

Full Guidance

Say the following as written or in your own words, except words in *[CAPITALS, BRACKETS, AND ITALICS]*, which are notes to you or words for you to fill in.

[INTRODUCTION, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

Welcome. *[IF AVAILABLE, ASK, OR HAVE AN INTERPRETER ASK, IN A SECOND LANGUAGE, “WELCOME. DOES ANYONE NEED INTERPRETATION IN THIS LANGUAGE?” IF SO, MAKE TIME FOR IT AND, IF NEEDED, SHORTEN THE NOTICE—IT ALL STEP.]*

Thank you for being here today. I’m *[NAME, TITLE]*. Today we’re in for a treat. We’ll get a rare break from noise and busyness and have a chance to de-stress, relax, and connect with nature in a new way.

We’ll do this through a peaceful process. It’s a blend of techniques that research indicates can help relax our bodies, calm our minds, and improve our mood.

[AGREEMENTS, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

To get those benefits, and let everyone else get them, it helps if we can follow two agreements.

Agreement 1 is to detach from devices. We’ll turn off our phones, smart watch, cameras, etc., or put our phones in airplane mode. And we’ll put them away in our pockets or bags. We won’t use devices unless something is urgent. In that case, we’ll step away. If we want to take pictures, we’ll wait until after the program.

Agreement 2 is to maintain quiet. Other than me guiding you through the process, we won’t talk or distract others unless something is urgent. If we have to leave early, we’ll leave very quietly.

Other than those two things, everything else is optional. This is your experience. If you don’t feel like doing a step, that’s completely fine. Please just honor the agreements, as a courtesy to everyone else.

Do you have any questions? *[ANSWER AS BEST YOU CAN.]*

Okay, do we all agree to the two agreements of detaching from devices and maintaining quiet? *[LOOK FOR EVERYONE TO NOD.]* Okay, let’s silence our devices and put them away. *[PAUSE.]* And let’s start maintaining quiet, except for my guidance.

[GET COMFORTABLE, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

If you like where you are, feel free to get comfortable. Or you can move somewhere else. You might sit on the ground or lie down, but please stay close enough to hear me. *[PAUSE]* Can everyone hear me? *[LOOK FOR EVERYONE TO NOD.]*

Okay, if you like, you can rest your hands on the ground or take your shoes and socks off and rest your bare feet on it. *[PAUSE]* Feel free to settle in and relax.

[MAIN 4-STEP PROCESS] *[SPEAK SLOWLY. PAUSE BETWEEN SENTENCES FOR TRANSLATION (OPTIONAL) AND ~10 SECONDS (FOR QUIET HALF-HOUR) OR ~20 SECONDS (FOR QUIET HOUR). OR PLAY THE MAIN 4-STEP PROCESS AUDIO (OPTIONAL). IF THE AUDIO PLAYBACK DEVICE HAS A SCREEN, PLACE IT SO PARTICIPANTS DON'T SEE THE SCREEN.]*

[1. CENTER, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

Welcome to here and now. Feel free to let everything else in your life pause. For now, you can let it all go. Maybe imagine your stress evaporating into the air. Here and now, you can rest.

[2. BREATHE, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

Now, you might become aware of your breathing. You might gently extend your exhale, like inhale 1, 2, 3, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. You can keep breathing this way on your own.

[3. NOTICE]

[NOTICE—FEELING, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

You might notice what your body is feeling. Maybe feel your seat or the ground supporting you. Maybe feel the air. Or, if there are some natural things beside you, within arm's reach, feel free to feel them.

[NOTICE—SEEING, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

Feel free to notice what you're seeing. What colors and objects are here? What do you see nearby? What do you see further away?

[NOTICE—HEARING, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

You might notice what you're hearing. What are the main sounds? What are the quieter sounds? In between the sounds, can you hear quiet?

[NOTICE—SMELLING, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

You might notice what you're smelling. Maybe keep smelling the air. Or, if there are some natural things beside you, within arm's reach, feel free to smell them.

[NOTICE—IT ALL, Q½H 5, QH 10 MIN.]

You might relax your focus. Maybe notice it all together, the whole natural system here. Let your awareness open and expand. We'll be in this step longer than the others, so you can relax and just be.

[4. APPRECIATE, Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

Now, you might feel grateful for something here, maybe the fresh air or the quiet. You might appreciate it all, everything here that added to your experience. Lastly, maybe appreciate yourself for taking time to do this process. Well done. *[TURN OFF AUDIO, IF USED.]*

[CONCLUSION (RETURN TO YOUR NORMAL SPEAKING RATE.), Q½H 2, QH 4 MIN.]

I appreciate you being here today and giving this a try. Did you like it? *[LOOK FOR NODS.]* Was it relaxing? *[LOOK FOR NODS.]*

You can take this process back into your daily life and repeat it at other times, in other places. You can do it all, or just parts of it, in any natural spot to relax and enjoy nature more.

[OPTIONAL] I'd really like to know what you thought of today's program. So, I'd appreciate it if you'd please fill out this short survey. *[SHOW.]*

[OPTIONAL] If you'd like help doing this process on your own, feel free to take one of these small summary cards. *[SHOW.]*

Thanks again. I hope you have a peaceful rest of your day.

[HANDOUTS, (OPTIONAL) Q½H 3, QH 6 MIN.]

[OFFER PARTICIPANT SURVEYS AND PENS. IF ANYONE CAN'T FILL OUT THE SURVEY ON THEIR OWN, HELP THEM. OR, IF THERE'S A LANGUAGE INTERPRETER, ASK THEM TO HELP. THEN COLLECT COMPLETED SURVEYS.]

[OFFER PARTICIPANT GIFT FOR PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE.]

Handling Potential Challenges

The following is not part of the main narration unless needed. If the following challenges arise, handle them using your best judgment or these suggested responses.

[HUMAN-MADE BACKGROUND NOISE]

Often stress comes from resisting what is. To reduce that stress, we can relax our resistance to the sound and shift our focus to more pleasant natural sounds. Also, humans are part of nature, too, and we can let their sounds blend with the other sounds.

[UNPLEASANT WEATHER]

Often stress comes from resisting what is. To reduce that stress, we can relax our resistance to the weather, let it be what it is, and shift our focus to something positive about it. For example, wind can be uncomfortable but also refreshing.

[RESTLESSNESS]

Feel free to stretch a bit. *[PAUSE]* You're welcome to turn and face a different direction. *[PAUSE]* If you like, extend your exhale for a few breaths. *[PAUSE.]* Now, maybe imagine you're a toddler, experiencing a place like this for the first time, with wonder and delight. *[RESUME FROM WHERE YOU WERE BEFORE THE BREAK. IF NEEDED, SHORTEN THE STEP CALLED NOTICE—IT ALL.]*

[DISRUPTIVENESS]

[QUIETLY TAKE PARTICIPANT ASIDE. ASK IF THEY NEED ANYTHING. REMIND THEM OF THE AGREEMENTS. IF THEY CONTINUE BEING DISRUPTIVE, FOR THE SAKE OF THE GROUP'S EXPERIENCE, QUIETLY SAY IT SEEMS THIS PROGRAM MIGHT NOT BE A GOOD FIT FOR THEM. ASK IF THEY'D BE HAPPIER LEAVING AND DOING SOMETHING ELSE.]