

THE BIG Book of Calmers



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Positive Press

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What are Calmers?

You will all be familiar with classroom moments when you feel the atmosphere becoming charged with negative energy. We experience these moments when children are overexcited or anxious and the bad feeling seems to catch on until everyone is restless and you know that you urgently need to find a way to settle them down and get them working calmly again. The big book of Calmers is a toolbox of activities which you can use with individuals, groups or a whole class to relieve stress and tension, or even as a quick pick-me-up. Many of them you can use yourself, whenever you feel your own stress levels rising.

How can Calmers help?

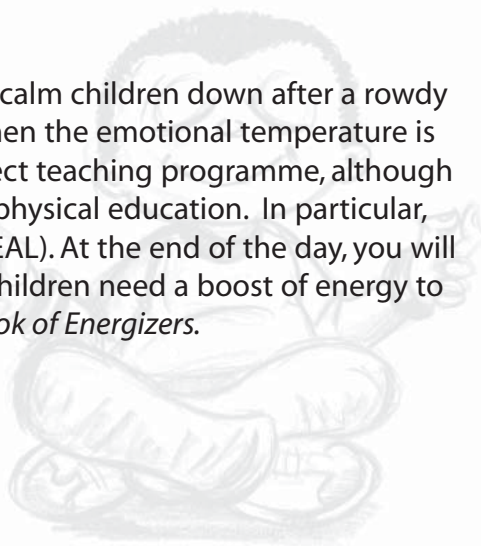
A calm classroom has an ethos in which children feel more secure and can concentrate on their work. A calm classroom is, therefore, likely to be a happy classroom and a productive one, where children experience a sense of well-being. Calmers are designed to turn around negative thinking and build children's self-esteem. They promote emotional self-awareness, teach anger management, and improve children's ability to interact positively with each other.

Learning is hard work and, sometimes, it can be taxing and challenging. Children often express anxiety in physical ways and their tension becomes visible. You know when this is happening because they start to fidget and disrupt other children. They can also become emotional and get upset or angry or withdraw into themselves and refuse to interact in their usual ways. When you notice these behaviours starting to take over your setting, you need to do something quickly so that everyone gets a chance to calm down and settle themselves back on task. You can do this by offering a complete change of scene that helps them to forget about whatever it was that was making them overwrought. In other words, you need to give everyone a break: a time of relaxation or positivity that calms everyone down but doesn't take too long or interfere with your timetable.

It is worth noting that The Energizers book works in a similar way by orchestrating a mental change of direction. With Calmers, children are being redirected away from anxiety or over-excitement and towards calm alertness, whereas with Energizers children are being redirected away from listlessness and into focused alertness. In other words, the same result is achieved but the starting points are very different. This is why, sometimes, Energizers and Calmers can appear similar.

When can you use Calmers?

Calmers are quick: you can use them to start the day, end the day, to calm children down after a rowdy playtime, to steady their nerves before a test – in fact, at any time when the emotional temperature is rising. They can be fitted in at any time. They are not part of your direct teaching programme, although many of them can add an extra dimension to art, language work, or physical education. In particular, they will fit in well with Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). At the end of the day, you will all go home feeling far less tired and more fulfilled. However, when children need a boost of energy to wake them up we recommend you use an energizer from *The Big Book of Energizers*.



Who can use Calmers?

Anyone who facilitates a group of learners can use Calmers. We have designed this book for use in primary and secondary schools. Some activities will suit younger children, some will suit older children. Many can be adapted for use in Early Years settings and for children with special educational needs. You can teach children to use some of these techniques independently, whenever they feel themselves getting anxious.

Weary staff and enthusiastic parents can benefit from Calmers too!

What types of activities do we include in our Calmers?

A wide range of activities can be used to calm children down. Some activities calm children by calming their physical bodies, while others harness their imagination or calm them by changing negative thoughts into positive ones. Some activities set out to change the atmosphere of the whole room and others are suited for use with small groups or individuals. Activities include:

- stretches and relaxation techniques
- sensory stillness
- singing together
- music, rhythm and rhyme
- stories and poetry
- self-esteem boosters
- positive thinking

Each chapter of Calmers is grouped in a particular order. You will find them by the following symbols:



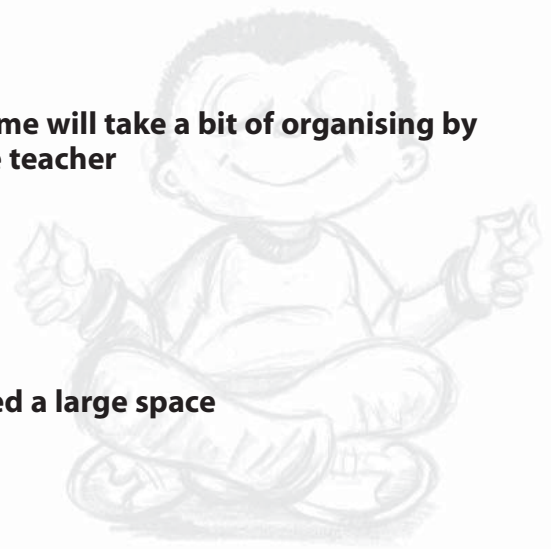
1. **Thumbs up** = activity can be played quickly and easily



2. **Index finger on the chin** = game will take a bit of organising by the teacher



3. **Pointing outside** = game will need a large space





42. A focused moment

This calmer helps the children to understand that concentrating on our senses is very soothing.

What you need: nothing

What to do:

Sit very still and concentrate your senses on the little details that are usually ignored.

What sounds can you hear?

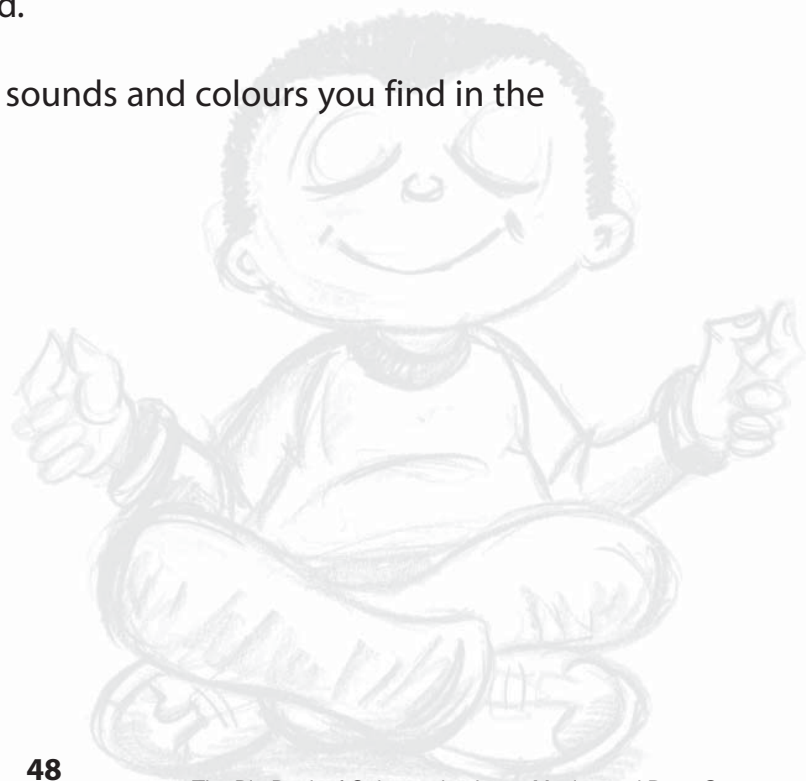
Which colours can you see?

How do your feet feel in your socks?

Can you feel the softness of your clothes on your shoulders?

You don't need answers, just direct everyone's attention to the small sensations of the moments and they will be instantly calmed.

Tip: Go outside and listen to the range of sounds and colours you find in the environment.





89. Colours and emotions

This calmer will help your children to make associations between colour and emotion.

What you need: paper; paints, or coloured crayons

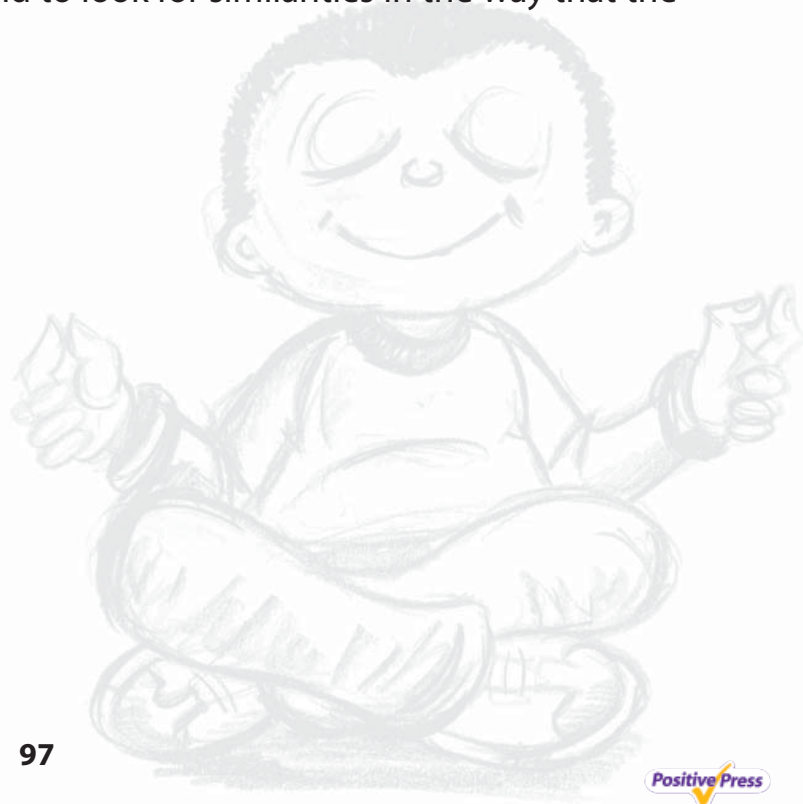
What to do:

Discuss emotions with the group. Make a list of the different emotions and list how these emotions make us feel inside and how they show up in our behaviour.

Ask the group to choose either the emotion of anger or the feeling of calm and draw or paint what this emotion feels like.

Tell them to try to feel the emotion as they paint or draw – a picture about anger will look spiky and hot whereas a picture of calm will look more floaty and fluid, perhaps. Ask them to think carefully about the colours they choose.

When the pictures are finished, group them so that the same emotions are put together. Ask everyone to compare these pictures and to look for similarities in the way that the emotion has been portrayed.





108. Pretend bedtime story

This is a lovely, snugly way to calm everyone down.

What you need: a suitable story

What to do:

Tell the group that you are all going to have a lovely little rest.

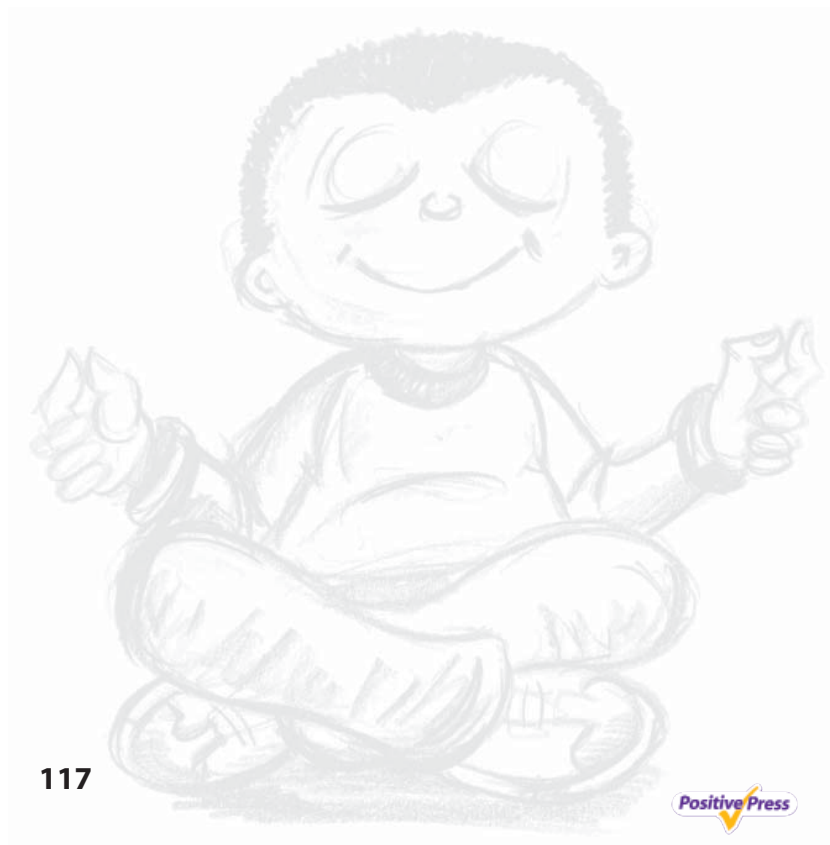
Turn off the lights.

Shut the blinds.

Ask the group to put their head in their arms and rest on the table.

Read them a bedtime story.

Now ask them to yawn and stretch and join in a group finger wiggle that will wake everyone up.



THE BIG Book of Calmers

When children become over-excited, stressed or fractious, do you ever wish that you could wave a magic wand and create an atmosphere of peace and order?

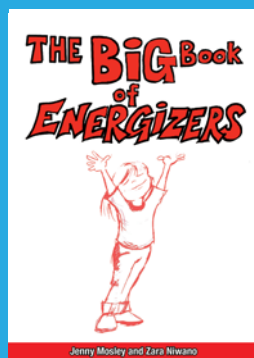
This book is what you need to do just that!

It is bursting with ideas to create calm whenever and wherever you see that calm is needed. The activities have been carefully chosen so that they can be used instantly and effectively almost anywhere in your setting. A very wide range of strategies are included to suit different groups and situations. Most require no equipment or preparation and are quick and easy to learn.

Wherever your setting, you find just what you need to de-stress your children and cheer everybody up.

A must-have book for anyone working with children of all ages.

*Jenny Mosley has written the circle time guidance for S.E.A.D.
(Social & Emotional Aspects of Development – DCSF 2008) and S.E.A.L.*



**We have written The
Big Book of Energizers
to create a balance!**

follow Jenny Mosley Consultancies on



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