

# Mindful Moment: Guided Imagery

## Introduction

“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.” – Jon Kabat-Zinn

“If every 8-year-old is taught meditation, we will eliminate violence from the world within one generation.” – Dalai Lama

Guided imagery is defined as “any of various techniques (as a series of verbal suggestions) used to guide another person or oneself in imagining sensations and especially in visualizing an image in the mind to bring about a desired physical response (as a reduction in stress, anxiety, or pain). It is a powerful tool to help people feel less upset or anxious, help in achieving a goal, or reducing pain.

### Activity 1: To Demonstrate the impact of stress and tension.

(<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/familyresiliency/files/2011/08/ResiliencyTeachingUnit.pdf>)

1. Give each participant a rubber band or demonstrate the activity yourself.
2. Ask each participant to stretch their rubber band as far as they can or demonstrate stretching the rubber band yourself. Make your decision on which to do based on the age of the group you are working with or how much time you have.
3. Ask the following question: if we keep the rubber band in this position for too long, what will happen? It will break and snap.
4. Share with the group the same is true of humans. We need to be able to reduce our frustration, stress, learn to calm down, and relax to stay healthy.
5. How do you cope with your feeling of anger, frustration, or sadness? Allow participants time to share.

### Activity 2: Practicing Guided Imagery

1. Share with participant that “guided imagery” is another tool you can use to deal with your emotions.
2. Get in a comfortable position. (Sit or lie down)
3. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.
4. Take deep breath. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
5. Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
6. Breathe in and breathe out. (Repeat)
7. Breathe in and relax and breathe out all the tension and stress. (Repeat)
8. Imagine you are (at this point you can pick a place to have them imagine such as the waterfall, beach, a shaded spot under a big tree, or ask them to imagine a place that is peaceful and soothing to them) insert whatever decide to have them focus on.
9. Breathe in and breathe out and picture yourself at (insert whatever you decided to have them focus on)
10. What can you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? What can you touch in this peaceful, pleasant place? Breathe in and breathe out.
11. Relax and enjoy this wonderful place and let your body and mind relax. Breathe in and breathe out. (Repeat)
12. Enjoy the way you feel. Breathe in and breathe out.
13. Remain here and enjoy the imagery around you. We will leave soon.
14. Instruct the group that on the count of three, they will awake and be energized. One: take a deep breathe in and slowly breathe out. Two: take another deep breath and breathe out. Three: open your eyes take a deep breath in and breathe out. You are feeling relaxed, refreshed and calm.



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## Discussion Questions

1. How was this exercise for you? Was it difficult or easy? Why?
2. Did your mind wander? If so, what did you do to bring your attention back to your body?
3. What did you notice about yourself and your body during this activity?

## Activity Suggestions

1. Practice guided imagery yourself before doing the activity with groups.
2. Practice giving guided imagery instructions.
3. Write down your instructions in case you need to reference them.

## Resources

1. "Guided imagery." Merriam-Webster.com Medical Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/medical/guided%20imagery>. Accessed 25 May. 2021.
2. Schaaf, J. (2009) Resiliency: Strength Under Stress Teaching Guide, [fyi.extension.wisc.edu](https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/familyresiliency/files/2011/08/ResiliencyTeachingUnit.pdf). <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/familyresiliency/files/2011/08/ResiliencyTeachingUnit.pdf>. Accessed 3 May.2021

For more information and activity resources visit :<https://u.osu.edu/4hjournal/>

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