

4 Elements for Stress Reduction (Earth Water Air Fire)

EARTH : GROUNDING , SAFETY in the PRESENT /REALITY

.... take a minute or 2 to “land” ... to be here now... place both feet on the ground, feel the chair supporting you.... Look around & notice 3 new things... What do you see.... What do you hear ? (don't ask this if it draws attention to on-going dangers)

WATER : CALM & CONTROLLED -switch on the RELAXATION RESPONSE

....do you have saliva in your mouth?.....make more saliva....run your tongue around your teeth on the inside of your mouth in a clockwise direction, and then run it on the outside of your teeth in the opposite direction...notice the moisture in your mouth.

.(explanation –when you are anxious or stressed your mouth often “dries” because part of the stress emergency response (sympathetic N S) is to shut off the digestive system. So when you start making saliva you switch on the digestive system again (parasympathetic N S & the relaxation response –that is why people are offered water or tea or chew gum after a difficult experience 0-when you make saliva your mind can optimally control your thoughts & your body

AIR: BREATHING for STRENGTH, BALANCE & CENTERING

...start breathing with deep slow breaths, making sure to take in as much air to fill up your stomach, and then slowly release it all to make room for fresh energizing air.

(explanation - anxiety = excitement without oxygen -you stop breathing- start breathing & your anxiety reduces. Important that one doesn't gasp and take in air only till the diaphragm).

FIRE LIGHT up the path of your IMAGINATION -power of imagination > will power.

...Now see above your head, a healing light pouring down on you out of the air...see the color of the light and notice what represents healing for you...feel it warm and gentle pouring over you like honey, bathing you in its healing.

As you continue feeling the security of your feet on the ground, to the feeling of calmness and control as you produce moisture in your mouth, centered with the air flowing in and out of your body through your breath, and the healing light of your imagination showing you all possibilities...give yourself four or five butterfly hugs.

Butterfly Hug: Place the right hand on your collarbone above your heart, and the left hand crossing it to rest on your opposite collarbone. Tap alternately left and right with your fingers in a slow heartbeat cadence on the collarbone.

Adapted from: Shapiro, E. (2012). 4 Elements Exercise. *Journal of EMDR Practice and Research*,1(2),113-115