

connections



Cool to be calm

This workbook is filled with fun and engaging activities that support your child's mental wellness in a simple, positive way. It helps children understand their emotions and build healthy calming skills they can use every day.

Recommended for ages 7-14

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Supporting your child's mental wellness

This is a special workbook for families to learn about thoughts, feelings, and helpful ways to calm your body and mind.

As you work through these pages with your child, you'll find tools and strategies that benefit the whole family. Your involvement makes all the difference; children learn emotional skills best when caring adults practice alongside them.

Together, you'll learn:

- Ways to recognize and name emotions
- Calming techniques
- Skills for handling tough moments
- Activities that bring you closer



Let's get started!

What is mental health?

Mental health is how we think, feel, and act.

It helps us:

- Handle stress
- Make friends
- Solve problems
- Feel confident

Draw or list three things that make your brain and heart feel good:

Think about it: What do you do when you feel sad, mad, or worried?

Feelings detective

We all have feelings, even the tricky ones!

Match the face to the feeling. Draw lines between the words and the faces.



Sad

Happy

Tired

Angry

Scared

Excited

Then draw your own feeling face in the blank circle below!



If you drew a face that looks angry, sad, scared, or tired, what usually helps you feel better?

The calm corner

Sometimes our bodies feel full of energy, and we need to slow down. Let's make a calm corner at home! Pick a quiet spot with a soft pillow, a cozy blanket, and maybe a favorite stuffed animal. When you sit there, take slow, deep breaths and count to ten.

Your calm corner can include:

- Soft blankets
- Stuffed animals
- Coloring books
- A journal
- Calming music
- A stress ball
- A fidget toy
- A photo of your family or a pet

Draw your calm corner! Think about a special place that helps you feel relaxed and safe. If you can't go there in real life, you can close your eyes and picture the one you drew to help yourself feel calm.

DIY calming glitter bottle

When you shake this bottle, imagine your thoughts swirling like glitter. Then slowly settling down, just like your feelings.

You'll need:

- A clear water bottle
- Warm water
- Glitter glue or clear glue
- Glitter
- Food coloring (optional)
- Beads (optional)

Steps:

- Fill the bottle with warm water about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up
- Add some glue and glitter
- If using food coloring, add a drop or two
- Add beads if you'd like
- Close tightly
- Shake!

DIY stress balls

Make your own calm with easy do it yourself (DIY) stress tools at home that help you feel relaxed.

What you'll need:

- One balloon (any color you like!)
- A funnel (or a plastic bottle with the bottom cut off)
- Filling of your choice:
 - Rice
 - Flour
 - Play-Doh
 - Cornstarch
 - Sand

Instructions:

1. Stretch your balloon a few times to loosen it.
2. Use the funnel to pour your chosen filling into the balloon. If using a bottle, place the balloon over the bottle opening and pour your filler in.
3. Fill it until the balloon is round and squishy.
4. Tie the end tightly.

Build your coping box

A coping box is a magic box that helps you feel better when you're upset. You can fill it with special things that make you smile or feel calm. Your coping box can even be a simple shoe box, and you can decorate it any way you want to make it extra special. When you feel sad, mad, or worried, you can open your coping box and choose something to help your body and heart feel better.

Things to include:

- A stress ball or squishy
- Pictures that make you smile
- Your glitter bottle
- Notes with calming sayings
- Your favorite smell
- Art supplies
- A journal
- A fidget

Draw or write about what you included inside your coping box! Then write a few things you'd like to add to it this week.

Breathe like a superhero

Just like superheroes use their powers to stay strong and focused, you can use your breath to help your body feel calm and in control.

Superhero breathing:

- Stand tall like a superhero
- Breathe in through your nose for four counts
- Hold for two counts
- Blow out slowly through your mouth for six counts
- Repeat three times

Draw or write about yourself as a superhero using your breath to stay calm!

Cool-off strategies

When you're feeling frustrated or angry, try one of these "cool-off" ideas:

- Count backward from 20
- Listen to your favorite song
- Color or draw a picture
- Write in your journal
- Take a walk
- Pet your animal
- Read a book
- Use your glitter bottle
- Use any of the items in your calm box!

Create your own cool-off plan

When I feel mad or upset, I can...

Positive self-talk zone

What we say to ourselves matters! Replace these thoughts:

Negative thought

"I can't do this."

"Nobody likes me."

"I messed up."

Power thought

"I can try my best."

"I have people who care."

"Mistakes help me learn."

Write your own positive message:

- I am...

Draw a picture of yourself feeling proud:

Express yourself

Your feelings deserve to be seen and heard. You can share them in creative ways!

Draw a “mood monster” for each emotion:

Happy

Angry

Sad

Scared

Tired

Excited

Write a short poem about your feelings:

Create a comic about a time you used a coping skill:

Design your own sticker for “stay calm mode”:

Write or draw a time when you used something from your calm box:

My feel-good goals

Setting small goals can help you feel strong, calm, and ready for anything! Think about what makes you feel happy, safe, or proud, and use this page to plan your week. You get to choose one thing to try, one new coping skill to practice, and someone you can reach out to when you need a little support.

- One thing I want to try this week:

- One new coping skill I'll practice:

- Someone I can talk to when I need help:

Remember: every feeling is okay; you have the power to handle it!

Beyond the guide: taking the next steps

While this guide offers a range of ideas and activities to support your child's mental well-being, it's important to remember that every child's needs are unique and often require more than a guide can provide. If you're noticing signs that your child is struggling, seek expert support.

Visit Connections today to explore how professional support can make a meaningful difference in your child's well-being. Remember, you're not alone. Expert care is available to help guide your family through every challenge and triumph. Several of our centers accept youth and offer walk-in access to care, no referral or appointment needed. You can access youth care at our centers in Tucson, AZ, Harrisburg, PA, and Woodbridge, VA.

Connections Tucson Crisis Response Center

2802 East District Street
Tucson, AZ 85714

Connections Emergency Behavioral Health Crisis Walk-in Center

1100 S. Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104

Connections Prince William County Crisis Receiving Center

14011 Worth Avenue
Woodbridge, VA 22192



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