INCREASING COPING SKILLS

Effective self-soothing coping strategies may be those that involve one or more of the five senses (touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound). Listed below are examples of self-soothing strategies for each sense.

**Touch**

* Soaking in a warm bath
* Getting a massage
* Relaxing in the warmth of the sun
* Stretching
* Going for a swim
* Changing into comfortable clothes
* Playing with an animal

**Taste**

* Eating a comforting meal
* Sipping herbal tea
* Eating healthy food
* Slowly sucking on hard candy

**Smell**

* Shopping for flowers
* Smelling lavender or vanilla
* Lighting a scented candle
* Deeply breathing in fresh air

**Sight**

* Seeing a funny movie or watching a funny television show
* Reading a good book
* Looking at pictures of loved ones
* Looking at pictures of a past vacation or places that you would like to visit
* Watching the clouds

**Sound**

* Listening to relaxing music
* Singing to yourself
* Saying positive statements to yourself or self-encouragement
* Playing a musical instrument

When engaging in these strategies, make sure to focus completely on the task at hand. That is, [be mindful](http://ptsd.about.com/od/selfhelp/ht/mindfulexe2.htm) of your senses and what you are experiencing, and anytime you are distracted, simply bring your attention back to what you are doing.