

Emotional Regulation Containment Exercises for Mindfulness and Relaxation

Containment is a way of practicing more control over your thoughts and feelings. When people feel they have more control over what they think about and what they feel, they are more content. The skill takes lots of practice, so keep trying and don't give up!

Shelve It

1. When a thought intrudes on what you are doing or trying to concentrate on, imagine you are pushing it aside or "shelving it" for later. You can tell yourself, "I'm not working on that right now. I am working on this. I will come back to that other issue later."

The Container

1. Imagine a container that is big enough and the right shape to hold a problem or a pain that you are having. This container should close tightly when you want it to close. What size is the container? What shape? What color? Does it have a lock?
2. Imagine that you are putting your problem or your pain into this container. Make sure it all goes in there. When you are ready, close the container tightly. Lock it if you need to. You may have to do this several times before you feel that the problem is put away, and then you can move on to something else.
3. If you like, you can send your container to Deity for help with the problem.
4. Remember that you can open the container when you need to deal with the problem, and you can use a real container if you need to...with objects, writings, photos, etc inside.

Let Go for Now

1. Imagine that you are somewhere safe and comfortable, and you are very relaxed.
2. To clear your mind of worries, imagine that you can see something moving past you, on which you can place your worries or thoughts and let them go for now. For instance, you could be lying on your back looking at the clouds in the sky, and as a cloud floats by you place your problem on the cloud and let it float away, then the next problem on the next cloud, etc. You may have to do this several times before you feel more in control.

The Train

1. As thoughts or emotions enter your consciousness, imagine you are sitting on a hillside watching a train, and these thoughts and emotions are cars on the train. You can notice them and let them go by.
2. The important thing is NOT TO GET ON THE TRAIN. The idea is to notice your thoughts and feelings without participating in them or intensifying them.

IMPORTANT!!

Set aside time to process the things which are bothering you, decide what you need to let go of, what needs your attention, what you need to talk about and what you need to work on. If you do not deal with things, they will keep coming back. But you can choose the appropriate place and time to deal with them.