

Self-Management



ABOUT OPEN CIRCLE

Open Circle is an evidence-based social and emotional learning program for Kindergarten through Grade 5. Our grade-differentiated curriculum proactively develops children's social and emotional skills including recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving. It helps schools build a community where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning.

Being Calm

By: Open Circle

Being Calm

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what it feels like to be calm
- To learn and practice calm-breathing techniques

MATERIALS

- **Calm Breathing** mini-posters

INTRODUCE

Ask students to imagine the following situation:

Every day after snack, your class has silent reading time together. You choose a book and go to your favorite reading spot near the window. Soon, the room is quiet. You are comfortable and your body is still.

Ask students how they might be feeling in that situation. If the word “calm” doesn’t come up, you can introduce it to students. Ask how they might be breathing. (*Slowly and deeply.*)

Ask students: What else might you be doing in school that makes you calm? What might you be doing at home that makes you feel calm?

When students give examples, ask them to show you what their body might look like in that situation. What happens to your breathing when you are feeling calm?

Tell students that when they’re feeling calm, they’re doing calm breathing. Point out that there are some different breathing techniques to use when you want to feel calm.

Share the **Calm Breathing** mini-posters and read aloud the directions for each of the techniques: Balloon Technique, Counting Technique.

PRACTICE/APPLY

Practice each technique a few times. To begin the practice, have students sit in a relaxed and comfortable position. (*Make sure that students aren’t lifting or holding their shoulders in a tense way.*) After you and the students practice, ask children how the calm breathing makes them feel. Ask students to notice where in their bodies they feel calm.

Ask how many students know some other breathing techniques. Invite a few volunteers to demonstrate their techniques for the class. Ask children to think about some ways

that calm breathing might help them in school. Have students think about and discuss how athletes and performers might use calm-breathing techniques to improve their performance.

Remind students that when they are breathing calmly, they are able to be good learners, good friends, and good problem-solvers. Learning how to do calm-breathing takes a lot of practice and it might feel funny at first. The more you practice calm-breathing, the easier it will be to use it when you need to calm down. Ask students for suggestions of when would be good times to practice calm breathing during the day.

HOMEWORK/EXTEND

Introduce an activity, such as “Chair Yoga” or “Relaxed Breathing Rate,” to give students more opportunities to learn and practice calm-breathing techniques. Instructions can be found in the Activities section.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

Wong, Janet. *Twist: Yoga Poems*. Margaret McElderry Books, 2007.

Illustrated poems help readers visualize various Yoga poses that can be used to increase relaxation and flexibility.

- Read aloud the poem, “Breath,” and then guide students through some calm breathing exercises. Have students write their own poems about what it feels like to be calm.

Calm Breathing

Balloon Technique



Breathe in.



Breathe out.

Calm Breathing

Counting Technique



Breathe in.

Breathe out.

Preparing to Facilitate Lessons

Preparing for each lesson helps you to listen and be responsive to students.

1. Read the entire lesson. Have a clear understanding of lesson objectives and key vocabulary words.
2. Review lesson “Notes.”
3. Have lesson “Materials” ready to go (skill mini-posters, chart paper, etc.).
4. Look at the suggested literature connections at the end of the lesson. If you don’t have the suggested books, choose a book that you already have that connects to the lesson content.
5. Work towards not depending on having the lesson sheet in front of you. You may want to highlight key questions on note cards or list main ideas on chart paper.
6. Consider how the objectives and concepts apply to your own life experience.
7. Think about some recent classroom examples relating to the concepts.
8. Think of ways to intentionally integrate the vocabulary and concepts into other parts of the school day.

The material on the preceding page(s) is an excerpt from the grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum*. The complete curriculum contains:



- 32 core lessons across five units: Beginning Together, Managing Ourselves, Strengthening Relationships, How to Sort Problems, and Problem Solving;
- 27 supplementary lessons;
- 80 community-building and mindfulness activities and practices;
- 27 skill mini-posters;
- 18 *Home Link* family newsletters;
- Over 250 children’s literature titles that connect to specific SEL topics;
- A myriad of homework and extension activities; and
- End-of-unit student and teacher reflection activities and additional curriculum-wide reflection and assessment tools.

Open Circle is an evidence-based, universal social and emotional learning program for Kindergarten through Grade 5. The grade-differentiated *Open Circle Curriculum* proactively develops children’s social and emotional skills, including recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem solving. It also helps schools build a community where students feel safe, cared for and engaged in learning. Open Circle’s unique whole-school approach includes all adults in the school community – teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff and families – learning to model and reinforce prosocial skills throughout the school day and at home.

Teachers implement the *Open Circle Curriculum* during twice-weekly, 15-minute classroom meetings in which students form a circle of chairs, including an empty seat to symbolize that there is always room for another person or opinion. These meetings are also a familiar and safe setting for children to discuss important issues in their classroom, school, community or the broader world. Teachers and counselors also use the *Open Circle Curriculum* with students who require additional, targeted instruction.

The *Open Circle Curriculum* is designed for educators who have participated in Open Circle’s Core Program, an interactive and experiential professional development experience that combines training and coaching sessions to help educators strengthen their knowledge and skills in several areas, including: social and emotional learning (SEL) theory, research and practice; facilitation; group development and community building; problem solving; mindfulness and reflection practice; appreciation for cultural and other differences in students; integrating SEL throughout the school day; and using children’s literature to teach and reinforce SEL.

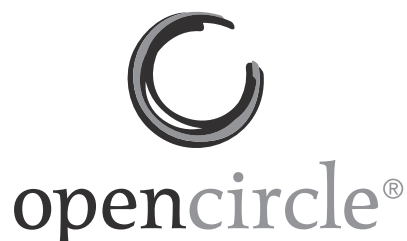
For more information, visit www.open-circle.org or call us at 781-283-3277.

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Open Circle
Wellesley College-STC
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481

Phone: 781-283-3277
Fax: 781-283-3717
info@open-circle.org
www.open-circle.org



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Centers for
Women