



Practicing Self Control

What is Self - Control?

- Self control is the ability to Stop, Think, and then Act
- Self control helps us manage impulsive emotions so we can make positive choices and avoid doing things that we may regret
- Example: Self Control is similar to a stoplight in your brain. When you feel like doing something quickly – the stop light turns red, reminding you to stop and think first.

Why is Self - Control important?

- Staying Calm when things don't go your way
- Improving your social interactions
- Completing challenging tasks with perseverance

PAUSE and REFLECT:

- Have you ever gotten upset and done something that made things even worse? How could self - control have helped?

MINDBRIDGE

What are three ways to practice Self - Control?

a) Taking Deep Breaths when Upset

- When we feel angry or frustrated, our body often reacts as well (i.e. faster heartbeat, slight sweating)
- Deep breathing can help calm these physical responses, so we can focus on our emotional responses.

b) Counting to 10 Before Reacting:

- Counting can give your brain time to calm down before deciding what to do
- Example: “If someone said something to you that made you angry or hurt, instead of reacting right away, count slowly to 10 in your head.”

c) Thinking about Consequences

- Thinking about the consequences (positive and negative) of a decision can help us tailor our actions to more desirable outcomes.
- In general, thinking ahead allows you to reduce impulsivity and future regret.

MINDBRIDGE

Exercise #1: The CBT Freeze



Goal: Teach children how to pause, and think before acting

Materials:

- Music!

Instructions:

- Have a parent or caregiver provide a real – life scenario that may elicit a negative response for the participant
 - Ex: You got a horrible grade after studying for a quiz for days
 - Ex: Your friends all excluded you to their birthday party
- Play music and have the child dance with their caregiver!
- Have your caregiver stop the music and say “freeze!”
- As the child, state your thoughtful response after thinking about what they said, and literally stopping!

MINDBRIDGE

Exercise #2: Balloon Breathing



Goal: Help children use deep breathing to calm down when they feel upset or overwhelmed!

Materials:

- Nothing (Optional: A real balloon for demonstration)

Instructions:

- When we are upset, it is like a balloon filling up with air – it can pop if we don't let the air leave slowly!
- Teach the child to take a deep breath in through their nose (pretending to fill up a balloon), hold it for 2 – 3 seconds, and then slowly release the air through their mouth (letting air out of the balloon.)
- Practice this 5 – 10 times together!
- To visually demonstrate this exercise, blow a balloon to its full capacity, wait 5 seconds, and then watch the balloon deflate (i.e. letting all of its impulsivity flow out)