

## Visualization Script (4 Minutes)

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Having finished our case reviews for today, I want to again acknowledge that reading and discussing these cases is difficult and can lead to secondary trauma. Additionally, we all have many responsibilities, demands and other daily stressors. But doing the work of Child Death Review honors these children and the lives cut short as we look for a way to make sure it doesn't happen again.

I'd like to take us through a simple visualization exercise to help our minds cope with the details of these cases we have just discussed. This type of exercise is also sometimes referred to as "guided imagery." We don't want to push traumatic thoughts away, but rather practice letting them go.

### Let's begin:

- First, feel free to turn your camera off for the duration of the exercise (if meeting virtually).
- I'd like each of you to get comfortable in your chair and place your feet flat on the floor.
- Now place your hands on your stomach and take two or three deep breaths, noticing your stomach rising and falling with each in-and-out breath. Inhale for a few seconds, hold it for a few seconds, and then release the breath, pushing it all the way out as though through a straw. (Pause)
- If you feel comfortable, close your eyes or focus on a fixed object or point.
- Keep breathing and paint a picture in your mind. You are walking in a field, next to a gently flowing river or maybe a more quickly moving stream, whichever you prefer. You pause to watch the water flowing over the rocks in the stream. You can smell the river and the green moss growing on the rocks. You can hear the water gurgling as it flows over and around the rocks and stones in the river.
- Keep focusing on your breath as you observe the water. There are leaves floating down the river, away from you. You watch them move downstream, off into the distance until you can't see them anymore. As thoughts come to your mind, take each one and attach it to a leaf and let it float downstream. Watch it disappear down river. You can even identify a thought from today – either from this meeting and the case details, or another thought that has been troubling your mind. Take this thought and attach it to one of the leaves. Let the leaf go and watch as it floats away. (Pause for about 10 seconds)
- Concentrate on breathing in, holding it, and slowly exhaling as you do this. As thoughts enter your mind, whatever they may be, take each one and attach

it to a leaf and let it float away from you, always coming back to the focus on your breath. (Pause)

- (Say softly): I'd like you to now slowly bring your attention back to the room you're in, noticing the sounds around you. Feel your feet still planted firmly on the floor. Begin to open your eyes and notice the objects around you. (Pause)
- Feel free to keep doing a few more deep breaths if you'd like.

### **How are we all feeling?**

Hopefully you're feeling relaxed and rejuvenated. This exercise requires practice to become a useful tool for your well-being. The breathing helps to oxygenate our blood while the simple focus on the breath and letting go of thoughts calms us and slows us down. Use this guided imagery exercise any time you need to, to clear your mind and focus your energy elsewhere, instead of letting thoughts become intrusive. We have to take care of ourselves so we can keep doing this important work. I hope you find a way to incorporate short self-care activities like this one into your daily life at work and at home.