

## Make your own ‘Self Soothe’ Box



Have you looked at BBC Bitesize recently? They have loads of different things on there now that they have added since the start of lockdown. One of the things I came across, was how to make a 'self soothe' box and I thought that we could all do with one of these at the moment.

The basic principle is that you get a box (with a lid) or a bag, ideally it would be something that you can decorate and personalise. Inside this box you keep things that you know will calm you down or that you find relaxing or soothing. The trick is to find something for each of the five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch (of course you can have more than one thing if you like).

Some of the things may be tricky to keep in the box eg you may find that eating crunchy carrot sticks are really calming, but if you keep carrot sticks in your box, you will probably find they are mouldy rather than crunchy when you need them! If this is the case, it might be a good idea to make a card with a picture of carrot sticks on to remind you to go and get some when you need them. So your box can be a mixture of actual things – eg colouring books, a soft teddy/ blanket, a recording of some music and some things written or drawn on cards.

Here are some links to help you see what other people have put in theirs, but remember it is personal to you, there's no right or wrong, just try to cover all the senses for maximum effectiveness.

<https://safeYouTube.net/w/qsS9>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/>

I have a sheet with a symbol of each of the five senses on it in case it is helpful to print that out to write/ draw your ideas on. Of course, you can draw your own, or just write which sense your idea relates to.

I am going to make one of these and my two boys are going to have a go too, but we are going to avoid technology and gadgets in ours. I think we are spending a bit more time in front of a screen in lockdown, and it's a relief to have a break sometimes. So even though games on their tablets do relax them to a certain extent, we have agreed that we will have no tech in the boxes. We also had a discussion about sweets, because although haribos / chocolate are delicious and chewy/ melty the sugar rush afterwards isn't very calming! (I have agreed to hot chocolate though as my youngest son finds this very soothing!) Have a discussion with your families and see if you can come up with any ground rules before you start.

You don't have to be feeling terrible to use the things in your box. It might be nice to choose one of the things before bed each night to help you unwind and get ready for sleep. Or you might just find you'd like some quiet time and you can use something from your box then.

I hope you have fun making your boxes/ bags and filling them with calming things. And I also hope that you will find them helpful if you do feel a bit wobbly or even just a bit bored!

Someone's made this page in a prettier format than me on the page below!



# MINDFULNESS MONDAY

## Stay Home Stay Safe

The coronavirus pandemic is a difficult and uncertain time for everyone. We can no longer take for granted some of the things we used to do to look after our physical and mental wellbeing, like playing sports or meeting up with friends to shake off the blues.

Along with other elements of our routines, we might have had to shake up, adjust or rethink some of our self-care techniques and rituals as we adjust to self-isolation and social distancing.

One of the things Young Minds suggest as a helpful tool for difficult times is a 'self-soothe box, or a calming toolbox' which can help if you're struggling with feelings of anxiety or panic. This is an empowering tool that anyone can use to manage their self-care and show themselves some kindness during difficult times.

What is a self-soothe box?

A calming toolbox, or self-soothe box can be anything you like. You make it yourself. It's a box where you keep things that make me feel better when you're feeling down. It's a little box of escape in a world of reality. It's a little piece of heaven to immerse yourself in for half an hour - usually afterwards you will feel a bit better.

What do you put in the box?

- Notebook, journal or notecards to write out feelings
- Cards given to you from friends and family
- Calming oils to touch and smell
- Stress ball or small bouncing ball
- Book or file cards with Affirmations
- Personal photos
- Smiley face/stickers
- A journal



## SELF-SOOTHING

Self-Soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions.



### Sight

Low lighting  
Soothing colors  
Sleeping masks  
Coloring books  
Pinterest Collages

### Touch

Soft things  
Cuddle things  
Massage  
Hot/cold shower  
Heated/weighted blanket



### Sound



Calming noise  
ASMR videos  
Nature sounds  
Guided meditations  
Binaural beats

### Smell

Aromatherapy  
Fresh air  
Candles/incense  
Comforting smells



### Taste



Strong flavors  
Warm drinks  
Eat slowly  
Nostalgic flavors



In my box is a postcard with some steady breathing techniques written on it. It acts as a reminder to keep calm and focused. There are a variety of techniques available; once you find one that works particularly well for you, write it down as a card to remind you. I also have some muscle relaxation exercises written down on other postcards. The NHS website has a few breathing exercises for stress which can be used for anxious thinking and panic also.

