

## Making a Distress Tolerance Kit for Healthier Coping

It can be helpful to have a Distress Tolerance Toolbox at the ready when you notice uncomfortable feelings that are difficult to manage. Use your Distress Tolerance Toolbox when your emotional discomfort is 5 or higher out of a 0-10 rating scale.

*What you will need for your Distress Tolerance Toolbox:*

- A small box (like a shoe box)
- Tactile items (something to feel) - textures, warm or cold objects, stuffed animal, stress ball, putty
- Visual items (something to see or look at) - flowers, photos, art, vivid colors
- Auditory items (something to hear) - music, meditation guides, books on tape
- Olfactory items (something to smell) - essential oils, perfume, candles
- Gustatory items (something to taste) - gum, mints, sweet or sour candies
- Any other items that bring your joy, contentment, or comfort

*Regulation Tip #1: Self-Soothe with the Five Senses*

Find a pleasurable way to engage each of your five senses. Doing so will help to soothe your negative emotions.

Vision	Go for a walk and notice the sights
Hearing	Listen to music you like, hum a soothing tune
Touch	Take a warm shower, massage a scented lotion onto your hands, hug a friend
Taste	Enjoy a piece of your favorite candy
Smell	Use your favorite perfume or aftershave, spray your room with air freshener

*Regulation Tip #2: Distract Yourself*

Take a walk or brief run	Start a puzzle, play a game	Watch a movie or TV show
Stretch or do yoga	Paint or draw	Read an engaging book
Use a guided meditation app	Write in your journal	Call a trusted friend

*Regulation Tip #3: Have a Crisis Plan*

If you notice your distress tolerance toolkit is not helping to lessen significant discomfort, ask for help:

- Call a family member or friend
- Reach out to your parent, guidance counselor, or therapist
- Call 911 or go to your local ER if safety is at risk