

Developing and Enhancing a Happy / Calm / Safe / Special / Secure Place

There are three guidelines: 1) I prefer it be somewhere in nature, because nature has a grounding effect; 2) There are no other people or pets there because there's never been a relationship that hasn't had some yuck associated with it at some point; and 3) It is imaginal — the absolute perfect place for you. What image represents your place? Tell me about it." _____

Emotions and Sensations: As you think of that happy place, what emotions are you feeling? What sensations are you noticing in your body? _____

Enhancement: Focus on your happy place — its sights, sounds, smells, and the good feelings. Tell me more about what you are experiencing. _____

BLS: Bring up the image of this place. Focus on where you feel the good things in your body and let yourself enjoy them. Focus on that and follow my fingers. [slow, short (4-8) round trips of BLS = set] What are you noticing now? _____

If positive: Focus on that. [slow, short BLS] What are you noticing now? _____

If the positive experience continues to expand, time permitting, you may choose to repeat the above to enhance and strengthen the adaptive network you are creating, particularly in clients who are poorly resourced

If negative: Redirect to identify another calm place or consider some other self-soothing strategy such as a container, mindfulness, or a breathing exercise. Ask the client to put any yuck into their container

Cue Word: What would you like to call your special place? _____ Think of [repeat the cue word] and notice the good things you feel you when you think of it. Concentrate on those those feelings and [the word/phrase] _____ and follow the BLS [slow, short BLS]. What are you feeling / noticing now? _____

Self-Cuing: Now I'd like you to say that word _____ and notice how you feel. _____

Cuing with Disturbance: Now imagine a minor annoyance [SUD 1-2] and notice how you feel. Bring up [the cue word] and notice what happens. What did you notice? _____

Self-Cuing with Disturbance: *I'd like you to think of another mildly annoying incident [SUD 2-3], notice how you feel, then bring up [cue word] by yourself, especially noticing your body when you focus on your cue word.*

Next, we put them together. Now, I'm going to teach you how to use these together, for an even more powerful effect. First, I want you to take a little something out of your container, just a minor annoyance, like a 1 or a 2 and notice what that feels like to have it out. [sometimes you will need to give them an example] [pause for the response – this is an excellent opportunity to begin to teach them body awareness if they have used dissociation as a dysfunctional coping tool]

Now, send it back into your container and notice what THAT feels like. [Pause for response]

If positive: you may choose to resource it with a slow, short set of BLS – 4-8 round trips

Now, take yourself to your Happy Place [or the name they gave it] and notice what THAT feels like. [Pause for response.] _____

If positive: you may choose to resource it with slow, short set of BLS

Would you like to practice it again before we apply it? [If yes, repeat, if no, move to Rescript & Rehearse]

Rescript: *Now that you have these helpful tools, let's apply them to your life. Think of a time in the last week or two where it would have been helpful to have them. [pause] Now I want you to run a movie and see yourself using your Container and Happy Place. [Pause for response]*

If positive: you may choose to resource it with slow, short set of BLS

Would you like to do it again with another one? [Pause for response.] If “yes,” repeat

If positive: you may choose to resource it with slow, short set of BLS

If “no,” move on to Rehearse

Rehearse: *Now you have the tools and know how to use them. Let's rehearse how you will use them in the future. Imagine a time or situation in the next week where it would be helpful to use them. [Pause for response] Run the movie / imagine it and see yourself using your container and happy place and let me know what you think. [Pause for response]*

If positive: you may choose to resource it with slow, short set of BLS

Would you like to do it again with another one? [Pause for response] If “yes,” repeat

If positive: you may choose to resource it with slow short set of BLS

If “no,” move on to Practice

Practice: *You've done a great job with this. We know that 'practice makes perfect,' so I'd like for you to practice using your Container and Happy Place several times a day, whether you need them or not, so that when you do, it will be much easier than if you only use them in here. When you come back, we'll check and see how it went. Sometimes they will work — great! Sometimes they might not work — if they don't, we'll figure out what could have and create THAT tool to add to your tool box. Sometimes, you'll forget to use them — that's why I want you to practice using them when you don't need to, so you won't be as likely to forget. Okay? Any questions?*