

## Creating Affirmation Boxes

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**Intention:** To build on adult learners' awareness of their strengths by creating affirmation boxes using collage.

**Population:** Pre-GED level women. Can be adapted to other populations.

### Materials Needed

- Boxes
  - Boxes suitable for recycling (cigar boxes, candy boxes, shoe boxes, etc.)
  - Note: The permanency and final aesthetic quality will depend on the types of boxes used.
  - Alternatively, use small metal canisters or recycled mint boxes such as *Altoids*. These are good for creating portable affirmation boxes that students can carry around with them.
- Collage Materials
  - Lightweight textured paper samples
  - Buttons, beads, small mosaic tiles, dried beans, inexpensive charms, etc.
  - Select materials that are lightweight, easy to affix with Mod Podge, and can be coated over with a "varnish" of Mod Podge over all.
  - Encourage students to bring in family photos, or other items from home, if they wish, for you to photocopy in advance.
  - Also include images from students' home countries, flags, etc.



- Other Materials
  - Oversized shirts, aprons, or large garbage bags to use as coveralls
  - Mod Podge or matt medium
  - Scissors
  - Cheap paint brushes for gluing Mod Podge
  - Trays or pieces of cardboard to store boxes-in-process
  - Baby wipes or damp towels for cleaning hands and spills
  - Stiff paper such as cover stock for affirmation cards

## Preparation

1. Have students complete the lesson [Affirming our Strengths \(Preparation\)](#). After this lesson they will have created their affirmation cards.
2. Discuss the concept of **collage**: how it allows for visual layering and images to tell a complex story.
3. Review the definition of **affirm** and **affirmation**. Where do we hear the word in everyday use? Discuss how we will be using the word as we explore our strengths and make affirmation statements.
4. Explain that an affirmation box is a place to hold your affirmations. You can open the box and read the affirmations to remind yourself of your strengths, skills, and abilities even if you are feeling down about yourself. It is a reminder that you have positive qualities and can draw from them to meet your goals. In addition to using words, the affirmation box allows you to display colors, items, and images that say something about who you are. It can also be a place where you remind yourself of your goals and your ability to reach those goals.
5. It is useful to have extra people, preferably ones with some art or craft knowledge, to help with the logistics of the project and for providing support and technical assistance to students as they create their boxes. Graduate students in Expressive Therapies programs, art school students, or community-based artists may be willing to participate.
6. Arrange **each table** with a selection of boxes, paper cups, or recycled containers for Mod Podge, and baskets or boxes of materials described above.
7. Explain to students that their boxes do not have to be perfect; they are learning something new and they should try to be relaxed with it and enjoy it.
8. Review the kinds of materials students can use for their boxes and offer some ideas for how materials can add to the symbolic nature of the box. (colors of nature, home countries, flags, etc)
9. Ask class if they want to do project without talking and listening to music or with talking and music. Suggest to them that we try both and alternate for next class.



**Implementation** (Note: this will take more than one class to complete)

1. Have students work on their boxes, circulating to provide support.
2. At the end of the class, ask students to put their leftover materials into a zip lock bag labeled with their names.
3. Place the emerging boxes and materials on a tray and store until next session.
4. Next class, point out how the Mod Podge dried clear. Have students complete their boxes and place the affirmations inside.
5. If time permits, ask students voluntarily to share their boxes one by one in front of the class.
6. Display boxes in the program or allow students to take them home.

