

Relaxation & Guided Imagery to Defeat Dental Fears

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DENTAL FEAR

Leading Causes :

- ◆ ANXIETY
- ◆ FEAR

AVOIDING DENTAL CARE

Dental Anxiety is estimated to effect 9 to 15%
of Americans (Appukuttan, 2016)

It is the fifth most common cause of anxiety
(Agras et al, 1969)

Dentists and Dental Hygienists report that it is
a common problem, encountered daily.

Cost of Irrational Fear

- ◆ People with dental fears dread upcoming appointments or avoid them all together.
- ◆ With dental phobia, awareness that the fear is irrational exists yet panic is still experienced.
- ◆ A vicious cycle develops in that they only go to the dentist when their oral health is so advanced that their dental procedures are now longer, more complicated and more uncomfortable, perpetuating the fear and avoidance responses.

COMMON CAUSES

- ◆ Fear of pain
- ◆ Fear of injection
- ◆ Feelings of helplessness
- ◆ Loss of control
- ◆ Fear of gagging
- ◆ Discomfort with associated loss of personal space associated with lying back or sitting in chair and having dentist working in such close proximity to the face.

TRIGGERS

- ◆ Smells of the dentist's office
- ◆ Sounds of the drill
- ◆ Sights of needles
- ◆ Feelings of betrayal if the anxiety is not discussed or treated adequately by the dentist/hygienist
- ◆ Sudden shifts in pressure or vibrations in the mouth as a result of the dental work

MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

The American Dental Association indicates that success in reducing dental fears and anxieties must involve 3 steps:

STEP 1

- ◆STEP 1: Have a frank discussion with your dental team to develop a supportive approach surrounding signals, like raising your hand if you need to take a break or if discomfort becomes intolerable

STEP 2

- ◆ PRACTICE DISTRACTION :
Frequent practice of wearing headphones, squeezing a stress ball or a fidget spinner in your hand or imagining a “happy (safe) place”.

STEP 3

◆ PRACTICE IMAGERY (SENSORY) BASED BODY RELAXATION (body scan) IN WHICH YOU CAN IMAGINE LETTING GO OF TENSION STORED IN YOUR BODY.

Relaxation & Guided Imagery A Natural Fit For Dental Anxieties

- ◆ Numerous studies document the fast, effective relief from stress and muscle tension that Relaxation and Guided Imagery (GI) offer.
- ◆ It combines belly breathing, deep relaxation & distraction techniques that foster desensitization to phobic and sensory reactions.
- ◆ It provides sensory laden exercises that allow one to imagine a safe place to work through fears.

Defeat Dental Fears GI on Imagery Work App

- ◆ Follows Best Practices of ADA. For Dental Fears.
- ◆ Designed to enable those with dental anxiety to practice deep relaxation, de-sensitization and sensory imagery to remain calm throughout the entire dental procedure.
- ◆ Can practice in advance of dental appointments for best results and can listen to it in the waiting room and during dental procedures on app.

What is Guided Imagery?

- ◆ Guided Imagery is used often by nurses when they have only a few meetings with patients and need to teach them quickly how to relax, lower blood pressure, shift pain experience, prepare for surgery, reduce injection anxiety or to increase coping and adherence to challenging, stressful medical procedures.
- ◆ It is faster, more fun and easier to learn than most forms of Western meditation. It requires less practice and skill level to achieve results.



Relaxation and Guided Imagery (GI) are gentle, yet powerful mind body techniques that teach people how to become deeply relaxed & then to use sensory images to promote well-being, healing & problem solving.

IMAGERY



Imagery is:

- ◆ A natural thought process
- ◆ Using 1 or more of the 5 senses
- ◆ Usually associated with emotions.....
- ◆ It's the way the Right Brain thinks
- ◆ It's the bridge between conscious & subconscious mind

*Developing a new idea cannot
take place without imagery....*

ONE FIRST
IMAGINES,
THEN
CREATES...

A User-Friendly Method

- ◆ GI is a natural, non-invasive, empowering method that can improve Quality of Life & promote patient adherence & acceptance of necessary, healing processes.
- ◆ It is versatile, inexpensive, practiced anywhere (except driving), & portable.
- ◆ It is easily taught over the web, live, one on one, in patient groups or alone.
- ◆ It is easily incorporated into a variety of nursing protocols, home visits, pt groups, helplines, life coaching, injection protocols, clinical trials, MRI scans or reducing stress for caregivers at home.

A Versatile Intervention

- ◆ GI can be used by almost anyone, including those with mild to moderate dementia.
- ◆ It does not matter what level of education or what kind of religious/ethnic background participant possesses.
- ◆ You do not even have to be a believer for it to work
- ◆ The more you practice it, unlike addiction, the less you need.
- ◆ It is fast & powerful in its effects. For most Westerners, it is easier to use than traditional meditation as it requires less time & discipline to acquire high level of skill.

Patient EMPOWERMENT



- ◆ GI creates a locus of control within us.
- ◆ This lowers a sense of helplessness/reactivity, increases responsiveness.
- ◆ Creates an atmosphere of allowing yourself to find responses to things rather than forcing yourself or commanding yourself to cope or heal.
- ◆ Enables us to rehearse & prepare for challenging or painful events.
- ◆ Produces radical shifts in attitude, coping, & problem solving which, in turn, increases treatment compliance & positive coping.

Efficacy of Guided Imagery

- ◆ GI has been an integral part of Holistic Nursing Practice for many years—it's a well regarded complementary therapy.
- ◆ Well-designed research studies have shown GI to:
 - Reduce anxiety & depression**
(Apostolo & Kolcaba, 2009; McKinney et al, 1997);
 - Shift pain experience**
(Sharpe et al, 2001),
 - Eliminate headaches**
(Penzien et al, 2002; Mannix et al, 1999)
 - Reduce arthritic pain**
(Baird & Murawaski, 2010; Gay et al, 2002)
 - **** fibromyalgia**
(Whiting et al, 2001);

Efficacy of Guided Imagery (cont.)

Reduce tremors in Parkinson's patients

(Schlesinger et al, 2009)

Increase adherence to therapies and drug therapies

(Mohr et al, 1997).

Lower MRI-related anxieties

(Thompson and Coppano, 1994).

Lower injection anxiety

(Oliver, Franco et al, 2012; Franco, 2008; Halpin & Spier, 2002).

Improve memory rehearsal in post stroke patients

(Page et al, 2001).

Improve pulse, clinical respiration, blood pressure & anxiety levels of surgical patients

(Ko, 2012).

The ABCs of Relaxation and Guided Imagery

How does it work?

First, learn how to become deeply relaxed, while conscious by use of diaphragmatic breathing & body scan, then imagine with your senses letting go of tension in the body.

It is not necessary to work at relaxing, it is impossible to maintain a state of relaxation & a state of tension at the same time.

Multisensory Imaging

- ◆ Once relaxed, sensory images are added to the experience, e.g., *guiding someone to go to their ideal place of relaxation or a safe place.*
- ◆ Under these conditions, our bodies do not discriminate between sensory images in the mind & what we call reality.
- ◆ Our bodies treat the imagined image as if it is happening & these effects reverberate, like depth charges, within the body.

The Neurochemistry of GI

- ◆ Parasympathetic functioning is increased, promoting rest & energy renewal, relaxed blood flow, lower muscle tension & reduced bracing/stiffness.
- ◆ Heightened Right Brain Activity is increased & stimulates increased intuition, symbolic reasoning, sensory processing, creativity & receptivity.
- ◆ Our own natural pharmacy is “turned on”-- neuropeptides, short term immune function, neurotransmitters flush through the system longer & their effects more sustained.

Ref. Achterberg, 1985; Geidt, 1997; Bakke et al, 2002

A Focused Reverie

- ◆ In this relaxed meditative state, the emotions, mood, physiologic state associated with the idea or image appear very vivid, very immediate & the place or event is experienced as a whole person, a whole felt body state.
- ◆ Sensory images experienced in this relaxed state create a “lived experience” & evoke a more powerful change than analyzing one’s attitudes or behavior

Being in the Zone

- ◆ This allows us to discover personal meaning & increase our understanding of how to cope with less reactivity.
- ◆ To shift our attitudes, perceptions rapidly, practice strategies that work & promote self efficacy.
- ◆ So, when we apply this to a specific focus, we have an awesome ally, a way to experience a source of internal strength & skill in approaching a goal.

How GI Differs From Other Modalities

Guided Imagery

A therapeutic process that facilitates working with the power of the imagination to positively affect mental attitude, potentiate positive outcomes, activate inner healing within the body. It is often scripted, directed by a practitioner with an individual or group.

How GI Differs From Other Modalities

Integrative/Interactive Imagery

Takes therapeutic process to deeper levels by eliciting & working with a person's own images, whether positive /negative. Person is guided by a practitioner to engage, interactive, often dialogue, with sensory images and felt states.

This process is based on belief that each person has a vast inner well of knowledge within the mind & an innate intelligence of the body.

How GI Differs From Other Modalities

Meditation

- ◆ There are many forms of meditational practice
- ◆ Each is based on religious/philosophical principles
- ◆ Meditation, like Hypnosis, has many similarities to Imagery process:
 - ◆ Facilitates a focused state of mental concentration (though more passive than other processes)
 - ◆ Focal point may be the breath, a word, phrase or object
 - ◆ Goal is to reach a deeper level of awareness, neutrality and inner peace
 - ◆ Out of this emerges wisdom, compassion for self & others

How GI Differs From Other Modalities

Hypnosis

- ◆Has many similarities to Imagery process: Hypnosis also creates a state of physical relaxation & heightened mental concentration, where mind is focused internally and open to suggestion
- ◆Some schools of hypnosis are similar in their client-centered approach and non-directive style, others are more directive.
- ◆Self-hypnosis often involves thoughts, e.g., “*in a moment I’ll be calm*”, whereas GI imagery process always involves multiple sensory awareness.

Special Populations

- ◆ GI is very versatile, can be practiced anywhere
- ◆ GI is highly functional, not connected to spiritual practice or concerned with becoming attached to a particular state, e.g., staying in longer period of relaxation if needed vs learning & observing how inner states & experiences pass
- ◆ GI is particularly effectively for LD, ADD/ADHD, highly sensory learners, or hyperreactive types, less focus on clearing the mind

Special Populations Continued

- ◆ GI is effective with persons suffering from compromised immune systems or auto immune disorders because it has been proven to increase immune function
- ◆ GI is effective with persons with mild dementia because of its heightened focus on sensory processing not left brain observation
- ◆ GI is playful & invites imaginative curiosity
- ◆ GI focuses more on the body and affective states than cognitive ones

- ◆ De-Stress 101
- ◆ Defeat Dental Fear, Remain Calm at the Dentist
- ◆ Imagine the Possibilities
- ◆ Boosting Your Confidence
- ◆ Inner Beauty, Inner Wisdom
- ◆ Master Test Anxiety, Max Performance
- ◆ Lower Anxiety & Injection Anxiety with MS
- ◆ DeStress for MS Youth
- ◆ Stressfree MRIs
- ◆ Relieving Caregiver Stress
- ◆ Lowering Blood Pressure
- ◆ Reducing Stress with Kidney Disease
- ◆ Stressfree Bride