



WORKBOOK

*Over 75 Coping Strategies to Help Kids Deal
with Stress, Anxiety and Anger*

By Janine Halloran, M.A., LMHC

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To My Family:

I love you and I couldn't have done this without you.
Thanks for dealing with me and supporting me through everything, even
when I was wearing my grumpy pants.

XOXOX

The information contained in this book is for informational purposes only. I am a licensed counselor, and the advice and worksheets contained in the book are ones that I've found helpful in my work with children and adolescents. However, this book is not meant to be a replacement for seeking face-to-face individual therapy for your child.

By reading this book, you agree that Encourage Play, LLC, Coping Skills for Kids and the author are not responsible for the success or failure of your child's ability to learn coping skills or the status of their mental health.

Readers of this book are personally responsible for their own safety and the safety of the children in their care. Please use careful judgment when doing activities and adapting them for different abilities and age groups.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Janine Halloran is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor with over 15 years of experience working with children and adolescents. She has worked in a variety of settings, including schools and outpatient mental health clinics.

In 2013, Janine started Encourage Play, a website dedicated to encouraging kids to learn social skills through play. The topics of self-regulation and learning coping skills to deal with difficult feelings kept coming up as she was doing work for Encourage Play. Teaching coping skills has always been a passion of Janine's since she first started as a counselor and since she became a mother.

Dealing with stress, anxiety and anger is such an important skill to learn, but not all kids learn those strategies naturally. Janine wanted to create a website with curated products aimed at helping kids calm down, balance their energy and emotions, and process challenging feelings. So she created Coping Skills for Kids, an entire site dedicated to teaching children how to deal with stress.

Janine lives in Massachusetts with her husband (whom she has known since high school!). They have an 8 year old daughter and a 5 year old son. As a family, they are working on increasing their positive coping skills together. It's always a work in progress. When Janine isn't working, you can find her in her garden or doing an arts and crafts project. She has a weakness for Nutella and Netflix.



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A NOTE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

This book is designed to be a support to help your child figure out different ways to learn to cope with stress, anxiety and anger. You can work through this book with your child, or your child can read it on his or her own.

When kids read this book on their own, they may find some of these exercises a little challenging. If they get stuck, encourage them to seek help from a trusted adult when they need it. This may be you or someone else who lives in your home. It may also be another family member. Or it may be a therapist or school counselor.

Note: Some of the coping skills in the book include doing activities that need adult supervision.

While I am a licensed therapist with years of experience working with children and adolescents, this book is not meant to be a replacement for seeking face-to-face therapy for your child.

If you've noticed the following symptoms with your child, then it's time to reach out for more help.

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks (e.g., crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated).
- Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- Out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others.
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort, or fast breathing.
- Not eating, throwing up, significant weight loss or gain.
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.

- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol.
- Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits (e.g., waking up early and acting agitated).
- Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that can lead to failure in school.
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes.

If you feel like your child needs more help, please seek support for them by finding a therapist. A few good places to start:

Your Pediatrician's Office: They may have therapists they recommend and refer patients to regularly.

Your child's school counselor: They may have a list of therapists they know and recommend.

Your Insurance Provider's Website: You will know that you are already covered to see that therapist if you start on your own insurance provider's website.

Psychologytoday.com: You can search by zip code or by city, and get a list of all the licensed therapists in your area.

Another great way to get support is by talking with other families who are coping with similar issues. The National Alliance on Mental Illness has local chapters all over the nation and provides family-to-family support. Facebook groups are a great place to get support. If there isn't one in your area, start one!

One of the best ways for you to help support your child is to learn about your own ways of coping, and teach them by example. You are your child's first teacher. Show them how you deal with the stressors you face, talk about it, and encourage them to practice with you.

A NOTE TO KIDS

This book is meant to help you learn more about yourself. This book can help you figure out what you like to do and what relaxes you. It's also meant to help you learn more about your thoughts and feelings and what stresses you out.

By the time you finish reading this book, my hope is that you will have figured out different ways to cope with your stress, anxiety and anger.

There are just a few things I wanted to share with you before you start reading:

- You can read this book on your own or with a trusted adult.
- Some of these exercises *require* adult supervision. **Check with a parent/guardian or trusted adult before starting any of the activities.**
- Some of the printable worksheets can be challenging to do on your own. If you get stuck, you can do them with a trusted adult who knows you well. They'll be able to help you figure out your answers.
- **Don't break any of your family's rules when you use this book.** Always check with them first!



Stress is mental or emotional strain resulting from challenging situations.

Everyone at one time or another has experienced stress. Adults can get stressed about tons of stuff like work, money, family or the future. But did you know that kids can get stressed too? Kids can worry about schoolwork, family, friendships, the future, and sometimes kids worry about adult problems, like money.

Stress isn't always bad. A little stress can help you stay alert, focus or study better for tests, but too much stress is harmful regardless of age. When you are experiencing too much stress, it impacts you in three ways: your emotions, your thoughts, and your behaviors.

Too much stress has an impact on your **emotions**. You may feel sad, anxious, restless, angry or a mix of different emotions. Sometimes it's hard

to identify what you are feeling, and sometimes it's hard to feel those feelings without getting overwhelmed or shutting down.

Too much stress can impact your **thoughts**. You can have a hard time looking for the positives or problem solving when you are having a stressful time. It can be hard to focus your mind and pay attention in class to learn new things.

Too much stress can affect your **behavior**. If you are feeling angry, you may punch a wall, or worse yet, another person! You might not feel like eating, or you may have a hard time sleeping, or you might not want to leave your room and refuse to go to school.

Do you get stressed out a lot and don't know what to do? Do you get angry and have a hard time expressing it in a safe way? Do you get really anxious at school or home?

Chances are, if you are reading this book, you want a little help learning some coping skills. You've come to the right place! I've seen the trouble people have when they don't have healthy coping skills, and the positive things that happen when they learn to replace their negative coping skills with more positive ones.

Maybe you can understand what these kids are experiencing:

Aidan, a tired 7 year old boy, just home from a busy day at school.

He's a little sleepy and a little hungry. He asked to play with blocks when he got home and his mom helped him get them out. Suddenly, he growls "argh!!!!" and a block tower goes tumbling to the ground. "It's not working!!" he says with tears in his eyes and frustration in his voice. A block bangs off the wall, thrown by this frustrated little guy.

Julia, an 8 year old girl, is anxious about her science test.

She thinks she's going to fail. She worries that her parents will be disappointed in her and she'll lose her privileges of playing with friends and screen time. She studies and studies, but as soon as the test is in front of her, her mind goes blank. Her palms sweat and her cheeks flush. "Why can't I remember?!" she thinks to herself.

Paul, a 10 year old boy, whose parents are getting a divorce.

"Why did it have to change?" he wonders. "I hate changing houses. I always forget something!" He misses how it used to be. "What will happen to me?" His parents keep asking him to talk, but he doesn't want to.

Isabelle, an 11 year old girl, worried about her sick grandma.

In the middle of her math class, her mind wanders to her grandma. She went to visit her this past weekend. She's concerned about her grandma's surgery. "I hope the surgery goes okay. I wonder when grandma will be home?"

Faced with stressful situations, these kids could use some coping skills! Everyone needs a good set of coping skills. But people don't always specifically focus on learning these skills. I'm here to let you know that **you can** and **you should**.

Learning things now as a young person will help you as you get older and become an adult. If you are a kid who has good coping skills, you will likely grow into an adult with good coping skills. When you have good coping skills, you can:

- pay attention in school and learn
- get along better with others
- manage your emotions in a safe and healthy way (something called self-regulation)
- make connections with other people

- start and maintain positive friendships

How to use this book - This book is divided into four categories:

Calming Coping Skills - designed to help you relax.

Distracting Coping Skills - designed to distract you and keep your attention when you might otherwise be focused on a certain stressor.

Physical Coping Skills - designed to help you rebalance your energy, either to energize you or to help you manage your excess energy in your body

Processing Coping Skills - designed to help you work through thoughts and feelings you have about challenging situations.

In each category, there are several skills to try. To get the most use out of this book, use the Coping Skills Checklist available on [pages 15](#) and [16](#) as a way to keep track of what skills you've tried and which skills you still need to attempt.

First, go through each section and only eliminate those items that you have already tried and you **know** that you don't like. Then I challenge you to try the rest of them! Don't automatically cross a coping skill off the list just because you *think* you won't like it. Instead, give it a try. If it doesn't work for you now, don't be afraid to go back to it later. What doesn't work at one time in your life may work at another point.

You'll notice, on the coping skills checklist, there's room for you to add in your own. Think of this book as a starting point of creating a coping skills list. Figure out what works for you that is covered in this book, then add in your own. The best place to start is by thinking about the hobbies and activities you enjoy right now and add those as ways to cope.

After working through this book you can create your own individual list of coping skills that you can use any time you are experiencing stress. There's a sheet on [page 101](#) that you can use for that too, the "My Coping Skills" worksheet.

Coping Skills Checklist

- Check off the ones that you do now
- Circle the ones you want to try
- Cross off the ones that don't work

Calming Skills

- o Deep breathing using pinwheel
- o Deep breathing with bubbles
- o Deep breathing with prompts
- o Deep breathing with shapes
- o Deep breathing with a stuffed animal
- o Deep breathing using a feather
- o Focus on sounds
- o Take a mindful walk
- o Yoga
- o Imagine your favorite place
- o 54321 grounding
- o Grounding self-talk
- o Think of your favorite things
- o Picture the people you care about
- o Say the alphabet slowly
- o Remember the words to a song you love
- o Run water over your hands
- o Carry a small object
- o Touch things around you
- o Move
- o Make a fist then release it
- o Progressive muscle relaxation
- o Positive self-talk
- o Take a shower or bath
- o Take a drink of water
- o Counting
- o Block out noises
- o Take a break
- o Homemade lava lamp
- o Zen garden
- o Calming jar

Distraction Skills

- o Write a story
- o Crossword/Sudoku Puzzles
- o Bake or Cook
- o Volunteer/Community Service
- o Random acts of kindness
- o Read
- o Clean
- o Play with a pet
- o Play a board game
- o Play video games
- o Screen time
- o Play with a friend
- o Start a garden
- o Creative thinking
- o Make up your own game
- o Plan a fun event
- o Start a new hobby
- o Do a crafting project
- o Your favorite things
- o Laughter is the best medicine

Coping Skills Checklist

- Check off the ones that you do now
- Circle the ones you want to try
- Cross off the ones that don't work

Physical Skills

- o Squeeze something
- o Use a stress ball
- o Shred paper
- o Use bubble wrap
- o Use a sand tray
- o Jacob's Ladder
- o Hold a small stone
- o Shuffle cards
- o Make something
- o Use a fidget
- o Walk
- o Exercise
- o Dance
- o Punch a safe surface
- o Play at the park
- o Make an obstacle course
- o Swing on a swing
- o Jump on a trampoline
- o Jump rope
- o Scooter
- o Go swimming
- o Stretches
- o Tumbling/Gymnastics
- o Yoga

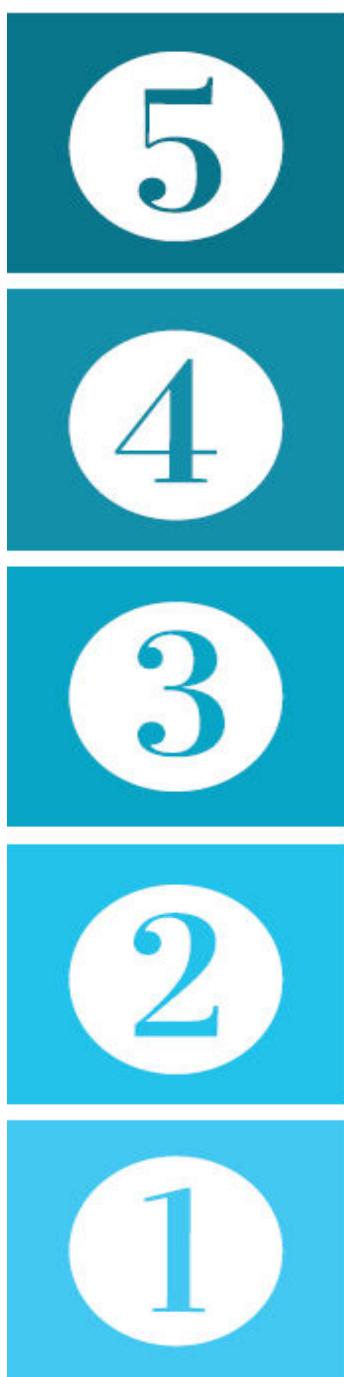
Processing Skills

- o Intensity of feelings
- o Feelings thermometer
- o Feelings as colors
- o Where do I feel things in my body
- o Understanding my triggers
- o Levels of stress
- o Track my stress
- o Map my stress
- o Write in a journal
- o In a perfect world...
- o Write songs
- o Write poetry
- o Write music
- o Draw
- o Talk to someone you trust
- o Create a playlist
- o Write what's bothering you and throw it away
- o Comic strip what happened/what can I do next time
- o I wish...
- o Write a letter to someone
- o Use "I statements"
- o What I can control vs. what I can't control
- o Make a worry box

Use this sheet as a way to track how you feel before and after you use a coping skill. This is a way to measure how much a skill helps you.

Rate Your Stress

BEFORE



AFTER



Here's something that people don't always think about when it comes to coping skills. Different types of coping skills will work at different times, in different places and for different stressors. When you're sad, you may want to lie down. And if you're at home, you can totally do that! But what if you're at school in the middle of social studies? I bet the teacher would not like it if you just closed your book and put your head down on your desk.

You should also choose a coping skill that works to combat the stressor you are experiencing. If you're angry, reading a book may not be the best option. Perhaps choosing to squeeze a pillow would be better in that moment. Reading a book may help later when you want to distract yourself and you've calmed down a bit.

Remember those kids from the beginning of the chapter? Let's go back and see their coping skills in action!

Aidan -

His mom comes in, gets down to his level, and talks to him using a calm and gentle voice. "You seem frustrated. Do you want to jump on your trampoline for a few minutes while I get your snack ready? Then I can help you build your tower."

Julia -

Her mom reassures her that no matter what kind of grade she gets, her mom will always love her. They talk together and the mom suggests having her imagine a calm place. They talk about all the details in Julia's calm place: what she sees, what she hears, what she feels, and what she smells. Then her mom asks her to imagine it for a few minutes while taking deep breaths. Julia's mom explains that Julia can think of that calming place whenever she feels stressed, like during a test, to help get her to a calmer place.

Paul -

His dad offers him a journal where he can write his thoughts, his questions, his feelings, and his frustrations. His dad explains that this will help him think and process more of what is happening. And his dad tells his son that any time he wants to talk, both his mom and dad are here to listen.

Isabelle -

Isabelle thinks about doing something kind to help keep her mind occupied. She's thinking of making her grandma a craft or a special treat. Doing this kind act will keep Isabelle busy and occupied as she's waiting for news about her grandma.

Are you ready to get started and build your coping skills list? Let's go!!

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CALMING COPING SKILLS

The techniques described in this section are meant to help you calm down and relax when faced with stressful or overwhelming situations.

The first part of this section focuses on breathing. I know, everyone always says, "take a deep breath" but there is a physical reason why deep breathing is so important.

To help understand why deep breathing and calming coping skills are so important, let's have a quick lesson on your Autonomic Nervous System. The Autonomic Nervous System controls the automatic systems in your body that you don't think about - things like breathing, digestion and heart rate.

When you are calm, your body is in what is known as "rest and digest" mode. Your breathing is normal, your muscles are relaxed and your heart rate is normal. When you experience a stressful event (like a dinosaur chasing you) your body automatically goes into what is known as "flight, fight or freeze" mode. Your heart rate increases, your stomach stops digestion and your breathing becomes more shallow.

The goal of calming exercises is to get yourself from "flight, fight or freeze" mode back to "rest and digest" mode. Deep breathing helps get more oxygen into your bloodstream, opening up your capillaries. It has a physical effect on your body to help you calm down and lower stress.

Autonomic Nervous System

Flight, Fight or Freeze

Sympathetic Nervous System



- Your heart rate increases
- Your pupils dilate
- Your muscles contract
- Your stomach stops many of the functions of digestion

Rest and Digest

Parasympathetic Nervous System



- Your saliva is increased
- Your heart rate drops
- Your muscles relax
- The pupils in your eyes constrict

In the first section, there are fun playful ways to work on deep breathing.

The next section focuses on your mind, in particular, mindfulness meditation and yoga. Your mind is a powerful tool you can use to help calm yourself down. You do have control over your thoughts and the more you practice, the better you'll get at it.

The last section has ideas for activities you can do, or items you can make or use, to help yourself calm down. Try some today and see how they work for you.



DEEP BREATHING TECHNIQUES

1. Deep Breathing with a Pinwheel

Breathe in through your nose and expand your belly, then breathe out to turn the pinwheel. You can practice breathing out slowly or more quickly, using the speed of the pinwheel as a measure. Then you can figure out which way works and feels best for you.

You can buy a pinwheel at a store or you can make your own. If you want to make your own, you can use the template on [page 23](#).

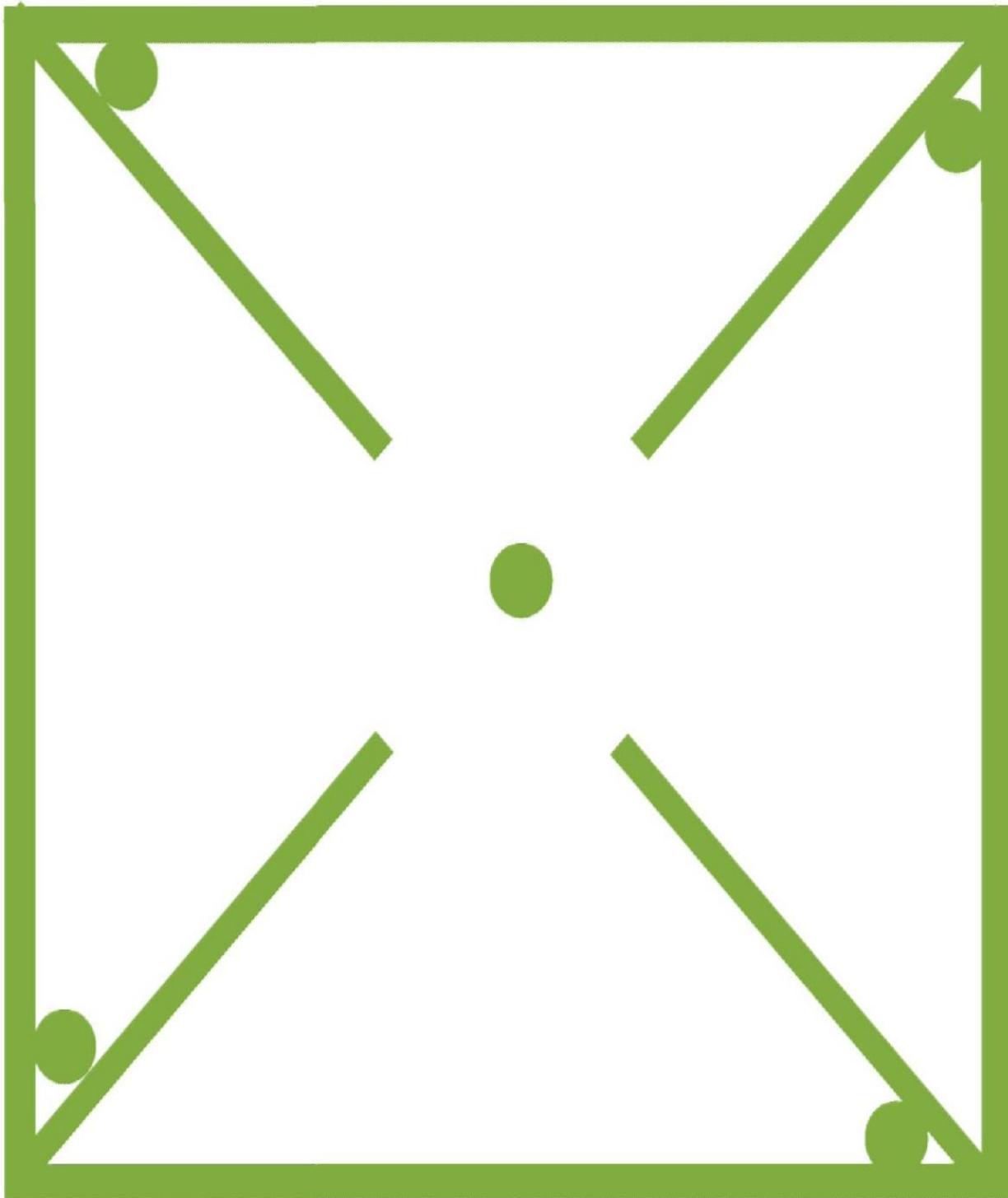
What you need:

- A pencil with an eraser
- A pushpin
- Scissors

1. Cut out the template of the pinwheel, and then cut along the lines.
2. Take a pushpin, and take each corner with a dot and push it onto the pin.
3. Then push all of those through the dot at the center of the pinwheel.
4. Finally stick the pushpin onto the eraser of the pencil and blow it!

To see one in action, watch the Make Your Own Pinwheel video at copingkids.com/videos

Make Your Own Pinwheel



2. Deep Breathing with Bubbles

Blowing bubbles is a great way to slow down and breathe. Breathe in through your nose and expand your belly, then breathe out. You have to control your breath to make the bubbles without popping them.

3. Deep Breathing with Prompts

For some people, just saying take a deep breath is not enough. Having a prompt is a helpful way to learn to breathe in and out. Once you know the prompts, you can say them to yourself to help you. Here are a few of my favorites:

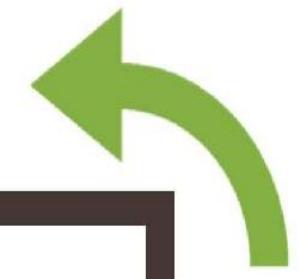
- Breathe in like you are smelling a flower, breathe out like you are blowing out birthday candles.
- Breathe in blue sky, Breathe out gray skies.
- Arms up and breathe in, arms down and breathe out.
- Breathe in and out like Darth Vader.
- Pretend your belly is like a balloon. Breathe in and make the balloon bigger, then breathe out and make the balloon shrink.

4. Deep Breathing with Shapes

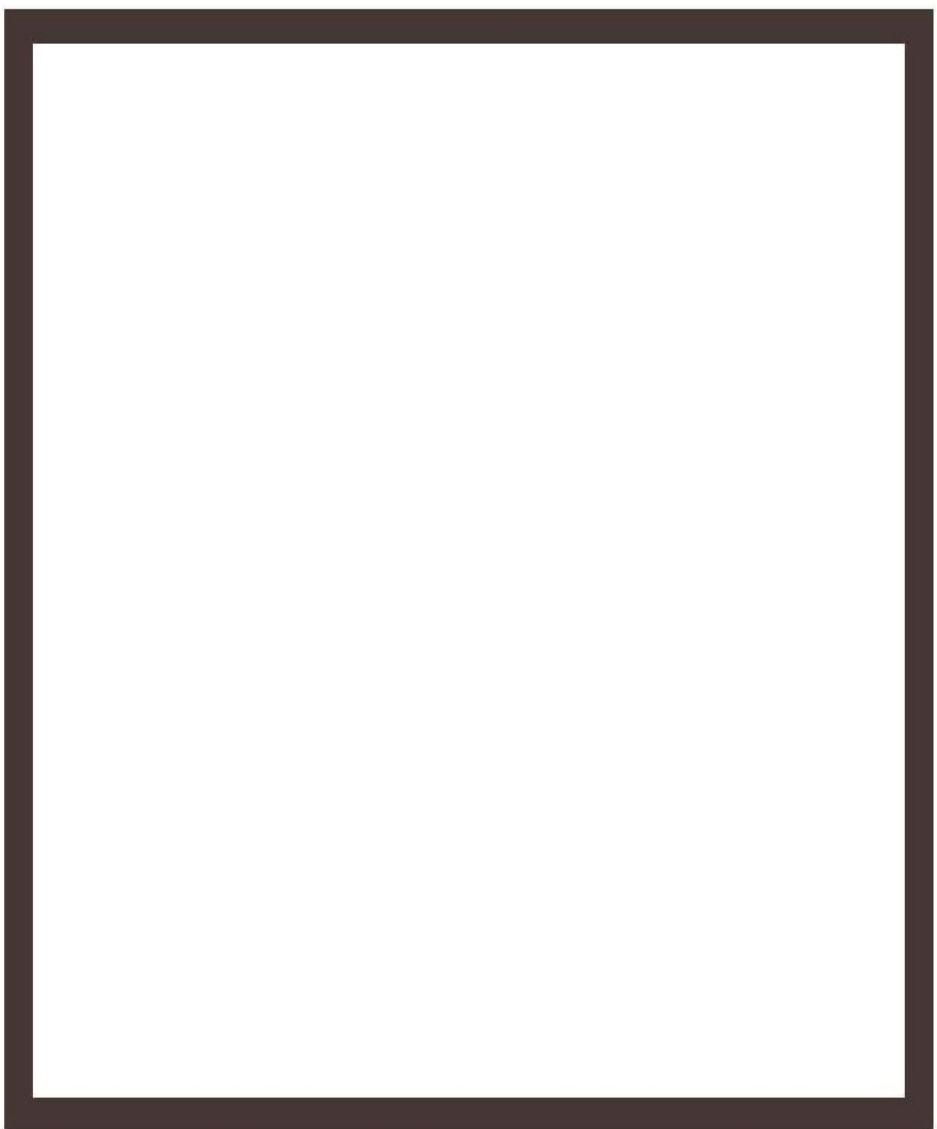
Sometimes you need a little more structure and playfulness around how to actually teach yourself how to take a deep breath. Using shapes is an easy way to keep track of breaths in and out. You can use your finger to trace the shape so you know where you are in your breathing. Try each and see how they work for you!

Square Breathing

Start at the bottom right of the square, and follow the arrows around the whole square to complete one deep breath.



Hold for 4



Breathe out for 4



Breathe in for 4

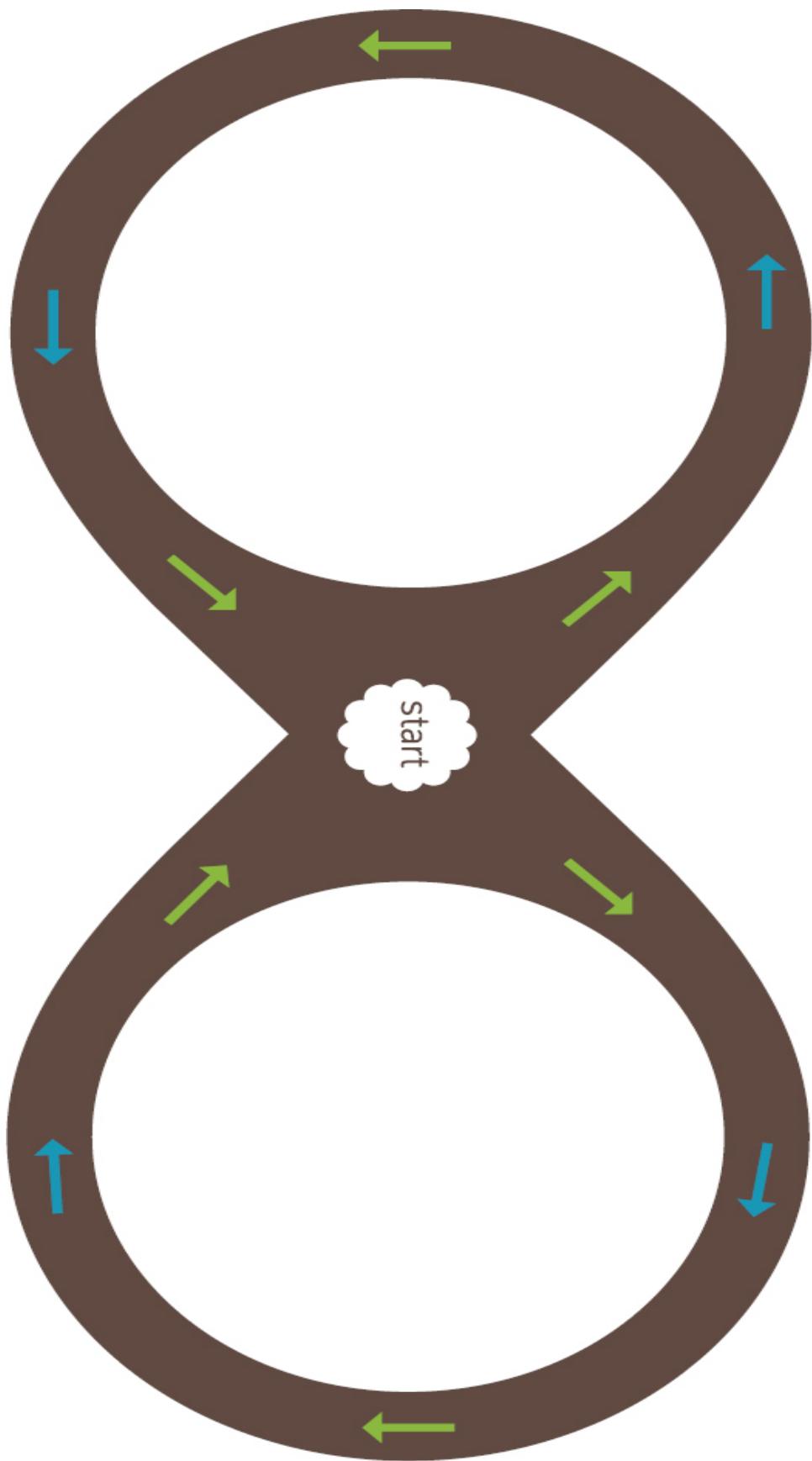
Hold for 4



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Lazy 8 Breathing

Start with an 8 on its side. Starting in the middle, go up to the left and trace the left part of the 8 with your finger while you breathe in. When you get to the middle of the 8 again, breathe out while you trace the right part of the 8 with your finger.



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Star Breathing

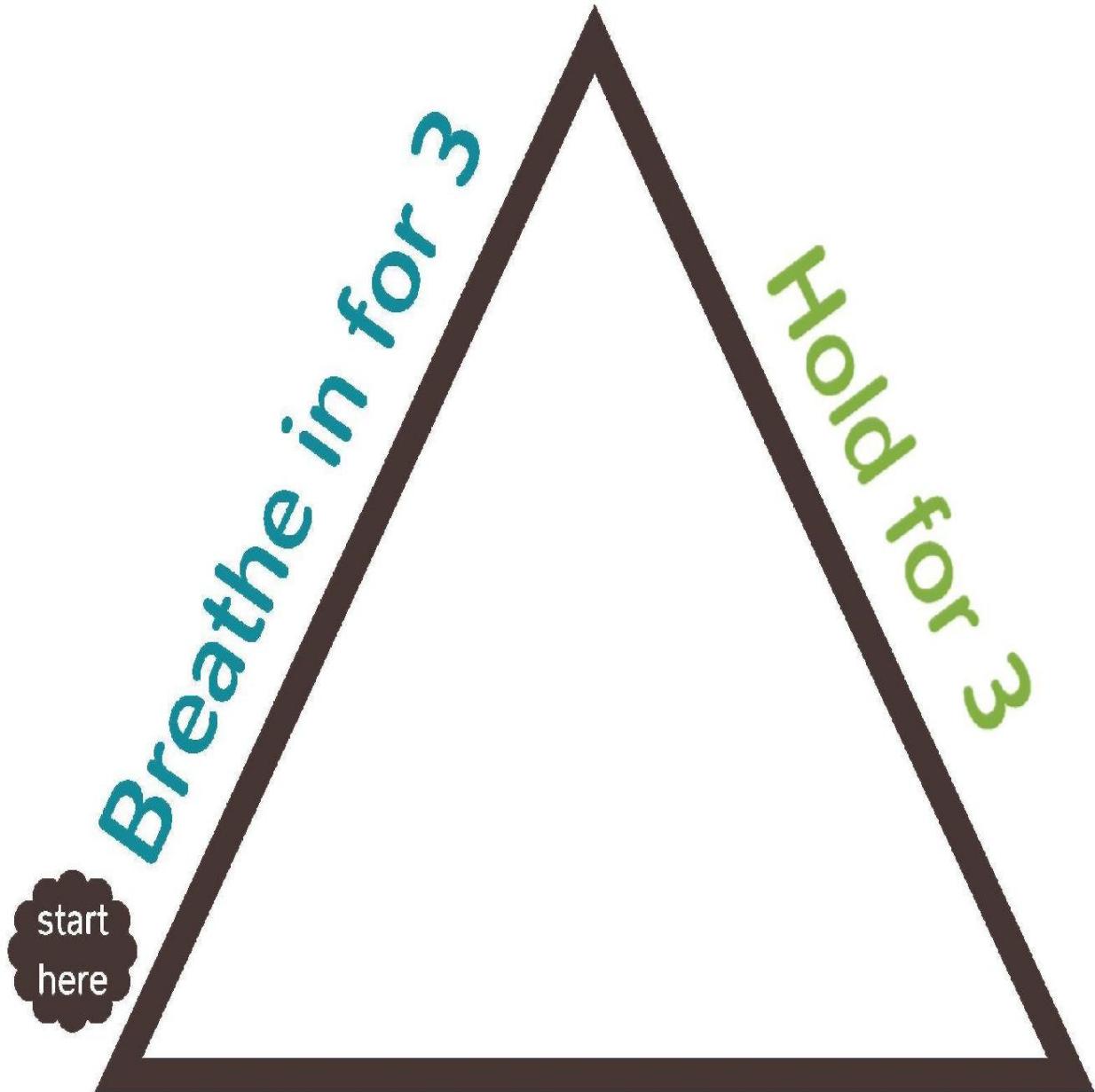
Start at any *Breathe in* side, hold your breath at the point, then breathe out. Keep going until you've gone around the whole star.



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Triangle Breathing

Start at the bottom left of the triangle. Follow the sides around the whole triangle to complete one deep breath



Breathe out for 3

5. Deep Breathing with a Stuffed Animal

A lot of kids like to play with stuffed animals, and just having a stuffed animal can be a comfort. But did you know you could also use it to help you calm down too? It's a way to make sure that you are breathing from your diaphragm!

Lay on your back and put your stuffed animal on your belly. As you take deep breaths in and out, you can watch your stuffed friend move up and down. Breathe in to make your stuffed animal go up and breathe out to make your animal go down.

6. Deep Breathing with a Feather

It sometimes helps to focus on a particular task when you are doing deep breathing. Why not try using a feather to focus?

Get some colored feathers and pick out one feather to use. It could be a color that you love or one that makes you feel calm. Then 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.

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MINDFULNESS MEDITATION & YOGA

Mindfulness is being aware of what's happening in the present moment. It's actually a type of meditation and closely related to yoga. Mindfulness can be a helpful tool if you have a hard time managing your thoughts and emotions or if you want to improve your concentration.

Mindfulness is not about trying to clear your mind, but allowing thoughts and emotions to come and go without judgment and familiarizing yourself with the present moment. It takes practice to be able to do this. When you are aware of the present, you will be more able to see what's happening around you and settle yourself, and your mind, more easily.

These coping skills are designed to help you focus on the present moment and have been found to reduce stress.

7. Focus on Sounds

Start by getting in a comfortable position and taking a few deep breaths. After a few minutes, stretch your hearing outside where you are right now. What do you hear? Traffic from the street? Birds chirping? A garbage truck backing up?

Next, turn your attention to what's happening in the room where you are. Do you hear a sound machine? The lights buzzing? The clock ticking?

Finally, pay attention and listen to what's going on in your body. Can you hear your stomach rumbling? Do you have a headache?

8. Take a Mindful Walk

Any time you take a walk, either at home or at school, you can choose to make it a mindful walk. Before you begin, focus your mind to pay attention to your senses. When you are walking, you are going to be paying attention to what you hear, what you see, what you feel, and what you smell.

So, for instance, if you are walking in the woods by a bubbling brook and leaves are on the trail, you may hear crunching leaves and water moving in the stream.

You may see trees and leaves falling from the trees when the wind blows.

You may feel a breeze on your skin.

You may smell earth, grass and scents from flowering plants.

Pay attention to what's happening with your senses. If other thoughts come into your mind, that's OK. Go back to the present and re-focus on your senses again. See if you can do this for 5 minutes - it can be quite a challenge.



There are also several places available online that have audio clips of mindfulness exercises, and they're great to use and practice. See the resources section for those links and other books on mindfulness you and your family can read together.

9. Yoga

Yoga is related to mindfulness meditation. The goal of yoga and mindfulness meditation is to reduce stress and become more aware of what's going on around you in the present. Try to do a few simple yoga moves. Here are a few that are easy to do.



Warrior Pose



Cobra Pose



Easy Pose



Seal Pose



Downward Dog



Camel Pose

10. Imagine your Favorite Place

Sometimes all you want to do is run away when you're faced with a tough or stressful situation. However, you can't always run away and escape. What you can do is *pretend*. Your imagination is a powerful tool you can use

anywhere to help you calm down and relax. The beauty of this coping skill is that you can use it anywhere and people have *no idea* that you are doing it.

Imagine your most favorite, calming place. It could be a beach, a garden, or in nature, even on stage. Take a few minutes and really think about what it would be like to be there. What is around you? What's under your feet? What do you smell? What do you hear? How warm or cool is it? Think deeply about all of those senses and imagine you are there for a few minutes.





GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

Grounding is a way to deal with overwhelming emotions. It's another way to practice staying in the present moment, not focusing on the past or the future. You can do grounding techniques wherever you are. These are designed to help you get less overwhelmed. The hope is that after a few minutes, you will be in a calmer place.

11. 5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Technique

This technique takes 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 five 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, etc.*

4 - FEEL: Pay attention to your body and notice four things 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, I feel the pillow I am sitting on, etc.*

3 - LISTEN: Listen for three 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.

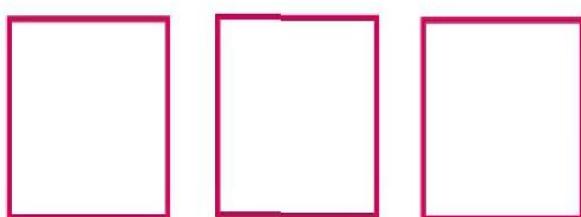
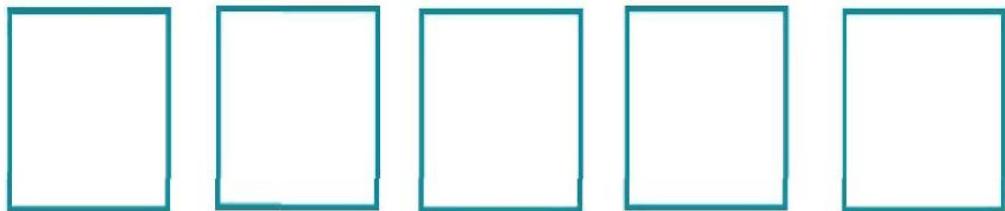
2 - SMELL: Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your two favorite smells.

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.

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5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Exercise



12. Grounding Techniques - Self-Talk about the Present

If you are by yourself, feel free to talk out loud. If you're with other people, you can do this in your head. Notice the environment around you and focus on where you are right now. What do you see, what do you hear, what can you smell, what do you feel? Focus on noticing tiny details.

Let's say you are at the pool. You might say something like:

I can see the waves, people swimming, splashes of water.
I can hear the hum of the pool filter and people laughing and talking.
I can smell the chlorine.
I never noticed the tiles are two different colors of blue.
I can feel drops of water landing on my feet.

13. Quick Mental Grounding Techniques

- Think of your favorite things - what's your favorite season, food, color, animal, day of the week, month of the year, etc.
- Picture the people you care about - you can imagine them in your mind or actually look at photographs.
- Say the alphabet slowly.
- Remember the words to a song you love.

14. Quick Physical Grounding Techniques

Here are a few other techniques to try to stay in the present moment:

- Run water over your hands. Try warm or cool water to see if one works better for you.
- Carry a small object around in your pocket, like a stone or a shell or a piece of fabric. Touch it when you need to be brought back to the present moment.
- Touch things around you - touch the chair you are sitting in, the coffee table, your desk, your clothes, your pencil. Notice the details - what

color is it, how heavy is it? Compare the objects you are touching.

- Move - jump up and down, or do some stretches.
- Make a fist and then release it.

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OTHER CALMING TECHNIQUES

15. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a way to tense and release your muscles. By tensing then releasing the tension in your muscles, your body physically gets calmer.

On the next page is a script that someone can read calmly and slowly out loud to you as a guide through a Progressive Muscle Relaxation. Once you do it enough, you can go through and do the relaxation on your own.

If you'd prefer to listen to this script instead of having someone read it to you, there is a YouTube video of this script at copingkids.com/videos. There are also other progressive muscle relaxation scripts available online. Check the resources section for other options.

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Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Dim the lights and turn off any distracting screens. Sit down or lie down in a comfortable position. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes. During this exercise, you'll be instructed to tighten muscles. If you feel uncomfortable, take a break and focus on your breathing.

Let's start by taking some deep breaths. Breathe in and have your belly expand like a balloon. Breathe out and have your belly contract like air is leaving the balloon. Take another breath in and breathe out. Breathe in and breathe out.

First, let's focus on the muscles in your face. Pretend you smell something really terrible, and wrinkle your nose and scrunch all the muscles in your face. Now let your muscles relax. That smell came back, wrinkle your nose and scrunch up your face again. Let your face relax. One more time, the smell is back - wrinkle and scrunch. Let your face relax.

Let's move to your shoulders. Pull up your shoulders almost to your earlobes and tighten your shoulder muscles. Release and let your shoulders fall back down. Tighten your shoulders to your ears again. Then release. One more time, pull your shoulders to your ears. Then release.

Now, let's concentrate on your hands. Pretend you have two huge pieces of play dough in your hands and you need to squeeze it. Squeeze your hands and squish the play dough. Then let your hands relax. Squeeze the play dough again, then relax. Once more squeeze the play dough, then relax.

Next, let's pretend you are trying to squeeze through a small hole. Take a deep breath in then breathe out and squeeze your belly tight so you can get through. You're making your way through this small spot. Take another deep

breath in then breathe out and squeeze your belly tight. You're almost there! Take another deep breath in then breathe out and squeeze your belly tight.

Now pretend like you standing in sand and you want to make deep footprints. Press down hard into the sand, keep going. Relax and move your feet. Now let's make another set of footprints, press down hard. Relax and move your feet again. One more time, let's make this set of footprints super deep. Now relax and move your feet.

Relax and take another few deep breaths. The relaxation exercise is almost over. Slowly start to move your body and open your eyes when you feel ready.

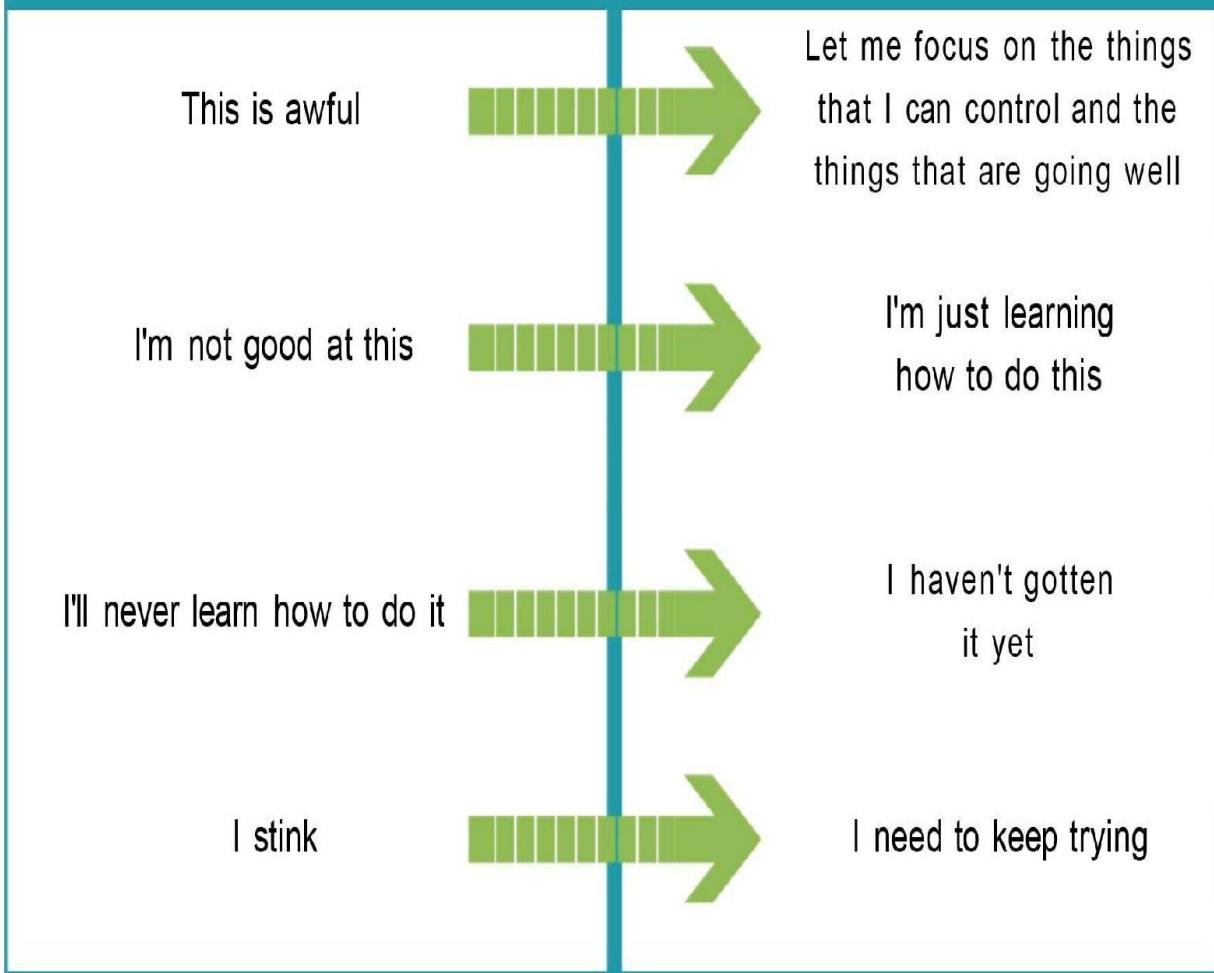
16. Positive Self-Talk

It's easy for both kids (and adults!) to fall into a trap of talking negatively to ourselves. We might say:

- This is awful.
- I'm not good at this.
- I'll never learn how to do it.
- I stink.

How we think and talk to ourselves frames how we look at life. If we are always thinking in a negative mindset, our outlook on life will be negative. If we think positively, our outlook on life will be more positive. We need to reframe how we are thinking. Instead of being negative, we need to change our thinking and tell ourselves a more positive story. Take those earlier negative statements that were listed and restate them in a positive way.

Negative to Positive Statements



I'm not saying you should never complain. I'm just encouraging you to not have that be the only way you think about life. No one wants to talk with someone who complains constantly. My challenge to you is to think of one positive thing each day. Try it now. What is one positive thing that happened today?

17. Take a Shower or Bath

Water is quite soothing and it can also be a break for your senses. If you need a break, go and take a shower or a bath. Use fancy bubbles if you like those. If you have a dimmer switch in your bathroom, you can lower the lights a little bit to make the environment calmer. See how much better you feel after taking this break.

18. Take a Drink of Water

Sometimes the sensation of having a drink of water, especially a cold one, enter our body can help us reset, take a quick break or energize us to move forward with the day.

In school, this can also be a great opportunity to take a mini break. Walk to the nearest fountain and take a sip. If you'd like to have access to water more easily, start carrying around a water bottle with you. Experiment with the water's temperature to see what works best for you. Do you like a lot of ice? A little? None at all?

19. Counting

It can be helpful to focus on something simple, like counting. It's super easy, because you pick a number and count to it. I used to work with a student who picked a random two digit number to count to, like 67, and counting to that number would help him relax and calm down.

Pick any number you'd like and begin counting. You can count by 2's or 5's or 10's too. If you are at home, you could count out loud. If you're in school in a class, it makes more sense to count in your head.

20. Block Out Sounds with Noise Canceling Headphones

Have you ever felt like the noise was too much, and you wanted to turn everything off and just get a few minutes of peace and quiet? Too much

noise can be overwhelming and then it's hard to separate it all out. At times like that, you may need a sensory break.

Did you know there are special headphones that can block out all noise? Even if you can't get those, you can get earplugs, or even just cover your ears with your hands for a few minutes. Having that quiet time can help calm and soothe you. Once you've had a few quiet minutes to yourself, it's more likely that you'll be able to participate and get back to what you need to be doing, like homework or reading.

21. Take a Break

Here are a few ways you can take a quick break:

At home, you can:

- Lay down and close your eyes.
- Go to your calm spot.
- Take five minutes in your room by yourself.

At school (after getting permission), you can:

- Take a walk to the bathroom.
- Go get a drink from the water fountain.

22. Homemade Lava Lamp

A lava lamp can be mesmerizing to watch. When you watch something like that, it can help you slow yourself down. It could be a great thing to do when you are about to study for a long time, or sit and do homework.

You could buy a lava lamp, or you could make your own. What you need:



- a plastic bottle
- oil
- water
- food coloring
- Alka-Seltzer

Combine the water and food coloring to make a color for your lava lamp. Fill the bottle with $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way with oil, then pour the colored water on top, leaving an inch of space at the top. Break the Alka-Seltzer up into small parts and drop one piece in at a time. Watch the lava lamp come to life!

To see a video of a lava lamp in action, visit copingkids.com/videos.

23. Zen Garden



There's something relaxing about using a rake, smoothing the sand, arranging the stones and seeing what kind of patterns you can make. A Zen garden is supposed to be simple and uncluttered. You can use the rake to make ripples and patterns in the sand and you can add in the stones as well.

Here are the materials you will need:

- rectangular or square container
- Sand (the kind made for sandboxes)
- Wooden rake
- Polished rocks

Directions:

1. Take the container and place the sand inside.
2. Place the rocks on the sand.
3. Use the wooden rake to smooth out the sand.

Repeat and rearrange the stones as you'd like. You can take out the stones and just play with the sand and rake for a bit.

24. Mind Jar



Sometimes your mind is whirling. It feels chaotic and you can't concentrate on anything. You might feel irritated because you can't think straight. A mind jar or calming jar is a visual you can use to help calm your mind. You could use it right before you start your homework, when you're feeling a little irritated, or when you just need to relax a bit.

The three basic ingredients you need are a container, water and glitter paint.

Empty Container: I've used empty soda bottles, empty water bottles, glass jars and plastic jars. Use whatever makes sense for you and your family. For instance, the calming jars my own kids have in their room are a heavy duty plastic bottle. I didn't want them to accidentally knock over a glass jar in the dark - that would be a huge mess!

Water: I've had the best results when I've used warm water - it makes it easier for the water and paint to combine.

Glitter Paint: I prefer using glitter paint (or glitter glue) instead of plain glitter because then you're not finding glitter all over your house for weeks. Your parents will be happier, trust me on this.

To make your jar, add glitter paint to the bottom of the jar until it just covers the bottom of it. Add warm water. Put the cover on and shake vigorously to help the ingredients combine.

Other ingredients that you can experiment with adding into a bottle:

Wet Ingredients - Sometimes you want the glitter/other items to stay afloat for a longer amount of time. Here are some different ingredients you can use as the wet ingredients to achieve this.

- Hair Gel
- Corn Syrup
- Glue
- Glitter Glue
- Glow in the dark paint

To add more interest you can add dry ingredients like:

- Legos
- Glitter
- Small stones
- Small shells
- Glow in the dark stars
- Sequins

Visit copingkids.com/videos to see a calming jar in action.



DISTRACTION COPING SKILLS

There are times when you can do something to reduce your worry. If you are overwhelmed with your schedule, you can cut back on activities. If you are stressed out about homework, you can talk to a teacher. But there are some stressful situations that you can't control. For instance, you may be stressed that your grandmother is in the hospital. You can't make the illness go away or make the surgery go faster.

There isn't anything you can do, but you may keep thinking and thinking about it, to the point of being unable to focus at school. Then it's time to take your mind off that stress by doing something else. Using a distraction coping skill isn't a way to avoid the problem. Rather, it's a way to manage dealing with situations that can't be solved or aren't changing.

25. Write a Story

First, figure out what you want to write on – do you like writing on paper or do you prefer to type? If you prefer paper, then take out a pen or a pencil, find some paper and get started. There are notebooks designed for writing stories; some even have space for illustrations. If you'd prefer to use a laptop, open a document and get typing.

No matter what you use to write on, let yourself fully focus on the story - the characters you are creating, the setting they're in, and the world where it all takes place. It's a great distraction for you if you love to write and create.

26. Crossword/Sudoku/Word Find puzzles

When you focus on solving the puzzle, your brain will be less focused on the stressful situation you are facing. Pick a type of puzzle to try. If you like using clues, maybe crossword puzzles are the way to go. If you like letters, try a word find puzzle. If you like numbers, maybe you should try Sudoku.

How do you pick one? It's almost like looking for a library book: look for a cover that seems appealing. Flip it open and check out the puzzles. If they seem to be the right amount of difficulty (not so easy that you can do it all immediately, but not so hard that you feel frustration), then go with that. There are also places online where you can either print out puzzles to do with a pen/pencil, or you can complete them online. Apps on a phone or small electronic device are also an option.

Quick reminder: Check with your parents before you download/buy anything.

27. Bake/Cook

Baking or cooking is a wonderfully tasty way to distract yourself. It's rewarding that by following the directions, you (usually) get a delicious outcome. And even if it doesn't work, it's still fun to mix and pour and see what happens. You could make something you've made in the past or you could try something new. Maybe you could even give your treats to a friend or a family member who could use a little something special (that can be a Random Act of Kindness, see [pages 49 – 51](#) for more information!).

Before using the oven or anything sharp, make sure you have your parents' permission.

28. Volunteer/Community Service

Identify places that you'd like to volunteer or do community service. Start with your own likes and interests and go from there. Do you like gardening? Maybe find a community garden you could help tend. Do you like animals? Maybe there's a local pet shelter that could use some volunteer help, or maybe some healthy treats for the animals. Start a food drive or a coat drive for those less fortunate than you. Even though you are young, you can make a difference in someone else's life.

29. Do a Random Act of Kindness

It can make someone's day when they receive something special and unexpected. Depending on the random act of kindness that you do, you may or may not be able to see the person's reaction when they get their gift. No matter what, it feels great to do something kind for someone and know that you made a difference for them.

On [page 50](#) are 8 Random Acts of Kindness. Pick one and get started today. There are also little printable notes you can add to your Random Act of Kindness gifts on [page 51](#).

<p>Make Something and Give It Away</p> <p>Get creative and make something you can give away to others. It's up to you! Give your creation away for free and see how people respond!</p>	<p>Cards for Kids in the Hospital</p> <p>Make get well cards for kids in local hospitals. Gather up your materials and your creative ideas to make something thoughtful for kids just like you.</p>
<p>Donate to Charity</p> <p>There are probably at least a few things in your house right now that may be too small for you, or you no longer want to play with.</p>	<p>Donate Books to your library</p> <p>Libraries are often looking for books for library sales or to add onto their collection. Take a peek at your shelves and see what</p>

Donating some items is a wonderful way to help others.

books you can donate for others to use.

Popcorn and a Movie

People often enjoy popcorn with their movie. Take an un-popped bag of popcorn to a DVD rental place at the store and leave it for someone to enjoy.

Thank You Notes

Write or draw thank you notes to the mailman, the UPS delivery person or custodian at your school. Be kind and show them that you appreciate them. It will make their day brighter!

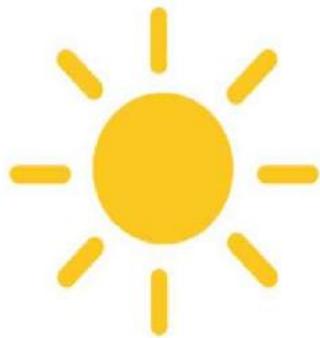
Bury Treasure at the Park

Some parks have sand pits in them, and often kids will bring toys and dig through the sand. Wouldn't it be fun to have them find a new toy or surprise to play with?

Bake a Treat and Share

It can be fun to bake a treat, and it's even more fun to share it. Your neighbors or friends will be so surprised and feel great that you thought about them!

Here are some printable notes you can leave with your random acts of kindness gifts!



Smile!



Have a
beautiful
day!

Pay
it
forward!



Kindness
Matters



30. Read

Books are phenomenal. They can enthrall you and take you to a different place. Your brain is focused on the story, imagining the characters in your head, picturing the setting and what's happening in the story. Books are powerful because they can change your mood. You could read a funny book, and start to laugh and feel happier. You could read a book that is sad and start to cry. You could read an inspiring book and it may make you feel hopeful.

If you need help finding a good book, talk to your school librarian or the librarian at your local branch. They'll be able to point you in the right direction. Happy reading!

31. Clean

It seems weird, but cleaning can be cathartic. When things in your life are out of your control, doing something like cleaning is in your control. It feels great to look back over something and say "I did it!"

Pick a place to clean. It's probably best to start in your room. Concentrate on one small area at a time. If you pick too big of a job, you'll get overwhelmed. You might want to start with something like cleaning and organizing your desk. It's helpful to take things out of the drawers and see what's been hiding in there. Take the opportunity to get rid of things you don't need anymore, or things that are broken and can't be repaired. Keep going until it's all rearranged. Then, if you still have energy, you can move on to another section of your bedroom, like your bookshelf.

If your room is in perfect condition, then ask an adult what they'd like help with cleaning. They may ask you to help fold laundry, or sweep the kitchen, or clean off the bathroom sink. No matter what, whenever you finish cleaning, you will feel an awesome sense of accomplishment once it's all done.

32. Play with a Pet

There's nothing quite like playing with a dog, cat, guinea pig or other creature to help calm and distract you. Spending time with animals can be really relaxing, even if it lives in a tank.

If you have a dog, volunteer to take it for a walk at the park, bring their favorite toy and play. If you have a cat, bring out a toy to play and spend some quality time. Read a book to your guinea pig or your fish. Learn more about your animals and what they like, and then use that information when you're deciding what to play with them.

33. Play a Board Game

There are so many board games out there. Think about which ones are your favorites and play one of those. Or look through your current stash of games at home and pick one you haven't played in a while.

If there's a game that you've been wanting to play, but don't own, see if one of your friends has it, and then ask them to come over and play with you. You can even make a whole day of it, playing a few different board games to pass the time.

Maybe try a cooperative game where you work together to beat the game. The companies Peaceable Kingdom and HABA both make great cooperative games. You can actually turn any board game into a cooperative experience by playing as teams! If there are 4 of you playing, divide into teams and play that way.

34. Play Video Games

Chances are you have at least one system to play video games. You may have game apps on your iPad or phone. You may have something like a PlayStation or Xbox or Nintendo system. There are tons of games out there; educational games, silly games or word games. Some games even let you play online with friends. I think video games are a wonderful way to distract yourself, but I have a couple of cautionary tips for you when playing.

- **Be careful and cautious when playing online. Don't give out information about yourself to people online.**
- **Set a time limit.** Video games are a great distraction, but you don't want to get trapped there. Video games should not have a negative impact on your studying or ability to do homework. It's not a good idea to avoid interacting with people in real life. I'm sure your parents also have time restrictions on how much you can play and when it's acceptable. So, be thoughtful about the time spent playing and when the time is up, STOP.
- **Make sure that you don't buy anything by accident and without your parents' permission.** The last thing you want is for your parents to get a sky high bill because you wanted to get more rounds in during Candy Crush.

35. Distraction by a Screen

Watching a show or a movie can take you to a different place and help you forget about what may be going on in your real life. That can be really helpful if there's a problem you can't do anything about (like you miss your dad when he's on a business trip).

Just like with video games, you don't want to get trapped and spend too much time in front of a screen. Set a limit or an end time. Also, it's *really* important to follow your family rules for screen time. If you are only allowed 30 minutes of screen time each day during the week, stop after 30 minutes. Don't break the rules!

Here are some distractions that use a screen:

- Go to the movies.
- Play on the computer.
- Watch a favorite TV show.
- Watch a movie at home.

36. Play with a Friend

Have you ever heard the expression that time flies when you're having fun? When you are hanging out with a friend, and you're having a blast, it's a great way to pass time and distract yourself from stressful situations. Set up a time to hang out with a friend. Figure out what you'd like to do during your time together. Do you want to make something? Maybe you want to try out that new crafting kit you got. Or maybe you just want to talk. Arrange a time to get together with your friend and do something fun and enjoyable.

37. Start a Garden

Gardening takes some time, but it's so worth it when you see what you planted grow bigger and stronger. The first thing you should do is figure out your growing zone - that will impact what you can and can't grow. A tropical fruit like a pineapple could never grow outside in someplace super cold like Maine. Here are some other questions to ask as you get started:

- Do you want to grow something indoors or outdoors?
- Do you want to grow something in a container or make a bed in your backyard? Or in a community garden?
- Do you want to grow something that will bloom or just has leaves?
- Do you want to grow a fruit or a vegetable?
- How do you maintain the plants and the garden area?

Do some research online and at your local library to get yourself started on making and maintaining your own garden.

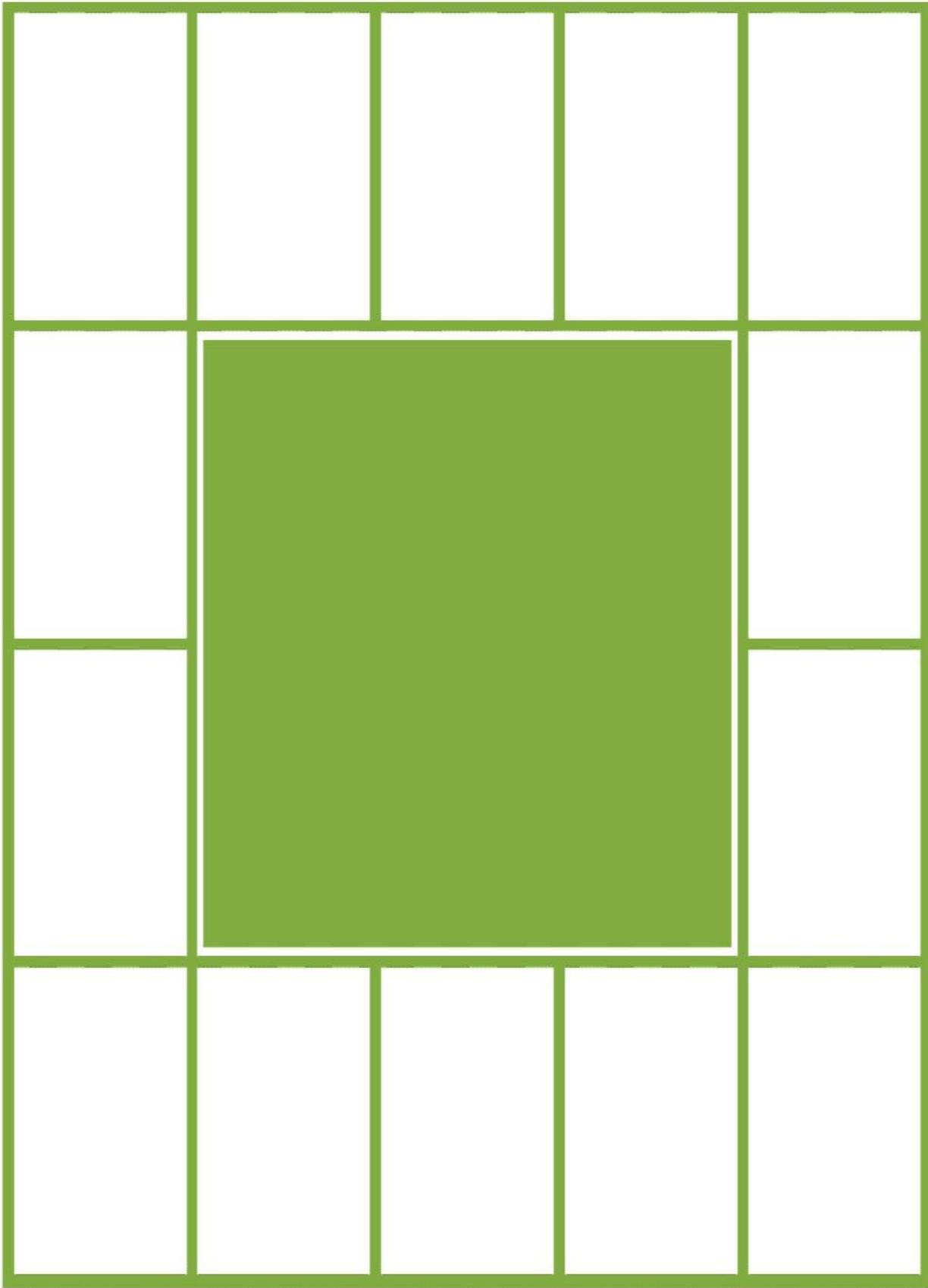
38. Creative Thinking

Using your creativity can be a great distraction. You may discover a new talent or passion. Your imagination and creativity is endless! Let it flow today and see what happens.

- Write - a poem, a book, a haiku, or just let the words free flow in a journal.
- Play an instrument.
- Create art - You may create some abstract art, or you may be inspired to make a bird, a crown, etc.
- Draw.
- Sing.
- Make something. Don't know what you want to make? Gather up any materials you'd like to use in your project. It could be paper, recycling, yarn, felt, pipe cleaners, markers, etc. Whatever you have on hand will do. Start by using the materials you have and see what happens when you start working with them.

39. Make up Your Own Game

Board games can be a fun distraction, but it can be even more fun to make up your own game. On [page 57](#), there's a board game template to get your creative juices flowing.



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40. Plan a Fun Event for the Future

Think about what kind of fun event you'd like to do. It could be going to the movies, going to a museum, or exploring a new place you haven't been before.

Once you have an idea of what you want to do, start your research. Look into the hours of operation and how much it would cost to go there. Think about who you'd like to attend the event with you as well. Do you want to go with your parents? An aunt? Your cousin? Then start talking with them about the event you'd like to plan.

Specify a date. You have so much to look forward to! When you need a distraction, you can think about your fun event you have planned.

41. Start a New Hobby or Learn Something New

Think about any hobbies or interests that you have wanted to try but haven't yet. Make a list of the ones you want to try, for instance:

- Karate
- Knitting
- Origami
- Swimming
- Gardening
- Guitar lessons

Now, think through what makes the most sense to focus on right now and what you have access to. Check in with your family about this too. If you'd like to start something new that involves getting a ride somewhere, you

need to check with your family first about the cost, how you'll get there, and if it works for your family's schedule.

Something like origami can be done at home with paper and a little research on YouTube or Pinterest. Think about what will work for you and your family when generating your ideas. Then pick one and focus on doing that one new thing.

42. Laughter is the Best Medicine

Laughter and silliness can reduce stress. What a great way to distract yourself! You could read funny books (some of my favorites are Mo Willems and Bad Kitty books). You could read a silly jokes book or make up your own jokes. Or you could fill in a Mad Libs. What makes you laugh? Funny videos? Goofy faces? Silly dancing? Find things that make you laugh and do them!

43. My Favorite Things

Make a list of all the things you enjoy doing in different places. This list can come in handy to help you think of things to do when you are stressed. There are going to be rainy cold days where you may not be able to go outside. Sit down for a few minutes and think of activities you like to do in each of these places and in each of these circumstances. Refer back to it when you feel stuck and add to it when you discover a new activity you like to do.

My Favorite Things...

Things I love to do at home	Things I love to do at school
Things I love to do outside	Things I love to do inside
Things I love to do by myself	Things I love to do with others



PHYSICAL COPING SKILLS

Movement is wonderful. Movement can calm you, energize you, or help you get rid of excess energy. When you are starting to get antsy or irritable, often a change of scenery and a little movement helps.

When your body goes into flight, fight or freeze mode (remember the dinosaur on [page 21?](#)), you suddenly have a ton of energy running through your body. If you do things to help get rid of that energy, then you're on your way to calming down and getting back to the rest and digest state.

When you are angry, you can feel like you want to strike out at people around you. There is nothing wrong with being angry, frustrated, sad, or any other feeling. All your feelings are OK. It's what you do when you are feeling that way that makes a difference.

It's okay to feel

MAD

WORRIED

SAD

ANXIOUS

FRUSTRATED

but...

Don't hurt yourself

Don't hurt others

Don't destroy property

People pay attention more, and focus better, when they get a chance to move. It's helpful to take movement breaks when you are doing work at home or at school. Some movement breaks are built into your day (recess and lunch, switching to art class, etc) and some you build in yourself (taking a walk to the bathroom, getting a drink of water, sharpening your pencil).

There are lots of ways that you can use movement as a way of coping. It's always good to try moving in a variety of ways. Sometimes all you need is to squeeze play dough or silly putty (small body movements) but at other times you may want to do something bigger (jumping jacks, push ups, running).

NOTE: Before doing anything, please check with your family. Don't take a walk and not tell your parents first! Think carefully and check in before you start.

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SMALL PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

44. Squeeze Something

Tensing and relaxing your muscles by squeezing something is very similar to a progressive muscle relaxation exercise, but in this case you are just focused on your arms and hands. Here are a few items you could use:

- Stress ball
- Putty
- Clay
- Play dough
- Sand

Take your squeezable item in your hand and squeeze it for a few seconds. Then let it go. Repeat a few times. Do you feel a difference in your stress level? Switch hands. See how that feels. There are a variety of items you can buy to squeeze that are available online and in stores.

You could also make your own. Here's a simple no cook recipe for play dough:

- 2 cup flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 tbsp. oil
- 1 cup cold water
- 2 drops liquid food coloring

1. Mix together flour and salt.
2. Add water, food coloring and oil. Mix until ingredients are combined.
3. Knead well. If consistency is too wet, add a little more flour.

45. Homemade Stress Balls

Squeezing something is a great way to help you reduce stress. There are many different types of stress balls of the market. But did you know that you can also make your own? You can choose which material to use – whether its lentils, play dough, flour or rice. Each of them feels different. Try them all to see which one you like the most.

Two balloons

Small Plastic Baggie

Fill Material - Play dough, flour, uncooked lentils, uncooked rice

- Cut the tips off the balloons.
- Put your materials in the sandwich bag and twist the top.
- Put the sandwich bag of material into one balloon.
- Then place a second balloon around the first one.

Your stress ball is ready to use!

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How to Make a Homemade Stress Ball

What You Need:



- **Two Balloons**
- **Fill Materials: Playdough, Flour, Uncooked Rice or Uncooked Lentils**
- **Plastic Sandwich Baggie**



Cut the tips off of the two balloons



Place filler in the plastic sandwich baggie



Twist sandwich baggie and put filled bag inside one balloon



Take the second balloon, and put it over the first, taking care to cover the hole on the first balloon

46. Shred Paper

Take a pile of papers that you and your family don't mind being ripped up. Tear the papers into little pieces. Try different types of paper to see which one is most satisfying to you. If you wanted to, you could even write down the things that are making you mad, sad, etc, and then rip it up and throw it out. It can be so cathartic to do that!

Some suggestions of paper to rip:

- Computer paper
- Old worksheets from school you don't need any more
- Newspaper
- Phone books
- Old notebooks

47. Bubble Wrap

There is something super satisfying about popping the bubbles in bubble wrap. Experiment with different sized bubbles to see which ones work better for you. Maybe the small ones are more enjoyable for you. Or maybe you like the big ones. There are so many types. Ask your family to set aside any bubble wrap that they find from packaging to try it.

48. Keep your Hands Busy

Find an item that you enjoy holding or playing with or an activity you like to do and keep it nearby. When you want to fidget with something, use it. Here are some ideas:

- Jacob's ladder
- Hold a small stone
- Shuffle cards
- Make something - knit, quilt, crochet or sew
- Fidget toys



BIG PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

49. Go for a Walk

Walking is a natural part of our lives. Simply by taking a walk you can take a break and clear your head. Have you ever noticed that after you go for a walk, your mind is clearer?

You can take a walk indoors at school. Go to the bathroom or to the water fountain and give yourself a break. When you're at home, take a walk around your home or you can go outside and get some fresh air. Going out into nature is a simple way to give yourself a break. Even if you live somewhere cold, you can go out for a few minutes.

50. Exercise

Need to get out some excess energy quickly? Try doing simple exercises at home. You can do jumping jacks, walk or run in place, push ups, sit ups, run laps, etc. Set a time limit for yourself - for example: I'll do these three exercises for 30 seconds each. Or set a number you'd like to reach - I'm going to do 20 jumping jacks.

Simple Exercises

Jumping
Jacks

Run in
Place

Sit Ups

Walk in
Place

Twist and
Touch
Your
Toes

Push Ups

Stretches

Yoga
Poses

Jump
Rope

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51. Dance

You don't have to be a professional dancer or be in a dance class to enjoy dance and use it as a coping skill. Simply turn on your favorite song or playlist and let your body move. It might be fun to do this with other people, like your family or a friend. If you don't feel comfortable dancing in front of anyone, find a private spot in your home where you can let go.

52. Punch a Safe Surface

Say you get really angry at someone, but you remember the rules about not hurting others and you know that you shouldn't punch them. Find a safe object to use instead. It could be a pillow, your bed, a couch in your house or a punching bag. Make sure other people aren't close by because you don't want to accidentally hurt them. Punch for 30-60 seconds and see how you feel. Do you need to keep going? Try it for a little longer and see how you feel after that.

53. Play at the Park

You can get out so much energy climbing on the structures, running around, or climbing trees. It's also a great place to meet up with new kids, or visit with others you haven't seen in some time. Play tag, hide and seek, pretend to be on a pirate ship or run a lemonade stand. Moving can help you get out your energy - it can also be a great distraction from stress too.

54. Balance on Bosu

Have you ever seen a Bosu ball? It looks like a ball cut in half with a base on it. Balancing on it can be tricky and takes some focus and time to learn.

You can start by balancing on the ball part with the base on the floor. If you're feeling daring, then you can turn the ball over and balance on the base with the ball on the bottom. Be careful!

55. Obstacle Course

Use your imagination and create your own obstacle course. Once you set it up, time yourself to see how fast you can get through it. Then try a different set up and see how well you get through that one. Below are some ideas for items you can use to set up an obstacle course.

Indoor Obstacle Course Ideas	Outdoor Obstacle Course Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairs• Stepstools• Shoes• Pillows• Jump rope• Cups• Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance beam• Jump rope• Plastic cones• Sticks• Stones

56. Swing

Using a swing can be relaxing or exhilarating. It all depends on how high and intensely you choose to swing. First you should figure out how to swing your legs to start yourself so you don't have to rely on anyone pushing you.

As you move forward, stick your legs out and lean back.
As you move backward, move your feet back and lean forward.

As you continue this motion, you'll start to swing higher and higher. When you're comfortable, stop pumping your legs and let yourself enjoy it. If you start to slow down, start pumping your legs again to speed up.

57. Other Physical Ways to Move & Get Energy Out

- Jump rope
- Use a trampoline
- Scooter
- Go swimming
- Stretches
- Tumbling/gymnastics
- Yoga (for a few simple yoga moves, see [page 32](#))

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PROCESSING COPING SKILLS

This section is all about working through the thoughts and feelings you have. You may be stressed about your parents getting divorced, or worried about your sick uncle, or angry about a big fight you had with a friend.

These next activities are designed to help you identify and process your thoughts and feelings. The first section focuses on getting a better understanding of your feelings. The next section is focused on helping you express your thoughts and feelings safely.

There are a few printable sheets at the end of the book to help you keep track of your coping skills. There's a sheet where you can keep a running list of coping skills that work and a sheet where you can keep track of coping skills you want to try. There are also coping skills cue cards so you can make visual reminders of your coping skills.

Out of all the coping skills exercises in the book, these are the most challenging. If you get stuck, you can do these exercises with a family member or trusted adult who knows you well (like a school counselor or a therapist). They'll be able to help you figure out what's going on for you and help you.



IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

58. Intensity of Feelings

Feelings can have a range of intensity - from mild to really strong intensity. It's important to identify not only what sorts of feelings you have, but also how intense they are. On [page 74](#) is a list of feelings with four basic emotions that we all experience from one time to another. In each box is a range of those basic feelings, starting from mild feelings to really intense feelings.

Think about how you typically feel and try to notice patterns. Do you always tend to feel things intensely? Or does the intensity of your feelings change during the day - milder in the morning, more intense after school? What do you notice about yourself and your intensity of feelings?

Being able to identify what you are feeling, and how much you are feeling, is the first step to managing your emotions, thoughts and behaviors. If you know when you have big reactions, then you can intervene and use the right coping skill to help manage your feelings in a safe way.

Intensity of Feelings

**Enraged
Furious
Angry
Frustrated
Annoyed**

**Hopeless
Miserable
Sad
Discouraged
Upset**

**Terrified
Afraid
Anxious
Nervous
Unsure**

**Overjoyed
Excited
Happy
Calm
Peaceful**

59. Feelings Thermometer

The Feelings Thermometer is a more detailed look at your intensity of feelings, focused on one feeling at a time. Just like with the Intensity of Feelings activity, being able to identify what you are feeling, and how much you are feeling, is the first step to managing your emotions, thoughts and behaviors. If you know when you are starting to have a bigger reaction, then you can intervene and use the right coping skill to help manage your feelings.

Let's use anger as an example. Take a blank thermometer. Pick out three colors and designate one color for each section of the thermometer.

Think about what your anger looks like when you're at the bottom of the thermometer. Do you sigh loudly, growl, etc.? Then move on to the next section - if you are really angry, what does that look like? Does your voice get louder? Do you stomp your feet? Then think about very angry - what does that look like? Is it yelling or throwing things?

Once you go through and identify behaviors on the thermometer, then work on identifying coping skills you can use to calm down. Some examples include getting a drink of water, taking deep breaths or shredding paper.

Make sure you have a couple of coping skills that will help at each level of anger. It's important to have a variety of coping skills for each level, because not all coping skills will work all the time.

My ANGER Thermometer

What I look like

- Yelling
- Throwing things

- Loud voice
- Stomping foot

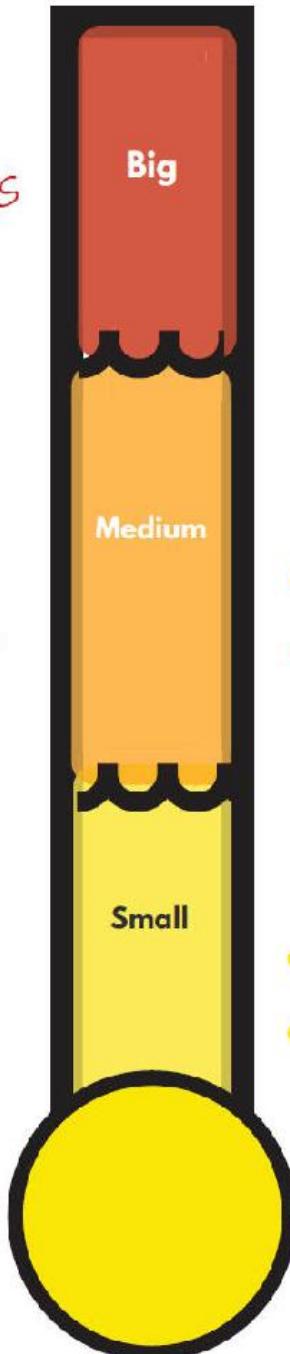
- Sigh loudly
- Growl

What I can do

- Take a break
- Shred paper

- Exercise
- Take deep breaths

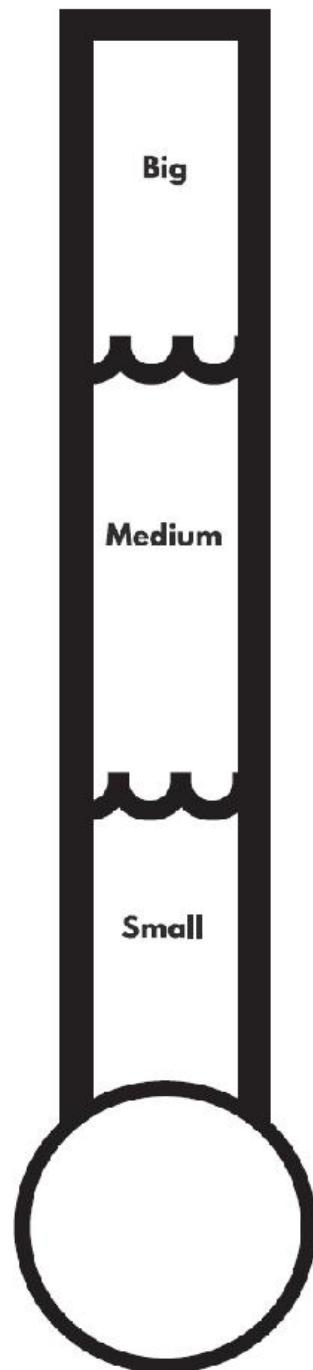
- Get a drink of water
- Squeeze play dough



My _____ Thermometer

What I look like

What I can do



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60. Feelings as Colors

What you need:

- Something to draw with (water color paints and paintbrush, crayons, markers, colored pencils)
- Paper

Take four basic feelings - happy, sad, mad and afraid. Pick one color per feeling - maybe you want happy to be green, sad to be blue, mad to be red, and yellow to be afraid.

Using the colors that represent how you are feeling right now, draw a picture. There is no right or wrong type of drawing, make whatever you're inspired to make. If you're feeling happy, use green. If you are feeling sad, use blue. You may be feeling more than one emotion at a time. Maybe you're feeling mad and afraid, so then you would use red and yellow to make your picture.

If you want to add in more than four feelings, go ahead!

61. Where do I Feel Things in my Body

When you are having big feelings, your body gives you clues about that. Recognize the clues and you can try to manage those big feelings safely with coping skills.

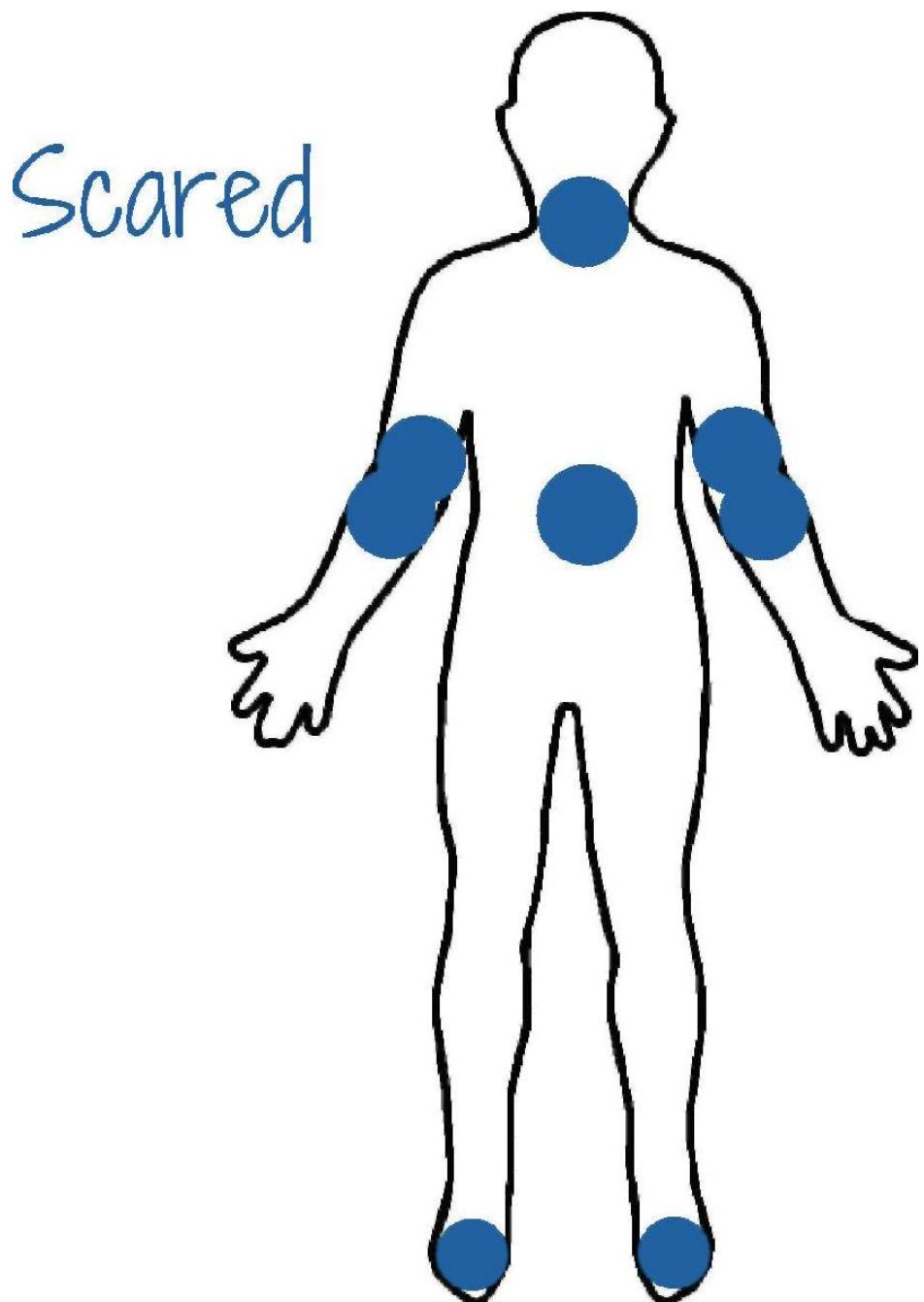
Take the person template on [page 80](#) and focus on one feeling at a time.

For example - Think about the last time that you felt scared. Go through the entire body to try and identify where you felt scared in your body.

- How did your head and neck feel?
- How about your face?
- Your torso? Your arms and hands?
- How did it make your belly feel?
- How did it make your legs and feet feel?

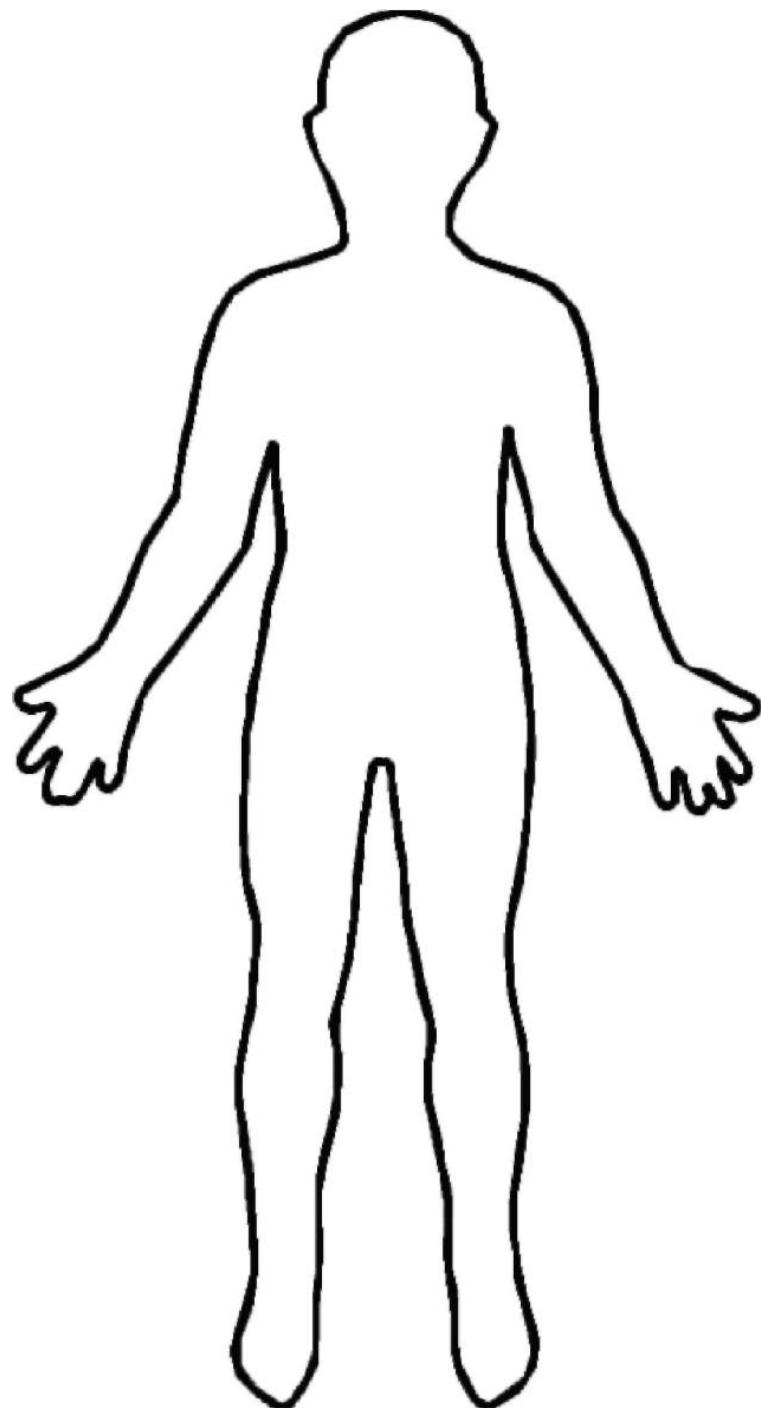
Don't worry if you can't remember what you felt when you do this exercise for the first time. However, the next time you feel that feeling, pay attention to your body's signals and add to your person if you realize that you missed something.

Where do I feel things in my body?



Scared

Where do I feel things in my body?



62. Understanding my Triggers

Have you ever noticed there are certain things that might make you feel frustrated or stressed? To help yourself for the future, one of the best things you can do is to figure out what things bother you.

- Do certain sounds bother you - like chewing gum or loud sudden noises or babies crying?
- Do certain situations bother you like class presentations or small group work?
- Do certain classes bother you?
- Do certain people get you stressed like the principal?

Certain situations will make you feel stressed and you can't always avoid them, but you can prepare better for them. For instance, if class presentations stress you out, and you recognize that as a trigger, then you can better prepare yourself when a teacher announces a presentation that needs to be done in a couple of weeks. You know that this causes you stress, so you can practice, make sure you have a fidget or small stone in your pocket on that day, and plan a time to hang out with your friend after school as a reward for getting through it.

63. 5 Levels of Stress

Once you identify your stressors, try to rank them. What makes you just a little bit stressed? Maybe talking to a teacher makes you feel a little bit stressed, maybe a 1 or a 2. But walking in front of the whole school at an assembly is a 5. Once you identified what stresses you out then you can identify what you can do to deal with your stress. So how do you deal with talking to a teacher? Try a few deep breaths. How do you deal with a school assembly? Maybe do a quick grounding activity. Use the worksheet on [page 82](#) to list your stresses and ways to deal with it.

Levels of Stress

My Stress Level	My Stressors	Things To Try
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

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64. Stress Map

You may need a little help to identify when and where your stress happens. When you're having a tough time identifying what caused you to be stressed, try using the map below. You can identify where a stressful situation happened, who was around you, when it happened etc. This can help you pinpoint exactly what was so stressful and bothersome about a particular situation.

My Stress Map

Where did it happen?

Home

School

Somewhere
Else

Be more specific about where (in math, in the kitchen, etc)

Were you by yourself? Or was
someone with you?

When did it happen? The morning,
the afternoon, the evening?

65. Track my Stress

Being able to identify the W's of your stress (what, when, where, why) can help you get a better understanding of what stresses you out, and identify any patterns you may not have noticed before. Use the chart on [page 85](#) to keep track of when you feel stress over a week or two. Then evaluate what you have noticed about yourself. Is it always before a math test? On Sundays? See what patterns emerge for you.

Here's an example of how to fill it out:

Track My Stress

What stressed me out? What happened before? When did it happen? Where was I? What happened after?

The bus ride home	Sara got mad and wouldn't talk to me	At the end of school on Thursday	Sitting next to Sara on the bus	I got off the bus and cried
Thinking about school	I took a shower to get ready for bed	Sunday night	In my bedroom	I talked to my dad
My huge math test	My mouth was dry and my mind went blank	Tuesday	in my Math classroom	I didn't think I did well on the test

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Track My Stress

What stressed me out? What happened before? When did it happen? Where was I? What happened after?

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EXPRESSING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

66. Journaling

Whenever I sit down and talk with someone about their coping skills, one of the first things I ask is if they have tried writing about it. Why do I always start with journaling as a way of processing through difficult feelings?

It's easier to write about, than talk about, hard things. It's your personal private thoughts. If your journal is private, and you feel comfortable that no one will read what you write, then you are free to say everything you really feel - the good, the bad and the horrible stuff you'd never say out loud.

Journaling helps you process what's happening. When you write, you mull over things in your head, and it sometimes helps you come to new realizations about the issues you are dealing with at the present time. Or even come to new realizations about issues in the past.

It's convenient. You can take your journal anywhere. All you need is a place to write and a pen or pencil. Or if you want to, you can also use a computer. Sometimes people write in the notes section on their phone, on an iPad or laptop.

It's not graded. You don't have to use perfect grammar. You don't even need to use full sentences. You can just write phrases, words or statements. Write whatever helps you work through things.

It can help you solve a problem. Sometimes through writing, you can think outside the box, or consider different strategies for solving a problem you hadn't thought of before. If you're struggling to figure something out, writing may help you come up with another idea to try.

It can help you reframe your thinking. Writing can help you focus on the positives too. It helps to write down three things you are grateful for or three things that went well during the past day or week. This is especially helpful if you have been writing about difficult experiences. End the writing session by focusing on the positives.

Identify a place to write. It can either be in a journal or on a computer. Even the notes section on your phone will work. Then just write - free form. Get your thoughts out of your brain and down somewhere. You can journal at any time you want. You can take a few minutes on a daily basis to write things down or only as needed.

67. In a Perfect World...

Things in life aren't always ideal. It's nice to think about what life would be like in a perfect situation. What would things be like at school or at home if things were perfect? Thinking about what would make things ideal can help you process what you aren't happy about. It can help you identify what things stress you out or really bother you. Use the worksheet on [page 88](#) to explore what your perfect world would be like.

In a Perfect World

In a perfect world, I....

In a perfect world, my family....

In a perfect world, my school....

In a perfect world, my teachers....

In a perfect world, my friends....

Draw your perfect world.

68. Expressing Emotions Using Creative Outlets

Using your creative outlets is a fantastic way to express yourself. Many great artists and musicians have channeled their frustration, anger, and sadness into beautiful art to share with others. There have been numerous studies that show using creative outlets has a positive impact on health and well-being.

What creative outlets can you use to express your emotions? You can:

- Write songs
- Write poetry
- Write music
- Draw
- Sculpt with clay
- Paint
- Dance
- Write stories

69. Talking to Someone you Trust (Roses & Thorns)

Talking to someone helps you process your feelings. You can use the other person as a sounding board to get ideas for dealing with your current problem, or you could just have someone listen as you vent. One thing I love to do with my own children is hear about their “roses” and “thorns” from the day. Their roses are good, happy, positive things that happened. Their thorns are tough, negative or sad things that happened during the day. We check in right after they get off the bus when they’re having snack about the roses and thorns from their day.

70. Create a Playlist

Listening to music can be therapeutic. Music has the power to change your mood. It can take someone from feeling sad to feeling happy. It can energize you. It can move you to the point of tears and help you express some of your emotions.

First, figure out what you are currently feeling and what you'd like to be feeling and thinking instead. Make multiple playlists for whatever you'd like to feel, and name them accordingly.

- If you are feeling sad, perhaps you want to make a playlist full of songs that make you smile.
- If you are feeling helpless, make a playlist of songs that makes you feel strong.
- If you are feeling like you have no energy, make a playlist of songs that make you want to get up and do something.

71. Write What's Bothering You, Rip it Up & Throw it Away

Writing is cathartic, but sometimes you don't want people to see what you've written. You have all these big feelings inside and you want to get them out in a safe way. Maybe you want to yell at someone, but you know you can't. Or maybe you want to say things you know you shouldn't. Instead of saying them, write them down. Once you've written down all the things you want to say, then rip up the piece of paper and throw it away. It's a great release to write then rip it up.

72. Comic Strip What Happened/Draw a Different Solution

When certain situations happen, especially negative ones or ones with really big consequences, it's helpful to backtrack and figure out what happened.

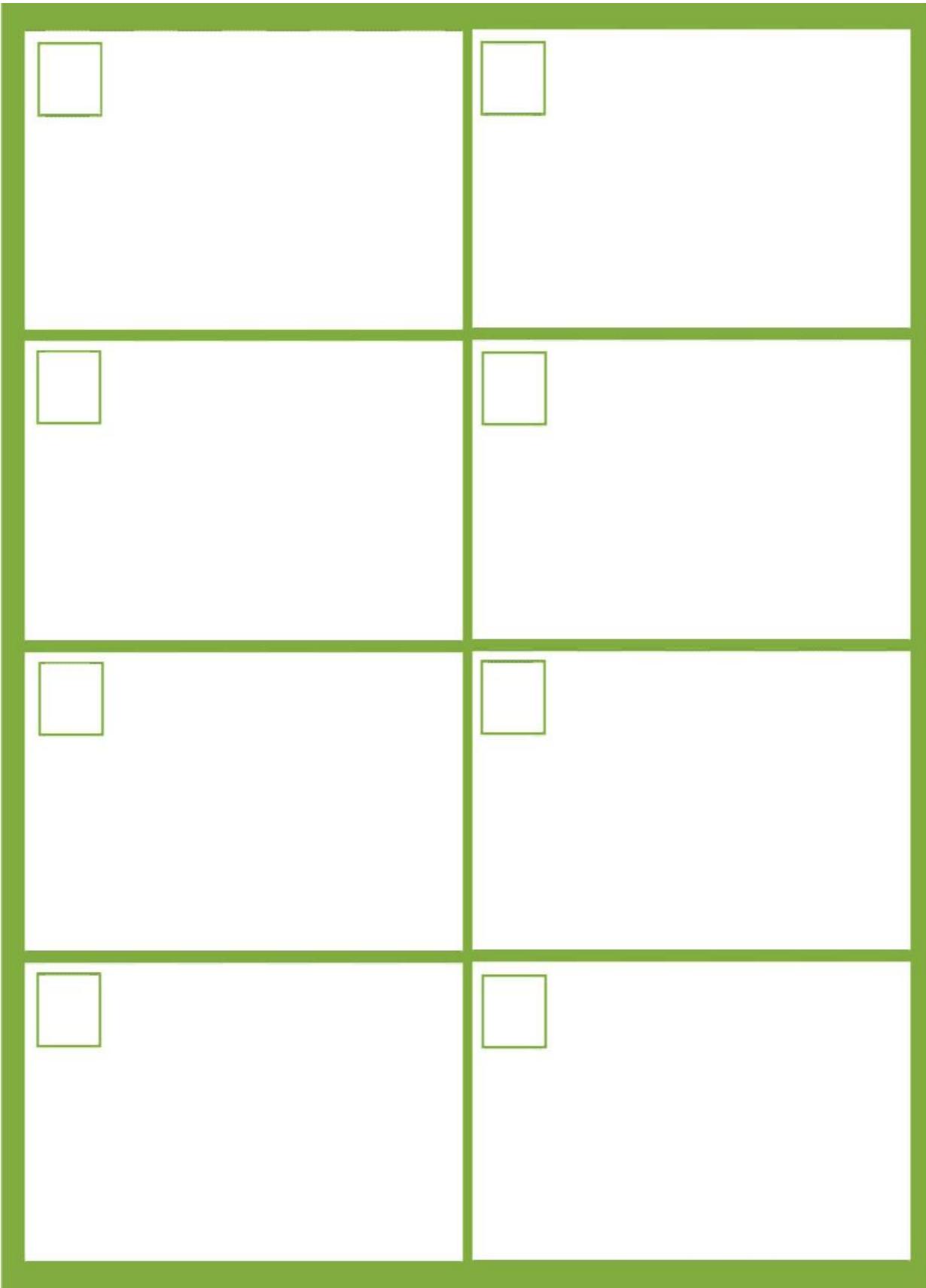
See if you can remember what happened first, then what happened next, and so on, so you can see where you may need to change your behavior or your reactions to certain issues. A good way to do this is to use a comic strip to recreate what happened.

Use the Blank Comic Strip on [page 92](#). Feel free to make multiple copies of the sheet of paper to go back as far as you need to. Start at the beginning.

It may be helpful to write a little caption to help you remember exactly what happened and what to draw. Or an adult can write, while you illustrate. You could keep it as simple by using a pencil or you could get fancy, and use different colors to represent different feelings.

Let's say you've just gotten out of a fight at recess. Start at the beginning. You felt like the person you were playing with was cheating. He said you were out but you weren't. You got mad and threw the ball at his head. He punched you and you punched him back. You continued to hit each other until the lunch monitors pulled you apart.

Once you've finished drawing what happened, think about what you could have done differently. Use the "What Could I Do Next Time" on [page 93](#) and draw what you could do next time you are faced with a similar situation that would be a healthier way to resolve the issue. There are four boxes because there is always more than one way to react to a problem. I encourage you to think about at least two different ways to handle the situation next time.



What can I do next time?

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73. Write a Letter to Someone

Writing a letter to someone is like targeted journaling. There may be times when you want to say something to someone but maybe you can't reach them. Maybe they're too mad and they won't listen. Maybe they live far away. Or maybe you are too hurt to speak with them face to face. A good way to explain your side of a situation is to write a letter.

It's up to you whether you decide to send it or not. Just know, even if you do decide to send it, it may not end up the way you hope. Writing a letter isn't about getting the other person to do what you want, or to admit they were wrong, or get them to apologize. It's about finding closure to a situation for yourself.

74. I Wish...

There are times you wish things were different, or wish things hadn't changed from the way they were. It's OK for you to think about that and feel those emotions. Using the I Wish Worksheet on [page 95](#), you can either draw or write out what you wish for. It's helpful to think about how you wish things could have gone, or could have been, even if they're not that way.

It's OK to daydream that things aren't the way they actually are in your present. Go ahead and do it. If you want, you can share your drawing or sentences with a trusted adult, and talk with them about why you wish the things you wish for. You could brainstorm and figure out if there are things you could do to make your wishes come true. And you could also talk with them to help identify those wishes that can't be.

I wish...

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75. I Statements

When you're in the middle of an argument or trying to explain your thoughts and feelings to someone else, it's quite easy to focus on what the other person did. "You did this to me, you are mean, you made me sad". But that's not the best approach when you're trying to have a productive conversation to figure out what to do next. It puts the other person on the defensive when you start with "you".

The best thing you can do in those conversations is focus on yourself. Start with your own thoughts and feelings by using an "I statement." For example, "I felt sad when you lied to me." or "I felt hurt when you didn't want to play with me."

76. What I Can Control vs. What I Can't Control

In life, there are things you can control and things you can't control. You can control yourself, your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions. But there are other things you can't control.

For example, you can't control that you have a social studies test tomorrow. You can control how much you study, how much rest you get, what you eat for breakfast, and how you prepare for the exam.

The same goes for really big situations too. You can't control if your parents get divorced, but you have control over your words and your actions. You can express your feelings to your parents. You can tell them what you don't like and how it makes you feel.

When you're faced with a stressful situation, take a minute and use the "What I Can Control vs. What I Can't Control" worksheet on [page 97](#). On the left, list things that you can control. On the right, list the things that you can't control.

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What I Can Control vs. What I Can't Control

What I Can Control	What I Can't Control

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77. Worry Box

Using a worry box is a good way to help manage stressful feelings. Sometimes, to really help deal with stress, you need to take some focused time to think and talk about your worries. However, it's helpful to limit the amount of time that you are perseverating on these thoughts. You don't want to be thinking about it constantly.

By using a worry box, you can focus and think about the things that are making you worry, and then contain your worries in the box for someone else to hold on to for safekeeping. Later, you can come back and talk about your worries again at another specified time. This helps you address your worries and create a physical holding spot for the worries so you have some relief from feeling like you always need to be thinking about them. You can also have fun decorating your worry box any way you'd like.

You will need:

- Paper/Sticky Notes
- pencil
- small box
- scale 1-10

- Set aside a short amount of time, maybe 15-30 minutes.
- Take pieces of paper or sticky notes and write your worries on the notes.
- Using a scale of 1 (least worried) – 10 (most worried), place your worries along a scale. This will help you get a better idea about what is bothering you. To make your own scale, use the worksheet on [page 99](#). Cut down the middle and tape the pieces together to create a scale.
- Take time to talk about each worry, and as you talk about it, put it in your worry box.

- Once all your worries are in the box, give it to your trusted adult to hold on to.
- Set up the next time you will come and discuss your worries. It may be tomorrow or it may be a week from now, but make sure you set up a time to talk with them.
- The next time, start with the worries in the box, and place them on the scale again. Have any of them moved? Do you have any other worries you need to add in?

5	10
4	9
3	8
2	7
1	6

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PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

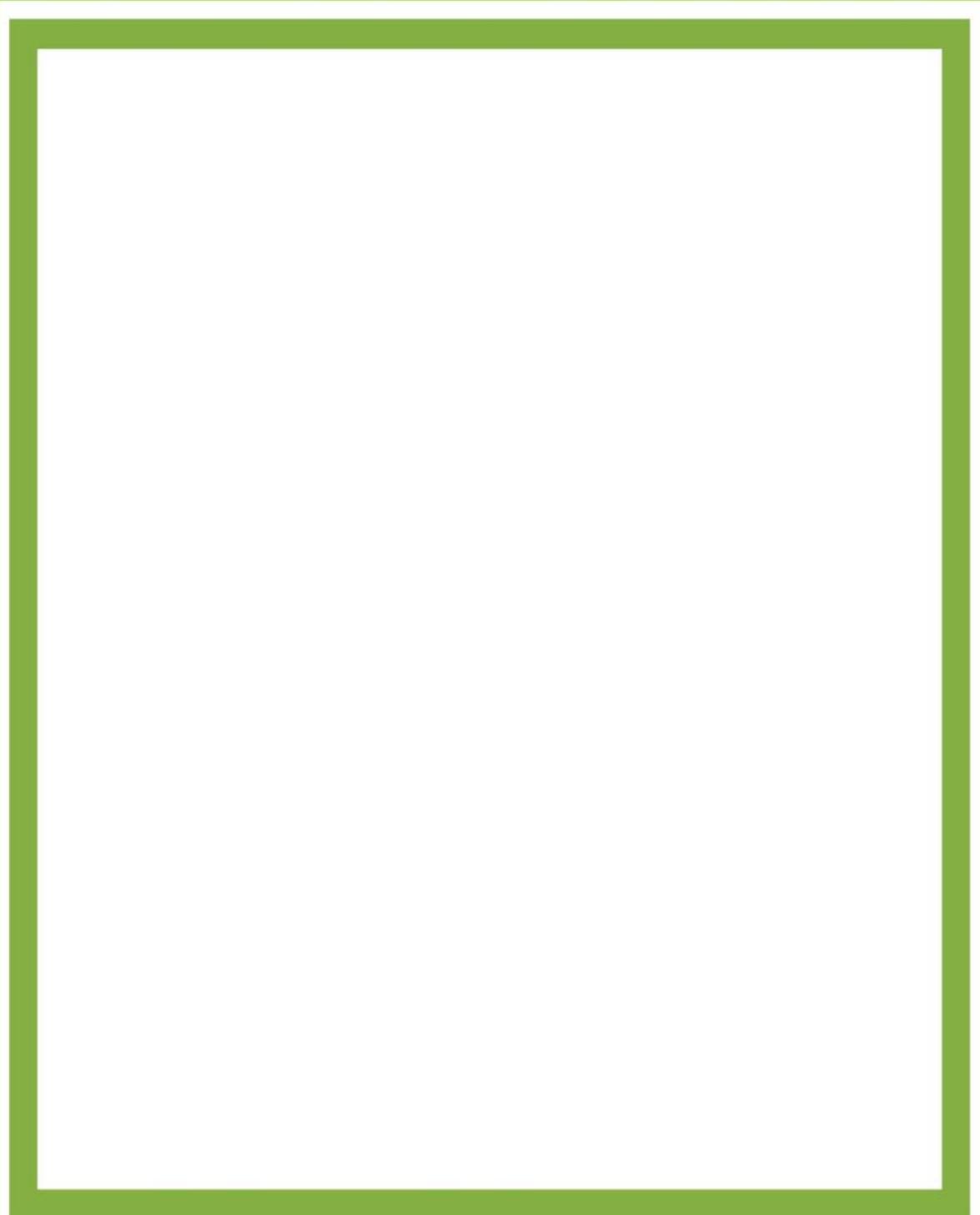
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Use this sheet to keep a running list of all the coping skills you've tried that worked. Keep adding to the list – it's always good to have several different coping skills to manage stressful situations!

My Coping Skills

Use this sheet to keep a running list of all the coping skills you want to try.
You never know what will work – give new things a chance!

Skills To Try



Coping Skills Cue Cards

1. Identify which feeling(s) you need help learning to manage. Are you angry? Are you sad? Are you anxious? Are there several feelings you need to work on learning to handle in healthy ways?
2. Look at your list of coping skills from the “My Coping Skills” worksheet on [page 101](#) and start to link your feelings and your coping skills. When you feel sad, do you like to draw? When you feel angry, do you like to listen to music? When you feel worried, do you like taking a walk? If you are having a hard time coming up with ideas, talk to an adult who knows you and see if they can suggest activities to help you manage your different feelings.
3. Once you figure out your coping skills, make a card for each one. Print off the cue cards on [page 104](#) as many times as you need. Cut out the cards. Fill in the feeling and one strategy on each card. Make it visual! There are several ways to do this. Pick whichever one works best for you.
 - write the coping skill
 - take a picture of the item that you can use
 - take a picture of yourself using your coping skill
 - draw a picture of your coping skill
4. Hole punch the cards, and place them on a key ring. Put the cards in an easy to access place, like your room. The next time you are feeling upset, pick a coping skill from your cue cards.

To make more durable cards, use card stock instead of regular paper and laminate them. As you discover new coping skills, you can always add in more cue cards. If certain skills are no longer effective, remove them from the ring.

When I feel _____,
I can...

You made it to the end, congratulations! I hope that this book has helped you. I'd love to hear your stories about new coping skills that you've tried. Feel free to send me an email at info@copingskillforkids.com about the coping skills that have helped you.

This book has been a labor of love for me that I've worked on for some time. If you enjoyed it, please feel free to direct people to www.copingskillforkids.com so that others can purchase the book.

At copingskillforkids.com, you'll find products to help you cope and deal with stress, anxiety and anger. There are all sorts of items you can use as coping skills, like journals, coloring books, toys, games and activities. There are also other books, workbooks and downloadable resources available.

I'm always looking to curate new products for our store. If there's a product that's worked for you and you think we should add it to the store, please share that with me. Have a wonderful day!



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Parenting Books

Bloom: 50 Things to Say, Think and Do with Anxious, Angry, and Over-the-Top Kids by Lynne Kenney and Wendy Young. Bloom tackles challenging issues facing families today in an easy to understand and practical way. The HeartSmart conversations and activities are wonderful ways to build positive connections in your family through play and communication. The BrainSmart Mantras help adults stay positive and re-focus on what matters. What a great resource!

Positive Discipline Ninja Tactics by Karen Kolp gives practical advice and easy to implement strategies with real life examples of ways we can parent our children in a positive, respectful way.

1, 2, 3 Magic by Thomas W. Phelan, PhD was recommended to me by my pediatrician when my son was having some behavioral issues at home. I read the book, then shared it with my husband. We started implementing the recommendations, and it's been amazing. There was an initial period of testing (and that was tough!) but once we got through that, our lives have changed. We're less stressed as parents and we are enjoying when we are together as a family. I highly recommend this book.

Sitting Still Like a Frog by Eline Snel is a super quick and easy read all about mindfulness. There are lots of hints for how to start practicing mindfulness as a family and for your kids. Lots of great activities to try and there are some great audio links too.

Little Flower Yoga for Kids: A Yoga and Mindfulness Program to Help Your Child Improve Attention and Emotional Balance. This book gives a thorough explanation of the connection between yoga, mindfulness and

emotional balance. There are lots of fun exercises and yoga poses for families to try together to help teach regulation and calming skills.

Positive Parenting for Imperfect Families by Nicole Schwarz. Practical and down to earth eBook to help you connect, calm and teach your family in a positive and respectful way.

Stress Free Kids: A Parent's Guide to Helping Build Self-Esteem, Manage Stress, and Reduce Anxiety in Children by Lori Lite is another great book to help parents teach their children how to manage stress and anxiety in a healthy way.

Books for Families and Educators to Help Teach Emotional Regulation

The Incredible 5 Point Scale by Kari Dunn Baron is a great resource for people to use in a school setting, a social group setting or at home. It can be used to address a number of different issues and it's a great resource for working not only with kids on the spectrum, but for all kids who need a little extra teaching around social and emotional concerns.

The Zones of Regulation by Leah Kuypers is another great tool to help kids learn self-regulation skills. This framework is designed to help kids notice what they are thinking and feeling, how their thoughts and feelings affect their behavior, and learn to self-regulate. I absolutely love teaching the Zones of Regulation to kids. It's such a great visual for them to see what zone they are in and learn ways to get back to the green zone.

The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook for Kids: Help for Children to Cope with Stress, Anxiety, and Transitions by Lawrence Shapiro, PhD, Robin Sprague is a great book with lots of resources to help families work on increasing relaxation and reducing stress at home.

Books for Kids about being Worried, Scared and/or Anxious
David and the Worry Beast by Anne Marie Guanci. David's anxiety is a beast and the more anxious he gets, the bigger it grows. David learns to

control his thoughts and his beast shrinks. There's also a couple of pages for parents and kids in the back.

When My Worries Get Too Big by Kari Dunn Buron. This book is wonderful! There are several pages where kids can add in their own thoughts, worries and what helps them relax. This book also uses the 5 point scale to talk about stress and different ways to manage it.

What To Do When You Worry Too Much by Dawn Huebner, PhD. This book goes through several ways that can help kids manage anxiety, including setting a time for worries, thinking about things that make you happy and resetting your body with activity or relaxation. There are some interactive places in this book, where a child can write down their worries, draw some images of things that might help, etc.

What To Do When You're Scared and Worried by James J. Crist. This is one of my favorite books for kids to help them deal with anxiety. Near the beginning of the book is a checklist that helps kids narrow down what they are anxious about. The beginning of the book covers the basics of what anxiety is and how to help manage with coping skills. The next section of the book goes into detail about different types of anxiety kids might experience, including Separation Anxiety, Phobias and Panic Attacks

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn. A classic about managing separation anxiety when kids start school. My daughter's kindergarten teacher read this to the class during the class visit right before the start of the school year. How perfect!

When I Miss You by Cornelia Maude Spelman. This is perfect for little ones who have a hard time dealing with the fact that they are away from their parents during the day. It suggests a couple of things they can do to help and offers reassurance that parents will come back at the end of the day.

Wemberley Worried by Kevin Henkes. Poor Wemberley worries about everything and then she gets really worried when she is about to start school.

Wilma Jean the Worry Machine by Julia Cook. I love that when Wilma Jean's physical reactions are described, they're also illustrated. When she says she has knots in her stomach and her knees lock, her stomach really looks like it's tied in a knot and there's a real lock around her knees. I love the activity she does with her teacher, going over worries she can control and worries she can't, it's a great way to help kids manage their anxiety.

Books for Kids about Anger

Angry Octopus by Lori Lite and Max Stasuyk. A great book that is a progressive muscle relaxation and deep breathing script for kids. It's wonderful!

How to Take The Grrrr Out of Anger by Elizabeth Verdick and Marjorie Lisovskis. I love using this book for kids who are having a hard time managing being angry. I typically read one chapter at a time with the kids and work on some of the strategies listed in the book.

What to Do When Your Temper Flares by Dawn Huebner. This book has lovely illustrations and goes through "anger dousing" methods.

Chillax!: How Ernie Learns to Chill Out, Relax and Take Charge of His Anger by Marcella Marino Craver. This is a graphic novel, perfect for the tween set.

Sensory

Understanding Your Child's Sensory Signals by Angie Voss. The book lists the different sensory signals that a child might demonstrate and is designed to be used in conjunction with Angie's website, A Sensory Life. I've worked with a lot of kids who have difficulties with sensory input and this book and website had a wealth of information for parents whose kids struggle with sensory issues.

Raising a Sensory Smart Child by Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske. Written together by an Occupational Therapist and a mother whose child received

OT services. This is one of the best books to help understand sensory processing issues.

The Out of Sync Child by Carol Stock Kranowitz. Another great book to help understand sensory processing disorder.

The Out of Sync Child Has Fun by Carol Stock Kranowitz. The companion book to the Out of Sync Child with activities for kids with Sensory Processing Disorder

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The Importance of Play

Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul by Dr. Stuart Brown with Christopher Vaughan. There are so many great quotes and wonderful information about the importance of play and its impact on our social lives. This is a great book to learn more about the important role play has across our lifespan, for children and adults alike.

Mindfulness and Meditation Exercises Available Online

Sitting Still Like a Frog - <http://www.shambhala.com/sittingstilllikeafrog> A great list of audio exercises for kids, including one called Sleep Tight. I've used that one with my own children; they both enjoyed it.

Annaka Harris: Mindfulness for Kids -
<http://annakaharris.com/mindfulness-for-children/>

There are several scripts available from the InnerKids program. I had my daughter try the calming one before she did her homework. She loved it.

Kristina Sargent, The Art of Social Work

kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/mindfulness-and-feelings-printables/ Here are a couple of kids activities for mindfulness and feelings. Kristina has also written a book to help kids with mindfulness, Ursula Unwinds Her Anger.

Dartmouth Resources -

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~healthed/relax/downloads.html>

I found this resource in Bloom Parenting by Dr. Lynne Kenney and Wendy Young, LMSC, BCD. What a helpful collection of meditation and mindfulness scripts.

Spider Man Meditation <http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/spider-man-practicing-mindfulness-and-increasing-focus/>

My kids love superheroes. This is a great way to use that interest to work on increasing their focus and awareness.

Mind Space Meditation for Schools -

<http://www.meditationinschools.org/resources/>

These scripts are specifically designed for use in classrooms, but could also be used at home.

Mindful Time in Nature -

<https://mindulkids.wordpress.com/category/activities-games/nature-awareness/>

I love these ideas for different nature walk activities you can do. But I also know that I can't expect the kids to be mindful for a full 60 minute walk. We'll try to be mindful on the walk for short bursts of time, just a couple of minutes here and there.

Websites

A collection of wonderful resources from around the web!

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) www.nami.org

The American Institute of Stress www.stress.org

The American Psychological Association www.apa.org

UMASS Center for Mindfulness www.umassmed.edu/cfm/index.aspx

Mental Health America www.mentalhealthamerica.net/

National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
www.aacap.org

A Fine Parent www.afineparent.com

And Next Comes L www.andnextcomesl.com

Annie Fox www.anniefox.com

Nicole Schwarz, Parent Coach www.imperfectfamilies.com

The Inspired Treehouse www.inspiredtreehouse.com

Jodi Aman www.jodiaman.com

Lemon Lime Adventures www.lemonlimeadventures.com

Lynne Kenney www.lynnekenney.com

Amanda Morgan www.notjustcute.com
Ashley Soderlund www.nurtureandthriveblog.com

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