

Activity: Food/Cooking Goal: Social Populations: All

## TH Activity Plan – DIY Tea Bags

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**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will create their own tea bag using different herbs and/or spices.

**THERAPEUTIC GOALS:**

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Practice reading skills in front of a group; learn about the benefits of certain herbs and spices; practice following directions

**Physical:** Develop fine motor skills in hands and fingers

**Psychological/Emotional:** Create a sense of pride and accomplishment through successful completion; evoke memories

**Sensory:** Tactile, olfactory, visual & gustatory stimulation by using different herbs and/or spices.

**Social:** Create an opportunity to form new relationships in a group setting.

**Materials**

Variety of herbs and/or spices such as:

Chamomile flowers

Peppermint leaves

Lemon Balm leaves

Ginger Root

Echinacea

3 tsp. of fresh herbs or

1 tsp. of dried herbs

(per participant)

Teaspoon

Coffee filters

Safety scissors

String (Cut into 5" lengths)

Stapler

Tape

Printable tea tag (below) or create your own!

Pen



**STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:**

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather all materials, plants/leaves and spices needed. Fresh herbs can be cut in the garden before putting tea bag together or bring in dried herbs, leaves or roots. Cut string into 5" lengths. Research health benefits of herbs and spices. Print out tea tags or cut out paper shapes for tea tags.
2. Facilitator begins session by introducing different types of tea and asking participants what kind of tea they like. Let participants know what they will be making. Show a premade example of tea bag.
3. Give each participant 1 coffee filter.
4. Offer participants scissors to cut a coffee filter into a rectangle shape. (This may be done ahead of time for participants who may not be able to do this step).
5. Place herbs or spices on table and have participants smell, feel, and possibly taste to see which one they would like to use as tea. Talk about health benefits of each herb, spice, or root. Offering choices helps the participant to be empowered. Herbs/spices/roots should be cut up into small pieces with scissors or by hand (this can be done before session if necessary).
6. Participant should measure 3 tsp. of fresh herbs or 1 tsp. of dried herbs with a teaspoon.
7. (Diagram Step 1) Have participant place herbs/spices into the center of the filter and fold the coffee filter in half the long way, closing the tea inside.
8. (Diagram Step 2) Seal by folding the meeting edges down two times.
9. (Diagram Step 3) Carefully place index fingers inside of filter and position the folded seam so it is down the middle of the filter.



10. (Diagram Step 4) Fold the filter package in half.
11. (Diagram Step 5) Fold in the two top edges so that the top now comes to a point.
12. (Diagram Step 6) Fold over the triangle and place the string end on top of it. Staple over the end or punch a small hole through the middle of the triangle, slide the string through and tie in a knot. This will seal the package shut as well as attach the string.
13. (Diagram Step 7) To make a tea tag print the labels (p.1), cut out, fold in half, and have participant write their name, or create their own labels. Place the end of the string inside the label and then staple, centering the stapler over the string when stapling. Or use tape. Your homemade tea bag is now complete! Enjoy a spot of tea in the session or DIY tea bags can be gifted to someone special.

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** This therapeutic activity can be done any time of year. You can celebrate Mother’s Day and have a tea party or use in colder months as a soothing and stimulating activity. All populations can benefit from the health benefits of certain herbs and spices along with the sensory stimulation. Participants may need hand over/under assistance performing certain tasks in creating tea bags such as folding, cutting or stapling. Other accommodations may include creating larger sized tea bags and tags, and thicker string for certain visual impairments. Adaptive scissors may also be used if necessary.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:** Please make sure participants have no allergies to any of the herbs or spices. Some herbs may be contraindicated when taking certain medications. Water temperature should not be too hot to avoid scalding. \*Staples may not be appropriate for certain populations, either using them or possibly ingesting them. Tying the labels with string or scotch tape can be used as a substitute.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** If you have access to a garden, consider having participants cut the herbs they would like to use right before creating tea bags. Let participants create their own tea tag and be creative. Tags can be cut in a heart shape and color. Ask participants if they would like to give tea bags as a gift. Homemade gifts are always appreciated! Doing a demonstration first may be helpful for certain populations. Have a completed tea bag to show participants how it will look when they are finished. When assembling ingredients be sure you have enough herbs/spices. You will need 3 times more herbs if using fresh vs. dried. Drying concentrates the intensity and flavor of herbs.

**Talking Points:** Herbal teas, also called tisanes, are a huge part of the tea world, but they are not technically teas! Real tea only comes from the leaves of one plant called *Camellia Sinensis*. There are four types of true tea: green tea, black tea, white tea, and oolong tea. The differences between true teas is how much the leaves of the camellia sinensis have been oxidized, a process that involves leaving the tea leaves in air temperature to dry and darken. Tisanes (pronounced ti-zahn) are teas that don't contain leaves of the *Camellia Sinensis* shrub. Instead, they are infusions made from the leaves, roots, berries, and spices of other plants when they are steeped in hot water. There are many different types of tisanes such as peppermint, cinnamon, licorice, and lavender.

#### REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

University of Hawaii - <https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/nph-9.pdf>

University of Florida - <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/home-grown-teas.html>

Hobby Farms.com <https://www.hobbyfarms.com/diy-tea-bags-from-coffee-filters-2/>

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TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2023.