

Calm-Down Choices: Notice, Choose, Check

This is an optional classroom worksheet to practise noticing feelings and choosing calm-down strategies. You can skip any part and keep your responses private.

1. Notice

Describe a real or imagined situation, and optionally how you feel. (You can skip any part of this worksheet and keep your responses private.)

2. Choose

Choose one strategy to try or imagine, if you want to. Different choices help different people. Stop if you feel uncomfortable.

Comfortable Breathing

Breathe normally at a comfortable pace. No holding your breath. Stop if uncomfortable.

Gentle Stretch

Choose a comfortable seated or standing stretch, or imagine it. Stop if uncomfortable.

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Notice 5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste. Skip or imagine any sense. Never taste unknown items.

Ask an Adult

Ask a trusted adult for support. You can ask without explaining on this sheet.

3. Private Check

How did the strategy work for you? (Circle one):

Helped / A little / Not for me / I imagined or skipped it

What is your next step? (Circle one):

Try another choice / Ask a trusted adult / Something else

Optional: Write any thoughts or next steps below.

My Calm Down Choices — Facilitator Guide

GRADES 3-5 · CROSS-SUBJECT · SEL SELF-REGULATION

A personal reflection activity where students practise identifying feelings and selecting a calm-down strategy to try or imagine.

QUICK START

Learning target: Students will practise noticing a feeling and choosing a calm-down strategy to try or imagine.

TIME	GROUPING	MATERIALS
15-20 min	Individual	Printed worksheet · Pencil

KEY VOCABULARY

Comfortable Breathing

Gentle Stretch

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

Private Check

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How can we notice when we are having a strong feeling?

Why might a calm-down choice work well for one person but not for another?

FACILITATION SEQUENCE

1 LAUNCH · 5 MIN

Students listen to the purpose of the worksheet, noting that it is optional, private, and can be skipped or imagined if they prefer.

Watch for: Hesitation about sharing. Remind students that they can use an imagined situation or skip any part.

TEACHING TIP · A useful prompt here is: "Remember, this is your private space. You can choose to write about a real feeling, an imagined situation, or skip any part you wish."

TEACHING TIP · A useful prompt here is: "Look at the four strategies under 'Choose'. Which one have you heard of before?"

2 STUDENT WORK · 10 MIN

Students independently complete the Notice, Choose, and Private Check sections, trying out or imagining a strategy like Comfortable Breathing or Gentle Stretch.

Watch for: Look for students holding their breath during breathing or over-stretching; ensure they follow the safety prompt to stop if uncomfortable.

TEACHING TIP · A useful prompt here is: "If you are trying Comfortable Breathing, remember to breathe normally at your own pace without holding your breath."

TEACHING TIP · A useful prompt here is: "If a strategy doesn't feel right, you can circle 'Not for me' or 'I imagined or skipped it' in the Private Check."

3 CONSOLIDATE & DISCUSS • 5 MIN

Students reflect on their next steps and optionally share general thoughts about how different strategies work for different people without revealing private details.

Watch for: Listen for students recognizing that not every strategy works for everyone and that having a next step like 'Ask a trusted adult' is a strong choice.

TEACHING TIP • A useful prompt here is: "Who can share why it is helpful to have more than one calm-down choice?"

TEACHING TIP • A useful prompt here is: "If a strategy was 'Not for me' today, what is a next step you might try next time?"

MODEL EXAMPLE & HOW TO APPROACH

FOR THE TEACHER

There is no correct feeling or required result. Model an imagined example: Notice: waiting for a turn, feeling frustrated. Choose: imagine a gentle stretch. Private check: I imagined or skipped it. Next step: ask a trusted adult. Accept other choices, including skipping. Do not grade feelings, completion or effectiveness.

LIKELY STUDENT RESPONSES, MISCONCEPTIONS, AND HELPFUL TEACHER MOVES

Anticipate these — and the response that moves thinking forward.

STUDENTS MAY...	WHAT THAT MIGHT MEAN...	A HELPFUL NEXT MOVE...
Try to hold their breath during the Comfortable Breathing strategy.	They think deep breathing requires extreme breath-holding to be effective.	Remind them of the worksheet instruction: 'Breathe normally at a comfortable pace. No holding your breath.'
Mark 'Not for me' on their sheet.	They tried a strategy and it did not help them feel calmer.	Reply: "Thanks for noticing. Would you like another choice or support?"
Say 'I do not want to share' or leave sections blank.	They prefer privacy or feel uncomfortable disclosing personal feelings.	Reply: "You can skip it or use an imagined situation." Reassure them that sharing is not required.
Feel like they failed if a strategy is marked 'Not for me'.	They believe there is only one correct way to calm down or that all strategies must work.	Reassure them that finding out a strategy is 'Not for me' is valuable information that helps them make a better choice next time.

EQUITY, SEL, AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PROMPTS

EQUITY

Perspective invitations you can offer students — a second context, a missing voice, a different lived reality.

Acknowledge that some students may prefer quiet internal strategies like imagining a stretch, while others prefer external strategies like asking a trusted adult, validating both preferences equally.

SEL

Focus on self-awareness and self-regulation. Do not grade emotions, compliance, completion, or effectiveness. The goal is practising the process of choosing and evaluating strategies.

TRAUMA-INFORMED

Ensure participation safety and predictability. Never demand bodily sensations or personal disclosure. Students can skip any part, stop if uncomfortable, or use imagined situations. Do not promise secrecy; follow school safeguarding procedures if help is needed.

UDL, DIFFERENTIATION, AND LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

IF STUDENTS NEED MORE SUPPORT

Provide accessible alternatives to writing or speaking. Allow students to point, draw, dictate privately, imagine, or skip any sense or movement.

Offer an imagined scenario. Sharing, explaining and handing in the sheet are optional.

Offer pointing, drawing or private dictation to a trusted adult, if the student wants support.

IF STUDENTS ARE READY FOR MORE

Optional extension: Compare calm-down choices for an imagined character in a scenario.

Have students write a brief scenario for a character, select two different strategies, and compare which might work better and why.

LANGUAGE SUPPORTS

Support students in expressing their choices and reflections with clear sentence frames.

Offer optional frames: 'I chose __.' 'It helped / helped a little / was not for me.' Students can point or skip explaining.

TEACHER CHECK-IN AND NEXT STEPS

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Use an imagined scenario to check that students understand the choices and know how to ask an adult for help. A selected box alone does not show understanding; offer an optional explanation or demonstration. Do not grade feelings, participation or whether a strategy helped. Students may keep or recycle their sheets. Follow up privately with anyone who asks for support.

Offer each choice as optional. Students can stop, skip or imagine any movement or sense. For grounding, never taste unknown items. Explain that adults can help; do not promise secrecy if a safety concern is shared. Follow school safeguarding procedures when needed.