

# Best Remedy: Effective and Safe Therapy as Guided Imagery in Cancer Patients

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## Abstract

Guided imagery is one of the powerful tool for relaxation of mind and body which convert into relaxed and calm state. It is a simple, safe and self-awareness technique used for the individuals or group of persons. Guided imagery have many health related benefits like relieve pain, nausea, stress, anxiety, lower blood pressure so on. And also strengthen the physical, mental, emotional well-being. **Method and materials:** Different sessions, music, images, worlds, exercises is used by the therapist. The session starts with the relaxation, breathing exercise which helps to increase the attention of mind. In the technique the practitioner guide the clients and tell them to relax progressively of different parts of the body (Example- feat ankle, then knees and so on). **Result:** According to research studies the guided imagery is an effective or supportive therapy in Cancer patients as proved. By practicing guided imagery 20 to 30 minutes daily in their live it relax the mind as well as reduces the symptomatic problems like pain, nausea, stress, anxiety related to cancer. **Conclusion:** Guided imagery significantly reduces all the stressful stimuli and makes client with well relaxed and calm mind. Especially cancer patient who are fighting with cancer cells in their body showing maximum symptoms related to adverse effects of treatment. For cancer patients Guided Imagery is a best remedy supportive treatment or technique to relief from various problems which in turn make their life betterment with copying harmful crises.

**Keywords:** *Guided Imagery, Relaxation, Mind, Body, Cancer Patients, Pain, Stress*

## Introduction

Guided imagery is one of the effective and powerful gentle techniques that focuses and guides the imagination. Many challenges face the practitioner or clinician in providing the supportive care to cancer patients. Guided imagery is a knowledge intervention that has been delivered with raising frequency as a curative option for many upcoming difficulties related to cancer patients. In this technique mind and body connection will take place and interact each other thus enhance the persons overall health and well-being. Guided imagery therapy uses words and images which help to divert the attention from the anxiety, stress, fear, pain and also strengthen the inner body naturally. In Cancer patient usually fights with disease related signs and symptoms such as pain, nausea, vomiting, stress, anxiety and fear. So Guided imagery is one of the best remedy to handle these problems according to psychologists and physician

tells that thousands of loyal immune cells come out of the thymus glands on identifying which intern destroy the unsuspecting cancer cells.<sup>1</sup>

### Definition:

1. According to the Achterberg Guided imagery is defined as the thought process that invokes and uses the senses, vision, audition, smell, taste the senses of moment, position and touch. It is one of the communication mechanisms between perception, emotion and bodily changes.<sup>2</sup>

2. According to many psychologist and physicians Guided imagery is also called as visualization. It is a technique in which a person imagines pictures, sounds, smells and other sensations associated with reaching a goal. Imagining starts in an situation or specific environment that can activate sense of feeling effective

by producing a physical or psychological aspects.<sup>2</sup>

### **History:**

In the past 18th century Franz Mesmer introduced the hypnosis that the space to guided imagery. The ancient Greeks introduce the trance experiences which are used in vehicles for physical illness or mental illness. In 1950's the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association identified the hypnosis as a formal tool. Over the past 25 years, the successful guided imagery has been introduced through research findings that show its positive impact on health, performance and creativity. Roughly 10 years later the guided imagery therapy was discovered through the integrated efforts of physicians and psychologist including Stephanie, Simonton and Carl, Roberto Assagioli, Lrving Oyle, Frank Lawlis, Jean Achtenberg and Rossman.<sup>4</sup>

The technique of psychodrama called Jacob Moreno's established in 1940's it is directly linked to guided imagery. In the year 1970's Dr Martin roseman and Dr. Bressler David have been developed for guided imagery as an ultimate approach for the treatment of cancer, chronic pain, stress, anxiety and serious mental illness. The discovered work has been came into the practice academy of guided imagery in 1989. In the 1980's throughout the number of health professionals like Ulrich, Lestie, Helen were started to publish materials related to effectiveness of positive responses of guided imagery on certain health illnesses like physical and mental aspects. Currently guided imagery is an effective developed therapy in alternative or complementary medicine and so many studies shows often helpful in therapeutic process.<sup>3</sup>

### **How Does It Help?**

Since from 25 years the guided imagery is has been used in positive impact on health performance and creativity. In this technique the experts uses own imagery or before created listening to imagery that will enhance divert, edit, change or convert what is offered for and what is needed. So that guided imagery is a right-brained activity by using or practicing can reduce blood pressure, reduces cholesterol, pain etc. It mobilizes unconscious to pre-conscious process to act with conscious goals, so it can convert much more individual

strength and motivation to accomplish a desired end. Hence by using edit imagery it is an effective technique tells some research studies that reduces or relive the side effects of chemotherapy in Cancer patients that is nausea, vomiting, fatigue and stress.<sup>4</sup>

### **Mode of Action:**

Early pioneers Green and Green, on guided imagery first research proposed psycho neurological theories related to imagery on healing. The researcher explain about mechanism of guided imagery that when the mind shuts it recreates an image of various emotional, physical or mental behaviour, a downward to upward self regulating feedback technique takes place. This process integrates the limbic system, cerebral cortex and hypothalamus which turn autonomic nervous system. When the patient stimulated in deep relaxation state the imagery sequence begins by creating mental image that influences the limbic system. Usually the pain stimuli are transferred through the substantia in the dorsal horn of spinal cord that act as gating mode. By use of guided imagery transmission of painful stimuli are closed at the gate before reaching maximum stage of conscious awareness.<sup>4</sup>

Levetal and J.Johnson proposed that patient experiencing a stressful condition may initiate coping actions which regulate action to both sensory stimuli, emotional and stressful stimuli which in turn reduces pain. Thus the mind is a measure tool and tremendous effect on the body. Example if you think about you that you are sleeping on the beach at Goa, your body responds and takes you in such as way that you're actually laying on the beach in Goa. As the positive imagery acts on body-mind and action takes place to relax by involving all the systems of the body.<sup>5</sup>

### **Procedure of Guided Imagery:**

Hypnosis and guided imagery resembles same but in the guided imagery technique there is a communication between the guide and the client may occur but in hypnosis the interaction is not required. The procedure of guided imagery is usually starts and ends with 20 to 30 minutes. The session starts with exercise of relaxation which helps on focusing the attention of mind. In the phase of relaxation the guide stars teaching the client to relax gradually at different parts of the body such as feet,

ankle, and knees etc.<sup>6</sup>

The common dialogue is used in Guided imagery keep your eyes closed when you take a deep breath, and imagine by your own in the relaxation mood, beautiful thought makes you relax up. There are many ways to think for relaxation and peaceful. Example walks in the garden or spend a day on a beach. By this practicing relaxation will achieve through the active imagery that intense cope up with relieving the pain nausea, stress, anxiety etc. Guided imagery is an effective technique where we can use in all settings including individual or group. If once the procedure is learn it can be practiced independently without the guidance of the guide. Guided imagery Ready scripts or steps are available in the internet or books. The therapist uses various aspects of process which relax and connect the mind and body such as peaceful environment, nice aromas, silent sound and textures. Guided imagery is developed to impact the mind and the body, breathing techniques by controlling and relaxing the muscles thus it creates a state of calm and relaxed mood.<sup>7</sup>

### **Guided Imagery Sessions:**

Guided Imagery can be obtained from home with the help of audio recording or books or by trained therapist. Guided Imagery can be practiced with individual or group sessions.<sup>8</sup> The sessions complete in 20 to 30 minutes the guided imagery sessions are as follows:-

- The guider uses any one of the different guided imagery techniques that will enhance imagery experiences in the mind.
- The guider will direct you to imagine a place or situations that will enhance to feel relax, safe, peaceful etc.
- Guider uses melody music background that will enhance to help for avoiding mind distraction.
- The guider ask you to imagine something warm healing light on the area where the immune system attacking cancer cells. In this the other uses the exercise which is popular by involving picturing tiny pacman role which represents catching and eating cancer cells.
- The guider directs you to focus on imagined situation that starts to experience feelings and sensations,

such as lightness, strength, warmth or contentment.

### **Methos / Elements of Guided Imagery**

The physicians, psychologists and other health professionals are using guided imagery sessions in some cancer centers according to research studies the main method in guided imagery is as follows.

**1. The Simonton Method:** Clients who are suffering from cancer they always fighting with harmful cancer cells. Here ask the clients to take relaxed regular breath deeply with imagination of soft cloud healing energy, and ask them to feel healing spreads full of the body.<sup>9</sup>

**2. The Palming Method:** In this method colours are used for imagination, which each colour represents the different things. Ask the client to close their eyes with hands and imagine a colour that you feel. For example if the client is thinking brown colour on imagination that represents the fear. So when the client suffers from various problems like pain, anxiety, fear, stress, etc. The same client think of colour according to their condition so ask the client to imagine that present colour slowly and when healing process starts automatically the replacement of colour occurs and changes in imagination. By this method the symptoms will relief and the client feels relaxed and calm.<sup>9</sup>

### **Benefits Of Guided Imagery:**

It is a technique of sense of control which helps the individuals to feel relax and calm, when the situation feel out of control. There are following benefits of guided imagery they are as follows.<sup>10</sup>

- Lowers blood pressure.
- Improves shortness of breath.
- Reduce feeling of depression.
- Feeling of wellness.
- Feeling of relaxed mind and body.
- Diverts the attention from pain, stress, worry, anxiety. So that the symptoms can relieve.
- Strengthen the inner body.
- Reduces the nausea and vomiting.

- Improve digestive and breathing problems
- Creating the state you want.

### **Guided Imagery is Safe Technique?**

Yes it is safe technique as per the various research studies. No known risk are identified with guided imagery. If the trainer of guided imagery teaches means it is proved that more effective than self practice.<sup>10</sup>

### **Requirement of Guided Imagery Practitioner:**

1. Usually there is no formal licensing process for guided imagery technician. But some schools have training centers which gives guided imagery certificate.

2. Specially card imagery is intended for health profession such as nursing or psychotherapist who are already state issued license.

3. Full training hours required 90 to 200 hours.

4. You can get qualified guided imaginary practitioner through the Academy for guided imagery. The centre will train and give certificate of guided imagery which requires 150 hours of training period.

5. Health professionals, personal coaches, counsellors may adopt his training.<sup>11</sup>

### **Criteria of Guided Imagery:**

- Select a peaceful environment place and time which you feel convenient.
- Prior starting guided imagery technique tell your family members or surrounding not to disturb at all.
- When you are listening guided imagery audio or music avoid driving.
- Make yourself more comfortable where you are doing guided imagery procedure.
- Switch off mobiles.
- When starting to practice guided imagery the common thing may occur such as running nose, tears, yawning, muscle cramps or twisting.
- If you feel sleepy at the time of practicing relaxation just leave it and choice any day for practice.

● Some unexpected thoughts or feelings may arise as imaginations while practicing guided imagery.

● Try to avoid worry or self decisions of getting it right.

● Day by day if you feel better relaxation, then you will be successful.<sup>11</sup>

### **Supportive Studies:**

Some of the clinical and research study shows that by practicing guided imagery the following aspects may able to:-

- Helps in healing of stress and depression.
- Helps in increasing the number of immune system cells.
- Helps in rest of mind and the body in relaxed stage.
- Helps in reducing cancer related symptoms like pain, nausea, anxiety etc.
- Helps in feeling of health with well being.

1. A meta-analysis of all the research articles published between 1980 to 2019 on the topic of knowledgeable strategies for pain relieving showed that more than 92% of the studies, cognitive interventions that are guided imagery, hypnosis and progressive relaxation techniques where significantly acts on reducing pain then no treatment. This study suggests that cancer patient facing poor quality of life due to treatment of chemotherapy and radiation. So the studies conducted on cancer patients by using relaxation therapy is to improve quality of life that chance physiological and psychological mechanism that combines together to control pain and related symptoms of cancer.<sup>12</sup>

2. As study was conducted by Lyles et al on cancer patients practicing guided imagery felt less anxiety, distress, nausea and physiological symptoms related to chemotherapy. The study took 50 cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. Method used in this study is guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation therapy for the session has been started by trainer by individually. Result reviles that patient feels after guided imagery less anxious, controlled nausea, relieved pain

and maintained blood pressure level.<sup>13</sup>

3. A study was conducted by Gruber et al to measure natural killer functions and response of lymphocyte with stage I breast cancer are 18 month period. Samples were trained with guided imagery and asked them to place themselves in relaxed setting. The result shows that significant effects of natural killer cells work with lymphocyte response. There is reducing of psychological symptoms like anxiety takes place and guided imagery become effective technique.<sup>14</sup>

### Conclusion

Guided imagery is generally potential and safe beneficial technique in providing relief from symptomatic problems in Cancer patients. Guided imagery enhances cancer patients to relief from anxiety, pain, and nausea by using their own sensory imagination of relaxation. Usually in Cancer patients sedating medications will improve quality of life, so guided imagery is one of the best remedy which supports the life for betterment. Guided imagery will not reduce the disease condition but according to some studies shows that the cancer patients control over their lives in facing of crisis. If guided imagery techniques practiced by cancer patients in daily life means there will be positive physical and psychological conditions will improve ultimately intern that will be a good contribution to produce humanistic help in their fatal life in promoting positive directions with better being.

**Ethical Clearance:** is obtained from the Institution's Ethical Committee of Shri B.V.V.S., Sajjalashree Institute of Nursing Sciences, Navanagar, Bagalkot.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Budget:** Self.

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