

Adjunctive strategies for pain control (EMDR+)

For clients who are responsive to EMDR but have ongoing pain, and are receptive to the use of strategies incorporating focused attention, mindfulness-based strategies, memory, and guided imagery to help manage their pain.

Antidote imagery

So just take a moment to focus in on your body ... as much as you comfortably can right now ... and notice your pain ... noticing where you feel it in your body ... and what it really feels like ... is it hot ... or cold? If it had a color, what color would it be? Is it hard or soft? Constant or fluctuating? What shape is it? And any other sensory or mental qualities that you might want to be aware of. And once you have allowed yourself to explore your pain as fully as possible and you have a distinct sense of it ... what does it remind you of ... what is the pain/discomfort like? Let an image of that form in your mind ... and then put that image aside for a moment and think of something else ... something that could take it away or make it feel better ... the opposite of what you just got. So if your pain was hot, something cool, if it was stabbing, something dull, the opposite ... and notice what comes to mind ... and how that feels ... and then imagine laying that over the top of your pain, and feeling that antidote resource overtaking your pain.

Positive memory

Take a moment to get comfortable ... as comfortable as you can at this moment ... just letting your body relax a bit ... and take 3 deep breaths ... with each breath letting yourself feel more and more relaxed ... that's right ... and now think back to a time or a place where you felt safe and well ... a place where you could just be yourself ... without having to make any effort or care or worry ... somewhere quiet and peaceful ... a place where you could rest without having to make any effort at all ... before all the craziness began ... when life had a more natural rhythm ... which we all need from time to time ... and you can go back to that place ... which is always there in the recesses of your mind and notice how the memory of that place makes you feel in your body right now ... and just notice that ... a place where there is nothing you have to do, no one to face ... just peace and quiet ... and is there a word that summarizes how the memory of that place makes you feel? ... And whenever you are feeling stress or discomfort, or you need a break, just take a moment and close your eyes and think of that place ... and that word ... and you will feel better.

Hypno-mindfulness

Take a moment to relax and get as comfortable as you can at this moment. And as you relax you may notice ... how difficult it is to not be aware ... of that discomfort ... And that's right ... because pain can be hard to ignore and sometimes necessary ... so you don't need to fight your mind ... which is always aware of those feelings there for you ... or resist those feelings ... so much easier instead ... to just accept those feelings for what they are ... just observing them ... like scenery from a train ... passing by in front of you ... and as you observe those feelings you might even begin to wonder what it really is about them that is so unpleasant ... they are what they are ... neither good nor bad. Just a part of life ... like the seasons ... where all present experience, even unpleasant things ... eventually become part of the flow of past, present, and future, as that scenery passes by in front of you and recedes into the distance ...

Breathing away the pain

- a) Focus on your breathing. And take 3 deep breaths.
- b) Notice how your chest expands with each in-breath, and contracts with each out-breath ... And how it tenses up when you breathe in and how it relaxes when you breathe out.
- c) Imagine that with every in-breath you are breathing in comfort ... And that with every out-breath you are breathing out discomfort ... so that with every breath you take, you can experience a little more comfort ... and a little less discomfort ...
- d) And with every breath you take, you can imagine that comfort spreading through your body, as those molecules of oxygen travel through the walls of your lungs into your bloodstream ... taking that comfort to the rest of your body.
- e) So, you can control your pain as naturally as breathing ... In, comfort ... Out, pain and with every breath you take ... you can feel that comfort spreading ...