



THE SELF-HELP AT HOME SERIES #1

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THE CONTAINER EXERCISE

This technique is useful to manage intense emotions. What we will do is “contain” or manage all of the disturbing **STUFF** that’s contributing to how we feel. “Stuff” is different for everyone. Maybe it’s finances, maybe it’s family worries, maybe it’s the intensity of the feeling. This exercise may not make the feeling go away, but may help you better manage the feelings that you’re experiencing.

HELLO
my name is

Anxiety

1: IDENTIFY THE FEELING: Name the feeling or feelings you’re experiencing. OUT LOUD. Write them down. Where is that feeling in your body? Is it in your stomach, behind your eyes, hanging out behind your ankle? Imagine where it is. Now rate the intensity of the physical feeling in your body from 0-10. Zero means no intensity, 10 means it’s **THE WORST** feeling right now. Whatever the number is, that’s okay.

2.) IMAGINE A CONTAINER: Imagine some sort of secure container. Maybe it’s in the room you’re in, or maybe it’s somewhere else. Maybe it’s a box, trunk, safe, office drawer, or bank vault. Anything that you believe is secure enough to hold all of your “stuff”.

3.) DESCRIBE IT: What would this container have to be like in order to securely hold all of your feelings and the disturbing stuff – memories, images, physical sensations, emotions, etc. Describe it in detail. What is it? What color is it? How big is it? What is it made of? Why is it so secure? Are there things that it needs to make it more secure? What does it feel like, smell like, sound like?



4.) PUT IT ALL IN THERE: Now, imagine all of the things that are making you feel this way and put them in the container. Everything. All of the images, sounds, smells, physical sensations, feelings, etc. If there’s anything else that needs to go in there, put that in there too.

5.) LOCK IT UP: Shut the door securely. Does it need to be more secure? Imagine what that would look like. Wrapping the container in caution tape? Putting it in another container? It’s all up to you. Also imagine where it is. Can it be in the room with you, or does it feel better to send it down the street, or in space?! It’s okay to send all of that stuff to the moon!

5.) PRACTICE: The ‘stuff’ will find a way out of there eventually, or there will be new things that may need to go into the container. If that happens, spend a few minutes going through the exercise again and enhancing the image of the container. Remember that intensity number from #1. Is it higher? Lower? Or about the same. If it’s not lowering where you want it to, repeat the exercise and enhance the image of the container. Focus on your breath. If nothing is working, it’s okay to reach out for extra help. Contact a local therapist or crisis center in your area.

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

CONTAINER EXERCISE

1.) Name the feelings:

2.) Where are the feelings in your body?

3.) What's the intensity of your feelings right now as you're filling this out?
(**zero** = no intensity / **ten** = worst feeling imaginable)

1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10 (circle one)

4.) Imagine a container, what is it? _____

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?
Colors, textures, size, etc.

WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?
Clangs like metal? Clicks like a lock?

WHERE IS IT?

WHY IS IT SO SECURE?

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

CONTAINER EXERCISE

DRAW THE CONTAINER HERE
Make it as detailed and colorful as you want!



- 5.) Check in with yourself again. What's the intensity of your feelings now?
(**zero** = no intensity / **ten** = worst feeling imaginable)

1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10 (circle one)

- 6.) If it's not lowering where you want it to, repeat the exercise and enhance the image of the container. Focus on your breath. If nothing is working, it's okay to reach out for extra help. Contact a local therapist or crisis center in your area. Contact 211 for local resources.