

Self-Soothing Kits to support Sensory & Emotional Regulation

Many of our students find sensory and emotional regulation challenging and this is understandably becoming increasingly difficult to manage given the current circumstances (as discussed with many families in Home Contact calls.)

As a response, I have been researching 'Self-soothing Kits' – a personalised strategy used to manage anxiety and sensory overwhelm by promoting healthy self-regulation skills (and hopefully reducing unhealthy self-regulation strategies).

The kits must be completely personalised to the young person. They can be as large or as small as required. Some advice is to have a larger box/bag at home and the option of a smaller, more portable one that can be carried when out.

The main thing is for the kit to be accessible. Some young people will be able to initiate accessing the kit as a self-help strategy, whereas others may need support to access it. It is also advisable for the kits to be used in advance of highly escalated emotions and subsequent behaviours. The value of having the 'kit' is that everything is ready in one place. When the young person starts to become distressed, they can access the kit and begin to try things – they don't have to think about what they should do or find what they need. For those trying to replace self-harming behaviours, the kit could hopefully create new positive rituals.

The kits should involve items relating to each of the senses and sensory processing needs.

I have listed a range of suggestions below, but obviously what you include will need to be personalised to what works for your young person, and meets their needs.

During Home Contact calls, your Tutor will be able to give more ideas about other possible options personalised to your young person. Also, please let us know if you require any specific personalised symbols/communication resources to be made which may help. Alternatively, feel free to e mail me:

ekenshole@ellentinkham.devon.sch.uk

Items to squeeze, fidget with or keep hands busy

Stress ball
Fidget spinner
Craft kits
Threading
Peg boards
Plasticene/Playdough/Slime/Putty
Wooden or metal logic puzzles
Rubiks cube
Pom poms/puff balls
Tactile beads
Worry stones
Feathers
Soft brush to rub along arm
Textured material

Items to keep visually calm

Kaleidoscope
Eye mask
'Look and Find' books
Lava lamp
Glitter jars
Favourite pictures/photos

Mindfulness tasks

Colouring
Doodle pads
Jigsaw puzzles
Activity books
Drawing equipment
Travel Games
Favourite books

Items for Olfactory Sensory Support

Scented lotions
Scented sprays
Aromatherapy oils
Jars of spices

Items for Oral Motor Sensory Support

Snacks with a variety of textures, (eg chewy, crunchy)
Sensory chew toys/bracelets/ 'chew buddies'.

Items for Auditory Support

Noise cancelling headphones
Music
Audio books
White noise
Nature sound machine

Items for Proprioceptive Support

Resistance/exercise bands
Weighted blanket/lap cushion
Mini massager
Hand weights
Punch bag/bop bag
Hair Brush