

## Figure 6.12: Steps for Teaching Calm-Down Strategies

Steps for Teaching Calm-Down Strategies	Considerations or Actions
1. Identify the emotion.	Consider how and when students will learn to identify their emotions, and what situations cause them. Teach students to notice physical reactions, such as clenched fists, raised voices, and heavy breathing. This provides students with a physical clue to identify when they are becoming anxious or agitated as well as an opportunity to use a calm-down strategy.
2. Teach calm-down strategies.	Work with students to identify choices of acceptable calm-down strategies that they can use in any environment. Make the strategy transferable to life beyond school. Deep breathing, using a self-talk phrase, or taking five minutes to write in a journal or look at photos on a phone are all helpful when trying to calm down.
3. Have a calm-down strategies menu or choice board to use as a reminder.	When students are in a heightened state, having an age-appropriate choice board or menu provides them with a way to reflect on acceptable alternatives.
4. Practice using the strategies.	Students and a teacher or mentor should practice identifying students' emotions and the strategy they will use when faced with the situation again.
5. Reflect on the experience.	Reflecting with students after they have used their calm-down strategies is important. Students reflect on their choice and possible options for how to handle the situation that caused their anger or frustration. They can do this verbally or in written form. This can also be done in a quiet area where they can reflect and consider how to handle the situation in the future.