

FREE CLIENT GUIDE



EMDR PREPARATION AND PARTS WORK

Picture Your Resources

How to use free AI image tools to create pictures of your Calm Place, your Nurturing, Protective and Wise figures, your Container and your parts.



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FREE DOWNLOAD

Copy-and-paste prompts, example images, and safety and privacy tips.

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Seeing your resources

If you are doing EMDR preparation or parts work, you may already have a Calm Place, a Container, or Nurturing, Protective and Wise figures. This guide shows you how to use a free AI image tool to turn those into pictures you can keep and look at between sessions.

Why a picture can help

The resources you build in therapy live in your imagination. That works well for many people, but it can be hard to call them up when you are tired, stressed or already activated. A picture gives you something outside your head to look at.

An image can help you:

- get back to a resource more quickly, just by glancing at your phone or a printout
- add detail you might not have thought of (the colour of the light, the texture of a blanket)
- practise between sessions, so the resource feels more familiar when you use it in therapy
- feel some ownership of your resources, because you shaped how they look

If you find it hard to "see" things in your mind, a picture can be a useful bridge. And if imagery has never really worked for you, that's fine too. Your resources can still be words, sounds, a felt sense or a memory.

The picture doesn't need to be perfect

It is a reminder of the resource, not the resource itself.

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Safety and privacy

Please read this page before you open an AI tool. It is the most important part of this guide.

Timing

- Start with a resource you have already built with your therapist. Talk to them first before picturing anything new, especially figures based on real people, or parts of you.
- Pick a time when you feel reasonably settled. Don't do this when you are very distressed or have just had a hard session.
- Have your usual grounding strategies ready, just in case.

What to put in, and what to leave out

Safe to describe	Keep out of the AI tool
Colours, light, weather, textures and sounds	Your name, address, workplace or other identifying details
Places in general terms ("a quiet beach at sunset")	Photos of yourself, your family or your home
Qualities you want a figure to have (warmth, strength, calm)	Details of a traumatic memory, or the person who hurt you
Animals, nature, invented characters	What you are putting inside your Container
The feeling you want the picture to give you	Anything you would not be comfortable with a company storing

Most AI tools keep what you type, and some use it to improve their systems. Check the privacy settings and turn off chat history or model training if you can. Describe your resources in general terms and they stay yours.

A few more things to know

- **Famous characters.** Many tools won't draw well-known characters such as superheroes or cartoon figures. Describe the qualities instead ("a guardian in silver armour with a calm, steady face") and you will get your own original figure.
- **Images of real people.** Picturing a loved one, especially someone who has died, can bring up grief. Talk this through with your therapist first.
- **AI makes mistakes.** Faces, hands and small details can come out strange, and sometimes an image has an unexpected dark or unsettling touch. If that happens, close the image, look around the room, and come back to it another day if you want to.
- **Age limits.** Most tools have a minimum age, often 13 with a parent's permission, or 18. If you are under 18, please do this with a parent or guardian and with your therapist.
- **Cost.** You don't need to pay. Tools such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot and Canva have free versions with a daily or monthly limit. They all need an account.

How to write a good image prompt

A prompt is just the description you type in. The more specific it is, the closer the picture will be to what you imagine. Most good prompts have six parts.

Part	What to include	Example
Subject	What or who is in the picture	a small wooden cabin
Setting	Where it is	in a eucalyptus forest beside a slow creek
Mood	How you want the picture to feel	peaceful, safe, unhurried
Light and colour	Time of day, weather, colour palette	soft morning light, warm greens and golds
Style	What kind of picture	watercolour painting, soft and dreamy
Leave out	Anything you don't want	no people, nothing dark or frightening

Start with a line that sets the tone

Begin every prompt with a short line that tells the AI what the image is for:

OPENING LINE

I am creating a gentle, calming image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it peaceful, soft and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing.

Then add your description. Put together, the example above reads:

FULL PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, calming image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it peaceful, soft and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A small wooden cabin in a eucalyptus forest beside a slow creek. The feeling is peaceful, safe and unhurried. Soft morning light, warm greens and golds. Watercolour painting style, soft and dreamy. No people.

Styles worth trying

watercolour

soft pastel

storybook illustration

oil painting

photograph

gentle 3D animation

simple line drawing

A softer, more painterly style often feels calmer than a realistic photo. Adding "square format" to the end gives you an image that suits a phone screen or social media.

YOUR RESOURCES

Your Calm Place

If you have filled in a Calm Place worksheet with your therapist, you already have most of your prompt. Use your answers to fill the gaps shown in orange.

TEMPLATE

I am creating a gentle, calming image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it peaceful, soft and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. **[Your place, scene or idea]**. In the picture I can see **[what you see or sense]**. The feeling is **[calm / steady / comfortable / peaceful]**. **[Time of day, light and colours]**. **[Style]**. No people.

An image can't hold sounds or smells, but it can hint at them. "Gentle waves" suggests the sound of the sea. "Steam rising from a cup of tea" suggests warmth.

A beach

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, calming image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it peaceful, soft and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A quiet, empty beach in late afternoon, small gentle waves, a soft towel on warm sand, a few seagulls far away. The feeling is calm and unhurried. Golden light, pale blue sky, soft pinks on the horizon. Soft watercolour style. No people.



Made in ChatGPT from this prompt.

A cosy room

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, calming image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it peaceful, soft and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A cosy reading nook by a rainy window, a thick knitted blanket, a sleeping cat, a cup of tea with steam rising, a lamp giving warm light. The feeling is safe and snug. Warm amber and cream tones. Storybook illustration style.

A calm state rather than a place

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, calming image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it peaceful, soft and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. An abstract image of the feeling of calm: slow, soft waves of colour flowing gently like breathing, with a warm glow in the centre. Soft blues, sea greens and warm gold. Smooth, dreamy, painterly style.

If you want your cue word on the picture, add it afterwards in a free app such as Canva. AI tools often misspell words inside images.

Your Nurturing, Protective and Wise figures

Start with the quality you need, then describe a figure who carries it. The figure can be a person, an animal, a character from nature or something completely invented.

Describe their face, posture and eyes, because that is where most of the feeling comes from.

TEMPLATE

I am creating a gentle, comforting image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it warm, kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A **[nurturing / protective / wise]** figure: **[who or what they are]**. They look **[expression, posture]**. They give a feeling of **[the quality you need]**. **[Setting]**. **[Light and colours]**. **[Style]**.

Some people find direct eye contact in a picture too intense. If that's you, ask for the figure to be "seen from the side" or "looking out towards the horizon".

Nurturing

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, comforting image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it warm, kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A large, soft, gentle brown bear sitting in a sunny meadow, holding out a warm blanket. Kind, patient eyes and a relaxed, open posture. The feeling is warmth, acceptance and comfort. Golden afternoon light. Children's storybook illustration style.



Made in ChatGPT from this prompt.

Protective

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, comforting image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it warm, kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A calm, powerful lioness standing at the entrance to a peaceful valley, watching over it. Strong, steady and alert, but not aggressive. The feeling is safety and a clear boundary. Clear blue sky, warm earth tones. Painterly realistic style.



Made in ChatGPT from this prompt.

YOUR RESOURCES

Wise

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, comforting image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it warm, kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A thoughtful older woman with silver hair sitting under a large old tree, with a knowing, gentle smile. An owl rests on a branch above her. The feeling is perspective, steadiness and quiet knowing. Soft dusk light, deep greens and lavender. Oil painting style.



Made in ChatGPT from this prompt.

Your resource team together

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, comforting image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it warm, kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A person seen from behind, sitting peacefully on a hill at sunrise. Beside them sit a gentle brown bear, a calm lioness and a wise owl, all facing the same direction, keeping them company. The feeling is being supported, protected and understood. Soft pastel colours. Storybook illustration style.

Choose the quality first

The figure is a way of reaching a quality you need: warmth, protection or wisdom. It doesn't need to be realistic. What matters is whether it reliably gives you that feeling. If a figure brings up pressure, fear or grief, choose a different one.

YOUR RESOURCES

Your Container

Your Container holds things until you choose to work on them with support. The picture should show the Container itself, closed and secure. Never describe or picture what goes inside it.

TEMPLATE

I am creating a calm, reassuring image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it steady and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A **[type of container]** made of **[material]**, firmly closed with **[lock, seal, lid or door]**. It is kept **[where it is kept]**. It looks solid, secure and well cared for. The feeling is **[safe / contained / settled]**. **[Light and colours]**. **[Style]**.

A vault

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a calm, reassuring image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it steady and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A heavy, polished steel vault with a thick round door, firmly closed and locked with a large combination dial. It sits in a clean, brightly lit, quiet room. The feeling is solid, secure and completely under control. Cool silver and soft white light. Clean, realistic digital art style.



Made in ChatGPT from this prompt. The numbers on the dial are jumbled: small mistakes like this are common and don't matter.

A wooden chest

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a calm, reassuring image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it steady and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A sturdy old wooden sea chest with iron bands and a strong brass padlock, closed tight. It rests on a stone shelf in a peaceful lighthouse, far from everyday life. The feeling is that everything is safely put away for now. Warm lamplight. Oil painting style.

Something entirely your own

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a calm, reassuring image for my own wellbeing. Please keep it steady and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A glowing glass sphere sealed with a silver band, floating calmly high above the clouds, far away and secure. The feeling is light, distant and contained. Soft blue and silver tones. Dreamy, painterly style.

If the picture shows the Container open, cracked or leaking, or it looks flimsy, ask the AI to change it (page 11). A Container you can't trust won't help you.

Your parts

In parts work, you get to know the different sides of you: a part that works hard to protect you, a part that worries, a part that criticises, a younger part that still carries old feelings. Picturing a part can make it easier to notice when it shows up, and to relate to it with curiosity instead of fighting it.

Parts work is more personal than the other resources, so go gently:

- **Check with your therapist first.** Decide together which parts are ready to be pictured.
- **Start with helpers.** Begin with a calm, caring or wise part of you, or a protector you already know well.
- **Wait on younger or hurt parts.** Picturing a part that carries pain can be activating. Do this together in session if and when it is right.
- **Symbols work well.** A part doesn't need to look like a person. An animal, an object or a shape can feel safer and more accurate.
- **Be respectful.** Every part is trying to help in its own way, even the difficult ones. Describe them with understanding, not as monsters or enemies.

TEMPLATE

I am creating a gentle, respectful image for my own wellbeing, to help me understand a part of myself. Please keep it kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A **[symbol, animal, character or figure]** that represents the part of me that **[what this part does or feels]**. It looks **[expression, posture, size]**. It is **[setting]**. The feeling of the image is **[understanding / respect / appreciation]**. **[Colours]**. **[Style]**.

A protector part

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, respectful image for my own wellbeing, to help me understand a part of myself. Please keep it kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A loyal, tired sheepdog standing guard at a farm gate, the part of me that always watches for danger. Alert and faithful, but looking like it would love a rest. Late afternoon light. Warm watercolour style.



Made in ChatGPT from this prompt.

YOUR RESOURCES

A worried part

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, respectful image for my own wellbeing, to help me understand a part of myself. Please keep it kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A small, busy rabbit with big ears, sitting up and listening carefully, the part of me that worries about what might go wrong. Its expression is earnest and caring. Soft meadow at dawn, pale greens and pinks. Children's book illustration style.

A calm, wise part

EXAMPLE PROMPT

I am creating a gentle, respectful image for my own wellbeing, to help me understand a part of myself. Please keep it kind and free of anything frightening, dark or distressing. A calm lighthouse on a headland at dusk, its steady light sweeping across a quiet sea, the part of me that stays steady and sees clearly. The feeling is calm, centred and compassionate. Deep blues and warm gold. Soft oil painting style.

Every part is welcome

There's no right way for a part to look. If the image surprises you, get curious about it instead of judging it. Notice how you feel as you look at it, and bring those observations to your next session.

When an image doesn't feel right

The first picture is rarely the one you keep. In most tools you can simply reply in the same chat and ask for changes. Change one or two things at a time.

If the picture...	Try typing
feels too busy	"Make it simpler, with fewer details and more open space."
feels too dark or cold	"Make the light warmer and softer, with brighter colours."
has a figure that looks stern or scary	"Give the figure a kinder, gentler expression and a more relaxed posture."
feels too intense or too real	"Try this again as a soft watercolour painting."
has people in it you didn't want	"Remove all people from the scene."
shows your Container open or weak	"Show the container firmly closed and locked, solid and strong."
is close but not quite right	"Keep everything the same, but change [one detail]."
is just wrong	Start a new chat and try a different description.

When to stop

Stop and put the tool away if:

- an image upsets you, or brings up memories or strong feelings
- you notice yourself getting frustrated trying to make it perfect
- you have been at it for a while and feel drained

Use your grounding strategies: look around the room, name five things you can see, feel your feet on the floor. Then tell your therapist at your next session what happened. That's useful information, not a failure.

NEXT STEPS

Using your images, and getting support

Once you have a picture you like, save it somewhere private, such as a hidden album on your phone.

Ways to use it

- Look at it for a minute each day to keep the resource familiar.
- Bring it up when you notice early signs of stress.
- Print it and keep it by your bed, in your wallet or on the fridge.
- Bring it to your next session so you can use it in therapy.

Your images are for you. You don't need to share them with anyone, and you can delete or change them whenever you like.

About this guide

This guide is general information to support the work you do in therapy. It isn't a substitute for treatment. If you would like support with EMDR or parts work, you can book online at www.myMHC.com.au.

If you are in crisis

Call **000** in an emergency, **Lifeline on 13 11 14** (24 hours), or **Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636**.



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If you are in crisis: call 000 in an emergency, or Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours).

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