

Visualization (Description)

What is Visualization?

Also called “mental imagery”, visualization is a technique that consists of mentally simulating a real-life or fictitious situation. Used in psychology (e.g. to overcome trauma), in sports (e.g. to improve an athlete’s performance), this method involves an individual representing an event that took place or will take place, in order to change his perception of reality. It can be used to prepare a trainee who will experience an extremely stressful situation because it is new to him, or because it is highly complex. This mental representation generates emotions in the trainee that he can learn to master so he feels more competent to face reality (Ji *et al.*, 2016).

Visualization can be done unaccompanied or with the supervisor. In the first case, the trainee determines on his own what he is seeking to accomplish. For example, if he is nervous when he has to introduce himself to a new patient, he can imagine himself in that situation as many times as needed, but with different patients. Eventually, he will become more familiar with the situation and his anxiety will progressively subside. In the latter case, the supervisor, by accompanying his trainee, may suggest situations that bring him out of his comfort zone. The supervisor will reassure the trainee through these unknown situations.

The trainee can adopt one perspective or the other: actor or spectator (Boulé, 2017). As an actor, the trainee subjectively feels physical and sensory sensations. As a spectator, he objectively experiences the situation, in order to analyze it afterward (Proteau, as quoted by Boulé, 2017).

Visualization is **useful for the trainee to:**

- Experience new situations in a safe environment
- React more appropriately when facing stressful situations
- Enhance his confidence in his own abilities
- Improve his practice by controlling his emotions

(Scaife, 2019)

Visualization is **useful for the supervisor to:**

- Guide the trainee in his learnings by exposing him to situations that he will encounter
- Carefully observe the trainee’s state of mind (calm, nervous, distressed, etc.) when facing particular events
- Provide the required resources so the trainee reacts positively when dealing with more difficult situations

|| References ||

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Visualization (Tool)

This process has several steps:

- 1. Choose a calm space**, away from any audible or visual distractions. The trainee must be relaxed, attentive and focused on the moment.
- 2. Determine the topic of the visualization**; could be in the form of three possible scenarios:
 - Simulation of an event that took place previously and that did not go as planned. For example in a situation where the trainee came out of the event very upset by what had unfolded, visualization will allow him to downplay the situation.
 - Simulation of a context that is currently unknown to the trainee. This will allow him to address the situation comfortably, before experiencing it.
 - Simulation of an intervention where the trainee has had difficulties.
- 3. Perform the visualization** in the most detailed way possible. The trainee must imagine all of the necessary elements to instigate the desired reaction. For example, if the visualization concerns a meeting between the trainee and a new patient, it would be useful for the trainee to imagine the patient's characteristics (age, gender, state of mind, etc.), his health condition, etc. The environment is also a factor to take into account to increase the authenticity of the visualization.
- 4. Encourage the trainee**, after the visualization, to **note his reflection** in his **logbook** (see this tool in the basket). He notes his emotions, hesitations, reluctance, in a word everything that he deems relevant to analyze the situation. He will then be able to ask questions to deepen his view of what happened and understand what he could improve in future similar circumstances.

(Boulé, 2017; Hafford-Letchfield & Huss, 2018; Moro *et al.*, 2016)