

# **Application of Relaxation & Guided Imagery to Hospice Care**

**\*Hospice Care is gifted at relieving physical pain, yet it is sometimes difficult for hospice professionals to get to the root of what may be causing spiritual and emotional pain. At the onset of illness, patients and families feel out of control and overwhelmed.**

**\* Guided Imagery (GI) can bring about a state of mind and body that is deeply relaxed and focused and open and receptive to others, problem solving and coping with difficult challenges. A relaxed body and mind along with sensory images are most conducive to healing, physically and emotionally. By helping patients reduce agitated sleep, breathe less anxiously and peacefully, shift pain experience, reduce nausea and vomiting, and improve coping, many times psychological pain can be addressed using symbols and images that the patient describes and experiences.**

**\*Imagery work is one of the most effective ways of aligning with and leaning into a patient's personal response to pain and suffering. It is an excellent interventional tool in helping people move through loss and transformation. It is effective in reducing staff stress, creating quick positive responses between caregiver and care receiver. It is extremely effective at reducing caregiver stress, insomnia, headache and muscle tension, anxiety and depression (restores energy and purpose).**

**\*RGI is empowering, composed of simple yet profound mind body techniques that promote dignity with end of life care and dying. It is non- stigmatizing. And, it is fast, powerful, inexpensive, and gets more and more effective with continued use. The user need not be well educated, young, strong, smart, spiritual nor mentally healthy to reap its considerable benefits. Listeners can be bone tired, disgusted, depressed, disbelieving, listless, resistant, distracted, mentally disabled, physically unfit or at death's door and imagery will still bestow its beneficial effects. It also easily can support other therapies, helping to anchor inroads made by traditional counseling, or medications, just as easily as it helps to integrate the speedier gains of other non-verbal, imagery based power therapies.**

**\*RGI can be taught to staff to use with patients one on one or in groups, performed on crisis lines/hot lines, via webinars, cds, mp3s or over the phone. It is extremely powerful because it can skip around cognition and send healing messages straight into the whole being, by way of primitive, sensory and emotional based channels in the brain and nervous system. Sensory Imagery travels primarily via right brain sensing, perceiving, feeling and apprehending rather than through left brain thinking, judging, analyzing and deciding. Because of this and the way that any trauma amps up visual and emotional centers in the brain, while short circuiting language and cognition, it is an ideal intervention for heightened vulnerable and traumatically stressful states.**

