

# COPING TOOLBOX (Page 1 of 2)



## Key Learning

Promote self-awareness and healthy coping strategies.

## What You Need

- Cardboard box with lid (*to hold items*)
- Assortment of craft supplies (*magazines, scissors, Mod Podge®, acrylic paint, paintbrushes, markers, glitter, buttons, sequins, washi tape, etc.*)
- Variety of coping items (*for youth to choose from*)

## No. of Youth

- 1 or more

**This activity was provided by Kimberly Blackmore, MC, CPT, RP.** Kimberly is the H.U.U.G. (Help Us Understand Grief) Counsellor at Heart House Hospice in Mississauga, ON. She provides counselling to children, youth and families who have a loved one who is dying or has died as well as education to professionals on how to support and communicate with grieving children.

## Preparation Activities

1. Inform youth of the activity in advance with a reminder to bring copies of photographs and/or other small items from home that provide comfort when they are experiencing difficult or uncomfortable feelings.
2. Lay out an assortment of small items that youth might select for their coping toolbox.

⚠ Many of the activities included in this resource provide youth with tangible tools which they might like to include in their coping toolbox.

## How to Play

1. Explain to youth that we will be creating our own coping boxes. Once we have had a chance to decorate our boxes, we will fill it with a variety of items to use when difficult feelings come up. Just as each person's grief is unique, each of our coping boxes will be different and that is okay.
2. Invite youth to choose a box to decorate using the craft materials provided.
3. Support youth to identify and select items to include in their toolbox:
  - Looking at the objects before you, are there any items that you could see yourself using in times of emotional stress?
  - Do you see any items that might serve as a helpful or comforting reminder when you are feeling overwhelmed with emotion?
  - Are there any tools that you have never used, but would like to try?
4. Encourage youth to try various tools before placing them in their box.
5. Invite youth to share the items they selected for their coping toolbox if they are comfortable doing so.

## TOOLBOX IDEAS

- Tissues
- Chocolate
- Photograph(s)
- Playing cards
- Magazines or books
- Journal
- Worry stones
- Affirmations
- Comfort Card
- Music (*or printed lyrics*)
- Calming essential oils
- Mindful meditation script
- Self-compassion exercise
- Colouring page & markers
- Stress balls (*or modelling clay*)
- Favourite tea/hot chocolate
- Puzzle book (Sudoku, crossword, etc.)



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## Discussion

### Reflect

How can each item be used to help you when you are grieving or going through other stressful situations?

Are there any missing items that you would like to include in your toolbox?

### Connect

What warning signs do you get in your body that would remind you to use the items in your coping toolbox?

### Apply

What are some other ways in which you can safely cope with your feelings?



## OUR NETWORK



### OUR VISION

Every child and youth has honest information and well-informed support when someone they care about is dying or has died.

### OUR MISSION

To advocate for educational opportunities and support services that will benefit children and youth who are grieving the dying or the death of someone they care about.

[www.childrenandyouthgriefnetwork.com](http://www.childrenandyouthgriefnetwork.com)

## SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



# RIGHT TO PLAY

PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Right To Play is an international organization that uses the transformative power of sport and play to educate and empower children and youth living in adversity to overcome the effects of poverty, conflict and disease. Partnering with more than 85 First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and urban organizations across four provinces, the PLAY program is led by locally-hired Community Mentors who are trained and supported by Right To Play staff to implement regular weekly play-based programs that build and enhance essential life-skills. We would like to thank Right To Play for sharing the organization's experiential learning methodology (Reflect – Connect – Apply) for the activities included in this resource to support youth through their grief. To learn more, visit Right To Play's website or email [canada@righttoplay.com](mailto:canada@righttoplay.com).

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