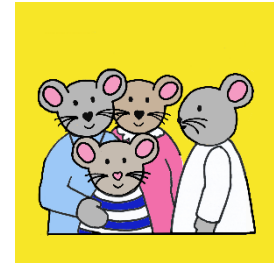


Quick Calming

Use This:

To reduce stress and improve mood when time is short or when in a public place.



Goals

- The family will understand that learning to stay calm and relaxed can have a positive effect on the way he or she feels – especially when stressed out or tense
- The child will learn Quick Calming, a relaxation technique to use when time is short, when in a public place, or when caught off-guard by a stressful situation.

Materials

- **Fear Thermometer** and **Fear Ladder** (2 unrated copies for anxiety/trauma)
- **Feelings Thermometer** (pp. 305, 307, 329)
- **Anxious Feeling and Thoughts** worksheet [Anxiety module] (p. 292)
- **My Relaxing Place** worksheet (p. 352)
- **Quick Calming Practice** worksheet p. 353)
- **Quick Calming** parent handout (p. 354)
- **Weekly questionnaires** and **Monitoring sheet** (see pages 268 – 285)
- **Therapist Note Taking Sheet** (p. 267)

⚡ If time is tight: Convey the idea that staying calm and relaxed can have a positive effect on the way we feel. Teach the child a brief relaxation strategy that can be used in public places where he or she may not be able to use deep muscle relaxation techniques.

Main Steps

<input type="checkbox"/> Set an Agenda	Remember to start by setting an agenda together and by reviewing any practice assignments.
<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Weekly Ratings	If the main focus is traumatic stress or anxiety, use the 0 to 10 scale of the Fear Thermometer to obtain Fear Ladder ratings from both the child and his or her parent. If the main focus is depressed mood, use the Feelings Thermometer to take a rating. Review the Weekly questionnaires and Monitoring sheet in detail.
<input type="checkbox"/> Review the Purpose of Relaxation	Ask the child to explain the relationship between muscle tension, stress, and negative feelings. Work with the child to generate an explanation that learning to relax our bodies can help us feel better emotionally. If the child previously did the relaxation training session with the CD, recall how the CD instructions helped the child relax, and how the child's overall feelings (e.g., Thermometer ratings) improved.

Explain Purpose of Quick Calming Explain to the child that some stressful situations are public or unexpected, and it can be difficult to use elaborate relaxation methods at those times. Provide examples of stressful situations in which you might need to relax but don't have a lot of time or there are other people around (e.g., just before an exam, just before you have to give a report in front of your class, just after an argument with a friend that has left you angry and your heart pounding).

ACTIVITY
Develop "Quick List" To help the child understand when it would be helpful to use the Quick Calming technique, ask the child to come up with some examples of times he or she may be stressed, tense, or uptight in public places, or when time is limited. Provide help, if the child needs it, reminding the child of situations he or she has discussed with you in which stress levels are likely to be high.

Introduce Quick Calming Tell the child that what you are going to work on today is a way to do Quick Calming, and that it involves three steps (they spell "ReST"):

- **Relax your muscles**
 - Relax the muscles, especially those that feel most tense
- **Slow your breathing**
 - Take slow, deep breaths and exhale slowly each time
- **Think of a peaceful place**
 - Picture a peaceful place and imagine that you're relaxing there

Tell the child the basic idea is that we can get good at doing these three things, and then – when we are in a stressful situation, we do these three things over and over again until we feel calmer, or until we have to take some action (e.g., take the test that is stressing us out, or take the penalty in football). Remind the child of some examples of stressful situations on the list the two of you just generated (above).

<input type="checkbox"/> Identify Areas of Chronic Muscle Tension, Using a “Body Map”	<p>Help the child identify areas in the body where muscles most often feel tight in times of stress. First, ask the child to imagine a situation in which he or she often feels stressed out (e.g., starting a test, arguing with parents, or other situations from the list the child gave you, above). Ask the child where his or her body feels tense in such stressful situations. If you have not done so in a prior session, select one of the first two pages of the <i>Anxious Feelings and Thoughts</i> worksheet and use it to "map" the feelings in the child's body (use only the girl or the boy drawing, as appropriate). Using questions (and pointing to areas if necessary), have the child mark each area on the body where he or she often feels muscle tension. Get as much information as possible, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can you mark places on this drawing where your muscles feel tight and tense when you are stressed out?</i> • <i>Do any other places ever get those tight and tense feelings?</i> <p>Point out that when doing Quick Calming, it helps a lot to focus on these tense areas of the body, trying to really get those areas relaxed.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Slow, Deep Breathing	<p>Tell the child that the second part of Quick Calming is slow, deep breathing. Explain that when people feel stressed or anxious, they often take short, shallow breaths which only make them feel more stressed. Discuss that taking slow, deep breaths from the stomach can help to slow the breathing, to calm the body, and to improve mood.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY <i>Slow, Deep Breathing</i>	<p>Teach the child how to take slow, deep breaths. Have the child get comfortable in the chair with feet on the floor and arms at his or her side. Ask the child to take a slow, deep breath from his or her stomach (his or her hand will move when inhaling). After 1-2 seconds, the child should exhale, even more slowly than when inhaling. An example follows:</p> <p><i>Now, we are going to learn how to do deep breathing. Take a slow deep breath in through your nose, and feel the breath go down through your chest and all the way down into your stomach. You will feel your chest rise first, and then feel your stomach rise, like a balloon is being blown up. When you breathe in, the hand on your stomach should move out. Hold your breath there for a moment, and then slowly let your breath out. When you breathe out, your hand will move in. You will feel your stomach go down, like the air is going out of a balloon. Let's try it a few times together.</i></p> <p>Explain to the child that this kind of slow, deep breathing is what he or she will do during Quick Calming. He or she probably won't</p>

	have a hand on their stomach, but everything else should be the same during Quick Calming.
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Guided Imagery	Tell the child that the third part of Quick Calming is picturing a peaceful place. Explain that just thinking about or imagining a peaceful, relaxing place can help us feel calm.
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY <i>My Relaxing Place</i>	Complete the <i>My Relaxing Place</i> worksheet together. Have the child describe his or her favourite relaxing place (e.g., the beach, bedroom) in detail. Focus on how that place looks, smells, feels, tastes, and sounds. Tell the child that he or she should make a <i>good mental picture</i> of this special peaceful place and how it looks, smells, feels, sounds, and tastes – because this is the picture the child will hold in mind during Quick Calming.
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY <i>Quick Calming Practice</i>	<p>Lead the child through three rounds of Quick Calming practice. First, have the child imagine being in one of the stressful situations you discussed earlier (e.g., just before a maths test or before shooting a penalty). See if – with a few tries – the child can imagine the stressful situation strongly enough to report a low ("Bad" or "Very Bad") rating on the <i>Feelings Thermometer</i>. If imagining a situation doesn't generate a low rating, try rehearsing a stressful situation together. For example, you might ask the child to get ready to take a football shot (imagining it is during a big game), or prepare to read a difficult tongue-twister aloud three times fast. Or you might play a quick game that is stress-inducing.</p> <p>Once you have got to a relatively low <i>Feelings Thermometer</i> rating, write it down. Then have the child do Quick Calming for two minutes. Before starting, remind the child that the three steps of Quick Calming spell ReST. See if the child can remember the three steps.</p> <p>Once the child begins the practise, you should periodically remind the child of the three steps (in bold, below), using a soft voice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>R</u>elax your muscles (sit in a relaxed posture, with hands resting loose on the lap or thighs; notice tension in any specific muscle groups and try to relax those muscles) • <u>S</u>low your breathing (take slow, deep breaths and exhale slowly each time) • <u>T</u>hink of a peaceful place (bring to mind the mental picture of that peaceful place you identified previously) <p>After the two-minute practice has ended, ask the child for another <i>Feelings Thermometer</i> rating and write it down. Then repeat the Quick Calming exercise a second and a third time, obtaining <i>Feelings Thermometer</i> ratings after each time.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss Activity	<p>After the three rounds of practice, discuss the effect of Quick Calming on the child's feelings, and Feelings Thermometer ratings. If the child's ratings showed improvement after successive Quick Calming practices, note how well Quick Calming worked; if the child's rating remained the same or got worse after the activity, discuss possible reasons for this (e.g., the exercise was too brief to do the trick, or Quick Calming is a skill that needs practice before it can work really well).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY Quick Calming in Public	<p>If time remains, arrange for one in-session practice of Quick Calming in a public place. You might have the child go to the clinic waiting room and practise Quick Calming; afterward, you can debrief, noting how the child did the calming privately, so that no one else in the room knew he or she was doing it (just like kids in school would not know if the child were using Quick Calming). Remember to take Feelings Thermometer ratings before and after this 'public' practice of Quick Calming.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Review Quick Calming Steps	<p>Praise the child for doing a good job on the activities, and explore how he or she can use this technique in real-life situations. Explore options for making it easier to do well. Some basic concepts to communicate in this discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising tense muscles in the body and relaxing them helps calm us down • Taking slow, deep breaths and exhaling slowly can help us get even calmer • Picturing a favourite peaceful place can add a lot to the calming experience
<input type="checkbox"/> Anticipate Difficulties	<p>Briefly review some common difficulties that people experience when using Quick Calming techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracting thoughts: Everyone has these. When these thoughts come up, the child should just gently refocus attention on his or her breathing and picture his or her relaxing place. • Physical reactions and sensations: Most people have little muscle twitches and tingling sensations when they do Quick Calming. It's not a problem, and there may be fewer twitches and tingles the more the child practises Quick Calming.
<input type="checkbox"/> PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT Quick Calming at Home	<p>Ask the child to find a time during the coming week to practise Quick Calming in a public place. Go over the Quick Calming Practice worksheet with the family. Briefly review the Quick Calming steps, and remind the child to make a rating on the Feelings Thermometer both before and after practising. Also remind the child that Quick Calming is a skill that will improve with practice.</p>

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- Send the materials for the next session** Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they do not need to be completed for next session as you will go through them together in the session. Tell the family you will also send the **Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet** and **Feelings Thermometer** which need to be completed for the next session.

Confirm date and time of the next call.

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- Summarising** Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.
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Leave ‘Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note with the family by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to treatment or a game or activity that will leave them feeling good about the work you’ve done today. The end of each session should be used to praise the family’s efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

Helpful Tips

- If the child is having difficulty describing a relaxing place, have him or her draw a picture of the place.
- Check in on goals: Does the child feel that he or she is making progress? How does the material you covered today relate to the goals you set together?

Special Cases

<i>Depression</i>	If the child enters the session in a bad mood, or seems tired, lethargic, or uninterested, this is an opportunity to introduce a mood booster: take a brief mood rating using the Feelings Thermometer , spend a few minutes engaging in a pleasant activity, and then take another mood rating. If the activity was successful, highlight to the child that what we do changes how we feel.
<i>Conduct Problems</i>	If you are using this technique with a child with conduct problems and he or she has not been introduced to the Feelings Thermometer , you will need to introduce it at the start of this session.

How’s Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?
- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?

