

Creating an Emotional Emergency First Aid Kit

It is important to take care of your mental health every day. Just like with your physical health, you should practice a variety of good habits, including getting enough sleep, exercising, eating nutritious food, spending time with your family and friends, practicing relaxation techniques, and more. All of these activities affect the “feel good” biochemical in your brain and will help you develop a sense of calm and well-being.

Sometimes, however, you may have an emotional emergency, and just like responding to a physical emergency, having the right Emotional Emergency First Aid Kit can help. This worksheet will give you ideas about tools you can use when you are feeling especially anxious or depressed; particularly if you feel you are going to do something that will cause you harm.

You can create a physical Emergency Kit from the list below, assembling objects in a large plastic baggie or other small case, and/or you can create a digital Emergency Kit with tools on your smart phone or tablet. The important thing is to have these tools and techniques in easy reach when you might experience an emotional emergency.

Begin by checking off the tools you think would be helpful to keep in your Emotional Emergency Kit. Then go ahead and assemble the kit and make sure that you keep it with you at times when you anticipate you will be stressed or upset.

My Emotional Emergency Kit

Check off the tools you think would be most useful to use when you feel overwhelmed by emotions. Add additional ideas at the bottom of this page.

A “grounding” object such as a small ball or stone

Just squeezing this object, and paying attention to your physical reaction, can help calm your emotions.

A list of people you can call

This list would include three or four people who are emotionally supportive. If you can't reach them, write down what you want to say, but don't send them an email or text. Wait until you can actually talk to the people on this list to ask for support.

A journal to write down your feelings or to draw and doodle

You can do this digitally or the old fashioned way with a notebook and pen or pencil.

Positive photographs

Have a few photographs or videos easily accessible. These could be of people, pets, or special places. Looking at these pictures should stimulate positive feelings and happy memories.

Water

Sitting and relaxing with a drink of water can have an immediate effect on your mood. Don't gulp it down, but rather sip, relax, and be “mindful” of how you are feeling.

Inspirational reading

Many people find comfort in reading poems, prayers, or inspirational stories.

Funny videos

If you can't find something to make you smile or laugh on YouTube®, there are dozens of websites that are designed to lighten up your day. No matter what you're mood, your favorite video can help.

Chewing gum

Many people don't realize that chewing gum has a calming effect on the brain, because repetitive motion produces serotonin.

A relaxing audio

There are hundreds of guided imagery soundtracks you can download to your smartphone or tablet, as well as meditation audios, and other forms of music designed to help you relax. Don't listen to sad songs, or songs that remind you of a difficult time in your life.

