

Enhancing Visual Rehearsals & Guided Imagery with Hypnotic Language

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ADAA

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Disclosures

none

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Functions of Imagery

- ❖ to habituate
- ❖ to develop self-efficacy
- ❖ to reduce anticipatory anxiety
- ❖ to reinforce coping techniques for moments of anxiety

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Hypnotic Language
EQUALS
Permissive Language

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Benefits of Permissive Language
in Imagery

- Easier access to parasympathetic activity
- Intensify vividness of imagery
- Focus attention/enhance association
/strengthen a weak association
- Enhance behavioral rehearsal
- Promote dissociation

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Benefits (con't)

- Greater flexibility in responsiveness
- Can explore experiences outside of usual frame of reference
 - Circumvents resistance
 - Gets them out of rigid point of view
 - More receptive to presented ideas
 - Increases willingness to perceive change

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Best Uses

- Relaxation Training
- Guided Mindful Meditation
- Behavioral Rehearsal
- Relaxation & Worry Exploration
- Self-control Desensitization
- Visual Rehearsal of Coping Skills
- Access needed resources, e.g.
 - Self-efficacy
 - Courage

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Increases Self-efficacy

Bandura: *self-efficacy* based on

- ✓ performance accomplishment
- ✓ vicarious experience
- ✓ verbal persuasion
- ✓ physiological states

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The Permissive Skills

- Qualifiers
- Open-ended Suggestions
- Implications
 - Rhetorical Questions That Imply
- Focusing Awareness
- Truisms
- Negative Adjectives & Adverbs
- All Possible Alternatives

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Demonstration

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Qualifiers: *direct suggestions*
become indirect suggestions

might
maybe
may
can
a little
somewhat
probably
can wonder
don't know if

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Open-ended Suggestions

raise a relevant topic without directing it in any obvious manner at the subject

Every person has abilities not known to the self, abilities that can be expressed during imagery.

One thing many clients have found useful is to remember back to experiences years ago, before a problem ever existed... to remember breezing through the grocery store without a moment's hesitation.

Each person can overcome obstacles at his own safe pace.

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Implications

Stirs associations regarding suggested behaviors

(stems from if-then thinking)

choose two activities

- ✓ one that they are already or could easily experience
- ✓ another more relevant therapeutic task

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Implications

Now if you {easy behavior}, it will probably remind you of {therapeutic task}.

Now if you sense the texture of your slacks on your fingertips, it will probably remind you of other experiences, of other feelings you have had.



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Implications

If... While When... Since... As... After... As soon as...	[on-going or likely future behavior]...	then... you can... the problem will/can... ___ will/can... it's possible that...	[suggestion]
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The closer... The further... The clearer... The better...	[expected behavior]...	the more... the easier...	[suggestion]
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Implications

While you sit there with your eyes closed, **you may find** yourself becoming more relaxed & comfortable.

As you feel that deepening comfort, **you can** recognize that you don't have to talk or let anything bother you.

If you create a voice inside you that supports your efforts, **then perhaps** you will notice just how good you can feel.

If your breathing becomes slow & gentle here, **then** your thoughts might quiet, too.

As you begin to improve, **I wonder** how many new behaviors you will become comfortable with?

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Rhetorical questions

that imply *Pose questions that imply resources or behavioral options available to client*

As you imagine yourself approaching the restaurant door, which of your many skills might you use to respond to your tension?

As you see yourself walking up to that restaurant, will you take a nice slow calming breath? Or will you tell yourself you can manage this task... & feel relief that comes with that knowledge? Or will you just forget all about your worries & enjoy your friends? Maybe you will do something entirely different that will help you feel safe & confident.

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Focusing Awareness

*questions or statements that suggest
or reinforce*

Would you like to...?
Do you suppose...?
I'd be surprised if...
I don't know if...
I wonder if...
How would you feel if...?
Are you aware of...?
Is it possible...?
Can you...?
Do you...?
Will you...?

imagine
see
experience
pay attention to
wonder
choose
let yourself
notice
sense
feel
hear
remember

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Focusing Awareness

I wonder if you can let your eyes close when they feel ready to rest. Let's see if they close all at once or flutter a bit first, as some parts of your body begin to experience the comfort so characteristic of relaxation. Does that comfort deepen as those eyes remain closed? You allow yourself to close your eyes to find out about a whole lot of things you can do. And they are so many more than you dreamed of. And how soon will you forget about your eyes & begin to grant permission for the face to relax, the arms...?

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Truisms: *simple statements of fact
that client can readily accept*

Sooner or later...
Everyone has the experience of...
Everyone knows...
We know that when...
In all cultures...
Every child (person)...
You already know...
Most people/some people...
It's a very common experience to...
You've known all alone how to...
It gives everyone a sense of pleasure to...

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Truisms

You already know how to experience pleasant sensations, like the warmth of the sun on your skin.
Everyone can have a memory that reminds them of something long forgotten.
We know when you are asleep your unconscious can dream.
Most people know the importance of doing some homework.

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Negative Adjectives & Adverbs

can overtly support a resistance to change while covertly encouraging a mental association to idea

- I don't know if you're ready to try something new
- You might not yet be able to even picture yourself better
- You don't have to know which is the best choice for you yet
- It isn't important to practice all the skills today
- You don't necessarily need to totally understand why this will support your recovery

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All Possible Alternatives

Give them a number of options associated with direction you want. Offers a sense of choice.

You may not use this learning. Or you might, but not right away. Maybe you will modify it when you use it. You might discover that you only use part of it, or you could use it all. Or you might mix what you learn in with what you invent.

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Samples of Imagery Protocols

Not reviewing here

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Applied Relaxation

1. Teach formal relaxation, then...
2. Absence of this tranquility = cue for breathing skills
 - a. Whenever detect external or internal (i.e., worry) cues
 - b. Before, during & after stressful events, &
 - c. Frequently during the day, even when they are not anxious
3. Then, relax into moment to get to data from present moment environment

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Generating Alternative Viewpoint

"Maybe it's this, not that"

1. Imagining event from a third-person perspective
2. Switching roles with another in situation
3. Viewing event in a large context or in a different time frame
4. Asking about presence of feelings other than anxiety

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Relaxation & Worry Exploration

- a. Relaxation suggestions
- b. "Reflect on a typical time that you have worried about this topic"
- c. "What are your automatic interpretations/ worries?"
- d. "What factors contribute to interpretations?"
- e. "Any other emotions, besides anxiety, about this issue?"
- f. "So, your automatic interpretations are _____. What if...?"
[see previous slide]

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Self-Control Desensitization

Train worrier to repeatedly imagine relevant external & internal anxiety cues & become anxious



Then respond with relaxation skills



Repeated rehearsals help to build habit strength (so greater choice) & cues to shift perspective



End segment: repeated rehearsals of images of most likely outcome (based on probability & evidence)

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The Technique

1. Create a deeply relaxed state
2. Introduce **imagery** of anxiety-provoking situations
3. As soon as anxious, imagine relaxing while remaining in situation. Engage in coping responses (self-talk, shift to more accurate perceiving, interpreting & predicting, etc.)
4. As anxiety reduces, continue to imagine successfully coping
5. Then turn off images & focus on deep relaxation
6. Repeat same image until client has low or no anxiety with anxiety-provoking image or is able to end anxiety rapidly.

(Use representative sampling of situations, not exhaustive list of situations.)

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The Technique (cont'd)

- Start therapy with previous week's events as cues (less threatening)
- Then move to future events (more threatening)
- Can practice at home
- If client is having great difficulty eliminating anxiety, then Systematic Desensitization may be needed

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Success Imagery

Helps them practice positive model construction

- Find ways to adapt & cope if threatened event actually happened
- Use "success imagery" to reinforce
 - Successful outcome
 - Successful task
 - Successful skills

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Successful Outcome Imagery

Close your eyes & see yourself after you have just finished your Task & it went perfectly, beyond your expectations. Don't concern yourself at all with how you reached your goal. Just enjoy the pleasure of possible success.

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Successful Task Imagery

Close your eyes & visualize yourself accomplishing your Task easily & without discomfort. Repeat that positive image a second time.

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Successful Skills Imagery

Close your eyes & visualize yourself moving through your Task. Let yourself experience 2 or 3 episodes in which you have some typical discomfort. Then rehearse what coping skills you want to use to take care of yourself during that discomfort. Imagine those skills working successfully.

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free
self-help forms

free
relaxation & breathing skills
transcripts for recording

On-line Self-Help Forms

from the book

- 1: OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE
- 2: COPING WITH FEARS
- 3: SAFETY CRUTCHES
- 4: PRACTICING CALMING SKILLS
- 5: PRACTICING CALMING SKILLS
- 6: SUPPORT STATEMENTS
- 7: TOLERATING SENSATIONS
- 8: TOLERATING SENSATIONS
- 9: LISTING LONG-TERM GOALS
- 10: RANK LONG-TERM GOALS
- 11: SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM
- 12: CREATE SHORT-TERM TASKS
- 13: PLANNING EACH TASK

Formal Relaxation & Breathing Skills

transcripts to record your own

- 1: PRACTICING YOUR BREATHING SKILLS
- 2: CUE-CONTROLLED DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION
- 3: GENERALIZED RELAXATION & IMAGERY

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Free Self-Help Site



Anxieties.com

Free E-Newsletter

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