

REFLECTING WITHOUT WRITING

Picture Prompts

Explore a feeling through images

A practical guide with no written answers required.

START HERE

A way to reflect that fits you

An image can give you a starting point when words are hard to find. You might choose a photograph, illustration, colour card or picture from your surroundings. You decide what it means to you; there is no hidden answer to decode.

What this approach can offer

Picture prompts can create a little distance from a difficult experience. Instead of explaining everything directly, you can point to an image that feels close, far away, comforting, confusing or simply interesting.

Set it up gently

Choose a small number of images from cards, your own photos, a magazine or an accessible digital collection. Avoid pictures that feel too intense. You can use ordinary scenes, colours or textures. No specialist cards are needed.

When it may be useful

Pictures make abstract questions more concrete. They may help when feelings are mixed, words are hard to find, or choosing from a few options is easier than creating an answer from scratch. A familiar photo can work as well as a prompt card.

A few reminders

- There is no right answer or correct way to take part.
- You can use a word, gesture, choice, image, AAC, pause or silence.
- You can skip, change or stop the activity at any point.

You are the person who decides what your response means.

TRY IT

A short guided practice

Move through these steps at your own pace. You can do one step and stop, or ask someone you trust to read each step aloud.

1. Choose a small focus

Think of one moment, feeling, preference or decision from today. Keep the focus small enough to approach without explaining everything.

2. Try the method

- Step 1. Look over the images without trying to choose quickly. Notice which one draws your attention, including an image you dislike or want to avoid.
- Step 2. Choose one image for "how things feel now". You may point, hold it, describe it aloud, or ask someone to place it in front of you.
- Step 3. If it feels useful, choose another image for "what would help" or "what I want more of". The second image does not need to be cheerful.
- Step 4. Describe only what you notice: colour, distance, movement, weather, people, open space or a small detail. Let your own meaning lead.
- Step 5. Finish by choosing whether to keep looking, talk about one detail, change the image or stop.

3. Let a question guide you

- Which picture feels closest to this moment?
- What detail do I keep noticing?
- Would I like something in this picture to change, stay or move further away?

A short example

You choose a quiet shoreline picture over a busy station. The open space catches your attention. You realise you want a short break from conversation, rather than needing to explain the whole day.

4. Choose how to finish

Notice whether you want to continue, pause, ask for support, take one practical step or leave the reflection unfinished. No written record is needed.

MAKE IT YOURS

Adapt the activity to your needs

The method should fit the person, not the other way around. Keep what helps and change anything that adds pressure.

Ways to adapt

- Use one image instead of a spread, or choose between two options offered by a support person.
- Use familiar photos, a view through a window, a colour square or an object you can see nearby.
- If visual material is inaccessible, have someone describe two images neutrally, or try sound, touch or spoken prompts instead.

Keep it workable

Try a small set of places, colours, patterns and everyday scenes. Choose one for "how it feels now" and another for "what might help", or choose none. Curiosity matters more than finding the right image.

When to pause

Do not let another person interpret the image for you. You can pass on a picture, change your mind, or choose one without explaining why.

Take something with you

An image does not have to explain the whole experience. One noticed detail can be a meaningful reflection.

A gentle reminder

Reflection can be spoken, shown, felt, chosen, moved through or shared. You do not have to turn an experience into writing for it to matter.

For more support, you can speak with someone you trust or a qualified professional. Space to Breathe Therapy can be contacted to ask whether its support may be right for you.