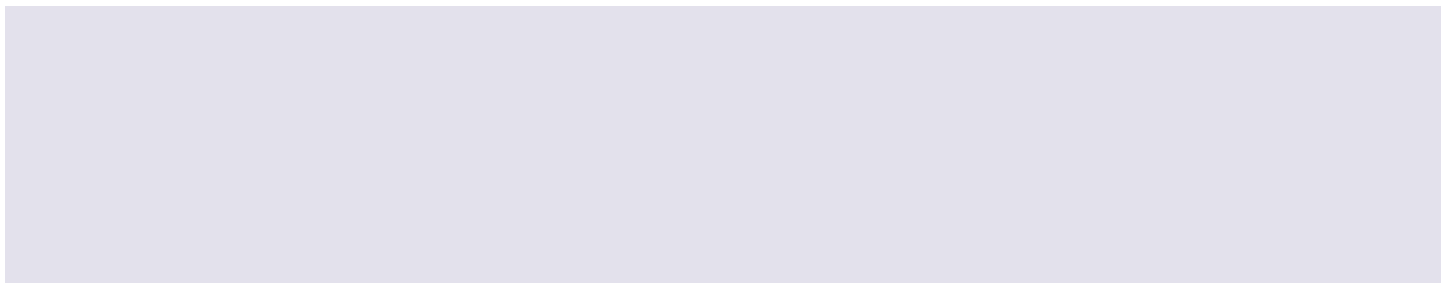


# RESPONDING VS. REACTING

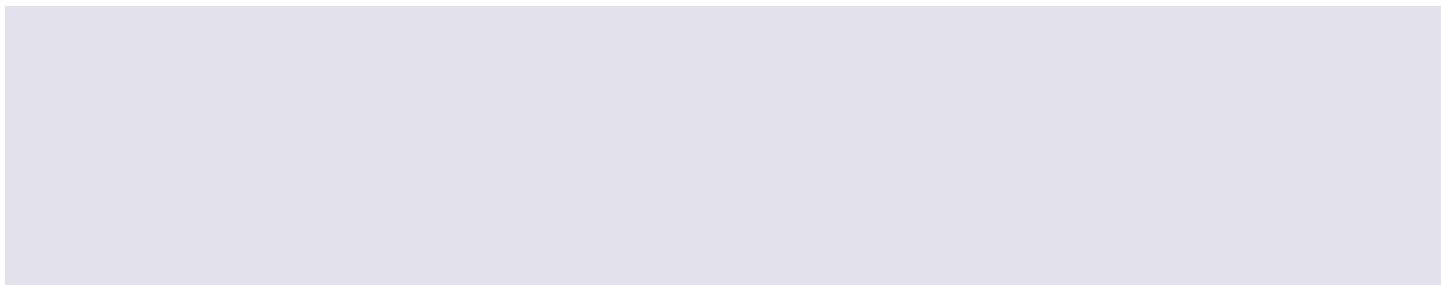
SEG. 12

**INTRODUCTION:** Self-soothing is critical in being able to handle challenging relationships. When all around you seems in turmoil, it's your ability to self-soothe that gives you power to respond instead of react. As with any skill, it takes practice for it to be effective when you need it the most. Staying calm in a normal environment is like making a free throw in basketball. Staying calm during an argument, on the other hand, is like making that same shot while being guarded by another player. In order for self-soothing strategies to work well in tough situations, we have to practice them frequently enough that we can apply the skills when we need it the most! This activity is designed to help you do just that.

**STEP ONE:** Identify one thing you have found that really helps get to a place of feeling calm even when you're worried or stressed. This could be a memory, a specific belief, a phrase you say to yourself, a place you like to go, or a specific activity such as listening to your favorite musician. Describe this in the box below.



**STEP TWO:** Make another list of new ideas or strategies for achieving that state of calm in your daily life. You might consider some of those talked about in the video segment, such as taking a walk or using a new meditation app. (Two app options include: "Meditation" by Gaiam and "HeadSpace.") Other ideas might include yoga, coloring, jewelry making, or even origami. Need more ideas? Try a quick online search.



**STEP THREE:** For the next 10 days, make it a priority to take 10 minutes every day to use one of your strategies listed above. Keep a record of your efforts on the "Responding versus Reacting Log" found on the next page.

In addition to recording your calm activities, this log invites you to also track difficult moments in your day. Doing so will give you additional insights into your patterns of emotional reactivity.

# MEASURING VITAL BEHAVIOR #2: RESPONDING VERSUS REACTING SEG. 12

Did I find 10 minutes of calm today? (Y/N)	What was the triggering event?	What emotions did I experience?	What thoughts seemed to jump into my head at the time?	Did I identify my emotions before responding? (Y/N)	How well did I let go of the outcome? (1-5)	Do I have a good plan for how to handle this type of situation? (Y/N)	Is there compassion in my heart for my teen? (1-5)	What insights do I have from this experience?

*Note: If you'll use this tracking sheet well, it will help you identify patterns in your interactions with your teen, giving you clues for what you can do to improve your ability to slow things down and thoughtfully respond instead of reacting to difficult situations. For example, do you tend to react less on days when you've found 10 minutes of calm that day? What other variables seem to make the biggest difference in your ability to respond calmly?*