

Safe Place Visualization Script

Written for therapists and counsellors who need a script to read aloud. Ten minutes of safe place resourcing as it is used in practice — building the place, pairing it with a one-word cue, and rehearsing the retrieval, which is the part that makes it usable outside the room.

10 min · 5 segments

Ten minutes, five segments. This is a clinical resourcing exercise — read the scope note in segment one rather than cutting it.

BEFORE YOU RECORD

- The cue word is the whole point. A safe place a client can only reach by lying down for ten minutes is not much use at 3pm on a bad day; the pairing in segment four is what makes it portable.
- Never populate the place for them. Other people — even loved ones — introduce relational complexity that can turn a resource into a trigger. If a client puts someone there, that's their call, not the script's.
- If distress rises rather than falls, stop. Say so plainly in the recording. A minority of people find interior imagery activating rather than settling, and they need an explicit exit.
- This is a stabilisation tool, not a treatment. Do not record an introduction implying otherwise, and do not use it to process material — it exists to make processing survivable.

01. What this is for

1 min 30

[plain and clinical — this segment sets scope and it is not optional]

This is a safe place exercise. It takes about ten minutes, and the point of it is practical: to build somewhere in your mind you can get back to quickly when things get difficult.

Two things before we start. This is a steadying tool, not therapy, and it isn't for working through anything painful — it's for making the rest of the work possible.

And if at any point you feel worse rather than calmer, stop. Open your eyes, look around the room you're actually in, and name three things you can see. Some people find that going inward makes things louder rather than quieter, and if that's you, nothing has gone wrong. *[pause for 10 seconds — let that land]*

Sit somewhere comfortable. You can close your eyes or leave them open and lower your gaze. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

02. Finding the place

2 min

[offer no suggestions — whatever they choose is right, and your examples would overwrite it]

Bring to mind a place where you feel completely calm. Somewhere real that you've been, or somewhere invented — both work equally well. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

One guideline: for now, keep it a place with nobody else in it. Not because people aren't comforting, but because a place with someone in it depends on them, and this needs to be somewhere that's yours alone. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

If more than one place came, pick whichever one is easiest to picture, not the one that seems most impressive. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

03. Building it

3 min

[slow — real gaps after every sense, they are doing the work in the silence]

Look around it properly. What's near you, and what's further away. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

Listen. Whatever sound is here, even if it's almost nothing. *[pause for 30 seconds]*

Notice the temperature. On your face, on your hands. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

And what it smells of here. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

Now notice what's happening in your body as you stand here. Where you feel calm, physically — chest, shoulders, stomach, jaw. Find where in the body this place registers. *[pause for 35 seconds]*

04. The cue word

2 min

[the clinically important segment — do not hurry it, and do not choose the word for them]

Now we're going to give this place a handle, so you can find it again quickly.

Choose one word that goes with it. It might be the name of the place, or something about it, or a word that just arrives. It doesn't need to make sense to anyone else. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

Say that word to yourself now, while you're still standing here and the calm is still in your body. Let the word and the feeling sit together. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

Again. The word, and the feeling in the body at the same time. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

05. Practising the return

1 min 30

[normal voice for the last two lines — this is instruction, not induction]

Now let the place go entirely. Come back to the room. Notice the chair, the floor, the light in here. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

And now say your word again, and see whether the place comes back. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

That round trip is the exercise. Not the place itself — the ability to get back to it in a second or two, from wherever you happen to be. It gets faster with repetition, and it's worth doing on ordinary days rather than only bad ones. *[pause for 15 seconds, then lift the voice]*

Come all the way back now. Move your hands and feet, and take a fuller breath. When you're ready, open your eyes.

USAGE

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