



I Can Handle Scared

A Book to Help with Crisis Events

Crisis events may happen within our communities or halfway around the world. Children may feel scared whether they personally experience these events or learn about them through family, friends or news reports. Sometimes we, as adults, feel the impact of these events as well, making it challenging to respond in a helpful way.

Our first step is always adult composure. Our most important job in helping children through their feelings of fear is to be co-regulators with them. An unregulated adult cannot co-regulate an unregulated child. It is only possible for us to create a calm, healing space when we are able to regulate our internal states. For this reason, it is essential for adults to practice deep breathing in the moment and meaningful self-care for the long-term (especially during emotionally charged times).

With our own self-regulation firmly prioritized so we can co-regulate with children, it is then possible to begin thinking of additional strategies to scaffold their ability to self-regulate. The *I Can Handle Scared* book is one such strategy. Teachers practicing Conscious Discipline have created many versions of this book over the years. This version is designed to help children handle feelings of fear after a crisis event like the pandemic, weather-related tragedies, global conflict and mass shootings (including those perpetrated in schools). The event the child is concerned about may have been in your neighborhood or on the other side of the world; it may have happened yesterday or generations ago. Children may express their fears about the event directly, or they may experience physical disruptions such as stomachaches, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, headaches, difficulty focusing or regressive behaviors (baby talk, bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, etc.).

If you notice children exhibiting these behaviors, create additional opportunities to practice deep belly breathing. Carve out more connecting moments with activities like I Love You Rituals and read the “I Can Handle Scared” book together at least once a day.

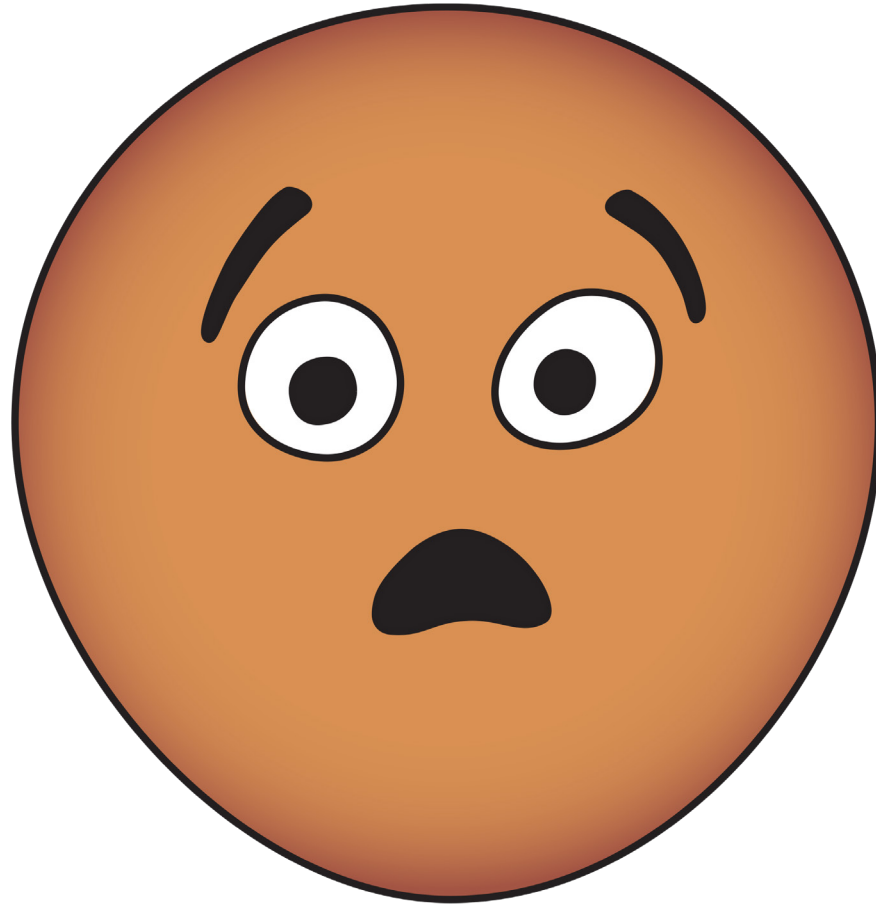
This printable can be used as a catchall for crisis events; however, it is most effective when used as a model for creating your own “I Can Handle Scared” book tailored to your children and the event they are concerned about. Use the tone and wording of this book as your guide for creating personalized versions.

- In the home, families would use photographs of the child and follow the general storyline of the book, filling in the specific events that trigger the child and the specific, healthy activities the child gravitates toward for relief.
- In a classroom, teachers would use photographs of class members and follow the general storyline of the book, filling in the specific events that trigger the need for the book and the specific, healthy activity choices available in your classroom.
- Classroom books can be checked out library-style for children to read with their families. This connects the school community with the home family, and provides a natural opportunity to offer helpful strategies to parents.
- If there are a few students within a classroom who are having a particularly difficult time, it may be helpful to make personalized books with their photos and strategies. Keep a copy of these book accessible to them in the classroom and send a copy home for the family to read together.

Whether used as-is or personalized, the “I Can Handle Scared” book is another helpful tool from Conscious Discipline that adults can use to supplement their efforts to create a safe, connected environment for children.

Please remember that this book is a helpful addition to, not a replacement for, assistance from a mental health professional. If you or a child are struggling to regulate emotions or function in daily life, please seek help from a doctor, school counselor or other trained professional. There are also many helplines for those in need, including the SAMHSA's Disaster Distress helpline at 1-800-985-5990 and the Crisis Text Line, reachable by texting HELLO to 741741.

I Can Handle Scared



I'm safe. Keep breathing. I can handle this.

Sometimes I feel scared. I might feel scared
when I am alone at night in my bed.



I might feel scared after I watch something on TV and I wonder if it could happen to me.



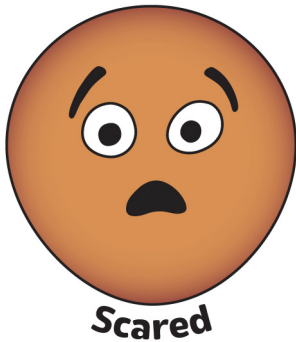
I might feel scared after I hear adults or classmates talking about things like war, tornadoes, shootings and fires.



Some times when I feel scared, I might

- Have headaches
- Have an upset tummy
- Not feel hungry
- Have trouble sleeping
- Be afraid of the dark
- Have nightmares
- Wet my bed
- Cry easily
- Feel cranky
- Become angry easily

When I feel scared, my eyebrows and eyelids go up, and the sides of my mouth pull down.



*Scared says,
"Seek safety and
comfort from
those you love."*

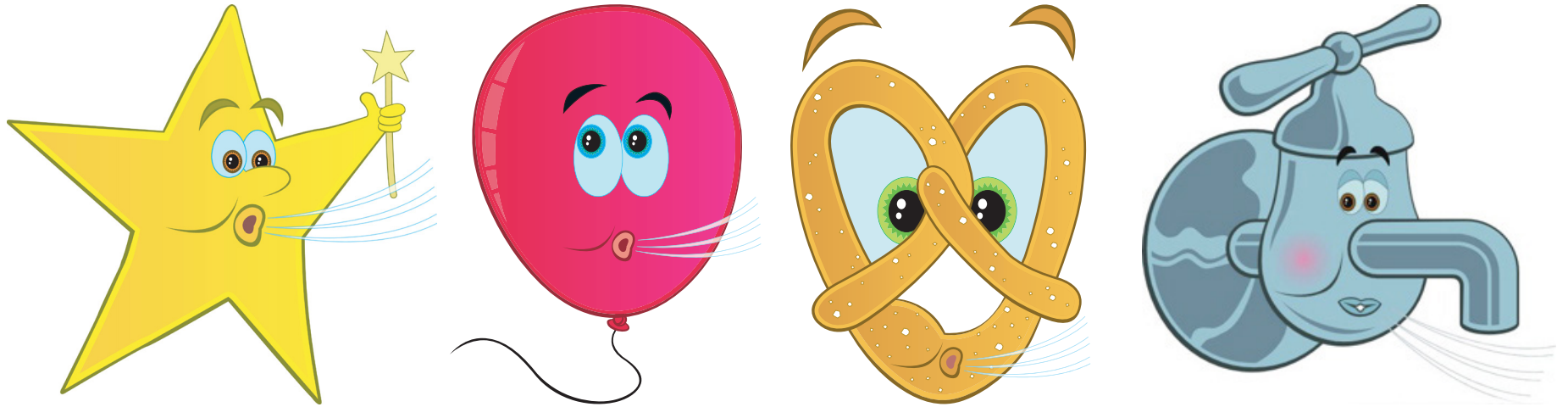


Scared is a sign for me to look for help.
I ask my family, my teachers or other trusted
adults to help me when I feel scared. They will
remind me that I am safe.

*You're safe.
Keep breathing.
I will keep you safe.*



Feeling scared signals for me to breathe deeply 3 times. I can choose to breathe like a **S.T.A.R.**, **Balloon**, **Pretzel** or **Drain**.

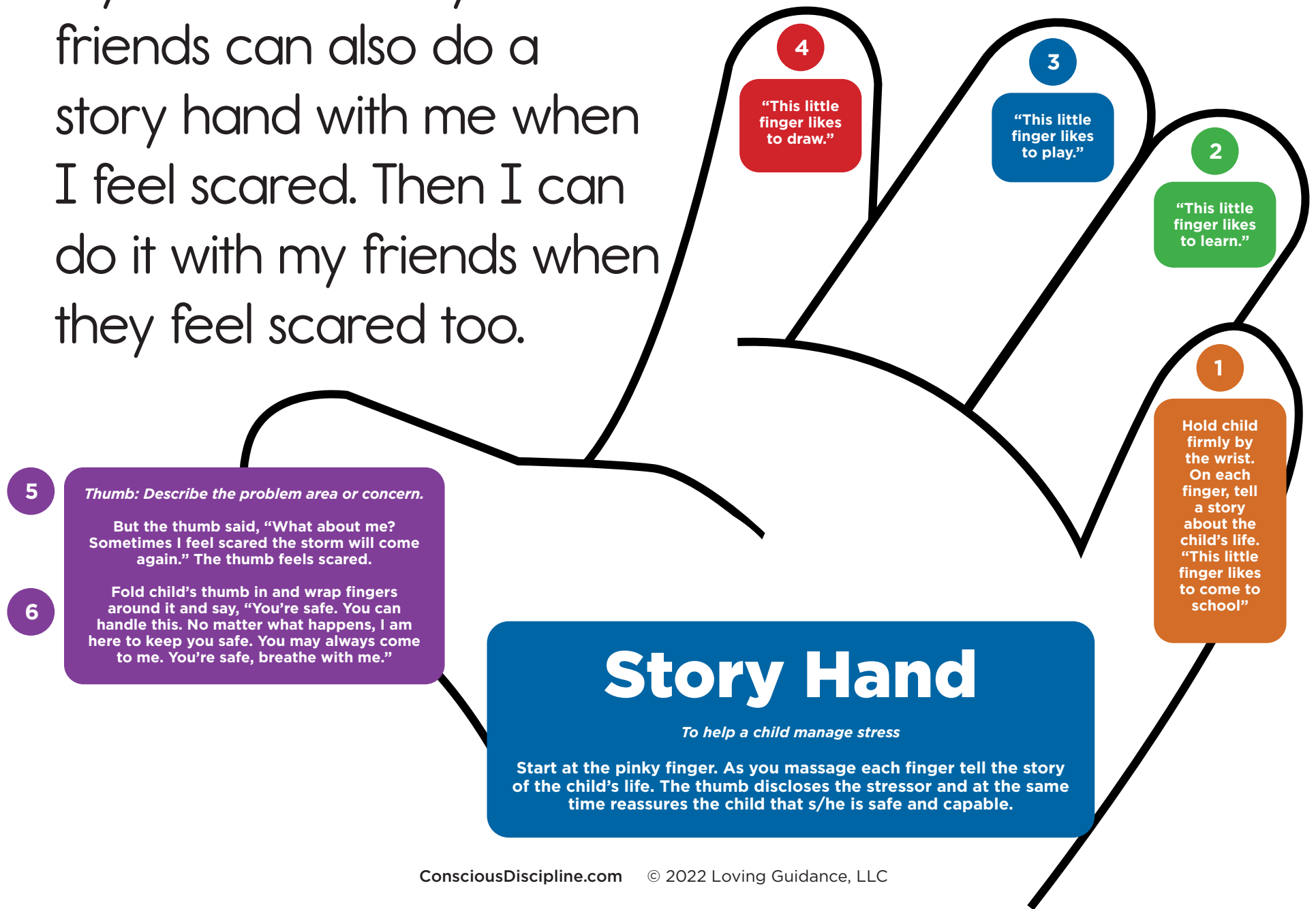


Breathe with me.

My teacher, my family or a friend can put lotion on my hand. Then, I can rub it on each finger starting with my pinky, naming the people that can help me feel safe.



My teacher, family or friends can also do a story hand with me when I feel scared. Then I can do it with my friends when they feel scared too.



If I am at school, I can get my Feeling Buddy Scared, and say, “Hello Scared. Welcome Scared. Breathe with me. You are safe.”

Then I breathe deeply with Scared. I keep breathing with my Feeling Buddy until I begin to feel calm again.



I can also help myself feel calm by:

- Making a drawing
- Squeezing a stress ball or using a fidget
- Talking with someone
- Continue breathing deeply
- Listening to music
- Walking or other exercise



When someone feels scared in my
School Family, they might look like this:



I can be helpful by:



Wishing well



*Helping in the
Safe Place*



*Sharing a
Feeling
Buddy*



Breathing

“I did it! I was helpful!”

Feeling scared can be hard. It might happen throughout my day, but I can handle it! **YES, I CAN!**

