

Workshop 7: Relaxation- Guided Imagery

Relaxation can make a real difference to feelings of anxiety, stress, fatigue and symptoms in general. Feeling less anxious can reduce the symptoms we experience. Persistent pain is a major cause of fatigue. Even if we don't feel anxious or stressed, using relaxation has been shown to improve our feeling of well-being and can help with getting to sleep. This sort of relaxation is different from watching TV or reading and is a deeper form of relaxation.

Relaxation can help us become more accepting of our symptoms and see them as just another sensation we feel.

What relaxation techniques have you found useful?

Think about setting a relaxation goal – aim for maybe 4 times a week.

There is a simple relaxation exercise which we can do, which also improves body awareness.

Some people find this quite difficult to start with, it is something that needs practice. Relaxation and breathing help to reduce anxiety and produce good chemicals that make us feel calm.

If you are interested to explore this technique further you may want to find out about Mindfulness.

You need to allow at least 20 minutes for this exercise. Make sure you are in a comfortable place and you won't be disturbed for the next 20 minutes or so.

You can either lie down with your knees raised and just touching and arms beside you, or sitting in a chair with both feet on the floor in front of you and allow your arms to rest by your sides or have your hands gently supported in your lap.

You may find it easier if you lower your eyelids.



Imagine

Imagine your breath is coming from lower down in your body. Just allow your breathing to settle into a natural rhythm for you; breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Notice

Notice the sensation of your breathing.... the feeling of the air going into your lungs.... and gently out again.... imagine that with each out-breath you are becoming more relaxed.... notice how your muscles are softening....

Breathe

We can now allow each part of our body to become even more relaxed.... imagine each breath reaching down into our body.... now breathe any tension out.... as you breathe in, imagine your breath going down to your toes and feet.... as you breathe out, your toes and feet relax.... continue like this for while....

Imagine

Imagine your breath is reaching down to your knees and calves.... release any tension.... and with your out-breath release it just a little more.... now, breathe down into your thighs and hips.... as you breathe out allow any tension to flow away with your breath.... continue like this for a while...

Breathe

your next breath reaches down to your tummy.... breathe out and let go of any tension.... do this a few more times....

Breathe

next, imagine your breath going into your chest.... as you breathe out tension leaves your body....

Breathe

then, breathing into your shoulders, let your shoulders relax and breathe out any tension you are holding here, do this a few more times....

Breathe

with your next breath, breathe into your head and neck.... let go of the tension with the out-breath.... notice how you are feeling as you just allow your breath to come and go naturally.... enjoy the sense of calm and relaxation.

Notice

Take a moment now to notice how you are feeling.... if you are still feeling any tension just enjoy the sense of calm and relaxation.... just imagine that tension going as you breathe out...

Awareness

Slowly become aware of where you are.... in your own time gently open your eyes. Remain still and quiet where you are for a moment, before gently moving.