

Box of Courage

Courage is only possible when we are afraid. Sometimes when we are faced with a difficult situation, we are so focused on the pain and problems that we forget we already have so much in us to get us through. It takes bravery and courage to keep moving forward when so much of you wants to give up. This activity is intended to remind you of many of the tools, people and resources available to help you when you are afraid. It can help you find the courage to keep moving forward.

Part 1: Creating the box

1. Find a shoebox or other box with a lid that you can decorate and make your own.
2. Find pictures, quotations or images that represent your hopes, dreams and goals. Look for specific images that represent your goals and dreams or draw them yourself.
3. Find and choose special objects, pictures or other things that help or remind you to keep going or represent courage and hope to you. These can be things that represent an idea, value or wish. It can be an activity, a coping skill, a person or animal. It can even be something that motivates you.
4. Find something that represents or reminds you of a healing activity such as a ceremonial item, a piece of nature, essential oils, bracelet kits, a book, or the “Letter to your Younger Self.”
5. If you wish, add crisis or emergency phone numbers or phone numbers of people who have been helpful in your life into the box.
6. Place all items in the box. Put the lid on.
7. Keep your box in a safe place.

Part 2: Self-reflection

Whenever you are feeling down, drained, spent, or overall like giving up, you can open the box and go through it. Remember, courage is being afraid but moving forward anyway.

1. Find a private, quiet place to open your box. Ground yourself with 5 deep breaths before opening the box.
2. Spend 10-15 minutes, or as little or as much time as you have, going through the box. As you pick up each item, ask yourself the following questions:
 - *Why did I put this item in my box of courage?*
 - *What does this item represent to me?*
 - *How does this item help me heal?*
3. If there is a ritual or ceremony you use the item for, consider performing that practice if it feels helpful. If the item brings you comforting memories, sit with those memories as you hold the item.

For adult facilitators:

Use part 1 of this document to introduce the Box of Courage and answer any questions that may come up. Share the instructions on how to create the box with teen participants and invite them to create a box at home and then bring it back for discussion at a later time. Feel free to create a box of your own and bring it with you to share during the conversation.

Use the discussion questions below to help facilitate a conversation with teen participants. Be sure to acknowledge how intimate and vulnerable sharing these boxes can be. Let teens know that sharing is encouraged but optional, and set some ground rules for the conversation. These might include:

- Be respectful
- Share only what you feel comfortable sharing
- [Step up/Step back](#)
- What is **said** here **stays** here, but what is **learned** here may **leave** here (i.e. share your takeaways, not a person's direct quotes).

Invite teens to add to this list and ensure that everyone agrees to follow these ground rules to help make the space safe and comfortable for sharing.

Discussion Questions

1. *Pick one object and share with the group why you chose it and how it reminds you of your courage/dreams/hopes or determination to keep going.*
2. *What surprised you about this activity? Did you choose items/symbols/things you did not initially expect to put in there?*
3. *Where will you put this box so you can access it easily?*
4. *How will you know you are going through a time when you may need to look through the box?*
5. *Boxes of courage can make great gifts for loved ones, younger siblings/cousins or friends going through difficulty. How might you be able to share this activity with someone who might need it?*

You may also provide part 2 of this document to encourage teens to continue to use and reflect on the boxes they've created.