

Student Mental Wellness

Positive Self-Talk

COPING CARDS



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social-Emotional Learning, or SEL provides a foundation for safe and positive learning, and enhances students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and life.⁹ The field of SEL is replete with programs and approaches, which support schools in embedding five large dimensions into teaching and learning. These include self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making.

Student Mental Wellness Positive Self-Talk and Coping Cards is a print-friendly booklet with coping statements and grounding tips that families and teachers, and students can use to help self-regulate when experiencing anxiety, anger, overwhelm, and other feelings of distress.

Social-Emotional Learning Affirmations

Affirmations—or positive sayings about yourself and your efforts—can be an important and easy-to-integrate social-emotional learning tool. Affirmations such as “I’ve done this before so I can do it again” and “I am going to have a good day” can help individuals develop emotional self-management skills by focusing positively on their experiences and emotions. Affirmations are easy to tailor for children and youth, and can easily be incorporated into other routines at the beginning and ending of days.

[Learn More >](#)

Create a coping skills checklist: calming, distraction, physical and processing.

[Learn More >](#)

Use understanding and supportive language

Use the following phrases as a way to support your child, let them know that you’re going to support them and help them in any way that you can.

“I’m here for you”

*“Together, we can work on this.
We’re a great team”*

*“Talk to me and tell me what’s
going on”*

“I love you”

“How can I help?”

“Do you want a hug?”



COPING STATEMENTS FOR:

- *Anxiety*
- *Fear*
- *Feeling Overwhelmed*
- *Phobias*
- *Panic*
- *Pain Management*
- *Disordered Eating*
- *Anger Management*

Source: Lee, J. (n.d.). Use Coping Cards and Coping Statements to Improve Mental Health. Retrieved March 7, 2016, from <http://www.choosehelp.com/topics/mental-health/rehab-for-patients-with-mental-health-challenges>

ANXIETY

“ *I’m nervous about this test...*

“ *I’m uncertain about the future...*

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- Fighting this doesn't help – so I'll just relax and breathe deeply and let it float away.
- This feeling isn't comfortable, but I can handle it.
- By relaxing through these feelings I learn to face my fears.
- I can feel anxious and still deal with this situation.
- This is not a real emergency. I can slow down and think about what I need to do.
- This feeling will go away.¹
- By staying present and focused on my task my anxiety will decrease.
- These are just thoughts – not reality.
- Anxiety won't hurt me.
- Feeling tense is natural. It tells me it's time to use coping strategies.
- Things are not as bad I am making them out to be.
- Don't discount the positives.²



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Take a moment to think of some of your favorite things - your favorite color, or song, or snack, and share what you like about them.

FEAR

“ *I'm feeling scared* ”

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- I've done this before so I can do it again.
- I'll be glad I did it when this is over.³
- I'll feel better when I am actually in the situation.
- I'll just do the best I can.
- By facing my fears I can overcome them.
- Worry doesn't help.
- Whatever happens, happens. I can handle it.



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Close your eyes and imagine being in your favorite place - What sounds do you hear? What do you smell? Take a moment to describe what you see and what you're doing on this mini vacation.

OVERWHELMED

- “ I can't do this. I can't take this anymore
- “ I hate math and am feeling overwhelmed...

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- Stay focused on the present. What do I need to do right now?
- It will soon be over.
- It's not the worst thing that could happen.
- Step by step until it's over.
- I don't need to eliminate stress, just keep it under control.
- Once I label my stress from 1 to 10 I can watch it go down.
- Take a breath.



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Take a pause and think about this very moment in time. What day is it today? What time is it, and how is the weather right now? If you're able, step outside and take a deep breath.

PHOBIAS

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- I can always retreat out of this situation if I decide to.
- There is nothing dangerous here.
- Take deep breaths and take your time.
- This feeling is just adrenaline. It will pass in a couple of minutes.
- These feelings are not dangerous.⁴



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Find 3 objects that are near you. Describe everything there is to notice about them - what color they are, what texture they have, if they make a sound, etc. If you were to give them a name, what would they be?

PANIC

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- This isn't dangerous.
- I will just let my body pass through this.
- I have survived panic attacks before and I will survive this as well.
- Nothing serious is going to happen.
- This will pass.⁵



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Take a deep inhale and hold for 3 seconds. Now exhale. Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, cow, dog, etc...)

PAIN MANAGEMENT

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- I can control the pain.
- One step at a time - I can handle this.
- I need to stay focused on the positives.
- It won't last much longer.
- This isn't as bad as I thought.
- No matter how bad it gets, I can do it.
- It will be over soon.



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Place your left hand on your right shoulder and tap. Now place your right hand on your left shoulder and tap. Squeeze into a big hug and say "I am safe". Tap, tap, squeeze, and affirm. Repeat as needed!

DISORDERED EATING

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- Food is fuel. Food is medicine. Food makes muscles.
- Don't think, just eat.
- I am not my illness.
- Strong, healthy, smart.⁶



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Think of your favorite animal. If you were to cook a meal for them, describe what you would cook and why.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

“ *This class is dumb...* ”

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

- It's not worth getting mad about.
- I won't take this personally.
- I am in charge not my anger.
- I am going to breathe slowly until I know what to do.⁷
- Getting angry isn't going to help.
- I can handle this and stay in control.
- Remember to breathe. Remember to breathe.
- People aren't against me – they're for themselves.⁸



GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Take a deep inhale and hold for 3 seconds. Now exhale. Find something to squeeze (play dough, clay, silly putty, your fists, a stress ball), and squeeze as many times as needed.

QUICK WAYS TO CALM DOWN

Sometimes you'll need a quick way to help a child calm down and you don't have much with you. Maybe it's when you're out at Target or stuck in traffic. These tips will come in handy at those times:

- Imagine your favorite place - it's like taking a mini vacation wherever you are
- Think of your favorite things
- Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, cow, dog, etc...)
- Squeeze Something (play dough, clay, silly putty, your fists, a stress ball)
- Get a Cold Drink of Water
- [54321 Grounding - go through each of your 5 senses](#)

More ideas of what to say to calm an anxious child

- Go Zen - [49 Phrases](#) to Calm an Anxious Child
- [Lemon Lime Adventures](#) - What to Say to Calm an Anxious Child

SEL 101 for Parents (2017)

An informational video to inform parents about SEL in schools and provide them with insights into SEL in their own parenting practices in order to support their children's social and emotional development. Also available in Spanish. In addition, there is an SEL discussion series for Parents and Caregivers (pdf) available in Spanish (pdf).

[View Resources >](#)

REFERENCES

¹ Coping Statements for Anxiety

<http://www.synergeticpsychotherapy.com/dont-run-from-panic-some-anxiety-management-tips/>

² Coping with Negative Thinking

http://www.drbeckham.com/handouts/CHAP03_COPING_WITH_NEGATIVE_THINKING.pdf

³ Anxiety Network: Coping Statements for Anxiety

<http://anxietynetwork.com/content/coping-statements-anxiety>

⁴ Anxiety Advice: About Phobias

<http://www.anxietyadvice.com.au/phobias.html>

⁵ RMIT: Coping with Panic Attacks

<http://mams.rmit.edu.au/gsn22k3fve9az.pdf>

⁶ McMaster Children's Hospital: Coping Statements for Disorders Eating Patients

<http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/documents/Patient%20Education/PediatricEatingDisordersCopingStatement-lw.pdf>

⁷ Coping Statements for Anger Management

<http://www.angriesout.com/grown4.htm>

⁸ SMART Recovery: Rational Thinking for Anger Management

http://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/library/Articles_and_Essays/Rational_Thinking/anger.htm

⁹ Overview of SEL

[https://casel.org/overview-sel/#:~:text=Social%20and%20emotional%20learning%20\(SEL,maintain%20positive%20relationships%2C%20and%20make](https://casel.org/overview-sel/#:~:text=Social%20and%20emotional%20learning%20(SEL,maintain%20positive%20relationships%2C%20and%20make)

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