



Toolkit 1 - Learning Unit 1 Post intervention

Activity 4 Dropping an ANCHOR

You took part in a psychological first aid intervention. Did you use the anchoring process to help you or to help others to stabilise when needed ?

*You found some basics informations about anchoring in the **Toolkit1-Unit 1 pre intervention** If you want to go back to it and **practise more**.*



Remember that an anchor is formed through repetition and association. Anchoring is a natural process that usually occurs without our awareness. Studies show that it can be build on purpose .



When you choose an anchor you are able to access it at a later time when it is useful.

You will find in this new document some more informations and suggestions;



More informations about anchoring

Anchors works like a "trigger", or a stimulus.

Anchors can come in a multitude form:

- sights
- sounds even verbal phrases,
- physical sensations,
- Internally form such as words one says to oneself, memories or internal states.

In a way almost everything can acts as an anchor ! Anything can tend to trigger reflexively some thought or feeling or response.

Anchoring is a natural process that usually occurs without our awareness.

Anchoring may have positive impact, but can also have a negative impact and be maladaptive.

To be effective an anchor must be

- **Specific** -
- **Intermittent** - if not then desensitisation may occur
- Trigger to a **unique and prompt reaction** in order to enable the reinforcement

Examples of anchors

- An old love song may re-awakens a romantic mood or other feelings
- A childs' comforter.
- A family photo album may stirs memories and some of the feelings associated with them, good or bad.
- Any family activities you participated in, that gave you great pleasure. This pleasure is associated with the activity itself, so when you think of the activity you tend to re-experience some of this pleasurable feeling you first had.
- Revisiting a place you used to live in may trigger some powerful memories.
- The smell of grass or chocolate cookies may bring back memories.

- Phobias is one example of very powerful but negative anchor.





5 Types of Anchors

1. Visual

Visual anchors can be internal or external. If you want to try an external anchor, it has to be visible at all times. For example a bracelet you wear every day.

Internal anchors are essentially visualization. It is an image that relaxes you. With mental imagery, it's important to be as specific as possible. You want this to feel real so your brain will experience those same powerful and positive emotions.

2. Auditory

Similar to visual anchors, sounds can be internal or external. A popular external auditory anchor is whistling. If you're feeling anxious, whistling (when paired with the feeling of relaxation) can help you enter a more balanced state over time. For an internal anchor, you can repeat a phrase in your mind.

3. Kinesthetic

The beauty of a kinesthetic anchor is there are many options, with an object, your body, your finger, or an internal anchor.

4. Olfactory

As the most powerful sense, smell is an excellent mental anchoring technique. (essential oil, perfume..)

5. Gustatory

For this mental anchoring technique to work, you should use an anchor that is readily available or an internal one.





Anchors study

In her book , Langer, "Mindfulness", Addison Wesley 1989, Ellen Langer studied two groups of 75-80 year old men at Harvard University.

For 5 days, both groups were isolated at a retreat.

- One group was engaged in a series of tasks encouraging them to think about the past *in general* . (Like writing an autobiography, discussing the past etc),
- The other group was engaged in a series of tasks which anchored them back into a *specific past time* - they wrote an autobiography up to 1959, describing that time as "now", watched 1959 movies, had 1959 music playing on the "radios", and lived with only 1959 artifacts.

Before and after the 5 days, both groups were studied on a number of criteria associated with aging.

While the first group stayed constant or actually deteriorated on these criteria, **the second group dramatically improved on physical health measures such as joint flexibility, vision, and muscle breadth, as well as on IQ tests !**

They were anchored back physically to being 50 years old, by the sights and sounds of 1959.





Another way to practice the safe place



Guided Imagery: Safe Place

Allow yourself to be in a comfortable position, either lying down or sitting up. If you're sitting up, place a pillow behind your back, and allow your neck and your back to be nicely supported, not leaning back too much if you have difficulty staying awake.

Remember that if you feel afraid at any time, just open your eyes and ground yourself in today. You are safe and you are in control today.

How does it feel? Let your body begin to relax by releasing the areas of tension by breathing. Take slow deep breaths and as you exhale let the tension go. Where is your body feeling tense? Focus your attention on this area as you take another breath in. Feel this area relaxing as you breathe out. Allow your breathing to gradually slow down.

Breathe in and out

As you do this, allow yourself to picture in your mind's eye, a safe place. What is the first place that comes to mind? What type of place does your mind choose as a safe place? In this place of safety, no one can come without your invitation. In this place of safety, you are always at peace.

Maybe you are in a beautiful garden, or in the mountains, or in an open field or the beach. Picture a place that feels calm, safe, and serene. A place you feel safe and protected. Each time you come to your safe place, you may develop it and allow it to become more and more beautiful. Allow yourself to see what is here today

Imagine the details of your surroundings. Notice the foliage and beautiful colours and hues. What season is it? Notice the ground. Is it earthy soil, rock, or sand? Are you barefooted? What does it feel like beneath your feet?

What smells do you notice? Is it sweet, pungent, or refreshing? Are there birds overhead? Listen to their singing. What other sounds do you hear? Let these sounds lull you peacefully.

Notice if there is any water. Is there a pond or a waterfall or waves? Can you hear the sound of the water? Let the water flow over your skin. Notice how it feels on your skin. Can you taste it?

Notice if there is a breeze or wind. What does it feel like on your face? Is it warm or cool? Allow yourself to take in all the senses feeling calm, serene, and peaceful.

Breathe in and out

Now allow yourself to lie down in the safe place and feel the ground beneath your body. Notice

the gentle earth below warming you. Imagine the earth cradling you allowing you to relax even more and feel safe during this meditation.





Feel your body resting on the ground allowing any tension to be released into the ground letting it seep away. Can you hear the water lapping in the pond, tricking by, or splashing as it makes waves? Imagine the water washing over you and taking away any tension left in your body.

Breathe in and out

Now look above you and notice the colour of the sky. Notice the sun. Feel the warm rays of the sun on you skin. What else do you see? Are there clouds? Are there any trees around? What kind of leaves do they have? Notice their beautiful colours.

Breathe in and out

Now look around, notice a bench, or rock or tree stump in this place, and go sit on it. Feel the sun warming you and further relaxing you. Breathe in the warmth and vibrancy of the sun allowing it to fill you with a sense of calm and peace from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. Notice as you become part of your safe place that you feel more rested, more relaxed, more at peace.

Breathe in and out.

Allow yourself to create a place of safety and peace that is always yours, always safe.... And breathe in the safety. And breathe out the fear. And breathe in the safety. And breathe out the fear.... As you breathe in, you can even smell the smells of safety. Perhaps you would like to build a shelter of some kind, a cottage, a cave, a tent, a tree house. And if it's already there, you may add to it.... Plant flowers, adding a splash of colour. Add special places or rooms to your safe place.... Create anything that you would like.

After you have thoroughly visualized this place and you are ready to leave, allow yourself to come back into the room and leave your safe place for now, knowing that you can return to your safe place any time you like.

Open your eyes but stay in a relaxed position taking a moment to reawaken completely. Continue to breathe smoothly and rhythmically. Take a few moments to experience and enjoy your relaxing guided meditation. Your safe place is available to you whenever you need to go there.