

Appendix 5: Test Anxiety Visualization

Helpful hints for the script reader who is reading the script out loud to the teen:

- When reading the script, speak slowly and use a calm and soothing voice.
- Make sure to pause after each instruction to allow enough time for the action to be carried out.
- Make sure he or she is not tensing too hard. He or she should feel tightness in the muscles but not pain. He or she should be tensing each muscle for approximately 5-8 seconds before relaxing the muscle.

Script:

- 1 | Close your eyes gently and get comfortable. You should have no distractions for the next few minutes. Give yourself this time to focus and be relaxed. Notice some key areas in your body where tension tends to build. Scan your body now for any areas that are tense. For each one, imagine directing your breath to that area. Your shoulders, hands, back, neck, and jaws. Imagine breathing in relaxation ... and breathing out tension. Inhaling a feeling of relaxation and exhaling all the tension. Feel your muscles relaxing with each breath.
- 2 | Start to relax your body. Take a deep breath in ... hold it gently ... and let it out ... Breathe in again ... pause ... and exhale fully ... Breathe in ... pause ... and out ... In ... out ... In ... out...
- 3 | Keep breathing naturally. With each breath, you become more and more relaxed. If any anxious thoughts linger, leave them where they are for the moment. You can tend to them later.

| *(Pause.)*
- 4 | Now you are feeling calm and relaxed. Your whole body feels relaxed and heavy.
- 5 | Now begin to imagine sitting down to write a test or exam. You feel very motivated to study for this exam and do well. Fully imagine this feeling, and allow yourself to experience it completely. Feel the motivation.

| *(Pause.)*
- 6 | You are so eager to write this test and do well.

- 7 | Now imagine yourself on the day of the test. You are feeling a little excited to take the test and share what you know with your teacher; at the same time, you are feeling confident. You imagine walking calmly into your classroom and sitting down. As you walk into the classroom you say to yourself, “When I get to my chair I will just focus on the test even if I am feeling some anxiety.”
- 8 | You see yourself sitting in your chair. You notice what’s going on around you. You hear the other students shuffle in their seats. You smile at them. You feel the hard desk. You feel the pen in your hand. You see the teacher handing out the test. You feel a hint of the old anxiety rising. You say to yourself “It’s just my anxiety; I can deal with it; it’s not going to stop me from writing this test.”
- 9 | Now, the test is in front of you on the desk. Imagine scanning over the entire test calmly and confidently. You discover that you already know something about each answer and you feel prepared. You feel relaxed, happy. You start to organize your time. You say to yourself, “I will continue to think calmly and not let my anxiety take over. I’ve taken plenty of tests before and there is no reason I can’t do this today. This is my chance to show what I know.”
- 10 | Take in a deep, slow breath and let it all out. Good. You feel your body relax and allow your mind to become calm. In this state of calm, you are able to concentrate on the test and see things clearly. Now you begin writing the answers one by one. You are able to remember what you studied. The answers and ideas are pouring onto the pages with ease. Some of the questions are easy and straightforward, and you answer them quickly. Some questions take more thinking. You were expecting this, and you are prepared. You try your best and find ways to show what you do know.
- 11 | You are now finished and you hand in your test. You feel good and proud. You say to yourself, “I got through it without blanking. I didn’t let my anxiety take over.”
Enjoy the feelings of success.

| *(Pause.)*
- 12 | Now that you have finished this test preparation visualization, you are feeling more prepared for the process of taking an exam. You are confident that you will be able to manage your anxiety and focus on the test. You are calm, confident, and in control.
- 13 | Slowly begin to return to the room ... return your awareness to the present. Wiggle your fingers. Wiggle your toes. Feel your hands and arms waking up. Turn your head from side to side ... feel your body waking up.
- 14 | When you are feeling awake and alert, you can return to your usual activities, feeling energized, motivated, and confident.