

## Imagery Rescripting of Traumatic or Distressing Stories From Childhood

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**Introduction:** A proportion of patients with mental disorders report significant stressful experiences in their childhood. In many others, basic childhood needs, such as security, acceptance or appreciation, were not met. Without systematic processing of such traumatic experiences, their therapy fails and their problems become chronic.

**Results:** The basic principles in the treatment of patients who have developed mental disorders, contributed to by childhood and adulthood stressful events, include establishment of a therapeutic relationship, explanation of and education on what is happening with the patient and decreasing or removing stigmatization and feelings of guilt. The therapist helps the patient understand how the symptoms are related to burdening events of the childhood and current problems. As a rule, rescripting is initiated only after cognitive processing of basic attitudes (core beliefs) and derived rules. The therapeutic process may be divided into several steps (a) creating a therapeutic atmosphere (security and control, acceptance, appreciation); (b) imaginal exposure to painful experiences; (c) expressing negative emotions towards aggressors or persons who could not protect; (d) expressing the child's needs towards the person who should have protected him or her; (e) experiencing a better end – imagery rescripting of the story; and (f) general calming. The therapist's task is to help the patient to recall his or her memories of the stressful event and express an adequate affective experience, and then help him or her reprocess the experience so that its consequences were less painful.

**Conclusion:** The text provides several examples of imagery rescripting of traumatic events.