

SOAR Educational and Mental Health Therapy

Understanding Your Safe/Calm Place (EMDR Preparation Guide)

Why This Matters

Your brain has a natural ability to heal and process difficult experiences. Sometimes, stress or trauma interrupts that process. The Safe/Calm Place exercise helps your nervous system experience safety again, which makes deeper healing work possible.

What Is a Safe/Calm Place?

This is a mental space—real or imagined—where you feel grounded, calm, or at ease. It is not about perfection; it is about accessibility. This place becomes a tool you can return to when emotions feel overwhelming.

How Your Brain Uses This

When you focus on a calm place while your therapist uses bilateral stimulation (like eye movements or tapping), your brain begins to connect calm with awareness. This strengthens your ability to stay present even when emotions rise.

How to Build Your Safe Place

Think of a place where you feel even slightly more relaxed. Then deepen it by noticing: - What you see (colors, shapes, distance) - What you hear (sounds, silence, rhythm) - What you feel in your body (warmth, heaviness, lightness) - What makes this place feel safe or steady

Making It Stronger

As you practice, your brain begins to store this experience. Over time, it becomes easier to access and more powerful. You may notice your body relaxing more quickly or your thoughts becoming clearer.

Your Cue Word

You will create a word or short phrase that represents this calm state (for example: 'steady', 'beach', or 'calm'). This acts like a shortcut to bring the feeling back when you need it.

Using It in Daily Life

You can use your Safe Place when: - You feel overwhelmed - You are anxious or stressed - You need to reset during the day Practice bringing it up for 1–2 minutes daily, even when you feel okay. This strengthens the pathway in your brain.

Important Notes

You do not have to 'do this perfectly.' If your mind wanders or the image fades, that is normal. The goal is not to force calm, but to gently return to it.

What You May Notice Over Time

- Faster emotional recovery - Increased sense of control - More awareness of your body - Greater ability to handle stress without becoming overwhelmed