



# CALMING STRATEGIES



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## TIME

5 - 10 minutes

## SEL COMPETENCY

Self-Management

## PURPOSE

To teach strategies to help regulate emotions

Reflection: Which calming strategy did you like most? How will you remember to use the strategy when you are upset?

### ACTIVITY:

Ask participants: **Have you ever felt like it's too hard to calm down when upset?**

Explain: **Scientists have been studying this and have found a few simple strategies that help regulate (or calm down) our brains when we become upset. Different strategies work best for different people. We are going to practice four strategies right now before we need them so that it will be easier to pick one when we need them.\*** (Write the names of these strategies on the board or on a poster as you explain them and keep them up to remind participants to use them.) Take the time to practice each strategy with them as you go.

**1. CLOSE YOUR EYES - Find a place to sit where you can safely close your eyes for at least a minute. Removing everything that you see can really help your brain regulate itself. Take 5 deep, slow breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. The slower the better. Try it now and see if you feel differently afterward.**

**2. SHAKE IT OFF - Did you know some animals in nature actually shake off their stress? Have participants spread out and stand up. Ask them to shake their hands, heads, shoulders, hips, and each leg for 5 seconds each. It's a way to use your body to reset your brain.**

**3. PALM PRESSURE - First, use one thumb to massage the other palm (squeezing the palm gently) for 20 seconds. Take it a step further and push your palms against each other. Find the right amount of pressure to use so it is a calming movement. Try it with your eyes open or closed. See which way works best for you.**

**4. SIGH - Allow yourself to be dramatic for 5 seconds. Let out the kind of sigh you might make when you are frustrated. It actually helps your brain reset!** This one may be the first one participants go for because it allows them to express their dismay (without using hurtful words).

\*These strategies are modified from the teachings of Lori Desautels, Ph.D <http://revelationineducation.com>