

COPE, CALM & CARE © Models for Community Recovery and Resilience

CALM Tip Sheet for Adults

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Doing skills: CALM

The CALM model is all about helping you remind yourself that you are in control of your body and its reactions to stress, panic and anxiety. The CALM model teaches *physical “Doing” skills*; active behaviors that can be used with children and adults to increase resilience and strengthen physiological responses to stressors.

Calm yourself by: CONTROLLING, ATTENDING, LISTENING, MANAGING

- **Control** your breathing and heart rate. *You can't panic if your body isn't in panic mode.* Slow your breathing by counting slowly to three for every breath in and out.
- **Attend** to the present moment (not getting caught up in the past or future), but tuning in to what is happening within you and around you RIGHT NOW. Use all your senses to help you attend to the present.
- **Listen** to your thoughts, feelings and sensations. Acknowledge each, and let them pass over you like a wave rather than getting stuck.
- **Manage** your anxiety with active techniques. Remind yourself that you are in charge, and that anxiety is not. Use muscle relaxation and body scanning to put yourself into a relaxed state. Use the CALM activities to develop the skills to mastery.

CALM SKILLS

Basic Deep Breathing:

1. Assume a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.
3. Breathe slowly in through your nose, feeling the air in your lungs expand down towards the stomach; pushing the diaphragm out as your lungs fill up with air.
4. Slowly count to three and release the breath during another three count.
5. Repeat.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):

1. Assume a comfortable position (lying down or sitting is fine).
2. Tense and hold each section (small muscle group) of your body for 5 seconds, and then fully release it.
3. Start with your forehead, eyes, lips, cheeks and jaw. Tense and hold for 5 seconds, then release and feel the calmness.
4. Move on with other parts of the body. Be sure to engage (tense and release) all the way through to your feet. Move from head and face to hands, arms, shoulders, back, stomach, hips, thighs, feet and toes.
5. If any particular area remains tense, focus on that area, and repeat the 'tighten and relax' process three or four times.

Mindful / Sensory awareness:

1. Assume a comfortable position (lying down or sitting is fine).
2. Engage in basic deep breathing.
3. Focus on your 5 senses (touch, taste, hearing, smell, and sight (if your eyes are not closed)).
4. If your thoughts wander, bring your focus back to the present moment, and your body and senses. Become hyper aware of how your body is feeling in the present moment.
5. Continue to breath slowly and deeply, focusing your attention on your sensory awareness.
6. Acknowledge that the past has already come and gone, and the future hasn't happened yet. In this present moment, you are OK. If your thoughts drift to the past or future, just acknowledge them and let them go, and bring your attention back to your senses, and the present moment.

Heartrate / Pulse checking / biofeedback:

1. As you learn how to calm your body, sometimes it is helpful to have a clear marker of your progress.
2. Learn how to check your heartrate (using an app, a smart watch or device) or manually with a clock.
3. Check your heart rate.
4. Practice deep breathing or mindful sensory awareness for anywhere between 5-15 minutes and check your heart rate or pulse again.