



## Handout 7

### Relaxation Techniques



#### Visualization

Close your eyes. Take a moment to think of a place where you feel really happy and relaxed. It could be a place you've been, maybe on a vacation, or a place you imagine. Close your eyes and picture this place in your mind. Notice how things look, what colors you see, whether you are inside or outside, whether it is sunny, overcast, snowing or raining. Then notice the smells around you. It could be the smell of the ocean, flowers, pine trees, bread baking, coffee brewing, whatever smells would be in this place.

Now pay attention to the sounds. You might hear birds, animals, water rippling, waves or music. Now, slowly open your eyes. Do you notice any difference in how you feel after doing this? For example, your breathing has slowed, your muscles (especially jaw, shoulder, neck area) feel relaxed, your heart rate has slowed, or you feel generally calm and relaxed.

#### Deep Breathing

Breathe in fully. You should see and/or feel your stomach moving outward. Then slowly breathe out all of the air. It may help to imagine that you are breathing in calmness and peace and that you are breathing out all of your worries, anger, or other negative and/or stressful feelings. Repeat at least 10 times.

#### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tense the muscles in your toes, hold for 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat with each muscle group in your body, working your way from your toes to your head: toes, feet, lower legs, upper legs, pelvic area, stomach, chest, back, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, jaw, face and head.

#### Other Ideas:

- Participate in any form of physical activity or exercise.
- Take a walk.
- Do some housework.
- Listen to music you find soothing.