

Counselor Corner

PBIS at Home

If you notice your child becoming frustrated, especially with completing a school task, suggest that they take a break. This is language that your child should be used to hearing at school. Taking a break could mean going to a break spot that you made (see week one for more on this), or simply stopping the activity for a few minutes. Kids can use a stress tool (see fun and calming activities for play dough and moon sand recipes), read a book or take a walk. A lot of kids like a physical option of relieving stress. This could mean running in place for as long as they can, dancing, doing jumping jacks, throwing balls or soft objects into a bucket or other activities. I would recommend that the break not include technology (with the exception of listening to music or doing a guided movement activity from online - GoNoodle is a great website for this). Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and then return to the activity.

Calming Tools

Here's a visual with different tools from Magination Press Family that can be used by kids or adults when they're feeling upset, stressed, etc. Directions are in the middle of the circle (and listed below the pictures). Many classes have talked about calming strategies that students can use when feeling frustrated, stressed, overstimulated, etc. so you could also brainstorm ideas with your kids what activities might be a good option for them under each category.

Mental Health Checkup & Toolkit

Taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health. These exercises can help you cope with emotions like worry, stress, or feeling upset, and help with situations that you feel you can't do much about. Give these exercises a try — they might help you feel better!

Distraction Tool



Doing distracting or fun activities focuses your attention in a helpful way — it gives you something else to think about instead of what is bothering you. Try playing a game, listening to music, spending time with a pet, talking to family/friends, or doing a craft.

Relaxation Tool



Slowing your body down calms your brain and relaxes your body. Try taking five slow deep breaths, tightening and releasing your muscles, or imagining being somewhere peaceful, like the beach or walking in the woods.

Action Tool

Keeping a good schedule and doing your everyday activities helps you stay on track and be healthy in your body and your mind. Try sleeping on a regular schedule, drinking plenty of fluids, eating nutritious meals, and exercising every day!



Thinking Tool

Noticing the realistic and positive parts of a situation increases optimistic thinking, which can help you change how you feel. Try asking yourself, "What are the good things that could happen?" or "These thoughts aren't helping me — how can I see this differently?"



Instructions

1. Pause and take a moment to check up on yourself. How do you feel?
2. Consider each tool. Start with the Distraction Tool and follow the arrows.
3. Which tool do you think will help you feel better right now? (On a different day, it might be a different tool.)
4. Now give it a try!

By Sara E. Williams PhD and Nicole E. Zahka PhD
More fun stuff: <https://dreamaplay.com>



Distraction Tool

Doing distracting or fun activities focuses your attention in a helpful way — it gives you something else to think about instead of what is bothering you. Try playing a game, listening to music, spending time with a pet, talking to family/friends, or doing a craft.



Relaxation Tool

Slowing your body down calms your brain and relaxes your body. Try taking five slow deep breaths, tightening and releasing your muscles, or imagining being somewhere peaceful, like the beach or walking in the woods.



Action Tool

Keeping a good schedule and doing your everyday activities helps you stay on track and be healthy in your body and your mind. Try sleeping on a regular schedule, drinking plenty of fluids, eating nutritious meals, and exercising every day!



Thinking Tool

Noticing the realistic and positive parts of a situation increases optimistic thinking, which can help you change how you feel. Try asking yourself, "What are the good things that could happen?" or "These thoughts aren't helping me — how can I see this differently?"

Directions

1. "Pause and take a moment to check up on yourself. Try taking a deep breath. How do you feel? Can you identify a problem? Until we know what is bothering us, it's hard to know how to manage it.
2. Consider the four tools, starting with the Distraction Tool. Take some time to learn how each one works.

3. Which tool do you think will help you feel better right now? (On a different day, it might be a different tool.)
4. Now, pick one and give it a try! If it helps you, great! If you need more help, try changing categories or adding a category, such as listening to music while taking a walk."

<https://www.maginationpressfamily.org/stress-anxiety-in-kids/kids-feeling-stressed-try-this-mental-health-checkup-toolkit/>

If you want more ideas for:

Thinking - Gratitude journal (Check out Week 2 Counseling Activities)

Relaxation - Cosmic Kids Yoga (Week 2 Counseling Activities) or

[https://indianorchard.springfieldpublicschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_498421/File/Fun%20and%20Calming%20Activities%20Week%201/Counseling,%20Mindfulness,%20and%20Choice%20Time%20Activities%20Week%202%20\(1\).pdf](https://indianorchard.springfieldpublicschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_498421/File/Fun%20and%20Calming%20Activities%20Week%201/Counseling,%20Mindfulness,%20and%20Choice%20Time%20Activities%20Week%202%20(1).pdf)

Calming Strategies/Visuals (Week 3 Counseling Activities)

https://indianorchard.springfieldpublicschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_498421/File/Fun%20and%20Calming%20Activities%20Week%201/Counseling%20and%20Choice%20Time%20Activities%20Week%203.pdf

In case you missed them, look at our previous Counselor Corners for ideas about:

Week 1 (4/2) - Calming Strategy (Break Spot), Videos About Explaining the Virus to Kids, Self-Care

Week 2 (4/9) - Managing Feelings, Technology Tips

Week 3 (4/24) - Home Reward System, Hand-washing Tips

Week 4 (5/1) - Giving kids specific positive feedback, task list for kids, Sesame Street and CNN Town Hall on the Coronavirus

If you have any questions or need more information/support please reach out to us:

Ms. McCoy

City Connects Site Coordinator

mccoys@springfieldpublicschools.com

Katie Potito

School Adjustment Counselor

potitok@springfieldpublicschools.com

Erin Vorwerk

School Adjustment Counselor

vorwerke@springfieldpublicschools.com