



Parent Guide to Help Children with PTSD

PTSD, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, can be really tough for kids. This guide will help them feel better using some simple activities they can do at home. Remember, it's always important to work with a therapist or mental health professional for the best results.

Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT)

What You'll Need:

- A quiet space
- Paper and crayons/markers (optional)

Steps:

1. **Identify the Nightmare:** Ask the child to describe their scary dream. They can write it down or draw it if they prefer.
2. **Rewrite the Nightmare:** Help them change the scary parts of the dream into something positive or funny. For example, if they dream of a monster, they can turn it into a friendly creature.
3. **Visualize the New Dream:** Encourage the child to close their eyes and imagine the new, happy version of the dream. They should try to see it clearly in their mind.
4. **Practice Before Bedtime:** Before going to sleep, have the child spend a few minutes thinking about their new dream. This can help reduce nightmares over time.

Safe Space Visualization

What You'll Need:

- A quiet space
- Paper and crayons/markers (optional)

Steps:

1. **Create a Safe Space:** Ask the child to imagine a place where they feel completely safe and happy. This could be a real place, like their bedroom, or an imaginary one, like a magical forest.
2. **Add Details:** Help them add details to this safe space. What does it look like? What sounds do they hear? What can they smell or feel? The more details, the better.
3. **Visualize the Safe Space:** Encourage the child to close their eyes and imagine being in this safe place whenever they feel scared or anxious. They can visit this place in their mind whenever they need to feel calm and safe.

Grounding Objects or Anchors

What You'll Need:

- A small, comforting object (like a favorite toy, a smooth stone, or a piece of fabric)

Steps:

1. **Choose a Grounding Object:** Help the child choose a small object that makes them feel safe and calm. This could be something soft, something they can hold in their hand, or something that has a special meaning to them.
2. **Practice Using the Grounding Object:** Teach the child to hold or look at this object when they feel scared or have a flashback. They should focus on how it feels, smells, looks, and sounds. This helps bring their attention to the present moment.
3. **Create a Grounding Routine:** Encourage the child to use this object regularly, not just when they are scared. This could be part of their bedtime routine or any other calming time of the day.

Additional Tips

- **Routine is Key:** Try to do these exercises regularly to help them become a natural response for the child.
- **Praise and Encouragement:** Always praise the child for their efforts. Positive reinforcement helps them feel more confident and willing to continue.
- **Stay Patient:** Progress can be slow, and that's okay. Every child is different, and it's important to go at their pace.

