

## ***SAMPLE Relaxation Based Therapy Protocol 1 – Somatron Relaxation Program***

To assist client to relax.

**Staff Requirement:** 1 therapist, nurse, or other health care professional .

**Entrance Criteria:** Screaming, weepy, uncomfortable, restless, chronic pain, or anxious. This is a good PRN (as needed) intervention to try for disturbing behaviors prior to PRN medications.

**Exit Criteria:** Client is able to relax independently and no longer displays target behaviors.

**Group Size:** One-to-one or small group of 2-4.

**Duration:** 30-45 minutes. The time of this is based on the individual client's needs. If client displays predictable behavior times, this intervention should be used one half-hour prior to when behaviors usually occur. If used PRN should be implemented as soon as behavior starts for best results.

### **Safety Considerations**

**Environmental Risks:** Transfer to the Somatron should be completed by trained staff members. Somatron unit is plugged into a stereo system. Keep the unit away from water or sharp objects to prevent damage. Safe proof cords.

**Client Risks:** Client needs to see demonstration by a staff member or family member to alleviate fear. No specific risks.

### **Facility & Equipment**

**Facility:** Quiet area with adequate space for Somatron unit and stereo.

**Equipment:** Somatron unit, stereo, Somatron music tapes for each client in the program.

### **Methods:**

This intervention is designed to assist clients to attain a relaxation state. The CTRS teaches each client about the three stages of relaxation. This is followed by 15-20 minutes using one of the following techniques: progressive relaxation, guided imagery, rhythmic breathing, or body scan. The therapist then assists the client to a comfortable position in the Somatron chair and has the individual select his or her favorite music. Dim the lights to allow for enhanced symptom reduction. This part of the session can go on for an additional 20 minutes.

There are three stages to this twenty-minute exercise:

**Stage 1:** The therapist will instruct the client to tense and then relax each muscle group. Clients will be instructed to tense a particular muscle group for a few seconds, then release the muscles and allow them to loosen. (Ten minutes)

**Stage 2:** Allow all the muscle groups to loosen and relax. (Five minutes)

**Stage 3:** Support and reinforce the muscle relaxation through imagery. (Five minutes)

Begin by assisting the client to sit comfortably in a Somatron; take off shoes and loosen any tight clothing. The therapist will state the following to the client:

**Close your eyes and take three deep breaths**, exhaling slowly. On each exhale, say the word "relax" silently. Or you may select a word that produces more comfort for you, such as "loosen," "quiet," "peace," or "calm."

First, clients will **tense and relax each muscle group** once (Stage 1). During each relaxation phase, direct the client to **repeat the word "relax"** (or his or her selected word) with every exhale.

Next clients will follow in their mind a visual image of the sun **warming and loosening all the muscles** of your body (Stage 2). It is essential, however, that the client **maintains attention** on each muscle group as it is mentioned and imagines the possibility of warmth and loosening of the muscles.

During the last few minutes of the exercise the client will be asked to **"go to your safe place"** in his or her mind's eye (Stage 3). Instruct clients to take a moment now to picture a scene that symbolizes comfort, relaxation, safety, warmth, and the absence of outside pressures. The client might imagine a location where he or she was relaxed in the past: a vacation spot, fishing, sitting on a mountain top, floating on a raft, soaking peacefully in the bath, or lying on a chaise lounge in the back yard.

Regardless of the image chosen, spend a few minutes **developing all the senses** within that scene. The client should be instructed to "look around in your mind's eye to see the colors and patterns of the scene. Hear any sounds appropriate to the environment: perhaps birds singing, wind blowing, ocean waves crashing on the shore." The therapist might even develop an aroma, such as honeysuckle or flowers, perhaps the salt air or the fresh odor after a rain shower. Enjoy all senses in an easy, effortless manner. This is the kind of image the therapist you can use.

After this portion of the session the therapist completes about 10 minutes of debriefing with the individual or small group. Clients discuss changes they have noticed in the session. The vibroacoustic music system in the Somatron unit has induced positive change in behavior and physiology in numerous studies. The most frequently reported symptom improvement areas are: tension-anxiety, pain, and fatigue.

#### **Possible Client Objectives:**

- Demonstrate enhanced blood circulation to tense muscles.
- Demonstrate the ability to relax muscles in spasm.
- Verbalize symptoms and changes noted during the session.
- Reduction in disturbing behaviors.
- Improved quality of life as indicated by less anxiety and distress.
- Increase in spontaneous vocalizations, spontaneous conversing / communicative attempts and/or a reduction in screaming or verbally agitated behaviors.
- Increase in appropriate physical activity.
- Improvement in social interaction.