



Soul Box Activity Guide



About the Project

What is the Soul Box Project?

The Soul Box Project is an art-based, community-building initiative designed to raise awareness about the gun violence epidemic in the United States. Participants create hand-folded origami boxes, which they can decorate to honor and commemorate lives lost to gun violence—whether through homicide, suicide or accidental discharge. Many contributors also use these boxes to share personal stories, calls to action or even include memorabilia inside. Each box becomes a deeply personal tribute, collectively representing the victims of gun violence in a visually powerful way.

What is the purpose of this project for its participants?

The Soul Box Project highlights a critical and often overlooked aspect of gun violence awareness. While the public focus is typically drawn to mass shootings and sensationalized headlines, the reality is that gun violence claims lives every day. The project seeks to emphasize the staggering regularity of these deaths and bring attention to the individuals behind the numbers.

For example, in Anne Arundel County alone, there were 50 gun-related deaths in 2023—the highest number recorded since monitoring began in 2016. This averages out to nearly one death per week. These figures represent more than statistics; they reflect real people whose names may never make the news. The Soul Box Project acknowledges these individuals by uplifting their stories and highlighting the often-overlooked human toll of gun violence in our communities.

Why is the Soul Box Project so impactful?

The project's impact is especially striking when hundreds of these Soul Boxes are displayed together, each telling its own story. Much like the AIDS Memorial Quilt, this project transforms statistics into a tangible, emotional experience. As Leslie Lee, the founder of the Soul Box Project has observed, emotion—not statistics—often spurs action and inspires change.

"I can state the statistic that more than 80,000 people are killed or injured by gunfire every year, but we need to emotionally see and feel those lost lives in a tangible, visceral way. Emotion, not statistics, is what prompts action to save lives."

— Leslie Lee, Founder of the Soul Box Project

Soul Box Activity Guide

Soul Box Materials

Interested in hosting a Soul Box Project event?

The Anne Arundel County Department of Health can provide supplies and information about the project. To coordinate your event, inform us at least **three weeks in advance** via the Soul Box Registration Form at AAHealth.org/soul-box or contact gun-violence-intervention@aacounty.org. Allow up to 72 hours for someone to contact you.

Recommended materials

- 8.5 x 8.5 Cardstock paper (96)
- Assorted construction paper/ scraps for collaging
- Information flyers (3 print-outs)
- Folding instructions (6 print-outs)
- Scissors (3)
- Tape (2)
- Glue sticks (6)
- Binder clips (for flattening folds)
- Colored pencils (1 pack)
- Colored markers (1 pack)
- Examples of finished soul boxes
- GVIT resources
 - Crisis warmline rack card
 - Mini “need to talk” cards
 - Lifesavers guide cards
 - LGBTQ suicide prevention cards

Attendees may want their soul box to be a memorial for a victim of gun violence. Search for names and pictures of victims of gun violence by visiting gunmemorial.org.

Extra materials available

- 20 sheets of cardstock
- 50 sheets of construction paper
- Extra box of colored pencils
- Extra scrap paper

Helpful instructions

- [Printable folding instructions](#)
- Informational flyer [English](#) / [Spanish](#)

Visit soulboxproject.org for all information and resources.

Before hosting the event:

- Gather all supplies (use list of materials above)
- Create a few example boxes
- Print instructions and resources

Sample agenda and slides available upon request.

Helpful videos

If your event has a projector, we recommend several resources to provide visual guidance:

- [How to make a Soul Box video instructions](#)
- [AACDOH PSA on Soul Boxes](#)
- [Soul Box Project works to offer healing, support to youths](#)
- [Evan | Sandy Hook Promise](#)



Soul Box Activity Guide

Activity Agenda

(Recommended 45 minutes)

Time elapsed	Agenda Items
5 minutes	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gun Violence Intervention Team● Host organization● Public health approach to gun violence
5 minutes	Pass around box examples (if available) Overview of the Soul Box Project (use overview on pg 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Purpose of the project● Examples of soul boxes
10 minutes	Step-by-step demonstration of how to assemble Soul Box <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Visual demonstration● Distribute printed instructions
12 minutes	Students decorate and build their own boxes
13 minutes	Discussion with students: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● How do you see the impact of gun violence in your school/community?● What did you express on your soul box?● Deeper discussion: What do you want to see change in your life/school? What can you do to increase safety in your school/community? Who can you go to to report/get help?
15 minutes	For clean-up