**Creating Your Comfortable or Safe Place**

We all deserve to have a place, whether actual or in our minds, where we can feel completely comfortable and safe. In creating this place of your own, you are making a retreat for relaxation and mindfulness, hearing and taking time to listen to your inner voice.

Your comfortable place might be at the end of a path that leads to a pond. Grass is under your feet, the pond is about 30 yards away and mountains are in the distance. You can feel the coolness of the air in this shady spot. The birds are singing. The sun reflects and sparkles on the water. You can smell the flowers and rich earth around you.

Or your safe place might be a sparkling clean kitchen, with cinnamon buns baking in the oven. Through the kitchen window you can see a beach; waves crash on shore and you imagine you can hear them. A wind chime flutters in the breeze that brushes across your face.

Your place might be the top of a mountain with the whole world spread below you and no one else around. You listen to the birds as they chat with one another—hear their wings rustle the leaves and needles of trees as they sweep through the air. You smell the rich pine sap and decaying leaves, sharp in your nose.

**NOTE:** This exercise asks you to close your eyes and let your guard down enough that you allow yourself to relax; these things can make a person feel very vulnerable. To get the most benefit out of this exercise, make sure you are comfortable where you are sitting or lying down. Before you begin, take the time to ensure that you are in a place where you feel safe enough to relax and open your mind. This will look different for each person. For some, it might mean asking your family not to disturb you for the next ten minutes, or getting your favorite blanket or pillow, locking the door to the room you’re in, or something else entirely. **If at any point you start to feel anxious or overwhelmed, open your eyes and stop. Reference your self-care plan, talk to a friend or someone you trust, or call the statewide sexual assault crisis and support line at any time at: 1-800-871-7741.**

***Try taping this exercise and playing it, or have a friend read it to you slowly.***

Close your eyes, or let your eyes blur. Walk slowly to a quiet place in your mind…Your place can be inside or outside….It needs to be peaceful and safe…

Picture yourself unloading your anxieties, your worries…Notice the view in the distance….What do you see?...What do you smell?...What do you hear?...Notice what is before you…Reach out and touch it…How does it feel?...Smell it…Hear it…Make the temperature comfortable…Be safe here…

Look around for a special spot, a private spot…Find the path to this place…Feel the ground with your feet…Look above you…What do you see?...Hear?...Smell?...Walk down this path until you can enter your own quiet, comfortable, safe place.

You have arrived at your special place…What is under your feet?...How does it feel?...Take several steps…What do you see above you?...What do you hear?...Do you hear something else?...Reach out and touch something...What is its texture?...

 Sit or lie in your special place…Notice its smells, sounds, sights…This is your place and nothing can harm you here…If danger is here, expel it…Spend a few minutes realizing you are relaxed, safe and comfortable.

 Memorize this place’s smells, tastes, sights, sounds…You can come back and relax here whenever you want…Leave by the same path or entrance…Notice the ground, touch things near you…Look far away and appreciate the view…Remind yourself this special place you created can be entered whenever you wish. Say an affirmation such as, “I can relax here,” or “This is my safe and special place. I can come here whenever I wish.”

***Now open your eyes and spend a few seconds noticing your experience.***