
Palliative Care Team

Guided imagery relaxation

Introduction

The technique described below can be useful for a number of situations, such as:

- In situations where unhelpful thoughts keep demanding attention
- When trying to distract attention from what is going on around you, for example while undergoing an investigation
- To relax the mind and body by strengthening good memories of **a special place**
- A special place can be anywhere that holds happy, comfortable and relaxed memories for you, for example:
 - It could be somewhere you live, or have lived in the past.
 - It might be somewhere you visited.
 - It could just be a place you saw in a film, or read about it in a book.

How to do it:

Get relaxed

- Slow down breathing so it is regular and slightly deeper than usual.
- Check your body to make sure it is as comfortable as it can be.

Start to use your imagination

- Once the breathing is under control, and the body feels as comfortable as it can be – start to use your imagination.
- Imagine standing at the beginning of a path
 - Now start moving down it as you count from 1 to 10.
 - You can walk down it, run down it, fly down it, skate down it, drive down it – however you want to travel along the path.
- When you get to 10, imagine a gate in front of you
 - Touch the gate and it will open.
 - Walk through the gate.
 - Touch the gate and it will close behind you.

Explore your special place

- Now find yourself in your own special place – somewhere you feel happy, comfortable and relaxed
 - Explore this place, using your senses.
 - Touch things that are there.
 - Taste drink or food if it is there.
 - Smell the surroundings.
 - Look at all the colours and textures.
 - Hear whatever sounds there are in your special place.

Leaving your special place (knowing you can always return to it)

- Take as long as you want to be in your special place.
- When you are ready to leave it, then see the gate in front of you again.
 - Touch it to open it and walk through it.
 - Touch it to close it, knowing you can always return, and no-one can spoil it for you.

Return to everyday life

- See the path, and start moving down it.
- This time move down it while counting backwards from 10 to 1.
- When you get to two, open your eyes.
- At one be back in everyday life.

When to do it

Each time you become aware of an unhelpful thought, or feeling physically uncomfortable, concentrate on visiting and exploring your special place that you keep safe in your mind.

- Try not to flit from one place to another.
- Keep focused on one special place you have chosen.

Initially, you might find that each time you try to focus on the guided imagery, unhelpful thoughts or physical discomfort will try to dominate your thoughts. However, with practice many people find they can begin to control what they focus upon, such as visiting their special place.

Contacts/Further information

If you require further information please leave a message for:

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Document history

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