

IMAGERY TRANSFORMATION FOR HEADACHE

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The use of metaphoric imagery in the treatment of stress-related migraine and sinus headache is presented. Some guidelines for use are outlined, with opportunity for practice in applications for pain. A videotape presentation will outline the use of transformational metaphor.

Briefly, this procedure involves several simple steps:

1. **Client Symptom Description.** Have the client describe in vivid detail the way the headache feels. Solicit, amplify, and encourage client metaphors and images in describing his/her experiences. Use a s.u.d.s. scale rating of baseline pain.
2. **Preparation.** Give a brief rationale for the procedure, using the concepts of dissociation, transformation, and reincorporation. Motivate the client with curiosity, wonder, attribution, utilization of existing client capacities.
3. **Trance Induction.** Preferably brief to make sure the headache is clearly anchored in experience.
4. **Projection and Dissociation.** Have the client visually project the headache into an empty chair or space. Have the client see and describe the representational aspects of the headache (size, shape, color, density, texture, posture, specificity, etc.).
5. **Transformation.** Working with each stimulus dimension, encourage and guide the client in allowing changes to occur in that dimension. Foster and utilize curiosity, experimentation, discovery. Your covert goal is the diminishment of magnitude or intensity of each dimension,

using analogical marking reinforcement of client movement in that direction. However, do not push the river, just promote its gentle flow.

6. Reincorporation. When satisfied that the attributes of the image have been significantly altered, have the client take the altered image back into his/her head. Observe carefully. If relief observed, ratify the comparison and use posthypnotic cue for the process, symptom activated. If no relief observed, ratify whatever progress has occurred with anticipation of further movement in subsequent practice.

7. Posthypnotic Interview. Ask client about the current rating of discomfort. Probe key points in the process of the trance work. Offer suggestions for homework practice.

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