

# Trauma Responsive Strategies: Tools for Calming the Physiology

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# Objectives

- ▶ By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:
  - ▶ Develop strategies for supporting all children in maintaining a safe, calm classroom environment
  - ▶ Begin building a classroom solution kit to support all children



# Guidelines

- ▶ Be respectful of others
- ▶ Support a caring and inclusive environment
- ▶ Use self-regulating tools to manage your body, mind, and emotions



# Getting Started- Be Proactive

- ▶ Take care of yourself & check your own emotional state
- ▶ Create a safe classroom environment
  - ▶ Draft a classroom safety plan
    - ▶ Discuss as a classroom family ways that everyone can work together to keep each other safe
  - ▶ Use calm, quiet tones of voice
  - ▶ Morning Check-ins
- ▶ Recognize children's emotions & validate those emotions
  - ▶ Plan lessons with a social-emotional focus, including introducing and modeling emotions



## Taking Care of Yourself

*Before you can care for others, you must care for yourself.*

When you are in a difficult situation with your child, ask yourself some questions:

How am I feeling? Do I notice a rapid heart rate? Angry facial expressions?

Tense muscles? Sadness or Despair?

What is my reaction to the child? Am I fed up? Am I telling myself that my child is doing this on purpose to make me mad?

How am I handling the situation? Am I withdrawing? Freezing up? Digging in my heels for a fight?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions try one or all of the following techniques to help you care for yourself. You will also be modeling behavior you want your child to learn.

**Use the Calm Down Steps.** Stop, Breathe, Count to Four, Give Yourself a Hug, Ask for Help. Ask your child to show you how!

**Take a timeout.** Make sure your child is safe then walk into another room.

Ask someone else to deal with the situation.

**Smile.** A big smile (even if it is fake) stretches and relaxes your face.

**Stretch.** Touch your toes and then the sky. Clasp your hands and reach over your head and back.

Press your palms together as hard as you can.

**Repeat a favorite saying to yourself.** "This too shall pass" or "I can do it".

**Opposite Action.** Do something that is the opposite of what you feel like doing. Want to shout?

Whisper instead. Want to spank your child? Instead, give her a big hug.

**Take care of yourself every day.** Get plenty of rest. Drink lots of water. Exercise and eat nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables and whole grains. Avoid alcohol, sweets, and fatty foods.

[www.traumasmart.org](http://www.traumasmart.org)



# Building Your Classroom Solution Kit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFJHbCMV7kc>

Head Start Trauma Smart

# CSEFEL- Center for Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

- ▶ Social Stories
- ▶ Feelings Faces posters/cards
- ▶ Tucker Turtle Technique
- ▶ Solution Kit
- ▶ Problem-Solving Steps

[www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu](http://www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu)









# Problem Solver



1. What is my problem?



3. What would happen if...?  
Would it be safe? Would it be fair?  
How would everyone feel?



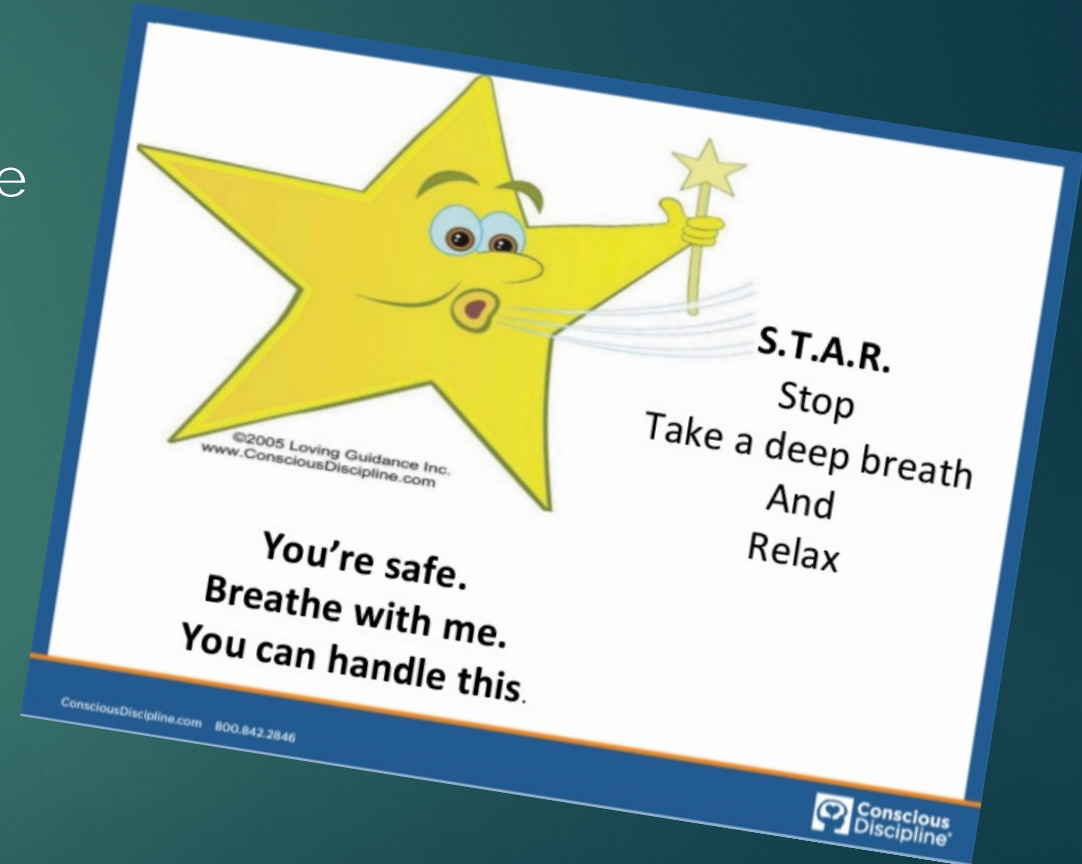
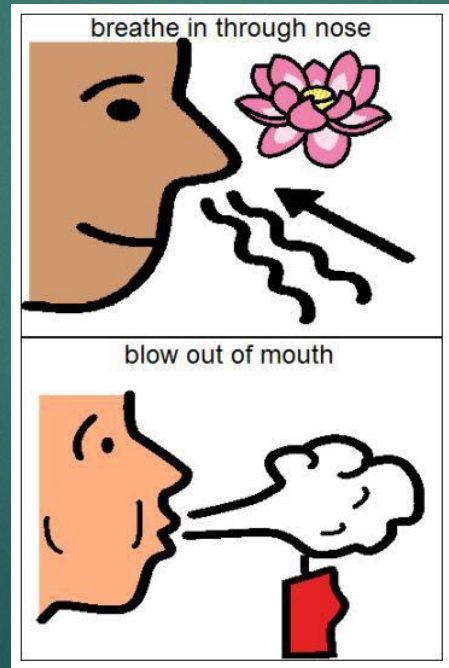
2. Think, think, think  
of some solutions.



4. Give it a try!

# Calm Down Exercises

- ▶ Conscious Discipline S.T.A.R. breathing
- ▶ Breathe in your flower, Blow out your candle
- ▶ Meditation
- ▶ Yoga



[www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)





**Mountain Pose:**

**Mountain, Cactus, Helicopter (swinging arms),  
Bird (flapping arms), Penguin**

(Stand tall with legs hip-width apart, feet facing forward, and straighten your arms alongside your body.)

[www.kidsyogastories.com](http://www.kidsyogastories.com)



**Crescent Moon Pose:**

**Giraffe, Moon, Banana**

(From Mountain Pose, reach your arms up high over your head, bringing your palms together. Tilt your upper body to one side. Come back to center. Tilt your body to the other side.)



**Tree Pose:**

**Tree, Flamingo, Cactus, Stork**

(Stand on one leg, bend your knee, place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh, and balance. Sway like a tree.)



**Warrior 2 Pose:**

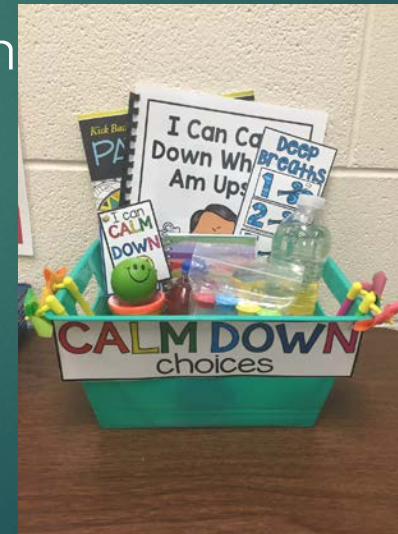
**Surfer, Archery, Snowboarder, Skateboarder, Hero**

(From standing position, step one foot back, placing the foot so that it is facing slightly outwards. Take your arms up in parallel to the ground, bend your front knee, and look forward.)



# Create a soft, quiet space in the classroom

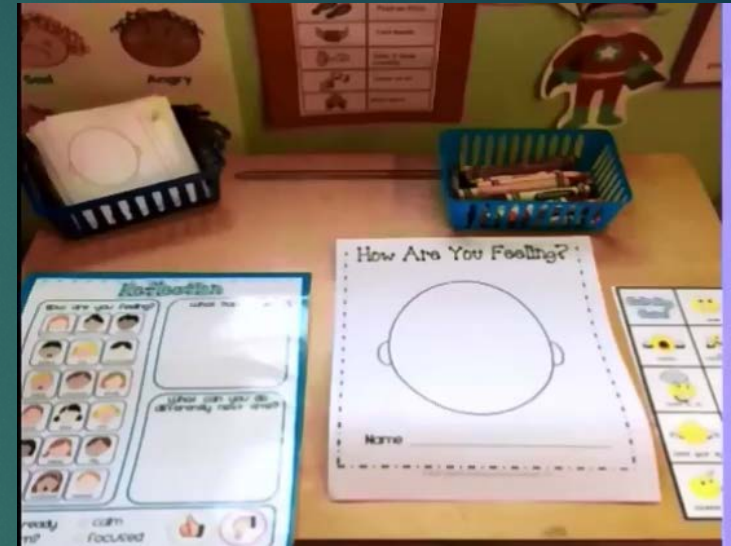
- ▶ Quiet cube or soft area for independent use
  - ▶ Pillows, stuffed animals, couch, blankets
- ▶ Place posters/materials near area for children to use to guide calm down techniques- Tucker Turtle, Feelings cards/posters, S.T.A.R. Breathing, etc.
- ▶ Include social stories or books about emotion
- ▶ Create "Calm Baskets" for independent use
  - ▶ Sensory materials
- ▶ Provide focused attention





# Create a Thinking Space in the classroom

- ▶ Area for independent use- desk or table w/ chair
- ▶ Stock the area with:
  - ▶ Feelings cards
  - ▶ Mirrors
  - ▶ Drawing materials- "This is how I feel today..."
  - ▶ Class mascot
- ▶ Elicit student feedback for ideas to be included in the Thinking Space

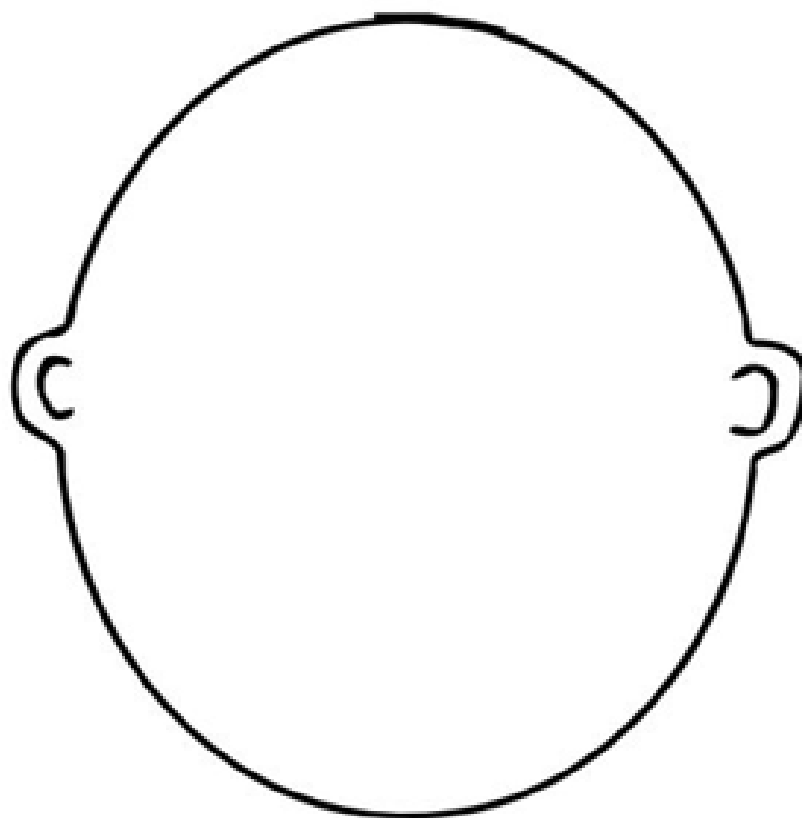


Think Space

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iV1-vnAvsAo>



How are you feeling?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I Am...

I AM FRIENDLY

I AM IN CONTROL

I AM SAFE

I AM UNIQUE

I AM LOVED

I AM CALM

I AM ME



Develop responsive classroom practices that support all students in a safe learning environment.