

## Supporting patients receiving radiotherapy– hypnotherapy and relaxation

The CALM team at a major cancer centre in the North West offer a variety of complementary therapies to help patients cope with medical procedures.

Joe needed radiotherapy to treat cancer in his throat. This meant he had to wear a mask which is clipped down to the treatment couch to keep him absolutely still.



Joe found the sensation of the mask tightening over his face frightening. It caused him to panic and the procedure was halted. A few days later Joe tried again with the support of a therapist. Joe took a mild sedative while the therapist talked to him, getting him to focus on his children, imagining he was looking through a photo album at happy moments in their lives.

The therapist used verbal cues to promote deep relaxation. As a result, Joe completed the six weeks of therapy needed, including a CT scan. Joe said: 'I can't believe I have made it through ... I am not frightened any more ... I feel safe being here'.