

A Collective Safe Place?

During Foundation Protective Behaviours training courses individuals are offered the opportunity to take part in a safe place visualisation activity where they are guided by the reader of a Safe Place script to visit a place that feels very special to them, (or to someone they care for), and experience what safe looks, sounds, smells, tastes and feels like. In this way no one is asked to think about anything that they would not link with the concept of feeling safe.

The words recorded overleaf however, were generated by participants during a one day Protective Behaviours training workshop and collected to collate with a view to illustrating the commonalities and differences in what a collective safe place might include.

When collating the words generated from the 'collective safe place' activity it is vital to be mindful that some things that would feel safe to one person may not to another. The discussion of this point is therefore one purpose of this activity as well as noting the many similarities in what people suggest as safe sights, smells, sounds, tastes, textures and feelings. (Repeated words in lists highlight that more than one person had the same idea).

Another outcome is to consider what safe sounds, sights, smells, tastes and textures are available in the setting, in this case a nursery and children's centre, to help children and adults visit their safe place when needed - a sort of safe place audit/inventory.

My thanks go to all the people who contributed to this activity by either offering words or by noting that this might be an area of their personal PB practice that they may need to develop.

When working with parents this is often an activity that requires more than words.

Time can be made to identify real objects which represent the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures that are associated with feeling safe - these can then be found and either metaphorically or physically contained in a 'safe box' My experience of this activity is that the adults really enjoy collecting things that they discover and associate with feeling safe and take great care to decorate their box and value what they have created.



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What are the sights?

Familiar objects/pictures, family, whatever's over his shoulder, going home to my mum's house, a circle of light from the bedside lamp, family, parent's house, my husband's arms, familiar people, the horizon, sunshine, mum's house, familiar faces, light, sea, familiar people/objects, seeing my dad, trees, sea & space, family, sunrise, a big cosy chair, in bed, my husband, somewhere I'm used to

What are the smells?

Freshly washed clothes, fresh baked bread, cooking, cake baking, fresh air, laundry conditioner, coffee, lavender, clean laundered sheets, garlic, cooking dinner at parent's house, familiar scents - maybe own, clean linen, washing powder, cut grass, husband, clean sheets, clean washing, scented candles, mum's home-made cooking, perfume, fresh air and cut grass

What are the sounds?

Children laughing, friends, my son laughing, conversation with family, rain or wind outside and low sounds of music on the radio, music, rain and wind on the windows, crashing waves, favourite music, music that you like, singing voice, whatever's environmental, breathing, music/radio, family, music, a favourite song, music, waves, people being happy/laughing, the sea, silence

What are the tastes?

Home baking, food, coffee, hot chocolate, mild & sweet, home cooking, hot chocolate, wine & chocolate, milk, chocolate, home cooked comfort food, mum's roast lamb, nice cup of tea, my mum's Sunday dinner, cold beer, hot drink to hand: tea, chocolate

What can you touch?

Muscles, bones, and solidity, holding hands and snuggles, my children's hair, soft, familiar clothes, blanket, cuddling my son, wooly jumper, blanket, my mum, skin, my mum, a soft, fluffy blanket, warm textured woolen blanket, skin, fluffy pjs, my fleecy blanket, soft blanket, something soft, skin, something soft, warm skin, my dog's fur, a baby's skin, something soft and comfortable, something soft, sand between my fingers

And one feeling word....

My partner's name, quiet, calm, content, contained, very very warm, secure, calm, comfy, loved, complete, loved, loving, comforting, secure, contentment, comfort, happiness, love, relaxed, happy & welcome, calm