

SOAR Educational and Mental Health Therapy

EMDR Phase 2: Safe/Calm Place Protocol (Therapist Guide)

Clinical Intention

Build affect tolerance, strengthen dual awareness, increase client control, and install a sense of safety.

When to Use

Use when clients are overwhelmed, anxious, new to EMDR, or lack internal resources.

Accessing the Place

Invite the client to imagine a calm or safe place (real or imagined).

Deepening

Explore sensory details: sights, sounds, body sensations, and what makes it safe.

Installation

Use short sets of bilateral stimulation (6–12 passes). Prompt: 'Just notice that.'

Strengthening

Check after each set: 'What do you notice now?' Continue if deepening.

Cue Word

Create a word or phrase (e.g., 'calm', 'beach') and pair with BLS.

Somatic Anchor

Identify where safety is felt in the body and reinforce with BLS.

Blocks

If no safe place → use neutral/pleasant imagery. If dissociation → slow down and ground.

Closing

Return to calm place briefly, then orient to body and present moment.

Between Sessions

Encourage daily practice and use during distress.

Therapist Check

Monitor pacing, embodiment, and client regulation.