



Calm: Soothing Worries

Wellbeing Activity
from The Art Room

Calm: Soothing Worries



Introduction

Worry and anxiety are normal everyday feelings. Sometimes these feelings can help protect or motivate us, but if they become too strong, they can feel overwhelming.

These three creative activities provide primary aged children with ways to settle and ground themselves, or to explore how to share their worries with someone they trust.

Overview of the activities:

- Activity 1 – Settle your thoughts
- Activity 2 – Soothe your senses
- Activity 3 – Share your worries
- Booklist – recommended story books exploring worry and anxiety for primary school aged children

Materials:

- Paper, card, or a reused box
- Household or reused objects
- Coloured pens, pencils, paint, crayons, and/or pastels

Optional:

- Magazines/ newspapers / coloured paper
- Glue and/or tape
- Scissors

Share your creations

We'd love to see your artwork! Share photos of your creations with us on social media:



Activities

The 3 activities in this project can be done independently from one another. Each one offers a different way of supporting children to calm worried feelings. Feel free to choose

which activities would be most helpful for your child/children.

Whilst the emphasis of these activities is not to name worrying thoughts & feelings, this project may prompt them to

surface. Adults are advised to be mindful of this and ensure children are given an opportunity to share any worries or feelings that may arise.

Section for partner/ artist info

This project includes videos by Place2Be Ambassador Ricky Martin, also known as CBBC's Art Ninja. Watch our accompanying videos so Ricky can guide you through each activity!

Inspiration


As further inspiration, you might like to listen to some of the music in our [Calm: Soothing Worries Playlist on Spotify](#)

ACTIVITY 1:

Settle your thoughts



Imagine

To get inspired watch this video of Ricky Martin guiding you through the activity. It is [here on YouTube to watch](#). 

Activity aims

- Make a picture by tracing around small objects onto paper so that they overlap.
- Focus on the shapes, and colour them in to help distract from worrying thoughts.
- Use drawing, colouring and pattern making to help with feeling settled.

Tip: This activity can help a child distract themselves from worrying thoughts or feelings. It can help them feel more settled by becoming focused on and absorbed in their task.



Create

You will need:

- paper or card
- colouring pencils, pens or crayons

Creative activity steps:

1. Collect some small objects from around your house like lids, coins, boxes, or jigsaw pieces. Have fun finding unusual shapes too!
2. Draw around each of your objects. Find interesting ways to make the outlines of your objects overlap and form different shapes.
3. Colour your sections in. You can do this at a pace that helps you feel settled. You don't need to colour it all in, maybe you'd rather add patterns or leave parts empty.
4. While colouring, you might want to focus on the shapes your pen/pencil makes on the paper – what can you notice about the marks you're making?

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Explore


- Look at your creation and see how many objects you can spot! If you like, you can show it to someone else and see if they can guess which objects you drew around.
- What was it like paying attention while tracing and colouring in your shapes? Did you notice anything in particular?
- Some people find it relaxing to colour and draw. How was it for you? If you did it again, is there something that could help you feel more calm or settled?

ACTIVITY 2:

Soothe your senses



Imagine

To get inspired watch this video of Ricky Martin guiding you through the activity. It is [here on YouTube to watch](#). 

Activity aims

- Create a Garden of Calm; a soothing space where you can feel relaxed from head to toe.
- Explore what would be calming to smell, touch, taste, see, hear, and feel in your environment.
- Focus on how your body and senses respond to being in your garden of calm.

Tip: This activity can help a child feel more grounded physically. This can be reached by soothing their senses, which helps calm their autonomic nervous system. This can help their body feel less under threat if they were feeling worried.



Create

You will need:

- A box, or plain paper / card
- A collection of found materials or objects

Optional

- Coloured paper or card
- coloured pencils/ pens/crayons/ paint
- scissors and glue

Creative activity steps:

1. Imagine and create a Garden of Calm - a place that helps relax your senses. Think about what would be nice and soothing to touch, smell, see, hear and/or taste. How can different things in your garden help you feel comfortable?
2. Your garden will be unique to you, and filled with sensory things that help you feel relaxed. You don't need to know why these things
3. Create your garden using the materials collected. Find a base to build it on – perhaps inside a box, or on a piece of paper or card. Feel free to add symbols, words or decorations as you like.

Tips: What helps us feel calm is different for each of us:

- It may be that you need a quiet space to sit, surrounded by the colour and scent of certain flowers. Some people may prefer not to see or smell much at all.

make you relaxed. It may help you to close your eyes and imagine being in your garden.

Now find materials that have a similar feel or texture, smell, taste, look or sound to what you imagined in your garden. Don't worry if you can't find something you want, you can draw or write it down instead. You can find sounds using these online tools and create your own relaxing soundscape –

 [BBC Sound Effects](#)

 <https://bit.ly/3fu8n2u>

- Perhaps you need a space where you can hear a few sounds like the movement of the water from a stream/waterfall or the rustling sound of the tall trees and leaves.
- For others, it may be more helpful to have an open space with soft grass where you can run around, kick a ball, and use all the energy within you before then feeling calm.

Now that you know some of the things that help you feel calm maybe you can find ways to soothe your senses if you feel worried. If you ever need to travel back there, you can picture it again in your mind.



Explore

- Imagine walking through your garden. What can you see, hear, smell, taste or feel?
- Can you describe the feelings in your body when you imagine being in your garden?
- Which three words best describe your Garden of Calm?



ACTIVITY 3:

Share your worries



Imagine

To get inspired watch this video of Ricky Martin guiding you through the activity. It is [here on YouTube to watch](#). [🔗](#)

Activity aims

- Create a worry doll to help share worries with a trusted adult.
- Think about the qualities a trusted adult would have to make sharing feelings comfortable.
- Explore how helpful it can be to talk and share worried feelings with someone.

Tip: This activity is best done with children who are feeling settled at the time. It is likely they will be more able to engage in the activity and think about sharing their worries with a trusted adult.



Create

You will need:

- a pipe cleaner or stick (a twig, ice-cream or lollipop stick)
- string, wool, plastic food wrappers
- or scraps of fabric
- pen/pencil
- glue or tape

Optional:

- coloured card, paper or tissue paper



Explore

- Imagine your worry doll's personality. What are they like?
- If you feel worried, your worry doll can help you find an adult you trust to tell your worries to. Who might that be?
- Is there somewhere safe you would like to keep your worry doll?

Creative activity steps:

Our inspiration for this is Guatemalan Worry Dolls! You can see them in the circle above. Worry dolls are small handmade dolls made originally by people in Guatemala, a country in Central America. It is a Guatemalan tradition that if a child felt worried, they'd be given a worry doll to tell their worries to. Let's make your own worry doll who can help you tell your worries to an adult you trust.

1. Start by imagining your worry doll. A worry doll is a character you can trust sharing worries with. What might that person or character be like? How do they make you feel? Do they have any special qualities? They don't have to be a real person you know, perhaps you want to create an imagined character. Feel free to make more than one worry doll.

2. Start making your doll by creating their body structure. You can use a lollipop stick, natural stick, pipe cleaner, or a rolled piece of cardboard. (You can see how to bend a pipe-cleaner into a doll shape [here](#) [🔗](#))
3. Decorate your doll. You can use string or other materials to wrap around the body structure. You can also tie or glue fabric or paper to create clothes.
4. Draw your doll's face on a piece of paper, and stick it onto the doll. If using a lollipop stick, you can draw the face directly on its flat surface.

Once you've made your doll or character, you can think of what you might call them. If you feel worried, perhaps your worry doll can help you tell an adult you trust how you are feeling.



BOOKLIST

Stories to help children explore their worries

There are many wonderful picture books which can help children think about worries and anxiety. Here is a collection of stories which you and your child or children might find supportive.

Ruby's Worry – by Tom Percival (ages 6-12)

A story about the healing power of sharing your worries. (Published by Bloomsbury Children's Books)

Imagine Eating Lemons: A Children's Introduction to Mindfulness – by Jason Rhodes (ages 6-9)

A story guiding children through simple steps they can take if they notice worried feelings or thoughts. (Published by Happy Sapling Books)

[You can listen to the author reading their book here](#) 

My Monster and Me – by Nadiya Hussain (ages 4-8)

A story which explores how to befriend the part of us that can sometimes feel worried. (Published by Hodder Children's Books)

Silly Billy – by Anthony Browne (ages 6-9)

A story about a boy who eases his worries by telling them to his worry dolls. (Published by Walker Books).

Charlotte and the Quiet Place – by Deborah Sosin (ages 6-9)

A story about finding a place to feel calm; both a real place and a space inside yourself. (Published by Parallax Press)

[You can listen to the author reading their book here](#) 

A Little SPOT of Anxiety: A Story About Calming Your Worries – by Diane Alber (All ages)

A book that can help children explore what feeling anxious can be like, and guides children to use affirmations and a breathing technique to feel calmer. (Published by Diane Alber Art LLC)

I am Peace – by Susan Verde and Peter H Reynolds (ages 6-12)

A story about finding a sense of peace through mindful breathing, connecting to others, nature and your senses. Published by Abrams Books.

[You can listen to the author reading their book here](#) 

What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety – by Dawn Huebner (ages 6-12)

A book which guides children through cognitive-behavioural techniques to ease worries. (Published by Magination Press)

The Very Hungry Worry Monsters – by Rosie Greening (ages 4-8)

A story that can help children name worries and think about sharing them by writing them down. (Published by Make Believe Ideas)

The Wonder Tree – by Teresa Heapy (ages 3 - 8)

A story about how we can ease worries by talking about them with someone who can help. (Published by Egmont)



Time for calm

Now you can settle, soothe and share your worries if they appear...



End of project reflection

- Think about the activities you have done in this project. How did they help you?
- What other activities can you do to comfort yourself and ease your worries?
- If you were to feel worried in the future, would you do any of these activities again? Which one(s)?

More from The Art Room

Looking for more creative projects? [Visit our website for more activities from The Art Room](#) [↗](#) to see our other projects for families and teachers, including projects like Tuning In: Mindful Listening, Weather: Noticing Feelings, or The Creative Gardener: Nurturing Self-Belief. They are free to download and can be done at home or in the classroom!

More from Ricky Martin (Art Ninja)



Presenter, Animator, Director and Place2Be Ambassador, Ricky, also features in the Art Room project [Portals: Exploring Changes](#) [↗](#)

You can watch more art videos and tips from Ricky on CBBC, or [here on YouTube](#) [↗](#)

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