Creating a protective space

Goal:

To create a protective space around you, set boundaries, make well-being possible and concentrate your resources. Your protective space should be accessible and transportable at all times.

Observe the following:

- Orientate yourself outwards: whenever dissociation threatens, always concentrate your energies on the outside and the here and now!
- Suggest options for association (to expand your protective cover), but don't commit to anything specific.
- Emphasise again and again that your protective space should be filled with pleasant impressions, that the elements of it are protecting, the ideas helpful, etc. No negative wording (a traumatised mind is faster at finding unpleasant associations than finding pleasant ones).
- When on your own, only do what you have already tried out and what makes sense to you.

Method:

- First, make sure you have a good position and orientation within the space.
- Determine what the space around you should be like: how much space do you need – let the person feel what works best.
- Set up a wall, a glass shield. Make sure you have everything you need as well as flexible solutions for the space around you.
- Think over carefully what the entrances, openings, etc, should look like; if necessary, plan for all eventualities (flexible design).
- Fill the space with colour, sound, resources (cuddly toys, dogs ...), smells, wind, tastes ... and a sentence that makes you feel strong.
- Practice packing and unpacking the space in your hand and think up a small gesture that symbolises unpacking.
- Practice and enjoy!

Example: a protective space to take with you wherever you go

- Stand in a stable position on the ground – can you feel your feet? Where exactly do they touch the floor? Move back and forth and make sure you are standing in a stable position. When you can feel your roots or have the feeling you are standing well, then look around the space. How much space do you need around you? Can you touch it with your hands? Stretch your arms out to create as much space as you need. Feel the walls of your space: in front of you, behind you, at the sides. Is it closed at the top, or is there a hole for the air and the sun?

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- What material could the walls of your protective space be made of? Imagine what they should look like so that you feel protected in the best way possible. Are they made of stone? Of reinforced glass? Of rubber? Or are they like a soapy bubble? Are their holes in the walls, or windows that you can open and close as you wish? Are their blinds perhaps? Or is there simply a transparent film that you can adjust so that something can only find its way through from the outside when you want it to? Remember – it's your protective space – and perhaps something you have wished for but only now feel coming into being. Let your hands feel the space again and again, creating it.
- There is a lot of space around you now. If you could fill it with a colour, with your favourite colour that protects you like a second skin, what would it be? Blue, yellow, red or something very different? Would it be very pale or preferably intense? Monocoloured or multicoloured, maybe even with stripes, or with patches of colour or stars?
- And when this beautiful colour flows over you, what sound would you like to hear to support it? A favourite song, a piece of classical music, the trickling sound of a stream, birds twittering? Can you hear it? Let yourself be carried away...
- When you feel your feet and your arms are feeling the space around you, in your colour, your sound, your protective walls around you – then what sentence fits in with this pleasant feeling, one that protects you in the here and now: "I am strong", "I give myself the space I need". Find your very own sentence, let it fill the space and just feel it – "I am!"
- Now add a scent to your space, your wall, your colour, and your sound – perhaps a spring meadow, flowers, a fresh wind?
- Feel the wind on your skin, or is it the sun? Is it a warm feeling of comfort or the fresh feeling of clear water?
- What sentence can you now use to encounter the world, and other people? "I am curious about you", I am strong enough to cope with you", "I follow my path and everyone else follows theirs"?
- Feel once again all the different impressions: the space, the wall and its properties, your colour, your sound, the pleasant scent, and the way it makes you feel good, feel all around you and grasp your protection with both hands. And when you have everything you need, bring your hands together gently and hold your precious treasure.
- Your protective space lies in your hands, and you can easily unfold it at any time, enter this space you hold in your hands, either with a large gesture or a small one that only you can see. Try it out – take your protective space everywhere you go and unpack it whenever you want.

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