

## Creating a self-soothe box

A self-soothe box is a useful tool for children and young people to use when they are feeling a variety of emotions including sadness, anxiety, and worried. It is personal to each individual, and can be kept throughout their childhood and life and continuously updated. Here is some ideas on what to include within this box.

We recommend sourcing a shoe box, and spending time decorating this with the child/young person. This ensures it is personal to them, and they can take ownership of this. It is important to remind them to decorate this with things that will help improve their mood; some examples include collages of their favourite characters/shows, their favourite colour, or pictures of their support network.

### Items that may be included:

- **Sensory items**, such as tangles, fidget cubes, fidget spinners, stress balls etc. *These support those who are sensory seeking, and can assist with restlessness.*
- **Bubbles**, touchable bubbles are now available. *These support relaxation, regulating the breathing and providing visual and tactile engagement.*
- **Photos** of loved ones/pets etc. *These can be used to remind them of their close relationships, and if appropriate photos of close people who have died may be helpful to reminisce.*
- **Notes** from their support network. *This can be useful particularly for those who rely on their support for reassurance. The note should be written in a way in which the child/young person can imagine the supporter saying it.*
- **Hobby items**, such as music, colouring, a book etc. *This enables items used to relax and distract are close by in one place.*
- **Relaxation** techniques, if possible on cue cards. *These can be used to follow when in a state of anxiety, giving the person direction.*
- **Worry Monster**. These can be found on amazon, and come in a variety of sizes. *These are good for those who find it difficult to express their emotions. The worry monster should have a closable compartment, to create the feeling of the worries remaining with them.*
- **Miscellaneous** items. Anything that can help soothe the child/young person. *Examples of this can be ear plugs, particularly for children who are worried in the night of noises, "monster spray" for helping with fears (water and essential oil such as lavender), their favourite teddy or childhood toy, memories from a previous holiday or outing. Things like red pens and elastic bands are useful for self-harming, and a small journal may be suitable for people who like to write their feelings down.*

The box should be kept somewhere the child/young person can access it. If they experience difficulty sleeping or waking in the night, ensure this is close by the bed to avoid them needing to get up in the night to retrieve this, or if they struggle with anxiety at school ensure that this can be within the classroom or a safe space for them to use. The possibilities of items that can go in a self-soothe box are endless! In addition to the self-soothe box, there may be instructions and reminders on what to do, for example using applications on smart phones or tablets, or reminders of who they can talk to (Kooth.com cards, important numbers, etc.)

*Remember: what soothes you may not soothe the child/young person, so ensure that this is guided by them, This is a guide for suggestions only and not exhaustive.*