

# ART THERAPY RESOURCES



## ART THERAPY CASE STUDY BACKGROUND: SELF-HARM

Sofia has been attending art therapy sessions for 3 months. She had been sexually abused by a family member from ages 8-12. The abuse came to light when Sofia was 12 and her mother found cutting marks on her arms. Sophia mentions since her abuse came out in the open that everything has been chaotic. Sophia and her mother have moved out of home. Sophia has moved to a new school and doesn't want to make new friends. Sophia mentions she feels numb all the time. Sophia feels like she is in a fog and can't see anything around her. Sophia sits in her room and constantly thinks about cutting herself. She thinks about it so much that she ends up doing it.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

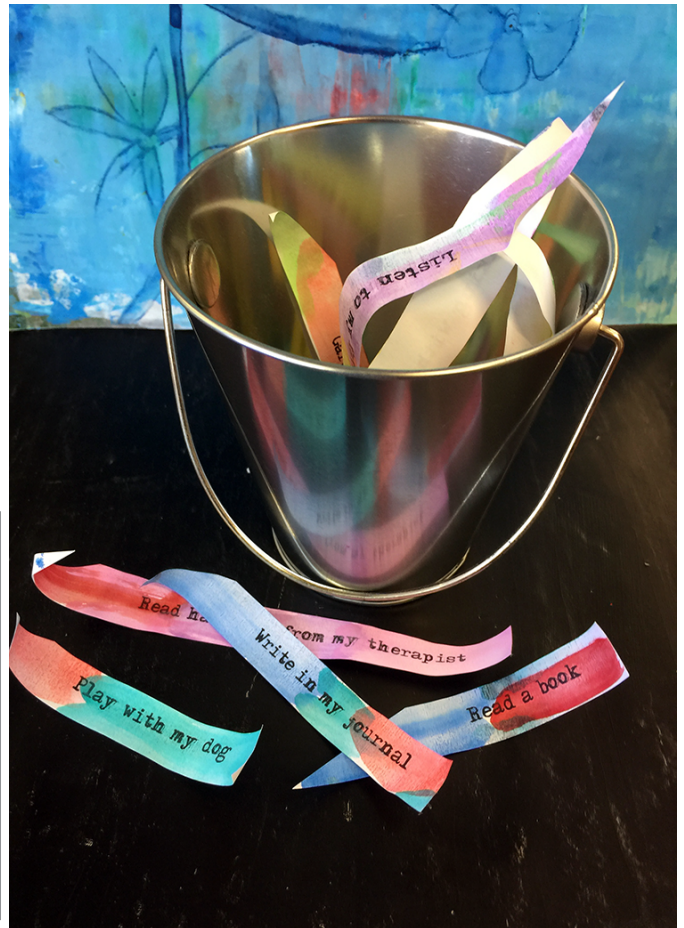
- Begin with some psychoeducation for the client on the benefits of distraction and disruption as an alternative to self-harm activities.
- Discuss with your client some activities that your client may want to engage in to distract them from pervasive thoughts. These activities should be simple to start and undertake so that the client does not have any significant obstacles to participating in the activities.
- Using art supplies, create a list of activities your client can do to distract them from pervasive thoughts and self-harm behaviours. These activities should be personally enjoyable for your client and be simple to undertake. The client can create a jar to pull out random suggestions from the list of ideas. The client can also art supplies to create a container to hold the list of activity ideas.
- Once the client has completed the project, draw out a random suggestion from the jar and discuss with your client the process of how and when they may undertake the activity if self-harm thoughts arise in the client's personal world.

Walking through the process of choosing a suggested activity can help the client solidify how to engage in this activity when they next face self-harm thoughts.

### EXAMPLE EXERCISE:

Sofia enjoyed creating her container of distraction activities as it reminded her of the activities she likes to do. Sophia felt she had a personal connection to the ideas as she has come up with the ideas herself.

Sofia wanted to use the ideas to seek relief from painful emotions and negative thoughts in the future.



NOTE: more details can be found at [www.arttherapyresources.com.au/case-study-self-harm](http://www.arttherapyresources.com.au/case-study-self-harm)