

BRIEF INTERVENTIONS: VISUAL IMAGERY (ANXIETY) BI-PED PROJECT

(BRIEF INTERVENTIONS: PEDIATRICS)

Emotional Health Committee Maryland Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

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Appendix 1

When to use: Visual imagery works well when someone is feeling anxious in general or needs to settle down enough to think through a specific problem with a clear head. By focusing one's attention on a previous pleasant experience, one can calm down and relax.

Steps:

- 1. Help the patient to identify an experience that was pleasant and positive. The experience being recalled should be one that is multisensory and can be clearly recalled. Common recollections include a beach visit, fishing beside a stream, cross country skiing, playing with a pet, etc.**
- 2. Have the patient recall the experience through each of the five senses and try to re-experience them –**
 - What did they see?**
 - What did they hear?**
 - What did they smell?**
 - What did they taste?**
 - What did they feel on their skin or what did they touch?**
- 3. Have them practice at least once while they are in the office –describing what they are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling.**
- 4. Tell the patient to practice experiencing the sensations of their “special place” at least once or twice a day so they can easily pull up those images during a stressful event.**
- 5. Once they have practiced for several days, they should next try pulling up those images (in each of the five senses) during a time when they are beginning to feel anxious.**
- 6. When they are feeling calm again, they can return to their normal activities or begin problem solving about how to handle the anxiety provoking situation.**
- 7. The patient can also write down a few key words on a small file card in order to prompt easy recall of their multisensory experience.**