

Chill Skills Card Deck (with Poster + Reference Guide)



by Stacey Kaczur

Teacher Notes

These 25 Chill Skill cards, inspired by neuroscience, are a great tool to use to support children with self-regulation.

Introduce children to the Chill Skill cards one by one over a period of time.

Explore these when children are in a CALM state.

When a child is upset, they are not able to think and learn something new. These Chill Skills need to be explored when the prefrontal cortex (the thinking, reasoning part of the brain) is in charge not the amygdala (the emotional control centre in a fight, flee or freeze response).

Only after experiences in a CALM state, would a child be able to employ these Chill Skills when dysregulated. We are all different so it makes sense that the ways we can settle our nervous systems may also be different. What works for one many not work for another and it's important children know that and also tune into what works for them.

One size does not fit all.

Consider having the Chill Skill cards readily available alongside the Chill Skills poster.

Eventually, children will do these independently when the needs arises. For more details on the neuroscience behind the Chill Skills see the Reference Guide.

**Teach Chill Skills in moments of calm so that children
may have a tool ready when the time comes.**



Chill Skills Poster

These can be posted in your Mindfulness Corner, used inside your student's Mindfulness Journals and/or given to students to take home to put up in their house/bedroom to bring the learning home.



Breathing
Brain Break



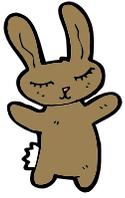
Mind Jar



Slow Breaths



Name it
to Tame it
(I feel...)



Stuffedie Breathing



Think A
Happy Thought



Counting to
Ten



Stuffedie Snuggles



Self-Hugs



Gratitude or
Memory Stone



Weighted Blankets



Standing Deep Breaths
(wrists crossed)



Listen to the
sounds around you

My Toolkit of Chill Skills



Visualizing



Breathe with a
mindful seeing tool



Seeing Perspectives
Using Talking Sticks



Mindful Listening
(noise cancelling
headphones
or music)



Change the activity
you are doing



Go for a walk - mindfully
notice your steps or the
things around you



Hum



Use humour as a
distraction



Imagine someone or
something you love



Get out in nature



Grounding
5 things I see, 4 things I hear, 3
things I touch/feel, 2 things I smell,
1 thing I feel right in this moment

My Toolkit of Chill Skills



Breathing
Brain Break



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Happy Thought



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Standing deep breaths
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Listen to the sounds
around you



Slow Breaths



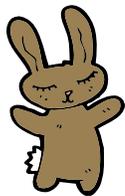
Name it
to Tame it
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Visualizing



Breathe with a
mindful seeing tool



Stuffed Breathing



Mind Jar



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Use humour as a
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Go for a walk - mindfully
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Grounding
5 things I see, 4 things I hear, 3
things I touch/feel, 2 things I
smell, 1 thing I feel right in this
moment



Get out in nature



Imagine someone or
something you love

Chill Skills Cards

These can be printed out and laminated as individual cards, or put together on a key ring to create a set.

Listen to the Sounds Around You



Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you for a minute.



How does your body feel now?

Self-Hugs

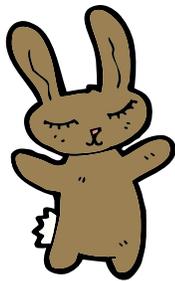


Give yourself a hug with a comfortable amount of pressure. Hold it for a minute.



How does your body feel now?

Stuffie Breathing



Lay down and place the stuffie on your stomach. Belly breath and watch or feel the rise and fall of the stuffie.



How does your body feel now?

Breathe with a Mindful Seeing Tool



Steady your breathing rhythm as you use your tool. Do you feel your heart rate changing?



How does your body feel now?

Change the Activity You Are Doing



Take a break from the activity.
What could you do instead?



How does your body feel now?
Are you ready to try again?

Use Humour



Try a silly shake, a 15 second
laugh or dance it out!



How does your body feel now?

Get Out in Nature



Notice the world around you.
Use all your senses.



How does your body feel now?

Gratitude or Memory Stones



Hold the stone. Think
about something you are
grateful for. Picture it.



How does your body feel now?

Think a Happy Thought



Choose a happy memory.
Enjoy a mind movie of the moment. Stay in your movie for a short time then notice the ending.



Focus on how this memory makes you feel now.

Slow Breaths

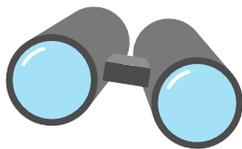


Feel your breath come in and out. Visualize your breath travelling through your body.
Slow it down.



How does your body feel now?

Seeing Perspectives Using Talking Sticks



Do you know your perspective?
Can you name your feeling?
Use the Talking Stick to speak to each other.



How does your body feel now?

Looking at Nature



Can't get outside?
Look at pictures of nature.



How does your body feel now?

Mindful Movement



Place your focus on the slow and purposeful movement of your body as you walk.



How does your body feel now?

Imagine



Imagine someone or something you love. Hold that image in your mind. Can you feel the warmth of that love around you?



How does your body feel now?

1,2,3 Counting to Ten



Take deep breaths and slowly count to ten.

1... 2... 3... 4... 5...
6... 7... 8... 9...10...



How does your body feel now?

Weighted Blankets



Wrap up in a weighted blanket or use a weighted stuffie.



How does your body feel now?

Name it to Tame it*



Can you name what you are feeling right now? "I feel ..." If not, can someone help you name what you are feeling?



How does your body feel now?

* Dan Siegel

Breathing Breaks with Chime



With a mindful body on, ring the chime and take a breathing brain break. Ring it a second time.



How does your body feel now?

Hum



Hum a familiar tune. Maybe invite someone to join you.



How does your body feel now?

Stuffie Snuggles

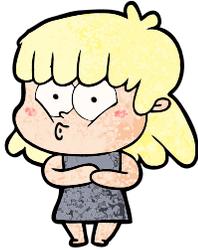


Take a moment on your own. Grab a special stuffie and give it a snuggle.



How does your body feel now?

Standing Deep Breaths



Slowly breathe in through your nose as you lift your arms above your head.

Exhale slowly bringing your arms down along your sides and then cross your wrists in front of you again.



How does your body feel now?

Visualizing



Experiencing self-doubt? Picture your situation going well & see yourself having success. Aloud or in your head, say, "Bring it On!" or "Challenge Accepted!"



How does your body feel now?

Mindful Listening



Use noise cancelling headphones to block distractions.



Are you better able to focus now?

Mind Jar



Give the jar a gentle shake. Watch the glitter slowly settle to the bottom. Do this a few times. As it settles, can you notice that your own body and thoughts are settling too?



How does your body feel now?

Mindful Listening



Listen to music you enjoy.



How does your body feel now?

Grounding



Mindfully use all our senses.

Notice 5 things you can see.

4 things you can hear.

3 things you can touch or feel.

2 things you can smell.

1 thing you feel in this moment.



How does your body feel now?

Chill Skills Reference Guide

**Remember, one size does not fit all.
Explore these when children are in a CALM state.**

Listen to the Sounds Around You



Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you for a minute.



How does your body feel now?

Listen to the Sounds Around You

Close your eyes. Listen. What sounds can you hear around you? When you mindfully focus on the sounds around you like this, can you notice more sounds? Can you tell what is making the sounds?

Take a minute to hear all that is around you. How do you feel after a mindful listening moment?

Self-Hugs



Give yourself a hug with a comfortable amount of pressure. Hold it for a minute.



How does your body feel now?

Self-Hugs

Cross your arms and wrap them snugly around yourself with your hands reaching just past the opposite armpits and onto your back. Squeeze with a comfortable amount of pressure. How does your body feel now?

A self-hug can release the same kinds of chemicals in the brain that a real hug from a trusted adult or friend release in helping us calm.

Stuffie Breathing



Lay down and place the stuffie on your stomach. Belly breath and watch or feel the rise and fall of the stuffie.



How does your body feel now?

Stuffie Breathing

Get a special stuffie. Lay down and gently place the stuffie on your stomach. You may place your hands on your stuffie or relax your arms at your sides. You may choose to close your eyes or gaze at your stuffie on your stomach. Focus on belly breathing (in through your nose and out through your mouth) and watching/or simply feeling the rise and fall of the stuffie with your breath. Can you notice a change in the way your body is feeling now?

The use of a stuffie can be comforting, and watching the stuffie can support younger children in sustaining breath work for longer periods of time.

Laying down is an upright trunk position which allows oxygen rich blood to flow more easily through the body.



Breathe with a Mindful Seeing Tool



Steady your breathing rhythm as you use your tool. Do you feel your heart rate changing?



How does your body feel now?

Breathe with a Mindful Seeing Tool

Pick your breathing tool. Use your tool to steady your breathing rhythm. Inhale, exhale. Breathe slowly. Breathe deeply. Do you feel your heart rate changing? Can you feel the effects of the breath on your body? How does your body feel now?

Watching a pinwheel, Hoberman Sphere or other tool, gives the child something different to focus on. The steady rhythm of the motion of the tool can support slower, deeper breathing.

Change the Activity You Are Doing



Take a break from the activity. What could you do instead?



How does your body feel now?
Are you ready to try again?

Change the Activity You are Doing

Take a break from the activity that has activated your amygdala (emotional control centre). What activity could you do instead that will help get your PFC, thinking part of the brain, back in charge? Are you ready to try again now?

Switching to a more pleasant or successful activity can support a child in getting their PFC back in control with responses rather than reactions. When the nervous system has settled, invite the child to try again.

Use Humour



Try a silly shake, a 15 second laugh or dance it out!



How does your body feel now?

Use Humour as a Distraction

Choose a joke book, a funny book or chat with an adult or friend. Do a silly shake, a 15 second laugh or dance it out! How does your body feel now?

Using humour can sometimes settle an active amygdala. Laughter can be a great chill skill.

Get Out in Nature



Notice the world around you. Use all your senses.



How does your body feel now?

Get Out in Nature

Notice the world around you. Breathe. Be. Involve all your senses in this outside moment. How does your body feel?

Connecting with nature is a powerful way to support self-regulation.



Gratitude or Memory Stones



Hold the stone. Think about something you are grateful for. Picture it.



How does your body feel now?

Gratitude or Memory Stones

Hold the gratitude stone in the palm of your hand. Close your hand around the stone. As you feel the weight, warmth and texture of the stone, take a moment to think about something you are grateful for.

Pause to visualize the moment, person, or thing. How does this moment of gratitude make you feel?

Gratitude practices positively affect the physical body, produce calming chemicals in the brain, support optimistic thinking and resilience.

Regular gratitude practices such as circles, conversations or journals can have a huge impact on self-regulation, mindfulness and wellness.

Think a Happy Thought



Choose a happy memory. Enjoy a mind movie of the moment. Stay in your movie for a short time then notice the ending.



Focus on how this memory makes you feel now.

Think a Happy Thought

Choose a memory. Bring all your attention to that happy experience. Start your mind movie of the experience. Tune into who are you with, what you are doing, your thoughts and how your body is feeling. Stay in your movie for a short time. Notice the ending and focus on how this memory makes you feel now. Might it even have brought a smile to your face?

Thinking about a happy memory can release the same kind of positive chemicals in the brain that experiencing the actual happy moment did!

Slow Breaths



Feel your breath come in and out. Visualize your breath travelling through your body. Slow it down.



How does your body feel now?

Slow Breaths

Find a quiet space. Turn your attention inward. Feel your breath as it enters and exits your body. Visualize your breath entering your lungs and travelling through your body. Visualize your breath as it leaves your body. Slow your breathing down. Inhale more deeply. Pause. Exhale slowly.

You could count your inhales (ie. count to 4) and your exhales (count to 8) or just simply notice your breath as you slow it down? Did it change your heart rate when you did this? How does your body feel now?

For some people, breath work is incredibly successful in slowing the heart rate, calming other physical responses to an activated amygdala (sweating hands, tight throat, butterflies in your belly, etc...) and giving them time to get their PFC back in control with responses rather than emotional reactions. Breath work is not for everyone though so please be sure to provide other options.



Seeing Perspectives Using Talking Sticks



Do you know your perspective?
Can you name your feeling?
Use the Talking Stick to speak to each other.



How does your body feel now?

Seeing Perspectives Using Talking Sticks

You are having a different perspective than someone else. Do you know your own perspective? Can you name how you are feeling? Sometimes people can have different perspectives of the same event.

Use a Talking Stick to share perspectives. Only the person with the Talking Stick speaks. This helps the other person pause and try to use their PFC to hear and respond to the other person's perspective rather than having an emotional reaction. Everyone will get a turn to share their perspective.

Remind children of the line, "It's not my job to change your mind!" Sometimes we have to agree to respectfully disagree.

Notice if they are able to hear and respond to each other's perspectives. Were they able to come up with a plan?

Looking at Nature



Can't get outside?
Look at pictures of nature.



How does your body feel now?

Looking at Nature

If you cannot get outside, even mindfully looking at pictures of nature can help calm the amygdala. How does your body feel?

Cut out calendar pictures or bring in photographs to share.

Mindful Movement



Place your focus on the slow and purposeful movement of your body as you walk.



How does your body feel now?

Mindful Movement

Go for a walk. Mindfully notice your steps. The movement of your legs, your weight on your heels and then on your toes. Place your focus on the slow and purposeful movement of your body as you walk.

Our bodies and brains are partners. Mindfully moving can help us notice sensations in our bodies and our emotional states. Mindful movements can help us change our states and help us get our PFC back in charge.



Imagine



Imagine someone or something you love. Hold that image in your mind. Can you feel the warmth of that love around you?

☆

How does your body feel now?

Imagine

Imagine someone or something you love. Close your eyes and visualize. Pause and hold that image in your mind.

Can you feel the warmth of that love around you?

How does your body feel?

Thinking about a happy memory can release the same kind of positive chemicals in the brain that experiencing the actual happy moment did.

1,2,3
Counting to Ten



Take deep breaths and slowly count to ten.
1... 2... 3... 4... 5...
6... 7... 8... 9...10...

☆

How does your body feel now?

1, 2, 3 Counting to Ten

1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9...10... How does your body feel. Taking deep breaths can calm us down.

Was this enough time to let your PFC lead or do you want to count to ten again?

Name it to Tame it*



Can you name what you are feeling right now? "I feel ..." "If not, can someone help you name what you are feeling?"

☆

How does your body feel now?

* Dan Siegel

Name it to Tame It

Can you name what you are feeling right now? I feel ... If not, can someone help you name what you are feeling?

When we are aware of what we are feeling and can also name it, it helps us get our PFC back in control from our amygdala.

"Name it To Tame It," is a concept created and shared by Dr. Dan Siegel. He is a wealth of information and I would recommend also checking out his hand model of the brain.

Weighted Blankets



Wrap up in a weighted blanket or use a weighted stuffie.

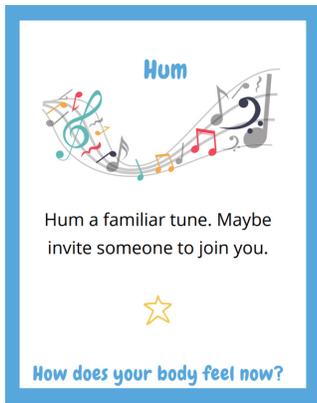
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How does your body feel now?

Weighted Blankets

Wrap up in a weighted blanket or place a weighted stuffie on your shoulders or lap. Does the pressure feel good to you? How does your body feel?

Extra pressure on our body can feel good and can help settle our nervous system.



Hum

Hum a familiar tune. Maybe even invite someone to hum along with you. How does your body feel now?

Did you notice you can't really stay upset when you are humming? What about trying out some singing?



Breathing Brain Breaks

Here is a break down of how to do this type of breathing break.

Often this is done class wide and several times a day so children are quite familiar with it. Easy to implement anywhere, with little materials needed, this can be a very effective chill skill for many.

Remember, of course, one size does not fit all.

1. Get your chime or another resonating sound tool. Find a quiet space.
2. Put your mindful body on.
3. Stand, sit or lay in an upright trunk position. We want to be sure we can get that oxygen rich blood flowing easily around our bodies.
4. Ring the chime in a sweeping motion.
5. Close your eyes or look down with a soft gaze.
6. Listen to the sound for as long as you can hear it.
7. Breathe. You do not need to change your breath in any way.
8. When you can no longer hear the chime, turn your attention to your breath. Notice it coming in and out of your body. Just be. If you notice thoughts entering your mind, gently let them go and return your focus to your breath.
9. When ready, ring the chime a second time. Open your eyes when you no longer hear the sound.
10. How does your body feel?

Stuffie Snuggles



Take a moment on your own.
Grab a special stuffie and
give it a snuggle.



How does your body feel now?

Stuffie Snuggles

Take a moment on your own. Grab a special stuffie and give it a snuggle. How does your body feel?

Many people keep their special stuffies forever and they can be a great source of comfort - yes, even for teens!

Mindful Listening



Use noise cancelling headphones
to block distractions.



Are you better able to focus now?

Mindful Listening

Sometimes the sounds around you are distracting. It is hard to focus on your job. Get yourself a set of noise cancelling headphones. Is your brain better able to focus now?

The Reticular Activating System (RAS) is the part of the brain that screens and sorts sensory input received via the spinal cord. Sometimes the RAS cannot filter out the noise around us. Noise cancelling headphones and privacy boards can support us when needed.

Standing Deep Breaths



Slowly breathe in through your nose
as you lift your arms above your head.
Exhale slowly bringing your arms
down along your sides and then cross
your wrists in front of you again.



How does your body feel now?

Standing Deep Breaths

Taking deep breaths can calm us down. Stand with your feet slightly apart and cross one wrist over the other in front of you.

Slowly breathe in through your nose as you lift your arms so they meet above your head. Exhale slowly bringing your arms down along your sides and then cross your wrists in front of you again.

Repeat this mindful breathing and moving activity several times.

How does your body feel?

Combining mindful movements with mindful breathing can support self-regulation. There are many movement and breath activities that can be done. This is a simple one that even a young child can do independently.

If a student is uncomfortable with breath work, then just work with the movement.



Visualizing



Experiencing self-doubt? Picture your situation going well & see yourself having success. Aloud or in your head, say, "Bring it On!" or "Challenge Accepted!"

☆

How does your body feel now?

Visualizing

Are you having some doubts about your skills or abilities? Picture the situation going well. Pause. Really see yourself having success. Aloud or in your head, say, "Bring it On!" or "Challenge Accepted!"

Optimistic thinking can be learned thanks to neuroplasticity!

Choosing to view life optimistically supports the PFC in leading us through life. Visualizing a positive outcome calms the amygdala, allows us to respond rather than react, and results in improved success.

Optimistic thinking can relax your amygdala and let your PFC take charge!

Mind Jar



Give the jar a gentle shake. Watch the glitter slowly settle to the bottom. Do this a few times. As it settles, can you notice that your own body and thoughts are settling too?

☆

How does your body feel now?

Mind Jar

Pick up the Mind Jar. Tip it upside down and give it a shake. Do you see all the glitter swirling around? Sometimes that is what our thoughts and feelings feel like too. Watch the glitter as it slowly settles to the bottom of the jar. Do this a few times if you need.

As it settles, can you notice that your own body and thoughts are settling too? How does your body feel now?

A Mind Jar is a great visual to represent our nervous system. When we are controlled by our emotions, our thoughts and feelings are scattered and the parts of the brain cannot communicate with each other. We may have sensations over taking our body and our systems are like the swirling glitter. We are reacting without thinking.

Just as the glitter can settle and the jar becomes clear once again, so too can our thoughts and responses when we get the PFC back in control again.



Grounding



Mindfully use all our senses.
Notice 5 things you can see.
4 things you can hear.
3 things you can touch or feel.
2 things you can smell.
1 thing you feel in this moment.

★

How does your body feel now?

Grounding

Let's mindfully use all our senses here. Take your time.

What are 5 things you can see?

What are 4 things you can hear?

What are 3 things you can touch or feel?

What are 2 things you can smell?

What is 1 thing you feel right in this moment?

Grounding engages the PFC, the thinking part of the brain. It shifts our RAS (the attention/focussing centre of the brain) to focus on new sensory input we are receiving and can move us out of our amygdala reactions (emotional brain).

Mindful Listening



Listen to music you enjoy.

★

How does your body feel now?

Mindful Listening

Head to a place where you can put on some headphones and enjoy some tunes.

How do you feel after a song or two?

Listening to music you enjoy can settle our amygdala, the emotional control centre.

