

CHAPTER 4

The Four Most Important Resources

In this chapter I introduce you to the four most important resources, those most commonly used and accessible:

- Safe or peaceful place
- Nurturing figures
- Protector figures
- Inner wisdom figures

I find it helpful to install/tap in the first three resources with all of my clients, regardless of their presenting problems, and use the fourth for my most traumatized clients. By doing so I get a picture of clients' inner capacity, resilience, areas of strengths, and areas that need strengthening. I am able to assess readiness to begin EMDR trauma processing work. I am often surprised at the resources clients come up with, even those with severe trauma and neglect in their histories. I can also be taken aback by a client who seems stronger than he or she is, and who struggles to find any kind of nurturer or protector. In these cases it may be that the client has always coped on his or her own, without help from others. By locating and tapping in these resources before you need to utilize them with the client, you are consciously developing and placing these most important and useful tools where you can find them. In some cases you may want to summon one of these resources as an interweave if your client is stuck and looping. I tap in the resources for very traumatized clients before beginning EMDR each time, as a way of creating

a safety net that helps them feel more contained. They can even imagine their resource figures with them as they process the traumas. Tapping in these essential resources creates a foundation of safety and stabilization for the work. For some clients with severe trauma and neglect, much time can be taken developing and tapping in these resources.

I have found that installing imagined safe/peaceful places and nurturing and protector figures in the beginning of treatment helps to create a stronger container for the trauma processing work. I believe that because we have stimulated the memory networks where these resources reside, the client has easier access to them, and can even sense them in the background when he or she begins the trauma processing work. Some clients require only a few minutes identifying and installing these resources during one session. If a client is able to easily locate and install them, we may only need to do this one time. That way I know he or she has the ego strength and the resources readily available if an interweave is necessary. We may never refer to their resources again for many clients because the processing moves along without the use of interweaves. For other clients, because these resources have been installed, they come up in their processing and link up as interweaves the client does him- or herself. For example, a client might “pull in” his best friend to protect his child self.

THE SAFE/PEACEFUL PLACE RESOURCE

Part of the client preparation before beginning the reprocessing work is to help clients establish a place where they can go in their imagination to feel comfortable and relaxed . . . a place they can imagine that evokes a feeling of safety and peacefulness. In the early years of EMDR, and in my earlier writings, I described the use of a *safe place*. However, I have found that for clients who have had extensive childhood trauma and neglect, the word *safe* evokes just the opposite: the absence of safety. For most clients these days, I use the term *peaceful place* as an alternative to *safe place*. The point is to identify a place that when evoked imaginatively, creates a sense of relaxation and a decrease in sympathetic activity in the nervous system. If your client responds well to the term *safe*, use it; if not, find alternatives. Many EMDR therapists mistakenly believe that if their clients cannot find a safe place, they cannot use EMDR with them. I have done very successful EMDR with clients who could not find a safe place, but *could* imagine peaceful, relaxing, calm places, or conflict-free images.

We may begin sessions with the safe or peaceful place, use it as a place our clients can go to during difficult processing to take a break and regain a sense of control, or use it to close down incomplete sessions. For clients who need to develop more of a sense of self-constancy, each EMDR session can begin and end with the peaceful place. This repetition increases the sense that they are the same person in different situations and can hold onto the peaceful place at home between sessions. Clients can also practice going to their safe/peaceful place between sessions as a means of self-soothing, and can even use it before going to sleep at night. The safe/peaceful place can also be imagined as the gathering spot for the client's resource figures to add extra safety and support.

You and your client work together to develop the safe/peaceful place. You adapt the safe/peaceful place instructions for each client's unique needs. What is important to achieve? Do you want to create a place of peace and calm where your client can turn off the outside world and the triggers to emotional upset? The safe/peaceful place can be a real-world location or a completely imaginary place. Many people choose a place in nature, such as a beautiful beach or mountain lake. One client chose the arms of a large mother bear as her peaceful place. The therapeutic relationship and the therapist's office can also be used as the safe/peaceful place. In addition, art can be used to create or enhance the safe/peaceful place. Clients can draw the place and then tap it in with BLS.

Before beginning the safe/peaceful place experience, you can help your clients enter a state of general relaxation by using a variety of known relaxation exercises. Or, they may have their own way to relax. Some people can contact an image and feeling of a safe/peaceful place easily, requiring little preparation. This is very individual and the time necessary for relaxation depends on the emotional/bodily state of the client.

It is helpful to activate the senses associated with the safe/peaceful place imagery. You might ask your client, "What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? What do you feel?" Then I'll ask, "Do you have a good sense of it now?" Or I'll simply comment, "Let me know when you can really feel your peaceful place." When the client signals yes, I begin a short sequence of BLS, maybe 6 to 12, to install this. I might ask, "Is it getting stronger?" If it is, I might go a little longer with the BLS. I watch my client for signs of deepening relaxation or increased agitation. If the client's breathing increases, I will stop immediately and ask him or her what is happening. Though for many clients, the BLS works quite well to install the feeling and imagery more securely, for some clients, the BLS opens up processing of traumatic material. Clients

who have had many *unsafe* experiences may begin to associate to those experiences if the word *safe* was used. If this happens, stop the BLS and explore with the client what he or she is experiencing. You may need to develop another safe place using imagery only or use the word *peaceful* or *comfortable* instead. I have worked with some clients who flipped to the negative so quickly, I could never use BLS to install the safe or peaceful place. With them, I use imagery only. As with everything in EMDR therapy, stay closely attuned to your clients and accommodate what you do according to their needs.

You may want to focus even more attention on making their safe/peaceful place feel secure for clients who have been traumatized or are anxious and stressed. If you feel the need for extra safety, you can ask your clients to imagine putting a protective barrier around their safe/peaceful place, made of anything they wish. They might imagine a protective shield around it, like from *Star Trek*, or imagine fierce protectors guarding it.

Shapiro (2001) recommends the use of a cue word with the installation of the safe place. For example, if the client's safe place is a beach, she can imagine the beach and say the word *beach* as she receives the BLS to install it. Then between sessions she can practice using the safe/peaceful place imagery and cue word during times of anxiety or distress. For instance, if she has to make a speech and is anxious about it, she can say the word *beach* to herself and imagine her safe place.

In the next box is a summary of what a therapist might say to a client during the process of creating and tapping in a safe/peaceful place resource.

The following material is a script for developing a peaceful place for clients who need more guidance (see Parnell, 2007). Begin this script after the client is in a relaxed state.

“With your eyes closed, imagine yourself now in a beautiful, peaceful place. . . . This might be somewhere you’ve visited before or somewhere you just make up in your imagination. . . . Just let the image of the place come to you. . . . It really doesn’t matter what kind of place you imagine as long as it’s beautiful, quiet, peaceful, and serene. . . . Let this be a special inner place for you . . . somewhere that you feel particularly at ease . . . a place where you feel safe and secure . . . at one with your surroundings. . . . Maybe you’ve had a place like this in your life . . . somewhere to go to be quiet and reflective . . . somewhere special and healing for you. . . . Or it could be a place you’ve seen in

TAPPING IN THE PEACEFUL PLACE*

1. "Close your eyes and go inside. Do deep, slow breathing or use another method to calm yourself and come to the present moment."
2. "Now that you are relaxed, imagine a place where you feel peaceful and comfortable, a place where you can feel relaxed and at ease."
3. After finding the place, enhance it using the senses:
 - "What do you see?"
 - "What do you hear?"
 - "What do you smell?"
 - "What do you feel?"
4. "When you have a strong positive feeling, I'll begin the BLS."
5. "If you feel distress or experience the intrusion of negative imagery, signal me, and we will stop the BLS immediately."
6. You can use a cue word as you tap in the peaceful place. For example, if your client's peaceful place is a beach, he or she can imagine the beach with the associated feelings of relaxation, and say to him- or herself *beach* as you add the BLS. When you do this, the cue word becomes linked with the feelings of relaxation and comfort that the peaceful place evokes. During times of anxiety or distress, you can instruct your client to use the peaceful place imagery and the cue word. For instance, if you have to make a speech and are anxious, you can say the word *beach* and imagine your safe/peaceful place to elicit a feeling of calm.
7. "Remember that this is *your* peaceful place. You can contact it whenever you would like. All you have to do is close your eyes and imagine your special place. You can repeat your cue word to yourself as you imagine your peaceful place and tap to access and strengthen your connection to it."

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a movie . . . read about . . . or just dreamed of. . . . It could be a real place . . . a place you know . . . or an imaginary place

"Let yourself explore and experience whatever quiet, imaginary place you go to as if you were there now. . . . Notice what you see there . . . what sounds you hear . . . even the smells and aroma you sense there. . . . Notice especially what it feels like to be there, and immerse yourself in the beauty, the feelings of peacefulness . . . of being secure and at ease.

“As you explore this special inner place, find a spot that feels particularly good to be in . . . a spot where you feel especially calm . . . centered . . . safe and at ease . . . Let yourself become comfortable in this spot . . . Let this be your safe place . . . Let this be your power spot . . . a place in which you draw from the deep sense of peacefulness and safety you feel here . . . Now just let yourself experience what it is like to be in this place . . . (Wait a few moments before beginning again, keeping your voice lower than usual because the client is in a deeper relaxed state.)

“Keeping your eyes closed . . . would you describe this place? (At this point begin BLS. Depending on the response, ask a few questions to help strengthen the imagery. The therapist can use short sets of BLS after the client responds to questions.)

“What season of the year is it? . . . What time of day is it? . . . What aromas do you smell? . . . What sounds do you hear? . . . How are you dressed? . . . How are you experiencing your safe place?”

“As you relax and are aware of how it feels to be here . . . tell yourself you can return anytime you wish . . . This is your special place . . . a place where safety, rest, and peace are always available at your own choosing . . . If you like, you can choose a cue word that will help you to remember your safe place. (Therapist adds more BLS as client says cue word to him- or herself.) In the future you can say this word to bring back the feelings of your special place.

“When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and come back to the room.”

Using Art to Enhance the Peaceful Place

Art can be used to create or enhance the peaceful place. Drawing the peaceful place can give it more substance for your clients. This is their special place and they can make it any way they wish. When they draw, the connection to it may strengthen, and they can add details to their picture to make it even more secure.

If they have difficulty finding their own safe/peaceful place, suggest that they draw a “safe island.” Find a piece of paper large enough for them to stand in the middle of it. Butcher-block paper can be used. They can stand in the center of the paper and draw a large circle around themselves. This is their safe island, which they can create in any way they would like. They can put anything and anyone they want on the island.

They can make it as safe and peaceful as they want. If they like, they can put a protective barrier around the island and encircle it with guardians.

Some people find that their sense of comfort increases when they draw the safe/peaceful place. Afterward they can use their drawing as a reminder of their safe/peaceful place that they can tap whenever they feel the need.

TAPPING IN THE SAFE/PEACEFUL PLACE THROUGH DRAWING

1. Get a piece of blank paper and use markers, crayons, pastels, or whatever medium you wish to use.
2. Say to your client: "Close your eyes and go inside. Imagine a place where you feel safe and secure, a place that is serene and peaceful."
3. "When the image comes to you, begin to draw it. Don't censor yourself or judge your artistic skills. Just allow what comes to be expressed on the page. It is most important to create some kind of visual representation, even if it looks like a drawing a child would make. What do you need to make it as safe as you would like?"
4. "Now, when you have completed the drawing, take a look at it and take in the feelings it evokes. Add whatever else you would like to it, even guardians to make it more protected."
5. "Close your eyes and hold the image in your mind. I'm going to begin the BLS now. I'll continue as long as it strengthens your positive feelings."

The main purpose of the peaceful place is to help clients find a means of calming the nervous system, a self-control technique. There are many other ways to accomplish this same purpose.

A Sacred Place Variation

A variant on the safe/peaceful place resource is the sacred place (see Parnell, 2008). Instead of focusing on the sense of safety or peacefulness, the emphasis is on the feeling of sacredness in the space, a place where there is a feeling of spirituality. The sacred place can be a place clients have been to or a place they can imagine. In this place they feel peaceful, but also a sense of something larger than themselves. Examples of sacred places are the Chartre Cathedral, the Hopi mesas, a Navajo kiva, a meditation cave in the Himalayas, sitting in a meditation hall with a spiritual teacher, or a sacred landscape, such as the Grand Canyon.

Positive Memories or Conflict-Free Images as Variations

Clients can bring up memories of doing something that they find comforting or relaxing that bring them pleasure as an alternative to the safe/peaceful place image (see Parnell, 2007). The idea is to find images of doing things that will help clients relax their nervous systems. Many people who have experienced early traumatization develop nervous systems that are attuned only to potentially dangerous stimuli, thus totally missing, or not registering in their memories, ordinary, nontraumatic daily life experiences that would counter their perception of the world as an entirely dangerous place (McFarlane et al., 1993). For that reason, the development of positive images and mindfulness practices catalyzes new neural pathways in the brain and serves as an important ego-strengthening method.

Phillips (1997a, 1997b) suggests that clients install *positive, conflict-free images* derived from experiences in their everyday life when they felt present and whole. It can be a real experience from the person's daily life, such as gardening, stroking a cat, or walking in a park. The image is strengthened by asking for sensory details and then installing them via BLS. It is important to emphasize the somatic component of the imagery. You want clients to feel free of anxiety and fear. The conflict-free image helps to create a sense of wholeness and increased feeling in clients that their life is not *all* terrible. It helps with self-soothing and affect regulation. The following are examples of images clients have used: the memory of baking bread, hiking in the mountains, sitting at a sushi bar, riding a horse, having a meal with a friend, playing with a kitten or puppy, watching baby ducks on a lake, walking among spring flowers, playing a musical instrument, cuddling with their children or grandchildren, or playing a musical instrument. Installing positive memories and images can be helpful for clients who are chronically depressed or have histories of serious abuse or neglect. As I mentioned earlier, many of these clients do not attend to positive or neutral stimuli. They have developed a kind of tunnel vision. Installing conflict-free images can help these clients begin to broaden their perceptual field, adding in new neuro networks.

NURTURING FIGURES

I have found it to be very helpful for clients to identify nurturing figures to use as resources before beginning EMDR processing. These inner allies can include real or imaginary figures from the present or

STEPS TO DEVELOP AND USE POSITIVE, CONFLICT-FREE IMAGES*

1. Help the client identify the conflict-free image by asking questions or making statements such as the following: "Where in your life do you feel wholly yourself? Is there an activity in which you feel entirely free to engage? Think of a time in your everyday life when your body felt most like just the way you want it to feel. You do not have any fear or anxiety. This should be a time when all of your energy is engaged in a positive manner and you experience only positive (or neutral) feelings about yourself and in your body."
2. Help the client select an image that represents a conflict-free area of functioning and evokes *completely* positive feelings. Install this image, using BLS, with the associated body sensations.
3. The client must be able to hold this image in a consistently positive manner and actually strengthen the image throughout the sets. If this does not happen, return to the second step.
4. Listen for and identify positive cognitions that emerge.
5. Have the client practice using this technique between sessions to manage distressing affect related to his or her symptoms. For example, the client may want to bring up the image before going to sleep, making a public presentation, and so forth.

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past, inner guides, and animals that have a nurturing quality. With all the resource figures that we tap in, the idea is to evoke imagery that activates the desired qualities in the client's own nervous system. When we imagine something, the nervous systems "lights up" in a particular pattern. When my client can imagine a loving mother, she *feels* those qualities in herself, whether she is conscious of that process or not. It's as if that loving mother is within her (which she is, because it is her imagination that has created her). We aren't taking an outside mother figure and putting her into our client; rather we are activating those qualities of a loving mother in our client's own nervous system by the use of imagination and BLS. When we add BLS to these imagined figures, we are integrating this healing imagery more fully into their neuro networks.

During the history taking, you can look for those people from the client's past who were loving, safe, nurturing figures for them. There may be a parent or stepparent, sibling, grandparent, nanny, aunt or uncle, teacher, coach, doctor, counselor, friend's parent, or clergy person who was an important source of caring for the client. Sometimes it's a one-

time experience of being seen and understood by someone (as occurred for Monica, in the case example with the social worker in Chapter 3), or it can be a vicarious experience of someone else receiving nurturing from this person. Occasionally the client will want to install you, the therapist, as nurturer. I find this to be an honor and an indication that the client has received and internalized my caring. In these cases, in order to decrease the dependency on me, I try to get other resources as well. Often when I'm doing adjunctive work, clients choose their primary therapist as a nurturing or protector figure, or both. I encourage this as it decreases the likelihood of splitting and helps the client to incorporate the other therapist into his or her work in a healthy way.

If clients choose their mother or father, I may discourage them from that choice if I suspect that the parent will be involved negatively in some way in the trauma network, such as when I know that the parents were neglectful or abusive. Sometimes clients feel loyal to their parents, or they dissociate the abuse to the extent that they will try to use them as resources. We need to protect clients from using someone or something that is not healthy. If I allow the parents to function as resources because I believe that they may be appropriate, I try to have additional resources as back-ups because of the possibility that the parents will be associated with the trauma or with a disappointment of some kind. For example, a client may want to use her mother as a nurturer, but her mother did not protect her from her father's abuse. In this case her mother failed her as a nurturer—information that is probably not integrated into the client's neural nets.

There may be people from clients' current lives who are important resources for them, such as a current spouse, partner, friend, or lover. They can even use figures from movies, TV, or books, historical figures, or people from popular culture. Clients have chosen Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck), the father in the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as a nurturing figure, and Aibileen (Viola Davis), the nanny in the movie *The Help*. Spiritual figures can also be used as nurturers, such as Quan Yin, Tara, Mary, Jesus, Moses, a Native American elder, or an angel. The same figure can be used as a nurturing figure, a protector figure, and a wise figure.

For clients with significant attachment trauma from neglect or abuse, and those who never experienced attachment to a healthy caregiver, I work with them to create and tap in an ideal mother. This is the mother they wish they'd had, a mother who can love and care for them in a consistent, healthy way. I explain more about this important resource figure in the next chapter.

The adult self can be used as a nurturer too. Schmidt (2002) recommends installing a nurturing adult self for clients who have unmet developmental needs. She has created a protocol for enhancing this ego state in which the client connects with his or her innate qualities of empathy, compassion, confidence, courage, strength, and so on. She asks clients if they have, or can form, a mental picture of that part of themselves. My clients often use their nurturing adult selves as one of their figures. I can evoke this part in my clients by asking them to recall a time when they nurtured someone or something. It can be caring for their own children, a relative, a friend, or even a pet. I'll say: "This is your nurturing adult self." Once clients have a strong sense of this inner component, we add the BLS.

For clients who have always taken care of themselves, and have never had anyone take care of them, I try to find another nurturing figure in addition to their adult self. It can be anyone or anything that has nurturing qualities.

Animals can be valuable resources for some clients. These can be pets from the client's present or past (e.g., a loving dog) or animals for which the client has a special affinity. Many clients have used their past or present dogs or cats as nurturers. Sometimes an affectionate dog was the only source of comfort and nurturance the client had as a child. Sometimes people have a special connection with an animal (e.g., wolf, bear, lion, panther, coyote, eagle) that may carry the numen of a power animal (Harner, 1980). Some have used mythological creatures such as dragons as resources.

I try to find more than one figure for clients with histories of abuse or neglect, as each figure has a different feeling and fills a different need. If my client is working on memories from childhood, I will ask him to find a nurturing figure or figures that can comfort and care for his child self.

Together we compile a list of nurturing figures and then tap them in one at a time. I begin with the first one, asking the client to close her eyes and bring up the image as strongly as she can. "See your grandmother in her nurturing aspect. When you can feel that, let me know." At that point I begin the BLS. I might ask the client to tell me when it feels complete, when she feels the sense of nurturing more deeply. I then move on to the next one on the list and ask the client to imagine her dog, for example, in his nurturing aspect. When she has a good sense of the dog's unconditional devotion, I add the BLS.

I have found it challenging for many clients who have been neglected to come up with nurturing figures. I need to work with them to come

up with someone or something that has a nurturing quality. I help these clients by offering suggestions. In one case the woman came up with the actress Meryl Streep as her nurturing figure. She could imagine her as a loving mother who could provide her infant self with the love and attention she needed to develop in a healthy way. Another woman struggled to find anyone at all. We searched through her history, current relationships, and even figures from movies. Finally we came up with a figure from *The Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd, a book that has a powerful, nurturing woman named August as one of its primary characters. This woman had the capacity to nurture her child self. When we found this figure, it was as if a light had come on inside of her. The image of August became essential to our EMDR work. Not only did the sense of her presence create a stronger container, but she was used in interweaves to nurture the child self.

A woman I worked with in a live demonstration at a master therapist workshop I taught demonstrating AF-EMDR (Cassidy Seminars, San Francisco, 2010) told me, when we attempted to find nurturing figures, that there were none—she had never been loved or nurtured in her life. Undaunted by what she told me (I am always sure we will find something, somehow), together we scanned through her life looking for any experiences she might draw from of being loved or nurtured, any examples of observing this, or even giving love or nurturing herself. Finally, she said, “The only thing I have is a memory of an experience of God as a loving presence.” I told her that was great, and to bring up the memory as strongly as she could, and when she had it I would tap on her knees. As I tapped on her knees she had a powerful experience of love and light suffusing her entire body. She seemed to glow. She felt full of this love. I could feel it too. I kept tapping for several minutes as the feeling kept getting stronger. After we finished and took a break, a woman from the audience who was inspired by what she had witnessed came up to her and asked her if she could give her a hug. She said yes and received this woman’s warm embrace. After the embrace they gazed at one another and chatted for a short time. I could see something special transmit between them. When the client and I resumed our work for the next part of the workshop, I reviewed the resources. Along with God as a loving presence, she now wanted to tap in the woman who had embraced her. This woman became a nurturing figure, a physical manifestation of the loving God for her that was easily accessible and very real for her.

For clients who have difficulty finding nurturing figures, I think it is key to let them know that they don't have to imagine the figure nurturing *them*. *What is important is that they can imagine someone or something that has a nurturing quality.* It is just too much of a stretch for our most neglected and abused clients to imagine that they can be nurtured, when they never have. It can bring up strong feelings of failure and amplify the feelings of neglect. I believe that by imagining someone or something that *has* a nurturing quality, and thereby activating that quality within *them*, they will have more access to this resource and will eventually be able to use it as a nurturing figure that can provide this for them. Initially, however, I just want them to imagine a figure that has that quality.

However, if they *can* imagine the nurturing figure nurturing them, that is excellent—use it, install it. I think we need to begin where we can with our clients and help them to feel that they are successful wherever they begin. You might suggest that the client imagine himself being held by his nurturing figure. As he holds that image and feels himself being held, add BLS.

I have seen clients come up with nurturers I would not have thought of. For instance, several clients have chosen their adult children as nurturing figures. They told me that they could imagine calling on their sons or daughters to nurture their child selves. In another case the client chose her parents when they were older adults as nurturers. When she was a child and they were young adults, they did not do such a good job of nurturing her. But over time they matured and developed into wise, kind people she could imagine caring for her child self. In another case, the client's mother was dysfunctional when the client was growing up, but got therapy and became a close confidante and support in her life. She was able to install her mother in her present aspect as a nurturing figure.

Sometimes tapping in the nurturing figure or figures can bring up feelings of grief and loss for what they didn't receive as children. I believe it is important to validate these feelings and to provide comfort to our clients with our compassion. I also tell them that even though they didn't get this as children, they can change the way it feels inside by using their imagination to create what they need and want *in the present*.

With some clients who could think of no one to be a nurturer, I asked them if they could remember times when they were able to love and nurture another person or even a pet. In this approach I am attempting to access the nurturing quality within the client and then install that so that they could bring that in for themselves if necessary. For example:

THERAPIST: Can you remember a time when you held or comforted your daughter?

CLIENT: Yes.

THERAPIST: Bring up a memory of doing that. What do you see?

CLIENT: I see my daughter around 3 years old, cuddled on my lap, and I'm rocking her in the rocking chair and singing her a song.

THERAPIST: Can you feel the feelings of love and nurturing towards her?

CLIENT: Yes.

THERAPIST: Focus on that while I tap on your knees.

In this case the adult self could be used as a nurturing figure.

TAPPING IN NURTURING FIGURES*

1. Ask your client to "spend a few moments going inside and quieting your mind."
2. "Think of a figure or figures from your present or past that you associate with nurturance. This can be a person or animal, real or imagined, a spiritual figure, or even someone from a book or movie. When you imagine the figure, *feel* the nurturing quality in your body."
3. "After finding your nurturing figure, enhance the image as strongly as you can. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you smell? What do you feel in your body?"
4. "When you have a strong sense of the nurturing quality of the figure, let me know. Now I'll begin the BLS." (*Use the BLS for 6-12 right-lefts sets. Then stop and check in with your client.*) "How was that for you? How do you feel?"
5. If the nurturing quality is continuing to strengthen, you can do more BLS if you sense that it would help your client. Continue the BLS as long as your client feels the figure and the nurturing quality strengthening and integrating.
6. If there is more than one resource, suggest that the client bring the next nurturing figure to mind and then tap it in also.
7. Repeat this process, tapping in one resource at a time.
8. When the client is through, he or she might want to imagine being held by the nurturing figure or figures. As he or she imagines that, add some more BLS to strengthen and deepen the feeling of being nurtured.

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You can spend considerable time working on developing the nurturing figures and cultivating these inner resources. You can do this in four different ways, as we've seen in the above discussion and examples. All four provide healing. You can begin where it is easiest for the client. It is important to begin wherever the client can begin with the most comfort. Here is a summary of the four perspectives:

1. Clients imagine a figure that has a nurturing quality.
2. Clients imagine themselves as the nurturing figure providing nurturance to someone or something.
3. Clients imagine the nurturing figure nurturing them.
4. Clients imagine viewing a scene in which one figure gives nurturance and the other receives it.

Child Self and Adult Self Relationship Assessment and Development

As I wrote about in *EMDR in the Treatment of Adults Abused as Children* (Parnell, 1999) and in *A Therapist's Guide to EMDR* (Parnell, 2007), very often during EMDR processing with an adult traumatized as a child, the client suddenly accesses the child self in its separate memory compartment and begins to process the past from the child's perspective. Commonly, clients become caught in looping or stuck processing and need help from the therapist in the way of interweaves. I have found it useful, in the preparation phase of treatment, to have the client access the child self before EMDR processing begins in order to evaluate the state of the relationship between the child self and the adult self. Sometimes one will find that the child does not like or trust the adult or that the adult does not like or trust the child. This is important information because during the processing of a traumatic event with EMDR, the therapist may find that the adult has turned on the child self or that the child cannot depend on the adult self to act as a protector resource. It is better to know of this possibility ahead of time. Having a good, strong, loving relationship between the client's adult and child selves is useful for interweaves and aids tremendously in the healing process.

The following is a description of how the adult self-child self relationship can be accessed and evaluated:

Begin by guiding your clients in finding their safe/peaceful place. After the safe/peaceful place has been established, you can ask them to

invite their child self into a protective circle that they imagine surrounds them. You can then begin a dialogue between the adult and child selves to evaluate the nature of their relationship.

Generally, clients keep their eyes closed and the therapist asks questions directed either to the adult self or to the child self. For example, the therapist might ask the child how old he is and how he is feeling. What does he need? How does he feel about the adult self? What is happening in his life? The client might respond, "I am 3 years old. I feel scared 'cause I know my daddy's in the house somewhere and my mommy's not home." The answer to any of the questions can lead to more questions as the therapist gathers information. At some point the attention can shift to the adult self to get his opinions and impressions of the child self. "How do you feel about him?" and "Do you think you can meet his needs?" are possible questions. You are attempting to find out what the child is like, his current emotional state, and the quality of the relationship between the adult and the child. If there are problems between the two (e.g., the child may feel betrayed by the adult), the therapist must seek a way to remedy the problem. It is like doing inner family therapy. A whole session or sessions may be taken up with trying to heal hurts from the past and developing a caring bond between the adult and child selves.

When a caring relationship has been established, you can ask the client to imagine holding his child self on his lap, playing with him, or engaging the child in some positive nurturing way. This feeling can also be installed with BLS. Once the relationship has been established, the adult can serve as a resource for the child self during times of blocked processing and to help create an increased sense of safety for closing sessions.

PROTECTOR FIGURES

Protector figures are allies that can be summoned in your clients' imagination to give them strength and to help them feel protected. I believe that protector figures are a very important resource for clients who have been abused, as they feel so helpless and unprotected. These figures can be used to reduce anxiety and to empower clients. Protector figures can include people (from their childhood or from their present life), animals, or imaginary figures from books, movies, TV, or dreams. Clients might even choose their protective adult self. It is most important that when they think of their protectors, they can *feel* their protective quality. Who would they like to summon that is strong, powerful, and protective? If

they can't think of a real person, is there someone from a movie or book? Action figures can make good protectors. The client's spouse or partner can also be a protector figure. For instance, a client who had no one in her childhood who protected or defended her, but was currently in a loving marriage, chose her husband, a man who would defend her ferociously if needed. After tapping him in as a resource, she was able to bring him in whenever her child self felt threatened by the perpetrator during EMDR processing. Memories of positive interactions with these protector figures can be installed with BLS.

For clients with abuse histories who were powerless as children, I insist that they tap in strong, powerful protectors. In this way I am helping to advocate and protect my clients and helping them to access the neural circuitry that is associated with power in their own bodies. For example, if the client imagines an elephant as a protector, she can feel the power of its body, the strength in its legs, its size, and its capacity to move large obstacles. In a sense, the client embodies the elephant, which becomes a powerful and effective protector for her. This resource then can become available to her in daily life, during the processing of the trauma memory, and for interweaves.

As with the nurturing figures, your client does not have to imagine the figure protecting him or her, specifically. It can be enough to imagine the figure in his or her protective aspect, displaying the quality of protection.

Many clients choose large animals as protectors, such as bears, tigers, lions, panthers, wolves, and elephants. Spiritual figures from many traditions can also be invoked, including protective angels and deities. Memories of positive interactions with protector figures can be tapped in. You might find that the figure the client uses for nurturing also serves as a protector. One woman's dragon served as her protector, nurturer, and wise figure. Examples of protector figures people have used include parents, grandparents, friends, partners, spouses, dogs; figures from movies and TV such as James Bond, Spiderman, Superman, Superwoman, Xena the warrior princess, and Rambo; mythic figures such as Hercules; and even the genie Mr. Clean from a TV commercial.

The *adult self* can also be a protector figure. This is the part that we can contact to protect ourselves or those for whom we care. You can help clients find their adult protective self by getting in touch with a number of skills and traits that they already possess, and then use BLS to strengthen and integrate these qualities.

Schmidt (2002) recommends installing a protective adult self for clients who have unmet developmental needs, particularly those who have

been neglected and have had disruptions in early attachment. As with the nurturing adult self, Schmidt asks the client to get in touch with a number of skills and traits that she tells the client he or she already possesses and then names them as the client feels them inside. They include attributes such as the ability to be protective, courageous, strong, logical, confident, grounded, and so on. After the client feels all of these qualities within herself, she is asked to bring all of them together into a single sense of self that is then installed with BLS. If the client has an image that represents the protective adult self, that image is installed. It is important that the client accesses a body sense of the resource. As I said with regard to using the adult self as a nurturing figure, for some clients it is important to install other figures as backups.

HELPING CLIENTS FIND AND TAP IN THEIR PROTECTIVE ADULT SELF*

1. "Close your eyes and go inside. Take some deep breaths and slowly let them out. Relax and release with your exhalation. Bring yourself to the present moment. When you feel yourself present, see if you can find a time when you were protective. Can you think of a time when you defended someone you cared about? Be aware of whatever memory or image comes to mind."
2. "When you find the memory, notice what you see. What are you hearing? What do you notice in your body? When you have the image and can *feel* the quality of protectiveness let me know." (*Do short set of BLS.*)
3. "How are you feeling? Can you feel the sense of protectiveness? If you wish, we can add BLS again as long as it remains positive and the feeling of protectiveness strengthens."
4. "Now think of a time when you were courageous. What picture comes to mind?"
5. "As you bring up the picture, notice what you feel. Notice what you hear, smell, sense. What do you feel in your body?"
6. "When you have the image and the feeling of courage strongly activated, let me know." (*Begin BLS, 6–12 times or more if client wishes and tolerates it well. Stop BLS and check in with the client.*) "How do you feel? If you want to go longer to continue to strengthen the quality of courage, tap some more."
7. "What other qualities are associated with protectiveness? Strength, confidence, groundedness, and others. Continue to think of times when you felt these qualities." (*Add BLS to strengthen and deepen them.*)

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8. "After you have felt all of these qualities within yourself, bring all of them together into a single sense of self." (*Add BLS to strengthen and integrate them.*) "An image might arise that represents the protective adult self. Let any image arise that feels like it captures all of the qualities of protectiveness that you have tapped. It is important that you have a bodily sense of the resource."

*From Parnell (2008).

TAPPING IN PROTECTOR FIGURES

1. "Can you think of someone or something that has a protective quality? It can be real or imaginary. It can be someone you know from the present or past, an animal, or even a figure from a movie, book, or TV. It can be a spiritual figure that is protective. It can be your adult protective self. It can be helpful to have more than one." (*Write down the list of protectors your client comes up with, then go through and install them one by one.*)
2. "Close your eyes and go inside. Bring up an image of ____ [the first protector figure on the list.] Feel the protective quality. When you have a good sense of it, let me know. Good, now I'll begin the BLS." [It is most important that the client have a body sense of the figure's protective quality.]
3. Keep the BLS going 6–12 times, right–left. Now stop and check in with your client to ask how he or she feels. If the sense of the image is getting stronger, or the client wants to go longer, continue with the BLS as long as it remains positive. Stop the BLS when the client feels that the protector resource is strongly anchored within.
4. Now bring up the next protector. Be sure that the client is experiencing its protective quality. When the client indicates a strong sense of the protector, begin the BLS.
5. Repeat this process of imagining and tapping in of protectors as long as the experience is positive for the client.
6. It can help to strengthen the feeling of the protectors by drawing them.

As with the nurturing figures, you can help clients access and integrate protection from four different perspectives:

1. *Imagining a figure that has a protective quality.* Clients imagine a figure, real or imaginary, which has a protective aspect. It can be a figure from a movie or a book, a person from their family, or even themselves. They bring the figure to mind, feel the protective quality of the figure, and then add BLS. The idea here is to activate the neuro network of protection; they feel this quality in themselves even if the protector is a character from a movie or a book.

2. *Imagining themselves as the protector figure providing protection to someone or something.* The client is the protector figure, bringing up a memory or a fantasy of providing protection. For example, the therapist might say: "If someone should threaten your son, what would you do?" Client: "I'd stand up to the bully and make sure he didn't harm my son." In this case you want to activate the imagery, body sensations, and emotions associated with the act of protection. "What do you notice in your body as you imagine doing this? How does that feel?" Add BLS if the feelings are positive. "Notice how your son looks when he is being protected." If it is positive, use BLS to integrate that too.

3. *Imagining the protector figure protecting them.* This is from the point of view of the child or adult receiving protection. Many of our clients have never had an experience of being protected by someone, or seeing someone stand up for them. As with imagining receiving nurturing, this can be much harder to do for many of our clients with attachment trauma. They first imagine and tap in the protector figure, and then imagine the figure protecting *them*. "Imagine your friend John in his protecting aspect. Good, can you feel it? (*If affirmative, add BLS.*) Now can you imagine him protecting you if you are under some kind of threat? What do you feel in your body when you imagine this?" Be sure to add in the senses to more fully activate the right hemisphere, asking, "What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel emotionally?" Then ask, "How was that for you? How did it feel to be protected?" If it was positive, add BLS to enhance that experience.

If they had imagined protecting someone or something earlier, clients can then imagine themselves in the position of the one receiving the protection. As in the above example: "Now imagine you are your son being protected. Put yourself in his position. What are you seeing? What are you feeling? What do you notice in your body?" If it is positive, add BLS. Then you could ask, "How was that for you to imagine being protected?"

If they give a positive response, you can ask them to “take that in,” and add BLS to more fully integrate it.

4. *Imagining viewing the scene of protecting and receiving protection.* In this version clients imagine seeing the scene of a protector figure protecting a child. This is an objective view. “How does that feel to imagine that, to see that scene? How do you think the protector figure feels? How do think the child feels receiving the protection?” You can add BLS as they imagine this from any of the positions.

You can increase the feeling of protection by imagining a circle of protection comprising all your client’s protector figures (see box). This can be used during times when your clients feel vulnerable and afraid and wish to feel their protectors more fully.

TAPPING IN THE CIRCLE OF PROTECTION*

1. “Close your eyes and go inside. Take some deep breaths in and slowly let them go. Relax with the exhalation. Bring yourself to a quiet place inside.”
2. “When you are more relaxed, imagine yourself surrounded by your protector figures. Look around the circle. Look at each protector, one at a time. Feel all of their protection for you. If you would like to, you can enhance the details of the imagery and the sense of protection. It is important that you *feel* the sense of protection from your protector figures.”
3. “When you have a strong sense of them, signal me and I will begin the BLS (BLS 6–12 times, then stop and check in with your client; if it is getting stronger, continue BLS). You might suggest to your client that he or she “take in the feeling of being surrounded by protection. Take in all the strength of your protectors. Let in their courage. Receive their determination to protect you.”
4. “You can also draw your circle of protection. Take the time to draw yourself surrounded by your protectors. Drawing can serve to reinforce the feeling of protection. Viewing it can provide you with comfort when you need it.” The therapist can add BLS as the client looks at it.

*Reprinted with permission from Sounds True, Inc.

INNER WISDOM FIGURES

For most of my clients the peaceful place, nurturing, and protector figures are sufficient resources to begin the trauma processing work. But for

clients who are more fragile or more traumatized, I add in inner wisdom figures to supplement the resource team. These are wise figures such as teachers, parents, grandparents, or helpers of any kind that they have known personally; spiritual figures, ancestors, or historical figures from movies, TV, or books. For some clients the easiest way to initiate this version is to simply ask them to compile a list of wise figures they would like as resources. Once they have provided a list of wise figures, tap in one at a time. For example, a client might choose the Dalai Lama, his grandfather, and Einstein as wise figures. I would ask him to close his eyes, go inside, and bring up the image of the Dalai Lama, along with the sense of the wise quality. When he indicates he has a sense of it, I begin the BLS. I do a short set and then check in with him. If he tells me it is getting stronger, I will do more BLS until he tells me it feels complete to him. I then ask him to recall his grandfather, to imagine him there with him in this moment, to get the sense of his wisdom quality, and use the BLS again. I repeat this process with the figure of Einstein. I find that each figure has a different quality that is evoked with the installation. He can access these inner resources any time he needs help or advice.

Another way to develop wise figures as resources is to use guided imagery and invite an inner advisor or wise figure to arise in that place. I described this process in three of my previous books (Parnell, 1999, 2007, 2008). I have found that developing and installing the inner advisor or wise self is particularly powerful and helpful, as it arises directly from the client's unconscious mind. The inner advisor or wise figure is an aspect of the ego that represents wisdom and offers a balanced perspective (Parnell, 1999, 2007, 2008; Rossman, 1987). It can be a very valuable ally during EMDR processing and between sessions. The inner advisor can be called on in times of difficulty or if the processing becomes stuck. When they develop the inner advisor, clients can derive a greater sense of connection to their own inner resources. Many clients light up with surprise and awe at the wisdom that comes out of their own mouths. The development and installation of the inner advisor provides clients with another tool and assures the therapist that clients can access their own source of wisdom and creativity.

When beginning this process of finding the inner advisor, guide your client to the peaceful place first. Let him know that you will do short sets of BLS when he finds the advisor. After your client is settled in his peaceful place, tell him that he is going to meet his inner advisor or wise self, an aspect of himself that is wise and can offer him guidance when he asks for it. When the inner advisor appears, ask your client what the

advisor looks like and if he or she has any advice to give him at this time. You may choose to install the feeling of the inner advisor with BLS. Tell your client that the inner advisor is available whenever he needs him or her and can call on him or her when he feels a need to do so. Inner advisors appear spontaneously to clients during the guided imagery and take a variety of forms that have included fairies, wise women, grandfathers, trees, waterfalls, elves, wizards, Jesus, hawks, snakes, Native American elders, goddesses, older versions of the client, and so on. It is important that the client not judge what comes up and that he accept the advice that is given as long as it is compassionate. The most critical and important function of the inner advisor is to *empower* the client. The advisor can also be present as a source of support and comfort.

INNER ADVISOR SCRIPT*

“As you relax in your safe place, invite your inner advisor to join you in this special place. . . . Just allow an image to form that represents your inner advisor, a wise, kind, loving figure who knows you well. . . . Let it appear in any way that comes and accept it as it is. . . . It may come in many forms—as a man, woman, animal, friend, someone you know, or a character from a movie or book.

“Accept your advisor as it appears, as long as it seems wise, kind, loving, and compassionate. . . . You will be able to sense its caring for you and its wisdom. . . . Invite it to be comfortable there with you and ask it its name . . . accept what comes. . . .

“Keeping your eyes closed . . . describe your inner advisor and tell me its name. (At this point begin the BLS. Do short sets and check in to see how the client is doing. If it continues to be positive, do longer sets.) When you are ready tell it about your problem . . . ask any questions you have concerning this situation. . . . Now listen carefully to [name of advisor’s] response. . . . You may imagine [name of advisor] talking with you, or you may simply have a direct sense of its message in some other way. . . . Allow it to communicate in whatever way seems natural. . . . If you are uncertain about the meaning of the advice or if there are other questions you want to ask, continue the conversation until you feel you have learned all you can at this time . . .

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INNER ADVISOR SCRIPT *(continued)*

(After a long pause, ask the client what is happening. After he or she tells you, begin BLS again.) "As you consider what your advisor told you, imagine what your life would be like if you took the advice you have received. . . . If you have more questions, continue the conversation. (If the client continues the conversation with the advisor again, pause, then ask what is happening. Resume BLS.)"

"When it seems right, thank your advisor for meeting with you, and ask it to tell you the easiest, surest method for getting back in touch with it. . . . Realize that you can call another meeting whenever you feel the need for some advice or support. . . . Say good-bye for now in whatever way seems appropriate, and allow yourself to come back to the room."

At the end, spend time debriefing the experience. Take care that the client is fully back in the room before ending the session.

**Adapted with permission from the "Inner Advisor" script developed by Martin L. Rossman, MD, and David E. Bresler, PhD, for the Academy for Guided Imagery.*

Clients can use their inner advisor to help them in a number of ways. If they have a question, problem, or don't know what direction to turn, they can take a moment and go inside themselves. They can bring up their inner advisor and ask him or her for guidance. Then they can tap themselves and listen for the response. In this way their inner wisdom figure can be there to provide guidance and support for them in their life. These figures can be used as interweaves when the processing is stuck. "What advice would your inner advisor give you?" Listen for the advice, and then say "Go with that" or "Imagine that" and add the BLS. Clients can have more than one inner advisor, and they can change each time you do the exercise. They may require a different inner advisor for different problems in their life, or at different times in their life.

TEAM OF INNER HELPERS

I ask many of my clients if they would like to imagine the resources they have tapped in as a team of support. Some clients take to this immediately and love the idea. They imagine all of their resources surrounding them, providing them with the support they need. "Now that we have tapped in your basic resource figures, would you like to imagine them together surrounding you and providing you support? They are your inner support team." When they have imagined or have a good sense of this team, I add

the BLS. Sometimes clients want to imagine all their figures assembled in their peaceful place. I let them choose whatever feels best for them.

Some clients do not like this idea. They can't imagine how their grandmother could fit with their mother grizzly bear. That's fine. I just move on. For those for whom this image works, it can be a wonderful resource. When they can feel a circle of support, clients don't feel so alone. They can draw upon their team for help whenever they need to during their EMDR processing, and also during daily life. Later you can suggest to clients: "You can imagine taking your circle of inner helpers into your life. They can be called upon and tapped in to help you whenever you need them." As clients discover more resource figures, they can be added to their team. A guided imagery that you can use to enhance the team of inner helpers is provided in the box.

TAPPING IN CIRCLE OF INNER HELPERS

1. "Imagine yourself surrounded by your inner helpers. You are in the center of a circle of support. Spend a moment and look at each one of your inner resource figures. Feel their support for you. Take in this support; feel it as strongly as you can in your body." (*Add BLS.*)
2. "Now feel the combined support from your inner helpers. Feel their caring and the qualities they provide as you tap in this entire team of inner helpers. When you can feel the sense of support strongly in your body, let me know." (*Add BLS as long as it feels positive.*)
3. "You may imagine more inner resource figures joining your circle, or some may arise spontaneously, adding even more support for you." (*Add BLS.*)
4. "Imagine taking this feeling of support with you into your life. When you have an image, picture, or sense of doing this, let me know." (*Add BLS.*)
5. Remember that your circle of inner helpers is always there. All you have to do is think of them. You can tap on your own knees or do the butterfly hug."

EXAMPLE OF INSTALLING RESOURCES WITH A CLIENT WITH RELATIONAL TRAUMA

Following is a transcript from a session I did that was videotaped from my class at the New York Open Center ("Attachment-Focused EMDR

for Social Anxiety,” available through www.emdrinfo.com). The client was a woman in her early 50s who presented with issues of having difficulty in group situations. She was highly anxious and told me that she had often been scapegoated as a child. She’d had insecure attachment with her mother who was not loving or nurturing of her. An orthodox Jew, she was currently married to a man she loved. I will present this case in more detail in Chapter 15. In this session I am installing the four resources outlined above. Because this client was highly anxious, she needed a lot of reassurance from me as we went along.

- LAUREL: So, do you have a place that feels peaceful and relaxing to you?
- MIRIUM: Yeah, well, the western wall in Jerusalem.
- LAUREL: So, it’s being there?
- MIRIUM: Yeah, or just visualizing it.
- LAUREL: OK. Great. So just take a moment and imagine that wall . . . and when you have a sense of peacefulness, let me know.
- MIRIUM: Yes. >>>>> (*installing or tapping in peaceful place*)
- LAUREL: OK, how’s that?
- MIRIUM: Good.
- LAUREL: Great, OK. Now, do you have nurturing figures, real or imaginary?
- MIRIUM: My husband.
- LAUREL: OK, anyone else? [I want to have some backups in case he isn’t enough.]
- MIRIUM: Nurturing . . .
- LAUREL: Yes, it could be an animal, it could be a spiritual figure, someone from the past . . .
- MIRIUM: I guess our dog growing up . . . I really didn’t have much nurturing, except for since I got married.
- LAUREL: It doesn’t have to be from your childhood. It could be from any time. It should have that nurturing quality.
- MIRIUM: I guess that the last time I picked you actually.
- LAUREL: Oh, OK.
- MIRIUM: The way you look when you’re doing this work! It’s very nurturing.
- LAUREL: Oh, OK, so let’s go to your husband and feel his nurturing quality.

- MIRIUM: (*Closes her eyes and focuses on the image and feeling.*) OK . . .
>>>>> (*Opens eyes when done.*)
- LAUREL: OK, great, so you got it . . . so now imagine me and feel my nurturing qualities.
- MIRIUM: Hmmm . . .
- LAUREL: Great, you got a sense of it, OK.
- MIRIUM: >>>>> OK . . . (*Opens eyes when done.*)
- LAUREL: Can you think of protective figures, real or imaginary?
- MIRIUM: Ok, hmmm, again my husband. . . I really have trouble with this . . . hmmm . . . I mean, there are lots of protective figures in movies but . . . I picture King David (*laughs nervously*) from the Bible (*anxious and unsure of herself*).
- LAUREL: Great, he's a powerful figure!
- MIRIUM: Yes.
- LAUREL: OK, that's good, you feel a resonance with that image?
- MIRIUM: Yes.
- LAUREL: So imagine your husband and imagine his protective quality now.
- MIRIUM: OK. (*Closes eyes.*) >>>>>
- LAUREL: OK, got it?
- MIRIUM: Yes.
- LAUREL: OK, and then King David . . . OK?
- MIRIUM: Yeah. >>>>>
- LAUREL: OK, that's great! . . . Good, now, wise figures—are there any wise figures?
- MIRIUM: Wise figures . . . well, weird that this should come up, because one of my problem figures is my mother, but she's in this whole thing, but she is a wise figure also, but we're not going to use her . . . ha-ha!
- LAUREL: Nooooo . . . (*laughs*).
- MIRIUM: Hmmm . . . I don't know, I feel so stupid but, no, I'm going to say again, I'm going to say Moses (*laughs nervously*).
- LAUREL: Well, great, you're resonating with these figures and that's what's important.
- MIRIUM: Yes, well . . .
- LAUREL: OK, wonderful, so just feel his wisdom quality.
- MIRIUM: >>>>> OK, great.
- LAUREL: Wonderful. Do you want to imagine them as a team?

MIRIUM: Well, right now it would take too much work to get everybody and put them together (*chuckle*) . . . yeah . . .

LAUREL: OK, not a problem.

The rest of the session, which includes the EMDR processing, is presented in Chapter 15.