INTRODUCTION
Audre Lorde, a Black feminist, writer and activist said, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

When we take care of ourselves, we are able to be the best version of ourselves. When we take care of ourselves, we are able to offer care to the people we love. When we take care of ourselves and each other, we change the world for the better.

Can you believe it? Changing the world starts with giving care to our lovely self!

What happens around us, in our environment, has an affect on how we feel. We may feel sadness, anger, fear, and even hopelessness. At times, the emotions feel so strong. Sometimes we are taught that it is not okay to have emotions or that some emotions are good and others are bad. However, emotions are natural. Everyone has them! Emotions don’t depend on your gender or your age. If we have the right tools, we can be prepared to respond to strong feelings in a way that is healing and helpful to ourselves.

How do you take care of yourself when you feel overcome by powerful emotions like sadness, anger, and fear?

IN THIS ACTIVITY YOU WILL:
- Explore the way different objects make you feel
- Make a self-care box by filling a box with sensory objects that make you feel calm and joyful

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL REGULATION?
At all times, emotions and sensations are communicating to us what our bodies and minds need. They are designed to keep us safe. Nerves are the messengers of the body. Our emotions and sensations are a special language our bodies use to communicate with us. Our bodies can let us know when we feel hungry, cold, and tired. Our body can even let us know when it thinks we are in danger! We have an alarm system right inside of our brains and it is called the amygdala. Emotional regulation allows us to be more aware and better control how we respond to these messages.
**ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS**

**Tools & Materials of Making**
Get creative and use whatever materials you have available. Here are some suggestions to start with:
- **Small or Medium sized box or bag:** ex: old shoe box, cereal box, any cardboard or plastic box
- **Sensory materials:** velcro, putty, feathers, pipe cleaner, candles, paper, containers etc.
- **Connection materials:** tape, glue, clips etc.
- **Tools:** Scissors, Pens, Pencils, Markers, Paper
- **Optional Embellishing materials:** glitter, stickers, drawings

**EXPLORATION**
Different colors, scents, sounds, and textures affect us all differently. Sensory objects can calm us when we feel stress and anxiety. Sensory objects bring our attention from our internal stress to focus on the external, or outside world.
- Explore around where you are and collect materials that seem interesting
- Find materials that look like they will have a calming effect.
- How does each object make you feel?
- What materials do you like the best?

**SELECT YOUR OBJECTS**
Humans can have up to 5 senses. For your self-care box, **choose one sensory object for each of your senses:**
- Taste
- Touch
- Smell
- Sight
- Sound

**FILL & DECORATE YOUR BOX**
When you are stressed in the moment, your thinking brain will be disconnected from your feeling brain. You will want to have your self-care box ready when you need it!
- Place your chosen objects in your box.
- Decorate your box! Make it yours!
- Go to your self-care box when you need care and emotional regulation.

**REFLECT**
- Can you reflect on a time where a strong emotion caused you to fight, run, or freeze?
- How did you get yourself and your body back into a calm state?

**Extra Credit!**
Design & build your own sensory board.

**Extra Credit!**
Invent your own fidget toy or tool.

**Hint:** Try to find a variety of textures: fluffy, scratchy, smooth, silky, rough, etc.