



CALM PRACTICES

SUPPORT STAFF QUICK GUIDE

For School Social Workers, Psychologists, Health Professionals, Counselors, Educators, and Coaches

CALM is a practical framework used to support self-management, emotional regulation, and readiness to engage in learning or problem-solving.

These practices are designed for brief, flexible use during individual sessions, small groups, check-ins, or transitions.

C — Centering Breathwork

Supports regulation, grounding, and emotional settling

Use when: a student is dysregulated, anxious, overwhelmed, or shut down.

- **Hand-to-Body Breathing**
Invite the student to place a hand on their chest or stomach to notice breathing.
- **Extended Exhale Breathing**
Encourage a slower breath out than in to support calming and focus.
- **Pause Awareness**
Briefly notice the natural pause after breathing out before the next inhale.

A — Active Movement

Supports energy release, focus, and body awareness

Use when: a student is restless, distracted, or needs to reset before talking.

- **Simple Guided Movement**
Light movement paired with breathing to release excess energy.
- **Standing or Grounded Positions**
Positions that help students feel stable and supported.
- **Choice and Agency**
Students choose their level of participation or opt to observe.

L — Listening

Builds internal awareness and self-management skills

Use when: supporting reflection, emotional awareness, or decision-making.

- **Noticing Body Signals**
Guide students to name physical sensations (tight, relaxed, energized).
- **Respecting Limits**
Reinforce stopping or adjusting when discomfort is noticed.
- **Brief Check-Ins**
Ask simple questions such as, “What do you notice right now?”

M — Mindful Movement

Strengthens attention, presence, and transition readiness

Use when: transitioning between activities or closing a session.

- **Slow Transitions**
Move intentionally between activities to support regulation.
- **Repetitive, Predictable Motions**
Simple movements that help students feel organized and calm.
- **Intentional Rest**
Short moments of stillness while noticing breathing or posture.

Implementation Tips for Support Staff

- Use **1–2 practices at a time**
- Keep language neutral and invitational
- Frame practices as tools for **focus and self-management**
- Use before or after conversation-based interventions
- Integrate into **Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 supports**

CALM practices help students regulate first, so conversation, learning, and problem-solving can follow.