

The Power of Imagery: Planning and Preparing Responses

In addition to using imagery to calm yourself or feel more confident and capable you can use imagery to plan and prepare the types of responses you want to make.

You may find it helpful to imagine yourself saying what you want to say, in the manner in which you want to say it, and getting the response you hope to get. Just in case things don't turn out as well as you hope, it may be helpful to imagine how you can handle problems that might occur. Mentally rehearsing responses to challenging situations can help you feel more confident and less threatened if things go poorly. In turn, this confidence can help you respond in effective and adaptive ways, rather than simply erupting in anger when things don't work out or running away in fear if you suffer from anxiety.

Imagery works, in part, because it helps you think through possible problem areas and design your response in advance. Furthermore, it can be helpful to see yourself as effective and relaxed in a high-risk, stressful situation.

If you can identify a situation that is going to be stressful and in which you are at high risk for experiencing anger or fear, you have the opportunity to plan, write out, and rehearse exactly what you want to say and how you want to say it. This script can help you develop a strategy targeted to what you want to achieve and enter the situation with a greater degree of confidence.