



Creating a safe place

Duration: 10–12 minutes

Instructions:

This exercise helps survivors who are in “freeze mode,” feeling numbed and frozen.

1. Make yourself comfortable, with your feet on the ground.
2. Feel and relax your body — your head, your face, your arms, spine, stomach, buttocks, thighs, legs.
3. Choose whether you want to close your eyes or keep them open during this exercise.
4. Listen carefully to the trainer’s voice.

Then:

- Think of a place in which in the past you were calm and confident and safe.
- It may be outdoors, at home, or somewhere else. It can be a place to which you have been once or many times, which you saw in a film, heard about, or imagined.
- You can be there by yourself or with someone you know.
- It can be private, unknown to others — somewhere that no one can find without your permission. Or you can decide to share it with others.
- This place must suit you and meet your needs. You can constantly recreate or adapt it.
- It is comfortable and richly equipped for all your wants. Everything you need to be comfortable is present.
- It is somewhere that fits you. It shuts out every stimulus that might be overwhelming.
- Imagine this place. Imagine you are there.
- Take time to absorb it in detail: its colors, shapes, smells and sounds.
- Imagine sunshine. Feel the wind and the temperature.
- Notice how it feels to stand, sit, or lie there. How your skin and body feel in contact with it.
- How does your body feel when everyone is safe, and everything is fine?
- In your safe place you can see, hear, smell and feel exactly what you need to feel safe.
- Perhaps you take off your shoes and feel what it is like to walk barefoot in the grass or in the sand.
- You can go to this place whenever you want and as often as you want.
- Just thinking about it will cause you to feel calmer and more confident.
- Remain there for five more seconds. Then prepare to return to this room. Open your eyes, stretch yourself, and do what you need to return to the present.