



Stress Ball

We all experience varying levels of stress throughout our lives, and you can never have enough tools to help support healthy ways to help relieve that stress. This activity offers an opportunity for parents/caregivers and their children to talk about some of the things that contribute to stress in their lives, followed by the making of one simple tool to help ease the physical tension that comes with difficult emotions.

MATERIALS:

- 1 cup of rice
- 1 clean tube or crew sock
- Recommended: essential oils
- Optional: markers



Alternative materials: large square of fabric and yarn instead of a sock; modeling dough (like play-doh) instead of rice.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Introduce this activity with a conversation about stress. Some discussion questions for you and your child to talk through:
 - When do I feel frustrated, angry, or nervous?
 - During those times, how does my body feel?
 - Does your heart beat faster? Do you feel some pressure in your chest or belly? Do your shoulders feel tense or tight? Do you get a headache?
 - What are some ways that I tend to respond to these feelings? What do I do when I feel this way?
- Explain that these feelings can sometimes be difficult to work through, so it is helpful to have a variety of tools and strategies available to ease stress and the tension it can build in our bodies. One simple tool that can help with this is the action of squeezing and releasing a stress ball.

Step 1: Pour the cup of rice into the sock (make a quick funnel out of a sheet of paper if you're having trouble!). If you would like, add a drop or two of an essential oil to help promote calm. Lavender or eucalyptus are great choices for this.

Step 2: Use the sock itself to tie a knot towards the bottom, securing the rice in place.





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Step 3: Cut or fringe the excess material above the knot or go on to tie, twist, and folder over the sock until excess material is balled up.



Step 4: You are done! If you'd like, you can draw on your sock with markers. Don't know what to draw? Try drawing something you find peaceful (perhaps a tree, flower, sunset), an angry face, or some simple shapes, colors, and doodles that you enjoy – just take the opportunity to slow down and make something for yourself that does not need to be judged in any way.

