



Self Help

Making and Using a Sensory Box

Our five senses (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch) play a major role in helping us understand, communicate and react to our environment. When experiencing strong emotions or during times of crisis, we may become overwhelmed. Stimulating our five senses can help us to soothe ourselves and may help us stay present in the moment.

Sensory boxes are designed to be available when you experience heightened emotions or difficult thoughts, so preparing a box in advance may be helpful. Examples of items you may wish to place in the sensory box include;

- **Sight:** Photos of friends, family or pets, pictures of places you have visited or would like to visit, affirmation cards, crystals or rocks with interesting colours, coloured papers and pens, paints with water
- **Sound:** Music player and headphones, flute, a bell, ukulele, rattle or drum
- **Smell:** Perfume, essential oils, candles, herbs such as lavender or rosemary, popping corn
- **Taste:** Herbal teas, favourite sweets or snacks, peppermints, lozenges, citrus, jellies or licorice
- **Touch:** Soft toys, scarf, stress ball, slime, bubble wrap, kinetic sand, playdough, drift wood, shells or stones from a beach or creek

When engaging with the sensory box, enjoy the experience and become absorbed in doing something you enjoy. Mindfully engage with each of the items in your sensory box, and describe internally what you see, hear, smell, taste or feel. Some people find self-soothing hard and may avoid being nice to themselves. If you engage in self-soothing and notice harsh, judgmental thoughts or difficult emotions arise, gently acknowledge them, and then return to trying to stay mindfully connected to the experience of being immersed in the box and the activities that appeal to you. Remember that it is normal for your attention to wander, and when you notice this happening gently turn your attention back to what you are doing.

