



## BRING ON THE *Calm*

### OBJECTIVE:

To learn ways you can calm yourself down when you are feeling angry, frustrated, angry, etc.

### THE TRUTH:

As part of this human experience, there will be times when you feel emotionally overwhelmed and unable to manage your thinking or feelings. When you feel this way, the emotional part of your brain takes over and the rational or thinking part of your brain takes a back seat. Calming your emotions—also called self-soothing—is an important life-long skill available to all of us. Our brains are amazing and if we can engage in certain activities when we notice our emotional side taking over, our brain produces a biochemical called serotonin that gives us a sense of calm.

### DID YOU KNOW?

There are three different factors that can make a particular activity more soothing. Let's explore them.

1. Familiarity: Activities that are associated with pleasant memories from the past will be particularly helpful in soothing your feelings. For example one person may find sipping hot chocolate with mini marshmallows and a striped straw soothing as it makes them think of happy afternoons from their childhood.
2. Multi-Sensory: Our emotional brain responds best when activities are multi-sensory and involve sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell. Typically pleasant activities that involve two or more senses are most soothing. An example of a multi-sensory activity might include walking in the woods, smelling the flowers, feeling the breeze, and hearing the wind rustling the trees.
3. Repetitive Motion: Studies suggest that repetitive motion, such as chewing gum, knitting, or rocking in a chair, can produce serotonin in the brain. Our bodies are naturally inclined towards repetitive motion, like pacing, when we are agitated.

### LET'S PRACTICE:

We are all unique with various likes and interests. What brings calm for one person, may not do the same for another. The key is to find what works best for you. Below is a list of ideas you can explore and try out. The list is divided into three types of activities:

- Activities you do immediately when you are starting to feel triggered.
- Activities you can do if you are anticipating a situation that can trigger you.
- Activities you can do on a regular basis to practice emotional control. It's helpful to understand that when you practice self-soothing on a regular basis, preferably daily, calming yourself down when you are more upset will be much easier.



## Calming ACTIVITIES

Check off the activities that you think would work best at different times.  
Add additional ideas of your own.

### THINGS YOU CAN DO *immediately* WHEN YOU GET TRIGGERED

- Take five cleansing breaths
- Splash cold water on your face
- Chewing gum
- Sip a soothing warm drink (preferably not one with caffeine)
- Wear familiar perfume or cologne
- Suck on hard candy
- Stretch
- Sit in the sun
- Walk barefoot on grass

Other things you can do:

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### THINGS YOU CAN DO WHEN *anticipating* TRIGGERING SITUATIONS

- Take a warm shower or bath
- Get a massage
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Enjoy a favorite meal
- Burn scented candles
- Take a walk outdoors
- Arrange and smell flowers
- Listen to quiet music
- Do a mindfulness exercise

Other things you can do:

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### *every day* TO DEVELOP THE HABIT OF SELF-SOOTHING

- Take care of a pet
  - Cook or bake
  - Meditate or relax in a quiet place
  - Read a book
  - Listen to "quiet" music
  - Watch a funny movie or show
  - Work on a hobby
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- (write in the hobby)
- Rock in a chair for 10 minutes
  - Garden

Other things you can do:

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TRY IT OUT and *Reflect*

In the space below, write down the calming activities you want to try. Try each one out, and then rate how successful they were in reducing your emotional distress using the following scale: 1=Not helpful at all; 10=Very helpful.

Name of Activity	Date Tried	Success Rating (1-10)	Thoughts about this Activity

MY *Game Plan*

Now that you have an idea of what works well for you in the different times of emotional overwhelm, create your personalized game plan of what your go to activities are. By writing them down and keeping this list handy, you'll have an easier time keeping your emotional brain from hijacking your life!

MY <i>immediate</i> ACTIVITIES:	MY <i>anticipatory</i> ACTIVITIES:	MY <i>routine</i> ACTIVITIES: