Practise coping skills

**Group size**

Any size group

**Suggested timing**

10-20 minutes

**Method**

Practise

**What you need**



[Film](http://www.firstaidchampions.redcross.org.uk/primary/kindness-and-coping/coping-skills)

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**PowerPoint**

Learning objectives

* Practise a coping skill – breathing with colour

## Overview

This activity helps children learn to breathe slowly, so they can stay calm when helping others.

## Preparation

Be able to show a film and/or PowerPoint.

Familiarise learners with the ground rules for the session or establish ground rules. Assure learners are given opportunities to ask questions and have a way to ask anonymous questions if they wish to. For guidance on how to do these things, see the [Creating a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment guidance.](https://firstaidchampions.redcross.org.uk/primary/guidance-and-support/)

## How to run the activity

1. Explain that the group is going to learn a special way to stay calm by breathing deeply and slowly. It is called ‘breathing with colour’.
2. Show Jonjo’s keeping calm film on the [coping skills page](http://www.firstaidchampions.redcross.org.uk/primary/kindness-and-coping/coping-skills) via the link or through the PowerPoint, which also includes a transcript of the film.
3. Once they have seen the film ask the children to choose a colour for good, relaxed feelings, maybe blue for a clear blue sky, or yellow for the warm golden sun.
4. Now choose a different colour for the uncomfortable or ‘not so good’ feelings– like grey, the colour of a rainy day.
5. Discuss, as a group, what different colours mean to them.
6. With the children sitting quietly in their chairs or on the floor, work through the breathing with colour activity as follows:
* Close your eyes and take a long, slow breath in through your nose. Imagine the air you are breathing in is your good colour. As you are imagining this say to yourself “in with the good colour”.
* Hold the ‘good’ air inside for a few seconds and let it fill you with good feelings.
* Then calmly and slowly blow the air out through your mouth. Imagine the air coming out of your mouth is the negative colour - you are slowly blowing those negative or bad feelings away.
* We are going to practise breathing with colour a few more times.
* Breathe in with the good colour…out with the bad colour …very, very calmly. Feel your arms and legs start to relax.
* In with the good colour…out with the bad colour. Now your stomach and shoulders are feeling relaxed.
* In with the good colour…out with the bad colour.
* Now open your eyes and keep those good, calm feelings inside you. Do you feel calmer after that exercise?

Discuss what other coping skills children might use to help them feel calm, for example taking deep breaths or thinking calm thoughts, encourage them to think about another coping skill they could use if needed.

## Stretch and challenge activities:

1. Have learners review the coping skills cards from the learn activity and reflect again whether they would add this breathing exercise to their cards? Encourage learners to reflect privately and think about which of these coping mechanisms they could use in future.
2. If they have already done their [‘Shield of strength’ activity](https://firstaidchampions.redcross.org.uk/primary/kindness-and-coping/), they could go back and think about coping skills they can add to this shield, or they can create their own shield, thinking specifically about coping skills they have, if they haven’t done this activity.

## Summing up

Remind learners that they can use this skill any time they feel they need to cope with a difficult situation or want to feel calmer inside, not just during emergencies.

Can they think of any other situations they might use it? For example, before a test or playing with friends.