

Script for Spiral Technique¹

Therapist statements are bold/italicized

Additional instructions are parenthesized (plain text)

1. **Bring up a disturbing memory and concentrate on the body sensations that accompany the disturbance. This is an imaginal exercise and there are no right or wrong responses. When you bring up the memory, how does it feel from 0-10?** (pause for response and write it here _____.)
2. **Where do you feel it in your body?** (pause for response and write it here _____.)
Concentrate on the feeling in your body (pause for a moment).
3. **Imagine that the feelings are energy** (pause for a moment before continuing). **If the sensation was moving like a spiral, what direction would it be moving, clockwise or counterclockwise?** (pause for response and write it here _____.) **Good** (pause for a few moments for them to notice it).
4. **Now, with your imagination, let's change direction and move the spiral in the opposite direction,** _____ (opposite of what they told you above). **Just notice what happens as it moves in the opposite direction** (pause for a moment before continuing).
5. **What happens?**
6. OPTIONAL VARIATION: **Now imagine that the spiral is moving away from you, getting smaller and smaller** (pause for client to do so). **Can you imagine that?** (Pause for answer; if "yes," continue.) **Just keep watching as the spiral moves further and further away** (pause as the client does this). **Just further and further away, until it's just a dot on the horizon** (pause as the client does this). **Then imagine that it just drops out of sight below the horizon** (pause as the client does this). **What do you notice now?** (If positive, encourage the client to practice this resource. Use it in session for state change and containment.

When the technique works, the clients generally report that moving in the opposite direction causes the feelings to dissipate and the SUD to drop. Teach it to the client for self-use. If the client says the spiral doesn't change, doesn't move, or nothing happens—choose another resource" (Shapiro 2012).

This resource can also be used when the session is incomplete, and the client continues to describe some disturbance. Ask them to simply notice the tension or disturbance and walk them through the steps above, eliminating the question about the SUD.

1. Shapiro, F (2012). *Getting Past Your Past*. New York, NY: Rodale Books, pp. 107-108.
2. Shapiro, F. (2023). *Weekend 1 Training Manual of the Two-Part EMDR Therapy Basic Training*. EMDR Institute, p. 100.
3. Adapted by Julie Miller, MC, LPC, LISAC, CCTP-2