

## Lived in Imagination Resources

### By Anna Englin

Also called guided imagery

This is an easy technique for inducing a hypnotic, or focussed state.

It can be used for improving compliance with medical procedures and decreasing patient anxiety.

Many practitioners find this technique simple to use, no training in hypnosis is required. It is extremely safe.

#### Step 1: find a scenario that engages the child

You're looking for a scenario, activity or place that makes their eyes light up, puts a smile on their face or gives them a glazed look when they think about it.

The aim is to find somewhere that **captures their imagination** and is conducive to guided imagery.

'When you come into my magic room we're going to pretend to be in a *(wonderful/magical/fun)* place. Where would you like to go today? '

If they don't suggest anywhere, here are some tips for finding an engaging scenario

'Can you tell me *(one thing, two things)* that you like to do?'

'What's your favourite thing to do after school?'

'What's your favourite TV show/movie/book/song/story?'

'What's your favourite sport/ activity?'

'Do you have any pets?'

'What's your favourite room in your house? What do you like to do there?'

'What's a game you like?'

'Where have you been on holidays/ to a fun park?'

'Can you tell me one thing you really like to eat?'

'If I had a magic wand and I could wave it, say, Abracadabra! and send you anywhere in the whole world right now, where would you want to go?'

If the information is not forthcoming, utilise any information you can gather about the child.

Look at them- what are they wearing, what are the pictures on their clothes, what colours, are there any special features? What toys have they brought? Talk to their soft toys - this allows less confronting, indirect communication. Are they watching something on a device? Have they brought books or drawings? Are they staring at something?

Start speaking about anything you can see that distinguishes them as individuals and see where it leads. You're looking for a change in body language that signals **engagement**.

'That's a beautiful rainbow on your top. When you come into my magic room, how about we pretend we're unicorns sliding down that rainbow' I can be a little blue unicorn, what colour will you be?'

'That's a very cool transformer you've got. Can you show me what he looks like when he's a machine? Imagine you can ride inside the machine, we could be right inside there, looking out through that window...'

If all else fails, pick something age and sex appropriate that is likely to interest them. Or ask their carer.

Examples: fairies, superheroes, currently trendy video games

### **Step 2: introduce the concept**

Use age appropriate language to prepare the child and build some excitement and **expectation**.

You may like to suggest there will be a **surprise** element (eg their soft toy will be there with them) or a magical element (eg 'this isn't a normal trampoline, this is the *biggest* trampoline you've ever seen!').

You can introduce the concept well beforehand, eg at pre-anaesthetic assessment, or just at the induction, depending on logistics, age, child characteristics or your own preferences.

'When you come into my magic room, we're going to pretend we're.... *doing the activity you discovered in step 1*'

'As we're giving you the straw in your hand/ as you've got the mask on your face, a lot of kids like to go somewhere else in their imagination. How about you imagine you're *doing the activity you discovered in step 1*'

### **Step 3: evoke the scenario**

The more senses you evoke, the more vivid and engaging the scenario will be. It should be a **multi-sensory** experience.

'You can hear the engine starting up'

'Mmmm I can smell the cake in the oven'

'What does the pizza have on it? Mmmm stringy cheese'

'Look at all the other kids cheering you on, you're running faster and faster'

'Can you feel the warm water on the water slide?'

'The bike is going super fast, you can feel the wind whooshing in your face'

Speak in the **present tense**,

'what colour is your magic wand?'

**Incorporate** aspects of their present situation.

The face mask can be an astronaut mask in a space scenario, 'Now, after you put on your astronaut mask, the rocket can blast off'.

The doors to the operating theatre can be the gates of an amusement park.

The tourniquet can be a magical bracelet gifted to them by an elf.

A sudden noise can be made by people in the scenario, 'gosh there's a lot of people at the park today!'.

Staff in the operating theatre can be elves, fairies, spectators at a cricket game.

You can commentate on the scenario, as if you're telling a story, or you can have the child do the talking, with prompting as necessary.

Experiment with this, the most appropriate way may present itself based on individual child preference, or you may find one style is easier or more authentic for you than another.

You may like to tell a story to the child, incorporating the elements of guided imagery, or adapt their favourite story to the current scenario.

#### **Step 4: continue vivid engagement in the scenario as long as the hypnotic state is required**

##### **General points:**

Over time, you will find wording and concepts for this technique that feel authentic for you.

Try out the suggestions here and then fine tune the style until it feels comfortable. If it doesn't feel comfortable, if it looks forced, it probably won't be as effective.

Authenticity is quite obvious, even to very young children.

Be as creative as you like.