



## ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

### Safe Place Pillow Case Project

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Kristina Marcelli Sargent

<http://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com>



## Objectives:

The participants will:

1. Identify symbols and phrases that calm the participant
2. Decorate a pillow case to be used by the participant using art and calming phrases

## Audience:

The “safe place” or “peaceful pillowcase” project is something that can be used by all age groups.



## Supplies/Materials:

- White or light, solid-colored pillowcases (Note: You can often buy a double pack of these for a dollar or two at outlet/discount stores.)
- A large piece of cardboard (to be placed inside the pillow case to keep the colors from bleeding through)
- Fabric markers (Note: you can use any fabric markers, but just be aware that some markers require ironing to “set” them in the fabric. I use Sharpie brand fabric markers called “Stained” since they are easy to use, thin, and require no ironing.)
- Paper and pencils/pens
- Rubbing alcohol and paint brush

### Prior to the Class:

Be sure to ask the children/participants before working on this project if they have pillows at home. Some children do not own or sleep on pillows so this is helpful to ask first. Also, assure the children/participants to take their time on this project and allow it be worked on for multiple sessions if needed.

### Class Instructions:

1. At the beginning of the session, ask the participants to make a personal list of words/phrases that help them feel safe and calm. Examples could be positive affirmations and pictures, helpful self-talk statements, reminders of coping skills, etc. The participants will be using this list to decorate their pillow cases. The participants can work individually or as a group.
2. Explain to the participants that they will be using fabric markers to decorate a pillow case with art and phrases that help them feel safe and calm.
3. Once the participants have a good list, place the cardboard sheets in-between the pillow cases (so no ink will leak through) at each station and pass out the markers.
4. Turn the participants loose to decorate their “calming” pillow cases using their markers and the list of phrases/images, etc.

*Note: If you'd like to add an interesting artistic element to the pillowcases, use a paint brush to dab rubbing alcohol on the images created using the markers and you will achieve a diffused, batik effect.*

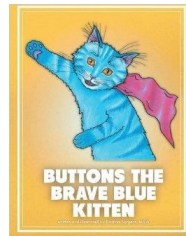
### At the conclusion of the Class:

Explain that this pillowcase can be a reminder for the participant/child to feel safe and calm before going to bed at night and first thing when he or she wakes up in the morning. This is also helpful for nightmares and bedtime anxiety--simply have the participants/children draw dreams they want to be having or positive self-talk statements to reassure and comfort themselves when waking from a nightmare.

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*Heartfelt thanks to **Kristina Marcelli Sargent (MSW)** who graciously gave permission to Hildegard Center to re-post this activity from her website <https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com> . Kristina is a mental health therapist*

*(living in Cincinnati, OH) who works with children and their families. Her blog is a place where creative expression and social/emotional well-being can become one, offering creative interventions, activities and inspiration for all ages—please visit it! Kristina has her undergraduate degree in art and creative writing and has written and illustrated her first book, “Buttons the Brave Blue Kitten” a story*



*about separation anxiety intended to help children develop empathy and give adults the skills to reinforce its development. The book is available to order on Kristina’s website or on Amazon.com. Also check out Kristina’s newest book: “Ursula Unwinds Her Anger” which teaches children mindfulness-related skills and offers adults tips on encouraging these skills in children. You can purchase this great book at <http://www.amazon.com/Ursula-Unwinds-Kristina-Marcelli-Sargent/dp/1499073003> .*

**If you have used this activity, we’d love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website [www.hildegardcenter.org](http://www.hildegardcenter.org) .**

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