

How to Create a Comfort Drawer with Your Child



An activity to help your child find calm
in the anxious moments

by

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Introduction

Is your little one feeling anxious, nervous, or upset?

According to the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#) anxiety can show up in your child as “crying, tantrums, clinging, avoidance, headaches, and stomachaches.” Reach out to your therapist if you have any concerns with the behaviors you are seeing.

I have found that children respond to the idea of having a “Comfort Drawer” to help them ease through an anxious instance. It is a happy place created by them to which they can momentarily retreat when life may seem too overwhelming.

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What is a Comfort Drawer?

What are the Benefits?

A Comfort Drawer is a drawer or a box containing various items which will immediately trigger feelings of peace, calm or delight in your child.

Sarah Ban Breathnach, New York Times best-selling author of the classic primer on living a full, intentional life, [Simple Abundance](#), brought attention around the idea of the comfort drawer. It is an idea dating back more than 25 years, but which seems so appropriate for our times. When we revel in the tiny pleasures of life, this joy briefly distracts us from our anxiety and brings us back to a place of being centered.

The thought is that when your child is feeling anxious, he can use this drawer (and the items in it) as a way to be reminded of the things which bring him joy and comfort. We could all use a huge dose of comfort to help us manage those times when our thoughts and emotions spiral out of control!



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What you need:

- An empty box, a drawer
 - Decorations
(wrapping paper, stickers,
anything to decorate the box)
- A collection of things which makes
your child happy
(See below for further instructions)



Step One

Decorate the Drawer/Box and Fill It Up!

If you choose to use an empty box, your child can let her creativity go wild decorating the box.

Now for the extra fun part: finding objects to fill the drawer or box. Think of appealing to your child's senses when choosing objects. Perhaps you will include the photo of a loved one or a best friend, a pint-sized version of your child's favorite snack, a fuzzy, favorite toy or object, a written list of feel-good songs to ask Alexa to play, a miniature pillow filled with dried lavender or rice infused with lavender essential oil. You get the picture. Your child can choose whatever she feels leads her to a happier place or a more calm state of mind.

As each item is placed in the box, you might ask your child how the item makes her happy or what about the item makes her feel good.



Step Two

Explain to Your Child How to Use the Box

Store the drawer/box in a visible place which is easily accessible to your child.

Tell him that the box is always there to go through or to play with, but is especially there for the difficult moments when feelings get hurt by a friend or sibling or when he feels the anger rising, but doesn't want to explode or meltdown. Encourage him to pick up the box, finger each of the items and to remember why each thing puts a smile on his face.

Be available to hear your child relive the importance of each piece of comfort. Check in with him to see how he is feeling after remembering why he filled the box with these few treasures.

When your child is in a more calm frame of mind ask him to share with you the heightened feelings and emotions that led to taking the drawer/box off of the shelf. Get him to notice any difference in how he now feels (after holding the contents of the box and talking about the objects) as opposed to his initial feelings. Remind him that the drawer/box is always available to him and you are there to listen as well.



For Therapists

Request that your client bring the Comfort Drawer to your next session. Ask her to explain the significance of each item and how it makes her feel. Get the child to remember a situation which led to her taking the box off of the shelf.

What preceded that moment? Where in her body did she feel any tension? How did the child feel as she went through the box? Did she notice any shifts in her emotions? Did she notice any changes in how she felt in his body after going through the box?

Prompt her to use the box as often as needed as a resource for feeling better any time she is feeling overwhelmed by her emotions.

