

Participating in Parties or School Events

Situational Stressor

Triggers:

- Student does not like changes in routine.
- Student is sensitive to increase in noise level
- Student may be nervous about unexpected happenings/activities.
- Student does not like smell or taste of special treats.
- Student unfamiliar with parent volunteers.
- Student unable to actively perform special activities.



Thinking Strategies:

Student Positive Affirmations

- I have self-control.
- I love challenges.
- I choose to be happy.
- We learn through experiencing new things.

Positive Adult Responses

- Keep going when things get tough.
- I appreciate you.
- Not everyone will like you and that's okay.

Activity

- Expressing Gratitude – Write categories on the board, i.e., polite gestures, kind acts and words, giving something needed or a gift, and spending time or giving attention to another. Allow the students to write a time they said “thank you” and include whom they thanked. By focusing at least a minute on a grateful experience, our thinking can be shifted to calmness, which is uplifting and comforting. (27)





Focusing & Calming Strategies:

*Prior to the party

- Mystery Sounds- Encourage awareness listening, by having students identify different sounds. Collect several objects to make sound... crumple paper, tap a pencil, shuffle cards, shake coins in a jar. Without allowing students to see the objects, state, “Focus and listen to the sound that I make and see if you can identify the sound.” This teaches students to train their brain to choose what they are going to focus on and respond to. (27)
- Awareness Breathing – “Close your eyes. Briskly rub your hands together to generate some heat. Place your hands over your ears. Listen to your breathing for one minute.”
- Color Mandala’s – Mandala’s are ancient art forms. They are symmetrical geometric designs made inside a circle. They can be used to decrease stress and tension promoting relaxation. How to Use: “Close your eyes. Focus your attention inward and notice what colors come to mind. Open your eyes. Begin to choose colors that you visualized. Start coloring either from the center and move outward or start at the edge and move inward.” (See Activity Templates Q, R or refer to <http://www.centrum-mandala.cz/en/mandalas-children> or <http://www.printmandala.com>)

Movement Poses & Breathing (See Appendix C)

- A OK
- Recharger
- Refresher
- Tranquil Turtle
- Awareness Breathing



Sensory Strategies:

Activities

- Calm Spray – Use lavender oil. Mix oil with water in spray bottle (labeled “Calm Spray”). Then mist the air.
- Allow students to hum while waiting for the party to start. If it is a holiday party you can hum familiar songs. Humming stimulates the frontal lobe for impulse control.(8)

Teaching Moment

Help student's recognize his or her own signs of anxiety (heart pounding, sweating, stomach ache, shortness of breath, lack of energy, muscle tightness), as a warning that they are in need of a strategy. Developing self-awareness is the one of the first steps in recognizing the need to change one's behavior.

