

Topic 10

Keep Calm

OBJECTIVES

- To continue to help children identify Trigger Situations
- To teach children a strategy for keeping calm and using self-control when faced with Trigger Situations
- To provide opportunities to practice the skill of Keep Calm
- To establish *Keep Calm* as a prompt to elicit use of the strategy

MATERIALS

Whole-class display of Keep Calm Steps (Worksheet K.10.1)

Keep Calm Home Activity (Worksheet K.10.2)

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Review concepts of Feelings Fingerprints and Trigger Situations.

Begin with a Sharing Circle and review of Feelings Fingerprints and Trigger Situations. You might wish to refer to the silhouettes created by students in the previous activity. It is important that students understand Feelings Fingerprints and Trigger Situations, so be sure to review these concepts, especially for students who may have missed the lesson. Helping each other with the review helps students learn more deeply. Be especially sure to take extra time with any students in your class who have special education classifications. Sometimes, these students take longer to grasp the concept of Feelings Fingerprints; for them, identifying the Trigger Situations that set them off becomes even more important.

2. Introduce the new skill of Keep Calm.

Ask students:

- Why is it important to know when you are upset and to notice your Feelings Fingerprints?
- What kind of things can happen when we have strong feelings?

- What can happen when we use Blaster behaviors? Shrinker behaviors? (Refer to examples of Blaster and Shrinker behaviors from Topic 5.)

Say:

Today we are going to learn what you can do before you do something that could get you into trouble or shrink away from standing up for yourself.

Explain to children that they are going to learn a very important skill called Keep Calm. By using Keep Calm, they will be able to have power over their own energy and use their energy to solve problems. It is a new skill, just like Speaker Power or Listening Position. When someone bothers them, when they are in a tough situation, or when they notice their Feelings Fingerprints, they can use Keep Calm to help them have more control. Say:

The key to keeping calm is to slow down your breathing. One of our Feelings Fingerprints might be breathing fast or having trouble taking a deep breath. Athletes, superheroes, doctors, astronauts, famous performers, actors, people in the martial arts, and others have used methods like Keep Calm to help them achieve their best under pressure (provide examples of people your students will relate to). We cannot think clearly when we are out of control. Keep Calm will help us with our control.

3. Introduce steps for using Keep Calm.

Display Worksheet K.10.1 as you describe the steps of Keep Calm. Ask students to watch you use Keep Calm before they try it. Model the skill by demonstrating the steps to the class while holding up the pictures illustrating the strategy.

1. Tell yourself to STOP!
2. Tell yourself to KEEP CALM.
3. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose while you count to five. Then hold it while you count to two. Then breathe out to the count of five.
4. Repeat the steps until you are calm and relaxed.
5. Praise yourself for a job well done.

Explain that some people might have to repeat these steps a few times before they feel calm.

Then model what Keep Calm does *not* look like: Breathe with puffed-out cheeks, then hold your breath almost to the point of hyperventilating. A bit of silliness helps make the point in a memorable way.

4. Conduct a Keep Calm practice.

Conduct a first practice to assess a baseline for how well students can implement the strategy.

Have everyone try the procedure. Continue to use the Keep Calm illustrations and repeat the step-by-step instructions at a pace the group can follow. Count for the breathing at a pace that all can follow.

Some students may have difficulty conceptualizing the breathing technique. Using “Smell the Pizza” is helpful for these children. (For those who don’t know what pizza is or say they don’t like it, ask them to think about a food they like to eat that smells very, very good.) Ask students to pretend that they are holding an individual-sized pizza (or other favorite food). Have them breathe in to smell the hot, fresh pizza, then ask them to blow on the pizza to cool it down.

Repeat the practice, counting more slowly once students get the basics down and can breathe deeply.

Look for students who are doing the procedure correctly. After each practice, be specific in praising details that some students might have missed. For example, say, “Nice, smooth breathing.” If children need correction, state so positively, with information about what to do. For example, “Remember to slow down your breathing” rather than “Do not go so fast.” Tell the children that using Keep Calm does not need to be loud or obvious to others.

Depending on how well the children are able to follow, repeat the breathing activity one to three times. Then practice the first three steps of Keep Calm. Have children repeat the steps of Keep Calm after you read them. Then practice each step individually. For example:

1. Say, “Stop.” The children repeat, “Stop.”
2. Say, “Calm down.” The children repeat, “Calm down.”
3. Say, “Take a deep breath through your nose to the count of five.” The children repeat, “Take a deep breath through your nose to the count of five.” Then everyone takes a breath to the count of five, holds for the count of two, and breathes out to the count of five.

Repeat the same procedure but in a whisper. Have children repeat the steps in a whisper.

Next, tell the children that they are going to try to go through the steps by talking to themselves on the inside.

Tell them that when you say “Now!”, you will hold up the pictures to show what to do, but they should try to say each step to themselves and do it.

5. Present a reflective summary.

Ask students what they learned today. Ask them to look for a chance to use Keep Calm if they find themselves experiencing their Feelings Fingerprints.

Ask students for some examples of times when it would be a good idea to use Keep Calm. Write down those examples and make a poster of those times, including words and pictures, to display in the classroom as a reminder for students to use Keep Calm before situations go too far.

6. Follow up.

The following activities will give students a chance to continue working with the new concepts throughout the school day and at home.

Take-Home

Once children are able to demonstrate and practice the steps of Keep Calm and can respond to the prompt *Keep Calm* to stop and slow down their breathing, send home the Keep Calm Home Activity (Worksheet K.10.2). This worksheet provides parents and guardians with information about how they can review and encourage their child to use Keep Calm in home situations.

Promoting Transfer and Generalization of Skill

1. Have students practice their Keep Calm steps after coming in from recess or other times when moving from an active situation to one where they need to pay attention and focus, such as transitioning to a new subject or before a test.
2. Look for opportunities to prompt a child to practice the Keep Calm steps with you if he or she is experiencing frustration, upset, anxiety, sadness, or other feelings. Do this before engaging in problem solving.
3. Share with students when you recognize your own Feelings Fingerprints and Trigger Situations. Model using the Keep Calm steps and ask children to do it with you.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Depending on the maturity, developmental level, and other student characteristics and abilities, the progression from counting out loud, to whispering, to silently going through the steps may take several lessons. The point is to move children to an understanding of self-talk. At this young age, the self-talk concept can be introduced, but children will need help and external coaching before the skill is internalized to the point of

independent use. The goal is to be sure that children understand this is a skill that eventually they will learn to do on their own when they need to use self-control. Another goal is to introduce this important concept and skill prompt that will be at the core of emotional regulation in grade-level lessons to come.

2. Continued practice of Keep Calm, repeating the steps over and over, is the best way for kindergarten-age students to begin learning the Keep Calm skill. It is not realistic to expect young children to use the skill without prompting, though some may begin to do so toward the end of the school year if they have had a lot of experience with prompts throughout the school day from various educators.
3. Continue to remind children that their goal is to use Keep Calm when they start to experience their Feelings Fingerprints and before those feelings are brought on by a Trigger Situation.
4. Irumu Breau, a school counselor in Winslow Township, New Jersey, developed hand signals to help teach Keep Calm in the primary grades. These signals were used throughout the district and shared with parents.

Stop

What you say: “Tell yourself to STOP!”

Hand motion: Left hand palm up, while right hand touches the left with a karate-chop motion.

Keep Calm

What you say: “Tell yourself to KEEP CALM.”

Hand motion: With both palms facing the floor, push down twice.

Two Breaths

What you say: “Take two deep breaths.”

Hand motion: Make the peace sign in front of your heart; move it out and back two times.

Good Job

What you say: “Tell yourself ‘Good job!’”

Hand motion: Pat yourself on the back.

1. Tell yourself to STOP!



2. Tell yourself to KEEP CALM.



3. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose while you count to five. Then hold it while you count to two. Then breathe out to the count of five.



4. Repeat the steps until you are calm and relaxed.



5. Praise yourself for a job well done.

Topic 20

Friendship Skills

OBJECTIVES

- To identify desirable characteristics in friends and teammates
- To identify undesirable characteristics in friends and teammates
- To increase children’s understanding about the importance of personal qualities
- To encourage children to use praise to acknowledge their peers for exhibiting good friendship and teammate behavior

MATERIALS

Whiteboard, easel pad, or other display surface for drawings and words that describe “good friendship” and “not good friendship” behaviors

Creole by Stephen Cosgrove (Price Stern Sloan, 1975, 2001)

A large outline of a person, drawn on a sheet of paper or whiteboard

Feelings Words Wall (created in Topic 8)

NOTE

This topic is most often presented in more than one session, depending on children’s ability to brainstorm behaviors.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

I. Review the skill of Giving Praise.

Ask children what they remember about the skill of Giving Praise. Ask them to tell about a time when they praised someone at school or at home. Ask whether anyone received praise from someone at home or at school. Reinforce efforts to use and develop the skills they are learning in their life.

2. Introduce the concept of good friendship and team behavior.

Let the children know that they will be doing an activity to help them learn about other people. Inform students that an important rule of this activity is to describe what people do—and not to use any names. Emphasize and repeat: *No names!*

Ask students to close their eyes and think of a person they really like to be with—someone they look forward to spending time with . . . someone who feels good to be around.

Have students draw something that shows what the person does to make people like to be with him or her. To help students think about a person and what to draw, ask:

- What kinds of things does this person say?
- What does the person do that is nice or good for a person to do?

Make a list of the behaviors on the whiteboard or an easel pad. When a list has been generated, write Good Friendship Behaviors at the top of the list.

Next, ask the class, “What are some ways that friends show they care about each other?” (Suggested answers include helping, giving praise, and listening when someone is talking.) Write down the responses on the Good Friendship Behaviors list and save it for future reference.

Continue the discussion by asking, “Now that we all know how a good friend behaves, what are some behaviors that you do *not* like to be around? Are there things that a person might do that would make it not fun to be around him or her?”

Have the class generate a list of characteristics they do not like, and write down their responses. Label this list Not Good Friendship Behaviors and save it for future reference.

Review the list of Good Friendship Behaviors and explain to the children that one thing this list shows us is that the way we behave makes people want to be around us and be our friends. Ask children how many of them like it when people treat them in the ways described.

Then explain that the list of Not Good Friendship Behaviors helps us learn that the way we behave can also make people *not* want to be around us or be our friends. Review the list of Not Good Friendship Behaviors and ask children whether they would like to be treated in the ways described.

Next, explain that being a part of a classroom is like being part of a team. In a class, everyone works together to learn. The way we behave and treat each other can make people like being a part of our team—or the way we behave can make people feel not as good about being a part of our team.

Again review the list of items labeled Good Friendship Behaviors and ask who would like people on our classroom team to treat them these ways. Then

review the list of Not Good Friendship Behaviors and ask whether those behaviors would make people feel not as good about being a part of a team.

Explain to the children that you would like to offer them a challenge. The goal is to keep the good friendship and teammate behaviors in mind and set a goal to treat others these ways. The goal is also to avoid behaving in ways that make it *not* as good to be a part of our team. Ask children whether they are willing to take on this challenge. You can have children agree with a show of hands, by standing up, or by saying yes at the count of three.

3. Conduct a practice activity.

Read the following situations aloud and ask children to think about what they just learned about good friendship and teammate behavior.

- Alex is playing with a ball when his friend Rodney approaches him. Rodney says to Alex, “Let me have that ball. I want to play with it!”
 - What should Alex do, using Good Friendship Behavior?
 - Rather than demanding the ball, what could Rodney have done to show that he is a good friend?
- Shakia and Ramona are friends playing a game. Kimmara comes up and starts whispering to Ramona about Shakia. Ramona then tells Shakia that she does not want to play with her anymore and goes off to play with Kimmara.
 - What should Shakia do?
 - Is Ramona being a good friend?
 - What should Ramona do?
 - Could they have all played together?

Conclude the activity by generating ideas about what they should do when their friends demonstrate negative friendship behaviors.

4. Conduct language arts activity about what makes a good friend.

Refer to the lists of friendship/teammate behaviors and mention that it is important to everyone how their friends treat them.

Explain that sometimes people think it is important to look good or be smart or have nice things, but the way people treat each other is also very important.

Ask the group to remember what they learned about how it feels when people tease or bully. Is teasing or making fun of people a good friendship/teammate behavior? Let children know that they will be hearing a story about some animals that learned a very important lesson about what makes a good friend. The story is about a dragon named Creole who is made fun of because of the way she looks. Although she is a kind and loving dragon, the other

animals in the forest do not take the time to get to know her. They are afraid of her because she looks different. Creole is large; she has a big nose and very scaly skin. She tries hard to engage the other animals, but they run away in fear. Eventually, Creole meets an alligator who can relate to Creole. The alligator is shunned by the other animals because he stutters. Creole and the alligator get to know each other, and they realize they are both wonderful animals with kind and loving hearts. Eventually, they team up and approach the other animals and are able to convince them that it is what is on the inside that is important when judging someone.

Introduce the word *heart*. Tell the group that in the story, Creole is said to have a good heart. That means she is a very kind creature.

Ask the group to sit in a good Listening Position. Begin reading *Creole* aloud. While reading, hold the book up so that all children can see the text and pictures.

Stop reading at the point where the alligator is shunned by the other animals because he stutters. Ask the following questions to check for understanding:

- What does Creole look like? (She is big and fat, has warts, and has a big beak.)
- What is Creole like on the inside? (She has a wonderful heart and thinks wonderful thoughts.)
- Why is Creole having such a hard time finding friends? (All of the other animals are afraid of her because of the way she looks, and when she tries to talk to them they all run away.)

Continue reading the book. Stop reading at the point where Creole sobs, “The only thing I want in the whole world is just to have someone to tell my happy thoughts to!” Ask the group:

- Who did Creole meet? (An alligator.)
- How are Creole and the alligator alike? (The others animals don’t like them; they both want a friend.)
- Why don’t the animals like the alligator? (Because he talks funny.)

Continue reading until you complete the book, then ask students what happened at the end of the story. (The other animals took the time to get to know Creole. They discovered she had a wonderful, loving heart.)

5. Introduce the True Friend activity.

Remind the group that Creole wasn’t liked because of the way she looked. Once the animals got to know her, however, they learned that she was a good dragon on the inside.

Tell the group that just because someone isn’t good looking on the outside, or just because someone looks different, it doesn’t mean they aren’t a good person on the inside.

Point to the body outline you drew ahead of time on a large piece of paper or the whiteboard.

Ask the group what makes a good friend. List the qualities they suggest on the inside of the body outline. Explain that “qualities” mean things like brave, nice, funny, loving, honest, and fun.

Remind the group that we can’t tell whether people have these qualities just by looking at them. We need to get to know them.

Next, ask students to suggest some qualities that are *not* important when determining whether a person is a good person on the inside. Give an example to start the group out. For example, say, “Eye color is not important when deciding whether someone is a good friend.” Have the class generate other ideas, and write them outside the body outline.

Ask, “Can we tell just by looking at a person whether he or she is a good person on the inside?” (No—you would have to get to know the person to find out whether he or she is good on the inside.)

Have the group think about a time when they judged someone based on the way he or she looked. Ask:

- Have you ever treated someone meanly because of the way he or she looked?
- Did you take the time to get to know the person?
- If so, was the person different on the inside?

6. Present a reflective summary.

Ask students what they learned from today’s lesson. Reinforce any key themes, then go over any follow-up work.

7. Follow up.

The following activities will give students a chance to continue working with the new concepts throughout the school day and at home.

Promoting Transfer and Generalization of Skill

1. Leave the paper with the body outline in a location that is visible to all students. Over the upcoming week, have students add qualities to the “inside.” That is, have them identify additional traits that make someone a good person or a good friend.
2. Be on the lookout for Good Friendship Behaviors in student interactions in the classroom, schoolyard, and other school settings, and reinforce them with praise.

3. Have the class pick “secret friend” names. Each student must do one thing every day for a week that shows Good Friendship Behaviors toward his or her secret friend. Ask students to not tell anyone who their secret friend is. At the end of the week, have them discuss their experiences as giver and receiver of friendship acts.
4. Keep the list of Good Friendship and Not Good Friendship behaviors posted and visible. Refer to it whenever students have disputes with each other.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Particularly for students with social difficulties, the issue of making and keeping friends is crucial. Some children have difficulty making friends, or they frequently enter into friendships in which they are taken advantage of or influenced to do unsafe things. The activities for this topic provide youngsters with some valuable tools to help them select and keep praiseworthy and caring friends.
2. You can use the Good Friendship and Not Good Friendship lists as a way to monitor behavior in the classroom. When Good Friendship Behaviors are observed, the teacher makes a mark next to that behavior and rewards the group for exhibiting these skills. If Not Good Friendship Behaviors are observed, a mark is made as a way to promote awareness. If several marks are made after a particular Not Good Friendship Behavior (such as saying something to put someone down), you can call attention to the problem and develop a plan with the class to increase Good Friendship Behaviors and decrease Not Good Friendship Behaviors.
3. Some teachers have noted the overlap between the concept of kindness and SDM/SPS lessons targeting friendship behaviors and giving help. Reading the book *Kids’ Random Acts of Kindness* (Conari Press, 1994) to students can help expose them to concrete examples and models of kindness by children of all ages.
4. You might wish to collect examples of kind acts, friendship behaviors, and giving help by having students write them on “helping hands” posted around the room, or on decorations for the holidays or other visual displays. Additional classroom activities to promote acts of kindness are available at www.actsofkindness.org/classroom and in the free *Teachers’ Guide to Random Acts of Kindness* (send a request to Teachers’ Guide, Conari Press, 1144 65th Street, Suite B, Emeryville, CA 94608).