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Keep Calm

OBJECTIVES

- To point out problematic situations where students can use self-control to calm down before reacting
- To teach students to regulate their emotions and maintain control in problematic situations
- To practice the *Keep Calm* exercise

MATERIALS

Whole-class display of the steps in Keep Calm (Worksheet 4.10.1)
 Copies of the "Keep Calm Reminder Cards" (Worksheet 4.10.2) *(optional)*

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Review Topic 9.

Go over the vocabulary from the last lesson, with a focus on Trigger Situations and Feelings Fingerprints. Encourage students to share their observations and experiences.

2. Conduct a Sharing Circle.

Ask students to share a time when they find it helpful to calm themselves down.

Make the point that it is possible to handle almost every type of problem or difficulty better if you are able to stay calm. Say something along these lines:

To help us learn to be better at keeping calm, we are also going to learn a specific four-step strategy called Keep Calm. This strategy can help you think through a problem before you try to do something about it.

3. Introduce the Keep Calm exercise.

Say:

The key to keeping calm is to slow down your breathing. Athletes, performers, and people in the martial arts have used

methods of controlling their breathing to achieve a high level of concentration and calmness that can help them perform their best.

Provide examples of sports figures or fictional characters your students will relate to, then continue:

Learning to regulate the way that you breathe increases your ability to think clearly and to do things with more skill and control.

Ask if anyone has ever heard of Keep Calm. If so, have them help you explain the four steps in using this skill:

1. Tell yourself to STOP.
2. Tell yourself to KEEP CALM.
3. Slow down your breathing with two long, deep breaths.
4. Praise yourself for a job well done.

4. Demonstrate the steps to the class.

Direct students' attention to the whole-class display of the skill steps. Follow this procedure: Present a situation in which you could be irritated or nervous. Describe the situation, then model the following:

First, I would tell myself to STOP.

Then I would tell myself to Keep Calm.

Then I would take two long, deep breaths. First, I would let out all the air in my lungs through my mouth. Then I would take a slow and smooth breath of air in through my nose to the count of five. I would hold that breath for the count of two and then slowly let the air out through my mouth to the count of five, while I say to myself (inside my head), "Keep Calm." I would do the breathing again.

Then I would say to myself, "Good job." Using self-control can be hard work, and you need to praise yourself.

Demonstrate the procedure, counting with your fingers to five while taking a breath in, and to two while holding your breath, and again to five while breathing out. Bring your hands down to your sides while you are releasing the breath through your mouth—indicating that you are saying, "Keep Calm." Smile after completing the breathing to indicate you are telling yourself you've done a good job.

5. Conduct a practice exercise.

Have the class practice Keep Calm in the same way.

Look for students who are doing the procedure correctly. Be specific in praising—you can say things like “Nice, smooth breathing.” If children need correction, describe what to do in positive terms. For example, say, “Slow down your breathing” rather than “Don’t go so fast.”

6. Discuss use of the exercise.

Have the class generate situations when Keep Calm may come in handy. Most situations fall into three main categories:

- When you are nervous. (Examples include things like being about to take a test, going up to bat, or giving a speech or other type of performance.)
- When you really need to concentrate. (Examples include things like working on a test, getting back in the mood to work after recess, or feeling distracted by noise in the room.)
- When you are angry or frustrated and about to lose your cool. (Examples include things like beginning to yell during an argument.)

7. Conduct additional practice.

Present students with situations to role-play, either acting out a situation yourself or showing a video or pictures and then having students add examples of their own to those presented. Have students practice using Keep Calm to help them in these situations:

- Feeling fidgety and talking in class
- Feeling nervous about a test or a report
- Being lost in a shopping center
- Going to a new school
- Competing in a sports event

8. Introduce a Reflective Summary.

As outlined in the Introduction, ask students to reflect on the question “What did you learn from today’s lesson?” Reinforce key themes, then go over any follow-up work.

9. Follow up.

The following steps will help make sure that the students have a chance to continue working with the new concepts.

Assignment

Encourage students to find a time when they can use Keep Calm and try it. Let them know that you will expect an example of how they used Keep Calm at the next lesson.

Take-Home

If you wish, send Keep Calm cards home with students. Parents and guardians can find many situations in which the skills will be useful.

Plans to Promote Transfer and Generalization of Skill

Social Studies and Current Events

Instruct students to seek examples of people taking deep breaths before performing certain tasks. Encourage students to observe athletes, politicians, surgeons, or others in real life or on TV. Have students keep track of observations of deep breathing used for calming.

Language Arts

Instruct students to identify points in stories during which a character could use Keep Calm. Have students predict what might have happened if the character had used Keep Calm and how that might differ from what did occur in the story.

Art Project

Have students submit posters illustrating the steps of Keep Calm.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

1. Some children may need a real-life example of what it's like to be nervous or antsy or to lose their temper. This can be illustrated in several ways. Use a mirror to show differences in physical appearances before and after using Keep Calm. Jogging in place to increase breathing can be used to show the contrast before and after Keep Calm.
2. During problem situations that come up during the week, encourage children to use the Keep Calm technique before discussing the situation with their teacher or classmates. If you wish, you may distribute Keep Calm Reminder Cards (Worksheet 4.10.2).
3. It may be a good idea to remind children about Keep Calm before potentially stressful situations, such as joining a new class or attending special classes like art, music, and physical education. The technique is especially useful for students with special education needs who are joining a regular classroom.

4. Some students will learn to use their Feelings Fingerprints as a sign to use Keep Calm. Others will be prompted by Trigger Situations or other sets of cues. Regardless, the skill will be learned to the extent that children are prompted and reminded to use it in salient everyday situations, such as when moving from class to class, before a test, before an important meeting, or when they are upset at home.
5. Here are some sample prompts to use when a child is upset or is beginning to lose control:
 - Use your Keep Calm steps.
 - Stop and think about what's happening.
 - Let's Keep Calm and get focused.
 - Let's take a look at what's going on. Tell me what you see. (Or "what you saw, what happened, how you are feeling.")
 - Take a deep breath and Keep Calm—then we can talk about it.
6. Testimonials about the use of Keep Calm (or times when Keep Calm could have been used) are highly valuable for students to share. These should be solicited regularly to promote future use of self-control. Students should be helped to use Keep Calm to prepare themselves for actual or possible Trigger Situations.

Keep Calm

- 1. Tell yourself to STOP.**
- 2. Tell yourself to KEEP CALM.**
- 3. Slow down your breathing with two long, deep breaths.**
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9

Understanding Different Points of View

- OBJECTIVES**
- To introduce the concept of different points of view
 - To practice Respectful Listening and FIG
 - To practice taking different points of view to resolve conflicts

- MATERIALS**
- Chalkboard or easel pad
 - Colored construction paper and scissors
 - Bell or whistle to signal change of view *(optional)*

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Review the first three steps of FIG TESP.N.

- F — Find the Feelings
- I — Identify the Problem
- G — Guide Yourself with a Goal

2. Introduce the new skill.

Explain that everyone has a different point of view:

The way we see things can make a difference when we are trying to work out a problem. For example, when I look out at our classroom, I see a group of students facing me. When you look out at our classroom, you see me and the backs of the students in front of you, unless you're in the front row. (Modify as appropriate to your classroom arrangement.) Because I am the teacher, I have a different point of view.

Explain that sometimes when people have different points of view, they disagree on how to resolve problems. But they can all use FIG to express their own point of view.

3. Conduct a practice activity.

Explore the concept of different points of view by using a relevant situation—for example, classmates:

How many of you have classmates who sometimes like to use or borrow things that are yours?

What is your point of view? How do you feel? How would you describe this situation from your point of view?

What about your classmates? How do you think it feels from their point of view?

Now, illustrate the example, using FIG:

Say what you see and feel (F).

Give a reason why you do not like it—that is, identify the problem (I).

Tell what you want instead—your goal (G).

Example:

I feel frustrated . . . (F)

. . . when you touch things on my desk. (I)

I want you to stop so nothing gets ruined. (G)

Then consider the classmate's point of view:

I feel jealous . . . (F)

. . . when you have everything you need, all neat and organized. (I)

I want to have what I need for class when I need it. (G)

Ask students if they can think of any other examples of times when people had different points of view. Prompt for both academic (history, language arts, social studies) and real-life situations.

Examples may include things like these:

- The settlers wanted to move West, but the Native Americans did not want the settlers taking over their territory.
- Differences in the points of view of two characters in a piece of literature that your class is using.
- My brother and I want to watch different TV shows.
- I was blamed for something I did not do.

4. Role-play the process.

Have student pairs act out a situation based on two characters under study in history, social studies, or language arts, or an example of a current problem from the classroom or the playground. Talk about each situation, using some of the questions from Step 3. As you present the situation, include elements of motivation on both sides, as in the following example:

Ashley and Alex are having a misunderstanding. Ashley feels hurt because Alex said Ashley's new shoes were "different." Ashley likes the shoes and wants to wear them all the time. Alex didn't mean to hurt Ashley's feelings. He just thinks the shoes might be too fancy for their camping trip.

5. Introduce the "Footsteps" activity.

Tell students that they will learn more about different points of view when they play an activity called Footsteps. Pass out the art supplies, and have each student make a set of paper feet big enough to stand on.

Display the following three steps, explaining that the idea is to finish each statement that ends in three dots:

Step 1: Use Speaker Power

I feel . . .

I think . . .

I want . . .

Step 2: Use Respectful Listening

I think I understand what you said.

You feel . . .

You think . . .

You want . . .

Is that right?

Step 3: Think of ways to solve the problem

"How about if . . . ?" or "How can we . . . ?"

Point to the three steps and explain that these steps will be used in an activity to practice taking different points of view by standing in different places. That is, the idea is to literally move across the floor so each person stands right where the other one started out for the second set of statements, then goes back to the original place for the third. Use your example to demonstrate the process.

Select two students to demonstrate the steps, using the following scenario while you read the viewpoints and step prompts. They should use the sample dialogue as a guide.

Kevin wants the class to put on a show for the school and thinks that his class should be the only performers.

Donna is in Kevin's class and wants to put on a show, too, but she thinks they should invite other classrooms to be a part of the show.

Stage directions:

Step 1: Each actor stands on a pair of paper footprints and explains one of the two points of view using "I" sentences, such as "I think," "I want," or "I feel."

After both have spoken, the students switch places so each stands in the other's footsteps. You should tell them to wait for your signal to switch places so the one who spoke first isn't tempted to move too soon.

Step 2: Each person explains the other person's point of view as well as possible, using statements like these: "I think I understand what you said. You feel . . ." "You think . . ." or "You want . . ." Follow up each sentence with the question "Is that right?" or "Is that how you think or feel?" or "Is that what you want?"

After both have spoken, the students switch places so each stands in their original footsteps. You should tell them to wait for your signal to switch places, so the one who spoke first isn't tempted to move too soon.

Step 3: Pairs think of ways to work out the problem, taking both points of view into account, using sentences that start with: "How about if . . . ?" or "How can we . . . ?" For example:

Kevin: How about if we let our class figure out what kind of show we want to do.

Donna: We could try that, but how about if we come up with the kinds of acts, too, and see if there is any extra time for other classes.

Kevin: That's a good idea.

Donna: All right, I'll ask the teacher for a class meeting about the show.

The actors should then ask the class:

What "I sentences" did you hear us use?

How about "you" sentences?

What were our "How about it . . ." suggestions?

Did we agree on a solution? What was it?

Explain that students will use the same three steps to act out a problem you will give them.

6. Conduct another practice activity.

Divide your group into pairs. Assign parts—one is Student A and one is Student B—in each pair. Have the pairs take their places around the room, facing each other on their footsteps.

Read the following problem aloud:

A and B both want the last two pieces of blue construction paper for their book report covers. The students playing "A"

want the blue paper because blue is their favorite color, and the ones playing "B" want the blue paper because their book report is on the oceans of the world.

Give students about one minute for each step, with all pairs acting out the situation at the same time. Remind them to take turns talking. Walk around the room and listen to what students are doing. If necessary, help with suggestions.

7. Call the large group back together.

Choose one pair to act out the situation for the group. Ask everyone the following questions:

- What else could each student have said to explain their point of view?
- Did they seem to understand each other's points of view? What misunderstandings did you see?
- What was the solution they came up with? Would both people reach their goal?
- What are some other solutions they could try?

8. Introduce a Reflective Summary.

As outlined in the Introduction, ask students to reflect on the question "What did you learn from today's lesson?" Reinforce key themes, then go over any follow-up work.

9. Follow up.

The following steps will help make sure that the students have a chance to continue working with the new concepts.

Assignment

Have students practice using FIG and the Footsteps activity, either at home or at school, when disagreements arise out of people's different points of view.

Plans to Promote Transfer and Generalization of Skill

Language Arts and Social Studies

Stop at critical points of a story in language arts, social studies, and so on and ask students to role-play—using Footsteps—the different points of view.

Social Applications

When conflicts occur on the playground, prompt students to use Keep Calm and then try using Footsteps to help them think of a way that they could solve their problem.

Here are some additional conflict situations to use for practice:

- One student calls another a name in a humorous way, but the other sees nothing funny in it.
- Two students want to read the same book. One student says he needs it for a report. The other says it is his favorite book and he wants to read it again.
- Two students are arguing over a very fancy pen. One says that it looks like the one she bought with her allowance. The other says that it looks like the one given to her by her favorite aunt.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

1. The Footsteps activity can also be combined with FIG, especially if students have a hard time taking others' points of view.
2. Keep two sets of laminated footsteps available to use whenever students are involved in a conflict. Doing so will let you establish "Drop the Feet" as a prompt, directing the students to literally drop the feet and stand on them to carry out the Footsteps procedure. This can also be done at a critical point in a story, asking two students to play the role of two characters who encounter a conflict.