

Non-Suicidal Self-Injury Practical Interventions and Tools for Students

Interventions

Comfort Kit (Cindy Morton)

The goal of a comfort kit is to provide a distraction for students who engage in self-injurious behaviors. Fill the kit with a few tactile tools and sensory items. It is more effective if you limit the kit to three to four items.

How to use the kit?

Start out strong by allowing the distressed student to come into your office and use his or her kit for about 20-30 minutes. As time goes on during the year, slowly reduce the student's time with the kit and progressively move the location of the kit so the student can access it without your presence (you can include a sand timer). The goal is to place the kit in his or her possession where the student can look at the items and become distracted from the act of NSSI.

Items to include in a kit:

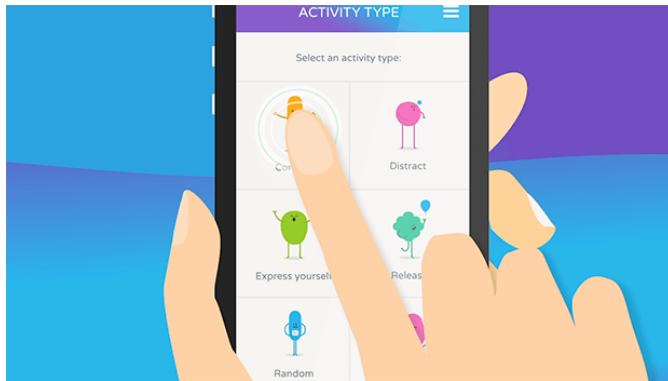
- **Glue** - Glue gives the sensation of pulling on the skin which mimics the sensation students desire when cutting, burning, or picking the skin.
- **Highlighters** (suggested colors are yellow and green)- Highlighters can be used for the student to make visual marks on the skin which is often another desired result of NSSI.
- **Tape**- Like glue, tape also provides a sensation of pulling on the skin which mimics the sensation students desire when cutting, burning, or picking the skin.
- **Band aids**- Like glue and tape, band aids also give the sensation of pulling on the skin which mimics the sensation students desire when cutting, burning, or picking the skin.
- **Bag** with sand and rocks, a manipulative like clay or play doh, or stress ball

Distraction Techniques (Kilburn & Whitlock; National Self Harm Network):

- Reach out to others (*students can call SAFE Alternatives 1-800-DONT-CUT*).
- Encourage students to express themselves creatively through a journal, a song, or drawing, or writing poetry.
- Students can nurture themselves by taking a bubble bath, watching a funny movie, listen to music, or take a shower.
- Find constructive activities like cooking, cleaning, doing homework, organizing their room or dying their hair.

Phone App

Calm Harm: was developed by Consultant Clinical Psychologist Dr. Nihara Krause. Upon opening the app, students are greeted with the metaphor that considers the urge to self-harm as similar surfing a wave: 'it builds...it peaks... but ultimately, it subsides.' As such, students are invited to ride the wave, which takes them to a selection of six categories: **Comfort, Distract, Express Yourself, Release, Random and Breathe**. Once they've chosen a category, they are given a list of different DBT-based strategies (within the selected category) that they can choose to do. *For example, in the Distract category, you could choose to Think of a country for every letter of the alphabet. In the Express Yourself category, you can choose to write what's*



upsetting you on a piece of paper and tear it up. Every time students 'ride the wave' they are asked how strong the experienced urge was, whether their chosen activity helped, and why they got the urge. Students answers, as well as the date and time the distraction activity was taken, will appear in the activity log.