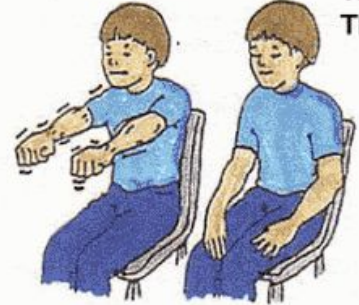


2. "SCRUNCH" UP YOUR FACE...



THEN...  
RELAX  
IT...

3. TENSE YOUR  
ARMS...



THEN...  
RELAX  
THEM

4. TENSE UP YOUR  
SHOULDERS  
AND CHEST...



THEN...  
RELAX  
THEM

5. TENSE UP  
YOUR LEGS...



... THEN RELAX!

6. BREATHE  
IN  
RELAXATION...



... BREATHE OUT  
TENSION

## Anxiety Buster

- Squeeze up your face - count to 5 - then stop



**1 2 3 4 5**



- Squeeze up or stretch your arm - count to 5 - then stop - do your other arm



**1 2 3 4 5**



- Squeeze up or stretch your leg - count to 5 - then stop - do your other arm



**1 2 3 4 5**



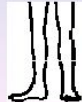
- Squeeze up or stretch both arms together - count to 5 - then stop



**1 2 3 4 5**










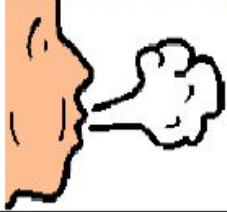




- Squeeze up or stretch both legs together - count to 5 - then stop



**1 2 3 4 5**



<p><b>Stop</b></p>	 <p>If you feel upset, stop what you are doing.</p>
<p><b>Breathe In, Breathe Out</b></p>	<p>Breathe in deep like you are smelling a flower. </p>  <p>Breathe out like you are blowing bubbles.</p>
<p><b>Relax</b></p>	<p>Breathing will help you feel more relaxed.</p>
<p><b>Use Your Words</b></p>	<p>Then use your words to tell someone what's wrong.</p>

<p><b>Stop</b></p> 	 <p>If you feel upset, stop what you are doing.</p>
<p><b>Sweep It Away</b></p> 	 <p>Sweep away upset thoughts, so you feel better!</p>
<p><b>Breathe In, Breathe Out</b></p> 	<p>Breathe in deep like you are smelling a flower. </p>  <p>Breathe out like you are blowing bubbles.</p>
<p><b>Relax</b></p> 	<p>Breathing will help you feel more relaxed. </p>

## **CALM DOWN WITH TAKE 5 BREATHING**

- 1.** Stretch your hand out like a star.
- 2.** Get your pointer finger ready to trace your fingers up and down.
- 3.** Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
- 4.** Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
- 5.** Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down.  
Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.

