

# Calming Skills Checklist

\*Check the ones you do now and the ones you are going to try\*

## These are designed to help you relax

- Deep breathing
- Count your breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly, count to one then inhale and exhale slowly, and count two; continue counting each cycle of breath until you reach 10.
- Count back from 100 in 3s or 5s.
- Blow bubbles or balloons
- Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth
- Body scan; try to breathe deeply and slowly while you do this.
- Spend time in nature; take a mindful walk
- Yoga
- Imagine your favourite / safe place; use as many senses as you can when you do this – what can you feel, hear, see, taste and touch? What is your reminder cue word for your safe place? How do you feel here?
- Think of your favourite things / memories
- Picture the people you care about
- Say the alphabet slowly
- Remember the words to a song you like
- Carry a small object – focus on what it feels like, every tiny detail
- Move
- Make a fist and then release it; repeat for your whole body
- Positive self-talk; I am safe, I am kind, I've got this, I can do this.
- Take a shower or a bath
- Take a drink of water
- Make / use a calming jar
- Meditate
- Use the Mindshift app
- Smells can be helpful; aromatherapy oils on a tissue or herbal teabags
- Give yourself a butterfly hug, using alternate hand taps; left, right, left, right.

## Distraction Skills Checklist

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### These are designed to hold your attention

- Connect with a family member or a friend; spend time with them, even just being in their company can be helpful
- Write a story
- Do a crossword / Sudoku Puzzle
- Random acts of kindness for others
- Play a brain based game like 'I Spy...'
- Read
- Clean
- Play with pet
- Play a board game / video game (video games in moderation)
- Watch a favourite tv show
- Plan something fun or exciting
- Exercise
- Start a new hobby
- Be silly; laugh
- Draw
- Start a gratitude journal
- Listen to music
- Think about plans; make plans with family / friends
- Go for a walk; move around the room
- Sing; pull a funny face
- Imagine your favourite / safe place; use as many senses as you can when you do this – what can you feel, hear, see, taste and touch?
- Smells can be helpful; aromatherapy oils on a tissue or herbal teabags.
- Count forwards and then backwards from a chosen number.
- Do some baking or cooking
- Do something pampering and nurturing; have a bath, apply moisturiser
- Make a relaxation / calming poster or playlist
- Notice and describe what is around you; what do you see, feel, hear, taste and touch?

## Processing Skills Checklist

\*Check the ones you do now and the ones you are going to try\*

**These are designed to help you work through thoughts and feelings you have about challenging situations.**

- Write in a journal
- Write a song
- Draw
- Talk to someone you trust
- Create a playlist
- Write what's bothering you and throw it away
- Write a letter to someone using 'I' statements; or write a letter to yourself
- Colour in
- Doodle
- Make / use a worry box
- Put your thoughts or worries in a balloon / jar / box / talk to parents, therapist or other adult.
- Talk to yourself positively, softly and kindly
- If you have experienced a difficult situation with another person; imagine the situation or the person who said something hurtful with the sound turned off, in slow motion or in black and white. This can reduce the impact of this memory.

## Regulating Skills Checklist

\*Check the ones you do now and the ones you are going to try\*

- Squeeze items using alternative hands-stress ball, playdough, an orange
- Watch the movement of a lava lamp, floating bubbles, food colouring moving through water, or fish swimming.
- Have a calming, hot drink.
- Do some colouring in.
- Wrap yourself in a warm, snuggly blanket or bean bag.
- Hug a pillow, a person or a toy.
- Do some physical exercise; use a fidget toy
- Interact with water; swimming, have a bath/shower Make some rhythmic movement; playing the drums, stamping feet, dancing, clapping.
- Rip, tear, twist, squeeze or scrunch up paper, issue or a wet towel.

### **Regulating Properties of Food – Comforting and Restorative**

- Sweet, salty foods, warm spice such as grated nutmeg
- Sucking thick milk shakes through straw
- Sucking food against the roof of the mouth such as chocolate or a sweet
- Dipping a biscuit or chocolate bar into a hot drink and sucking it
- Sports water bottles for water / juice

### **Agitation, Feeling Tense or on Edge**

- Munch, crunch food; Crisps, nuts, raw vegetables, apples, biscuits, cereal

### **Chewing for Anger**

- Chewy bars, toast, meat

### **Alert and Focused**

- Citrus, spice; orange segments, yogurt, mini sweets

The higher the stress level, the more heavy work the tongue, lips and jaws need to do. Combinations of foods can provide for different needs; a snickers provides sweet and salt flavours, the crunch of the peanut, chewing the caramel and sucking the chocolate. This combination soothes while helping to lower one's level of tension at the same time.

## Physical Skills Checklist

\*Check the ones you do now and the ones you are going to try\*

**These are designed to rebalance your energy – either to energise you or help manage excess energy in your body.**

- Squeeze something
- Pop bubble wrap
- Rip paper
- Use a sand tray
- Hold a small stone
- Make something
- Use a fidget toy
- Dance
- Swing on a swing
- Jump on a trampoline
- Go swimming
- Yoga
- Shuffle cards
- Exercise
- Go for a walk
- Cycle
- Play sport
- Shake or dance it out