**SKILL PRACTICES TO USE WITH COMFORT KITS**

Icon

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Skill 2: Feel Better – Catch the Relaxation Wave

What does this help? Worries, trouble sleeping, pain

What is it? A form of progressive muscle relaxation.

What items do you need?

Nothing but yourself and a comfortable place to sit or lay down. Sometimes it helps to hold a squeeze ball, ***squishy stress ball***, or a ***finger puppet***. Or, put a ***color-changing sticker*** on your finger, forehead, or the back of your hand and see what happens!

How to do it?

This can take from 5 to 10 minutes, depending on how long you need it.

* Start with taking 5-10 slow, deep breaths.
* Notice how your shoulders drop with each breath out.
* Imagine with each breath out the muscles relaxing further down your body, like ice cream melting in a bowl. It’s like a wave of relaxation!
* Every time you breathe out, tell the muscles in your body to relax. You may want to do this with each muscle, one by one, or your whole body all at once.
* Just remember with each breath out, you can loosen muscles of your neck, shoulders, arms, fingers, chest, ribs, belly, back, hips, legs, ankles, feet, and toes.
* Make the muscles in your feet and toes very, very tight. Hold them tight – tight – tight and count to 10. Then, let go of the tightness and feel the muscles in your feet and toes melt into relaxation.
* Next, do the same thing working up your entire body.
  + Your legs, thighs, knees, ankles
  + Back, Chest, Stomach
  + Arms, elbows, fists
  + Neck and shoulders (pull your shoulders up to your ears then let them drop comfortably)
  + Forehead, eyes, nose, cheeks, and jaws
* You can use your squishy stress ball while you catch the relaxation wave. Squeeze the ball each time you make your muscles go tight, tight, tight, and soften your grip on the ball when you relax your muscles.
* You will notice the difference between tight, stiff muscles and loose, relaxed muscles. After you are done, your muscles should feel like wet, loose noodles or a floppy teddy bear!

When to use it?

* Practice 2 to 3 times per day.
* Any time you are feeling nervous, stressed, or upset.
* Use this before medical check-ups, including vaccine shots.