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Nurturing, protective & advisory figures — use after safe/calm place

Purpose: This script installs a resourcing figure during Phase 2 (Preparation), after the safe/calm place is established. Select the figure type that best fits your client, then follow the steps. Italicised text is suggested therapist language.

FIGURE TYPES

Nurturing

Offers unconditional warmth, comfort, and care. Ideal for clients with early attachment wounds, self-criticism, or difficulty accessing self-compassion.

Protective

Offers safety, strength, and the capacity to defend. Ideal for clients with trauma histories involving threat, helplessness, or lack of safety.

Advisory

Offers wisdom, guidance, and perspective. Ideal for clients who feel lost, overwhelmed by decisions, or disconnected from their own inner knowing.

STEP-BY-STEP SCRIPT

1

INTRODUCE THE FIGURE

"Now that you have your safe place, I'd like to help you develop another resource — a figure. This is someone, or something, that embodies a quality you may need more of right now — like warmth, protection, or wisdom. It can be real or imaginary, a person, an animal, or even a symbolic presence."

Check for understanding. Clarify that the figure does not need to be someone they know personally.

2

IDENTIFY THE FIGURE

"Take a moment and let an image come to you — who or what feels like a truly [nurturing / protective / wise] presence? Don't overthink it. Just notice what arises."

Wait. Allow silence. If the client struggles, offer gentle prompts: "It could be an animal, a wise elder, a character from a story, or something you imagine."

3

DEVELOP THE IMAGE

"As you hold that image, notice what you see... what this figure looks like... how they carry themselves... and just sense their presence with you for a moment."

Encourage the client to linger. The richer the image, the stronger the resource.

4

SENSE THE QUALITIES

"What do you notice about this figure? What qualities do they bring — what do you feel in their presence? Just let yourself take that in."

Reflect back what the client names: "So they bring a sense of [their words] — notice that." This deepens the somatic anchor.

5

NOTICE THE BODY

"As you sense this figure with you, what do you notice in your body? Where do you feel their presence? Just stay with that for a moment."

Note the body location and sensation — this becomes part of the resource anchor for future use.

6

ADD BILATERAL STIMULATION

"I'd like to strengthen this resource for you. While you hold that image and those feelings, I'll add some [eye movements / taps / tones]. Just notice whatever comes."

Use short sets (6–12 passes). Check in after each: "What are you noticing now?" If the resource strengthens, continue. If it shifts, stop and explore what emerged before proceeding.

7

NAME THE FIGURE

"Would you like to give this figure a name — something you can use to call them to mind when you need them?"

Record the client's chosen name in your notes. This becomes their personal cue for accessing the resource independently.

8

PRACTISE AND CLOSE

"Let's practise once more. Bring up [their figure's name] and notice what happens in your body... Good. This figure is available to you any time — inside or outside of our sessions."

Encourage the client to call on this figure between sessions, especially during moments of distress. Consider noting the figure's name and body sensation for their take-home summary.

CLINICAL NOTE

A client may draw on more than one figure — a nurturing figure for self-compassion and a protective figure for safety can work powerfully together. Install each separately with BLS before combining.