

Video Transcript: Second Excerpt from Sleep Interview with Debbie Benkovitz

Debbie:

We're helpful to other children who are maybe a little bit older and want to be engaged in the relaxation process. And maybe they have an illness that's causing them pain, or maybe they're anxious about something that's going to happen; for example, maybe they're going to surgery, or they're going to get an IV started, or have a procedure that they're afraid of.

[Debbie begins to gently strum chords on her guitar as she continues speaking.]

A way to engage patients is to ask them, "If you could be someplace in this world—not here in the hospital—but any other place where you could be where you would feel comfortable, and calm, and relaxed, what would that favorite place be?" I've had lots of answers. Probably the most common one is "beach," but I've had kids say that they wanted to be on the ski slope, I've had kids say that they wanted to be in the woods, they wanted to be at Disney World (that's another big one), but let's use an example for a beach, because that's a pretty common one.

So I'd be asking the child, "Okay, tell me about the beach. Who's going to be at the beach with you? And, what does the beach smell like? Do you taste anything at the beach, maybe salt on your tongue from the salty air? Or maybe a food that's on the beach, like a hot dog, or lemonade, or a popsicle. What do you feel? What does the sand feel like? What does the air feel like?" You probably notice that I'm bringing in all the senses because that helps us engage more fully in the experience. And then I invite the child to close their eyes, if they want, and tell them they're safe, because doing this helps you engage more fully in the experience, and you could really be at the beach in your mind. It's like a form of daydreaming, and we're all pretty good at that, especially kids. So a song about the beach might sound something like this:

[Debbie begins to sing as she continues to strum.]

Let's go to the beach
Mom and Dad will come with me
And my little sister, Amy, will probably come too
When we go to the beach.

[Debbie strums her guitar during a brief interlude between verses.]

The air is warm and salty
But I sit under an umbrella

The shade is pretty comfortable; I can hear the crashing waves
When I go to the beach.

[Debbie continues strumming as she begins to speak again.]

Now, I can make this song go on as long as I need. I can slow it down a little bit or speed it up—whatever that patient needs. You probably noticed *[Debbie takes a deep breath in]* that I'm taking some deep breaths to help remind the patient that deep breathing will help get you there faster.

[Debbie strums a final chord on her guitar.]