

David Laing

Clinical Hypnotic Consultant



HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A COMFORT BAG

What do you do when you're away from home and anxiety strikes? Reach into your comfort bag for security, distraction or relaxation.

- 1. Choose a bag.** Decide what kind of bag is most suitable. If you drive a lot, you can take more in the car. If you carry a purse, maybe a large one is in order. A rucksack is an ideal option for anyone.
- 2. Brainstorm.** Now it's time to brainstorm. Sit down with pen and paper, and write down anything that comes to mind that has helped relieve your anxiety in the past. Add to it anything that you'd like to try.
- 3. Pick the portable items from your list.** After your list is complete, decide what is portable and build your comfort bag.

Below are a number of suggestions to help you complete your list.

4. Relaxation:

- * Index cards with relaxation and breathing exercises
- * Lavender oil
- * Hand cream (for hand massage)
- * Music and portable player
- * Relaxation tapes

5. Comfort

- * Photos
- * Cards/letters from loved ones
- * Teddy bear
- * Religious or spiritual items
- * Index cards with poems, quotes and calming reminders

6. Stimulation

- * Rubber bands (can put on your wrist)
- * Mints
- * Cold water
- * Mentholated cream (to smell)
- * Upbeat music

7. Distraction

- * Puzzle books
- * Magazines
- * Portable computer games
- * Journal
- * Small children's toys
- * Colouring books
- * Audio books
- * Pens, pencils, coloured pencils, crayons

8. Emergencies

- * Mobile phone
- * Extra clothes (including something warm)
- * Blanket
- * Extra medication
- * Small phonebook with all important numbers
- * Change for public phone
- * Money
- * Toilet paper and Kleenex
- * Maps

Tips:

1. Have a list people you can call if you're stuck somewhere. They would be people who could come get you or talk to you until you feel calm again (make sure they've agreed ahead of time).
2. Forgetfulness is a common symptom during anxiety and panic. When you put together lists, like phone numbers, be sure to include even the most obvious because you may forget the most obvious when you're anxious.
3. Remember that anxiety can often make easy tasks more difficult, so be sure to bring distractions for an anxious mind (i.e., perhaps a children's puzzle book rather than an adult's).
4. Don't be embarrassed about bringing what soothes you. If bringing that childhood teddy bear will help you take a few more recovery steps, then it's worth it!