

Safewards Victoria

Calm Down Methods: Resource Ideas

Sometimes we can recognise early signs of agitation. It might be someone's facial expression, tone of voice, quick response to a common reminder, restlessness, change of breathing pattern, body language, eye contact (or lack thereof), movement around the unit or other cues. Pro re nata (PRN) medication has been used as an effective strategy to calm people down, but perhaps we reach for it too easily and too quickly on occasions. At times it is effective to use the person's own strengths and usual coping mechanisms to help them calm down.

This intervention suggests a range of alternatives to using PRN medication and provides the means to make these items available to people where possible.

A starter kit of items for the Calm Down intervention will be provided to each unit following Train the Trainer sessions. The lists below provide prompts and ideas for adding to this kit. Further ideas can be developed with the engagement of consumers on the unit, from members of your local consumer advisory group, or from allied health staff.

Think about what might be helpful for different types of 'calm down' needs:

- **Difficult emotions**

- Anger
- Fear (fight/flight)
- Fear (freeze)
- Sadness/depression
- Shame

- **Difficult thoughts & urges**

- Suicidality
- Self-harm
- AOD/nicotine withdrawal
- Interpersonal relationships
- Sexual vulnerability
- Obsessive/compulsive thoughts & urges
- Binging or purging

- **Difficult experiences**

- Hearing voices
- Seeing visions
- Somatic experiences
- Mania / racing
- Dissociation, feeling numb
- Unusual beliefs, including spiritual experiences
- Panic attacks
- Reactions to restrictive interventions
- Reactions to compulsory treatment
- Unwanted medication side effects
- Trauma flashbacks

Think about different types of resources and the functions they could serve:

- Sensory & grounding
- Comfort & soothing
- Humour
- Distraction
- Mindfulness
- Inspirational
- Expressive & venting
- Harm minimisation
- Problem solving & reflection
- Movement & activity
- Nature or creativity

Plan a Calm Down Kit for your unit (1 of 2)

Different types of 'calm down' needs	Different types of resources & functions					
	a) Sensory & grounding	b) Comfort & soothing	c) Humour	d) Distraction	e) Mindfulness	f) Inspirational
1) Difficult emotions						
Any difficult emotion						
Anger						
Fear (fight/flight)						
Fear (freeze)						
Sadness/despair						
Shame						
2) Difficult thoughts & urges						
Any difficult urge						
Suicidality						
Self-harm						
AOD/nicotine withdrawal						
Interpersonal relationships						
Sexual vulnerability						
Obsessive-compulsive thoughts & urges						
Binging or purging						
3) Difficult experiences						
Any difficult experience						
Hearing voices						
Seeing visions						
Somatic experiences						
Mania / racing						
Dissociation, feeling numb or split						
Unusual beliefs, including spiritual experiences						
Panic attacks						
Reactions to restrictive interventions						
Reactions to compulsory treatment						
Unwanted medication side effects						
Trauma flashbacks						
4) Other needs						

Plan a Calm Down Kit for your unit (2 of 2)

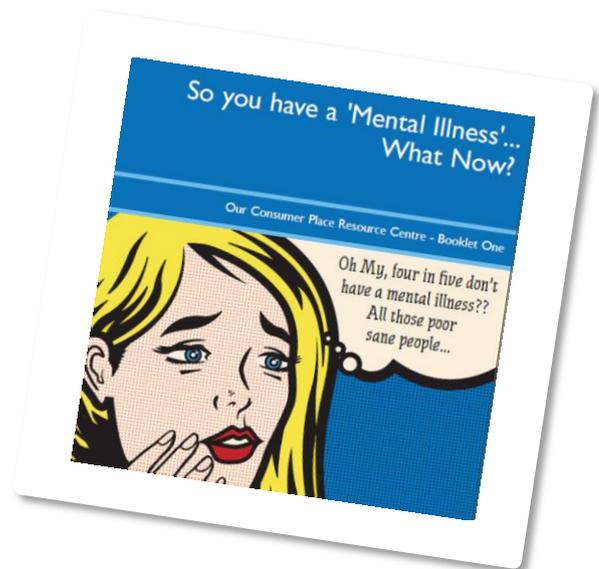
Different types of 'calm down' needs	Different types of resources & functions					
	g) Expression & venting	h) Harm minimisation	i) Problem solving	j) Movement & activity	k) Nature or creativity	l) Other resource types or functions
1) Difficult emotions						
Any difficult emotion						
Anger						
Fear (fight/flight)						
Fear (freeze)						
Sadness/despair						
Shame						
2) Difficult thoughts & urges						
Any difficult urge						
Suicidality						
Self-harm						
AOD/nicotine withdrawal						
Interpersonal relationships						
Sexual vulnerability						
Obsessive-compulsive thoughts & urges						
Binging or purging						
3) Difficult experiences						
Any difficult experience						
Hearing voices						
Seeing visions						
Somatic experiences						
Mania / racing						
Dissociation, feeling numb or split						
Unusual beliefs, including spiritual experiences						
Panic attacks						
Reactions to restrictive interventions						
Reactions to compulsory treatment						
Unwanted medication side effects						
Trauma flashbacks						
4) Other needs						

Sharing ideas about what works

Staff are not the only people with good ideas about what can help to 'calm down' - patients can also share good ideas with each other about what has worked for them.

Make copies of the template form overleaf, store them in a folder, and keep with your calm down box.

Over time, patients can write down ideas about how and why they've used the resources.



Consumer developed self-help resources

The internet has many useful self-help resources developed by consumers, for consumers. Most of these are freely shared without copyright.

We have selected a range of these resources and compiled them into a folder for use by patients on the ward.

This folder can form part of your Calm Down Box. You can offer to photocopy handouts from the folder for patients to keep – especially when they are in a worksheet format.

Self-help resources have been categorised as follows – but remember that many of the resources can be helpful for a variety of calm down needs.

Self-help resources for coping, calming and recovery: By consumers, for consumers

- Emotional Distress
- Psychosis
- Self-injury
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Recovery



What helps you to cope with distress?

How have you used items from the Calm Down Box?

Read what other patients have said

Share your experiences & ideas with other patients

