

TOUCH

Touch can help to ground and regulate the nervous system. Different textures can evoke comfort or provide a sensory distraction. Some ideas of items to consider including could be:

- Fidget tools like a stress ball, squishy toys, or a fidget spinner can help release pent-up anxiety and redirect attention
- A soft, comforting fabric like a small piece of fleece or silk
- A plush toy or pet to cuddle or squeeze
- A weighted object or blanket. Research has shown that deep pressure stimulation can be calming for individuals experiencing anxiety or sensory overload
- Hand lotion
- Kinetic sand
- Bubble bath

Do you need connection with a friend, family member, or crisis line?

- Crisis: 9-8-8 (call/text)
- Crisis: 1-800-SUICIDE
- Mental Health (BC): 310-6789
- _____
- _____
- _____

TASTE

Taste can also be a grounding and pleasurable sense. Gentle flavours, often in the form of comfort foods or calming beverages, can promote relaxation and regulation. Some ideas of items to consider including could be:

- Herbal tea bags: Choose calming and soothing herbal teas such as chamomile, peppermint, lemon balm, or lavender
- Dark chocolate (70% or higher) has been shown to have mood-boosting effects
- Nuts: A small bag of almonds, cashews, or walnuts, which are rich in magnesium and omega-3 fatty acids can provide sensory input with crunch and flavour
- Honey or soothing syrup: A small jar of honey can be comforting and grounding when added to tea or eaten by itself
- Lollipops or other candies that can last a while in the mouth
- Chewing gum



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SIGHT

Research in mental health suggests that colours, lighting, and visual cues can influence mood and emotional states. Calming or grounding colours such as blue, green, lavender, and earth tones are ideal. Some ideas of items to consider including could be:

- A small meaningful photo
- Artwork
- Images that are peaceful or comforting to you, such as nature scenes or people who are close to you
- Stress-relieving colouring pages & coloured pencils or markers
- A beautiful crystal or stone such as amethyst, rose or clear quartz, or one with special significance to you
- Fairy lights or a small LED or tea-light candle
- Soft, warm lighting to create a soothing atmosphere
- A favourite cuddly stuffed animal
- A note to remind yourself to attend to internal body needs:
 - Do you need to use the bathroom?
 - Do you need a light snack?
 - Do you need a nap?
 - Do you need connection with a friend, family member, or crisis line?



SMELL

Scents have a profound effect on mood and mental state. Specific scents can help with relaxation, grounding, and mood regulation. Some ideas of items to consider including could be:

- Aromatherapy roller or essential oils: Essential oils like lavender, peppermint, or sandalwood are commonly used for stress relief and relaxation
- A sachet of dried lavender or chamomile: Aromatic herbs like lavender, chamomile, or rose petals in a small sachet can help induce calm
- Coffee beans



SOUND

Auditory experiences, such as soft sounds, nature sounds, or calming music, can be highly effective in reducing anxiety and promoting relaxation. Some ideas of items to consider including could be:

- A playlist of your favourite songs
- A list of music or calming sounds, such as ambient music, nature sounds (rain, ocean waves, etc.), or binaural beats for relaxation
- A small portable speaker or set of headphones and music player
- Wind chimes: These can create a soothing, melodic sound when gently moved by a light breeze
- Silence



MENTAL HEALTH TOOLS & RESOURCES

It may be helpful to include other resources that can guide you through self-care practices that enhance resilience and emotional well-being. Some of these may include:

- A mindfulness journal to write down thoughts and feelings or practice gratitude, which has been shown to improve emotional regulation and reduce stress
- Breathing exercise cards that outline techniques for box breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, or diaphragmatic breathing. Breathing exercises are widely recognized as effective for calming the nervous system
- Self-compassion affirmation cards focused on self-compassion, strength, and kindness. Research has shown that affirmations can enhance emotional regulation and reduce self-criticism