



How can you use Playdough in ELSA sessions? A huge thank you to those that participated and gave their ideas. More minds are always better than one! If you want to join our [ELSA group](#) on Facebook then please do!

- I've used with younger children on blank face mats for emotions. Make a happy face etc.
- I've used with blank face mats with a group. The only remit was making an emotion. After they made it I got others to guess the emotion and then asked the child if they knew why they made that particular emotion and what made them feel like that.
- Use with a combination of smells for stress relief.
- Stress relief, pummelling, tearing, squeezing.
- Family members, alongside the [house templates](#) you have on the Elsa website, and reenacting scenarios or telling stories.
- Great to just build things freely so children can chat without feeling need for eye contact.
- Use to illustrate size of a problem in our brains - fits in with how big is your problem ? - can talk about what to do to change the size / manage of problem - mindfulness, positive thinking etc .
- Use a paper plate and bits of playdough to make a mandala patterns.
- We've made worry monsters out of playdough, googly eyes are a hit!
- Using different colours to go with different emotions: red for anger/embarrassment, blue for sad/cold, green for disgust/jealous, yellow for happy and so on.
- I have added different smells to enhance mood and asked the children for ideas on colours/smells and to recognise the mood that they induce.
- Add things to the dough for different sensory input? Have a jar and put a piece of pasta in it to signify a feeling of anger. Then as we talk about positive things that happen throughout the day, moments of gratitude the piece of pasta is still there but is surrounded by happier moments and starts to disappear.
- Make long sausages into a maze. Then use drinking straws to blow a ping pong ball through the maze. Practises slow controlled breathing.
- Use to make things that make you feel happy, sad etc, think about what colours would coincide with each emotion.

Make your own safe place, thinking about where, what you can see, what colours are there and you could add scents to think about what smells there would be. Looking at scene pictures (Forrest, beach, park etc) make yourself in playdough (think about how you're feeling) and place yourself on the picture. Is there anybody else with you?

Make them and place them on the picture. Why are you there? What's happening? A bit like a 3D blob tree!

- Build some feelings beads using different colours to represent different feelings.
- Use as a fidget toy so children have something to play with when talking.
- Bury small objects in the playdough for children to find and dig out. Use as a warm up and conversation starter.
- Make a stress ball using playdough inside a balloon and then tie off. Draw a face on the balloon with a permanent marker.
- Use to make finger prints and then discuss how we are all individual and different.
- Use with two children to illustrate turn taking eg. build a caterpillar and each take in turns to roll a ball.
- Use for instructions asking a child to tell you what to do in order to make something.
- Use as a warm up and ask children to make their favourites - eg what is your favourite food? What is your favourite book character? What is your favourite emotion? and so on.

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