

Staying Calm Under Pressure

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Many people ask, "How can I calm myself down when I am under pressure so that I can make better choices for myself?" This is a great question because you will be far more effective at handling difficult situations if you are calm and aware rather than upset and anxious.

It is normal for most people to get upset and overwhelmed when they feel under pressure.

Common sources of pressure are:

- Facing Conflict.
- Being threatened with an attack.
- Disapproval from people whose opinions matter to us.
- Having too many things to do in too short a time.

Upset and overwhelm take different forms for different people such as:

- Shutting down and becoming very quiet or frozen.
- Exploding and becoming loud, frantic, or aggressive.

Getting frustrated with yourself for having these feelings will just make you feel worse. Instead, you can train yourself to become centered. Being centered means that you are calm, aware, and connected with your body and with your environment.

A technique we teach for getting centered for Kidpower, Teenpower and Fullpower is:

"Pause for a moment to feel your hands and feet or some other part of your body. You can feel by moving slightly. Take a slow breath and let it out again loud enough that you can hear it. Find something close by to look at or to listen to. When you can feel your body and breath and notice the world around you, you are well on your way to being centered."

Most of the time, doing simple physical things can help you to step away from a pressuring situation emotionally so that you can get perspective. When you are centered, you are most able to assess the situation, figure out what your options are, and make thought-out decisions rather than just reacting.