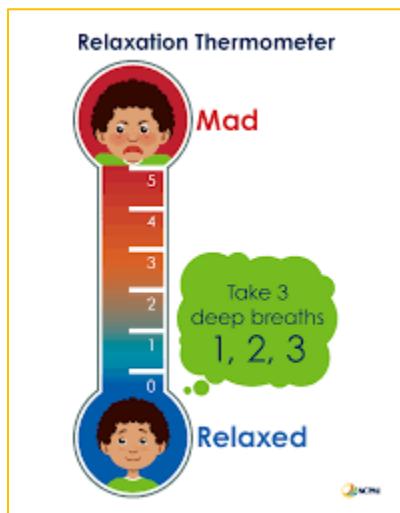


Not Just for Kids: Pyramid Model Strategies During COVID-19

April 8th, 2020: By Sara Silva, STARS Coach- Child Care Connections



It is very easy to make the mistake of thinking that [Pyramid Model strategies](#) are just for kids. The reality is that these strategies for supporting children's social emotional well-being and preventing challenging behaviors work for adults too! When adults are stressed we also go through processes of increased emotional volatility that can lead to our engaging in challenging behavior...and we also need to engage in calming techniques.

The uncertainty brought into our lives by the COVID-19 virus, and the governor's shelter in place order, has led to an increased level of stress for all adults. Even if we are feeling pretty even keeled, having access to news and other social media outlets can quickly increase our levels of stress. Being aware of our own emotional state and utilizing calming strategies becomes imperative in staying healthy

(remember emotional wellbeing equals a stronger immune system) and in supporting the children and families in our care (whether personally or professionally). One strategy we can use is the relaxation thermometer:



Survival mode (fight, flight, freeze, tend)

- What does my body feel like?
- What are my emotions? How am I feeling?
- What are my thoughts like?
- What is my behavior like?



Early stress warning

- What does my body feel like?
- What are my emotions? How am I feeling?
- What are my thoughts like?
- What is my behavior like?



Our optimal zone of regulation

- What does my body feel like?
- What are my emotions? How am I feeling?
- What are my thoughts like?
- What is my behavior like?

Once we are aware of how we individually respond to different levels of stress, we can engage in periodic check-ins to see how we are doing and implement strategies to bring us back down to our optimal green zone. But what are those strategies anyways?!?

If you have taken the Pyramid Model trainings (especially Module 2) this universal calming strategy will come as no surprise:

BREATHE



This means that we take deep belly breathes with long exhales. Longer exhales than inhales sends a message to the brain that all is well and calms the nervous system. This one is the biggy, “in-the-moment” strategy for calming back down the relaxation thermometer but there are many more. The challenge is that these are much more unique to you. Here are some things to consider:

- Are there certain relationships that help you to feel calm and grounded?
- Are there certain places or activities that feel calming and restorative? (such as a walk in the park, cooking, crafting, writing in your journal, lighting a scented candle, etc.)
- Are there certain things that you find to be comforting?
- Are there certain quotes that are calming?

Think of it as creating your very own calming kit. There are many online suggestions as we all try to handle the stresses of COVID-19, try some of them and see how they work for you. Maybe yoga is calming? Or guided imagery? Sometimes certain techniques will work sometimes and not others. What has been calming and supporting of your emotional well-being in the past?

Try implementing some of the Pyramid strategies in your own life and know that we’re all in this together.

P.S. If you need a little reminder to take deep breaths check out:

- [Tucker Turtle](#) and ([Spanish](#))
- There's one for [families](#) too! ([Spanish](#))

