

Making Your Own Calm Box

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This is a great self-care exercise and while it is designed to help children and young people navigate their feelings with the aid of supportive adult, it can also be really helpful for adults too. In addition to self-soothing and helping us to manage and take care of ourselves in high-stress or triggering situation, creating and using the Calm Box also gives us an insight into how the activity helps children self-sooth and regulate

The box

As small or large as you like, but think practically – is it large enough for all the items you want, is it small enough to be easily transportable? It doesn't have to be a standard 'box'; it can be a sturdy bag, large pencil case, small basket or other container, but it should be durable. Collect pictures, photos materials etc. of things that make you feel calm, safe, happy, e.g. your family, your favourite food, your hobbies and interests, a sunset, flowers ... and decorate the box with these. Then decorate with your name, e.g. 'Jenny's Calm Down Kit'.

The contents

Add items to the box that aid you in becoming more aware of your surroundings, calm you down, or help you to express your feelings. You can include pens and crayons, and pieces of paper or Post It notes to write out what's going through your mind, as well as items that make you feel better.

Consider all your senses to decide what to soothing and comforting things to place in your kit:

Smell – scented candles, lotions, a small vial of fragrances or essential oils, handcream, perfume, chocolate

Taste and oral motor - favourite chocolate, sweets, chewy bracelet, bubbles, balloons, drinking straws

Touch - charms, stress ball, prayer beads, Playdoh, Aroma-doh, stones pebbles, crystals, a favourite rock, a piece of jewellery, playing cards, pipe cleaners, fabric, buttons, shells, stress balls, feathers, jewels, leaves, pine cones, twigs

Sight- small journal, pictures of supportive people in your life, words of inspiration in your hand writing, images of calming scenery, bubbles, snow globe, glitter bottle, small doll/soft toy/ornament

Auditory - chime balls, rain stick, large sea shell, uplifting songs that you can listen to, sounds in nature (running water, leaves blowing in the wind)

Nurturing items – hand cream, face mask, lip balm, wipes, heat pad, plasters, soft blanket

Distractors – Rubik's cube, kaleidoscope, puzzles, colouring materials, chewies, snow globe, stress ball, stickers, playing cards, dominoes

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Other – worry dolls, Russian doll, dream catcher, mandala, mask, mermaid, precious personal items e.g. own child's first shoes, card from a significant person

The possibilities are endless. If you put more effort into creating it, you'll be more likely to use it. Share it with someone you trust. Keep it in a place where it's easily accessible to you.