

## COPING KIT SKILLS: **Guided Imagery**

**Helps with:** Pain, Sleeping, Nausea, Anxiety, Worries, Anger, Fatigue

**What is it?** Guided Imagery is a tool that helps your body by letting your mind take you to healthy places that feel good. It uses your imagination to change your thoughts by focusing on your senses (sound, vision, smell, taste, touch, movement). It's like daydreaming - when your mind begins to wander and you imagine that you are doing something fun. You can decide what to think about and what to imagine, and the best part is that your brain will listen.

**What do I need?** The main things you need are your brain and your imagination! Other things you may use:

- A favorite memory or pictures of things you like doing or places you wish you could be.
- A favorite smell or scent
- A CD with a visualization or imagery script

See the Tips section to see how these items can help!

### **When do I use it?**

- Do this anytime you are feeling nervous, stressed, angry, worried, or are in pain.
- You can use it during times you wish you could go or be somewhere else because you are uncomfortable.

### **How do I do it?**

1. Close your eyes.
2. Take 3-5 deep belly breaths.
3. It's time to imagine you are going to your special place! Where would you like to go? If you could be anywhere in the world at this moment, where would you be? At the beach with family, out with friends, at a sports game, somewhere feeling healthy?
4. When you have picked out a place, picture yourself there. Through your mind, you can be at this place as if this were really happening.



5. Use all of your daydreaming skills and think about every little thing that makes this place and experience just as you like it.
  - a. What do you see?
  - b. What does it smell like?
  - c. What does it taste like?
  - d. What sounds do you hear?
  - e. What do things that you can touch feel like?
  - f. How does your body feel as it moves (or rests) just the way you want it to.
6. Be aware of how comfortable your body feels when you are imagining yourself in this place. You may notice your breathing slow down and your muscles feel looser as your whole body starts to relax.

**Tips:**

- A favorite smell or scent can make your imagination activity more enjoyable and bring your special place to life. Using a special scent before or during the imagery activity can help you to feel even more comfortable and relaxed.
- Sometimes kids find it difficult to do this imagination activity on their own. If this is the case for you, you may be able to use a photograph or a picture from a book or the computer to help jump start your imagination. It may be helpful to have someone, like your mom or dad, lead you through this activity. Or maybe you already have a CD that describes a special, relaxing place to you. You can listen to this CD and use it to help your mind picture yourself there.

**How can this help me?** Have you noticed that when you think about sad stuff you feel sad, or when you think about things you are worried about you feel nervous, or when you actually think about your pain, you hurt more? Fortunately, just like your body and brain listen to you when you are thinking about bad stuff, you can start to think about good stuff to feel better. Usually, when you think about good stuff, you start to feel better and more comfortable. It's like changing the channel on your TV to something you really want to watch, or turning the volume up or down in your body to a level that is more comfortable for you. If you're sad or afraid, your mind can bring you to places that feel happy and calm. If you have pain, for example, your mind can help you picture yourself comfortable and relaxed. You can find the places in your mind where you're in control of your body and where you feel happy and relaxed.

