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**Mental  
Health  
Council**  
OF TASMANIA



## Self-Soothing Sensory Kit

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Sight, touch, sound, taste and smell

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## Feeling anxious or upset?

One way to deal with negative feelings is to use your five senses – sight, touch, sound, taste and smell – to distract you from feelings of distress and give yourself some time out.

Focusing on your sensory input has a naturally calming effect.

To help you focus on your senses, you can create a self-soothing sensory kit, and keep it handy so you can use it whenever you want.

## How do I create a self-soothing sensory kit?

It's easy - you don't need to buy anything special, or even leave the house! You can use common household items to create your kit.

The great thing about creating your own kit is that it's designed especially for you. Everybody's sensory kit will look different – yours will be unique to you.

Follow the instructions and links below to start creating your kit!

## Find a container for your sensory kit.

Firstly, you'll need a container or box that will be the place where you can keep all the items in your sensory kit together.

A shoebox is a good size for a sensory kit, but you can use any type of container you want.

It's a good idea to choose something with a lid, so that the items will stay together when you're not using it.

You may want to decorate the outside of your kit – it's up to you.

Ribbons, bits of fabric, coloured plastic or cardboard from grocery packages

Newspaper, old wrapping paper, cutouts from magazines

Scissors, glue, sticky tape

Textas, crayons, pencils, paints

... Go wild!

## What can go into my sensory kit?

Your kit should contain small items that inspire positive emotions when you see, hear, touch, smell or taste them. You can choose the things you like best.

When thinking about what to put in your kit, think about items that relate to using one of your five senses. Is it something you like to look at? Or, something that smells nice?

Remember, you don't have to buy anything new. Hunt for items that you already have in your home. Try to collect at least one or two items that relate to each of your senses.

Here are some examples. You don't have to use these, but they may give you some ideas for items you can keep in your kit.

### 1. Smell

- Scented eraser or scratch'n'sniff sticker
- Small tub of playdough
- A piece of card sprayed with your favorite cologne or perfume.

### 2. Sight

- A photo of your pet
- A cartoon that makes you laugh
- A shell that reminds you of the beach where you found it
- A piece of paper or card with an inspirational quote written on it
- A Lego figure, ornament or toy that makes you smile.

### 3. Touch

- A piece of driftwood
- A smooth, shiny pebble
- A textured piece of fabric (silk, wool, flannelette)
- A stress ball or squeeze toy

### 4. Taste

- Mini chocolate bar or small Easter egg
- A single Mintie
- Small box of sultanas

*\*If using food items, make sure they're long-life and don't need to be refrigerated – you may not use them straight away*

### 5. Hearing

- A prompt to listen to a song you like (i.e., write a 'note to self' to be kept in your box, like "put on your headphones and listen to *Riptide* by Vance Joy")
- A bell or small windchime
- A rattle, drumsticks or rhythm sticks.

## How to use your kit

Decide where to keep your kit and make a space for it. It's ideal if this is somewhere easily accessible, in a room that you spend a lot of time in. That way, it will be on hand when you need it.

Any time you start to feel distressed by negative feelings, open your sensory kit and explore the contents.

Sit quietly for a moment, then pick an item and try to focus your mind on it:

- Which of your senses responds to this?
- How does this object make you feel?
- What memories does it hold for you?
- What is special or distinctive about it?

*Tip: You could write these questions on the inner lid of your box to help you remember them.*

After you've done this for a few minutes, 'check in' with your feelings. Notice what you're feeling. Do you feel different now from the way you felt when you first opened the kit?

It's important to understand that your sensory kit can't 'fix' your feelings long-term. It's best used to get you through temporary distress, by distracting you and invoking enjoyable sensations for a short time. If you continue to feel very distressed, it's a good idea to talk to somebody about your feelings or seek help.

**Lifeline** 13 11 14 or **TXT** 0477 13 11 14, 6pm-midnight (AEDT)

## Extras

Here are some extras for you to download and print. Once they are printed, you can cut out images or quotes that you like and put them into your kit.

[Quotation cut outs for Sensory Kit](#)

[Not-to-Self cut outs for Sensory Kit](#)

## Feel like sharing?

We'd love to see the kit you've created!

If you'd like to share, please [email](#) us a photo of your kit and a few words about what you've added to it.