



# EMDR THERAPY: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PHASES

## CREATING A CONTAINER

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- Use the imagination to build an image of a container that is sensory rich i.e. color, texture, sound.
- Examples: bank vault, file cabinet, tool chest, or something in the therapy office, something from your life that has meaning (but not something visual on a daily basis.)
- Strong: Make your container strong enough to hold what you put in it. Ex: With a lid, protectors, distance (buried, off planet etc).
- Secure entry: It can have a two-way valve system, or a mail slot, to put things in and take things out, but nothing can escape. Maybe it needs a lock.
- Comfortable inside: Make it be comfortable inside so those experiences you put in are willing to stay until you are ready to work with them.

### PRACTICE

- Managing disturbances using the container.
- Give yourself permission to take a break. Just for now. You can come back to it when you're ready. Whatever is in there, will wait for you.
- Think of a mildly disturbing recent experience, (around SUDS=3/4), and move it into your container. Take your time and notice when you're done, or if you're having trouble.
- Some people benefit from containing a disturbance piece by piece, others may need to do a sweep of everything all at once, without looking at all the pieces.
- Containment + Safe State: Notice any positive, or neutral sensations in the body that are experienced after you put all disturbing experiences into your container. Let that settle in.
- Cue word: As you think of your container, the positive feelings associated with it and your ability to use it, what word or phrase would you use to describe it?
- Practice using your container as often as possible between now and when we meet again. The container will get stronger the more you use it.

### BLOCKS

- It is not unusual to have some resistance to using containment.
- If resistance surfaces, stay curious about what is coming up.
- Is a part fearful, concerned or unsure of the purpose? Can it be reassured?
- Remember, it is just for now. This is not repression or ignoring. It is a conscious choice.