

GROUNDING

WHAT IS GROUNDING?

Grounding is a set of simple strategies to detach from emotional pain such as anger, sadness, anxiety, self-harm impulses, cravings, etc. Grounding works by focusing outward, rather than inward to self. It's also like

- Distraction
- Centering
- Creating a safe place

When you are overwhelmed, grounding helps to detach so that you can gain control over your feelings. Grounding 'anchors' you to the present moment.

GUIDELINES

- Grounding can be done any time, any place, anywhere and no one has to know.
- Do what feels SAFE for you
- Grounding puts healthy distance between you and these negative feelings.
- Keep your eyes open, scan the room, and turn the light on to stay in touch with the present.
- Try to avoid talking or writing about your negative and anxious feelings.
- Stay neutral—no judgments of "good" and "bad". For example, "The windows are open; I dislike open windows.
- Focus on the present, not the past or future.
- Grounding is not relaxation. Grounding is active, focuses on distraction.

Mental Grounding

- Describe your environment in detail using all your senses. We have five senses (sight, sound, touch, smell and taste). For example, "The walls are white; there are 3 red chairs, there is 2 windows, and there are birds chirping outside." Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers and temperature. You can do this anywhere.
- Play a "categories" game with yourself. Say your favorite TV shows, Say your favorite animals, Say your favorite music artists.
- Describe an everyday activity in great detail. For example, describe a meal that you cook (e.g., First I peel the potatoes and cut, then I boil the water, I add seasoning...").
- Use an image: Picture your negative feelings floating away on a cloud.
- Say a positive and focused present statement. 'I am riding a wave, this will pass. I am okay. I am safe, I am standing in ____blank place, the date is ____ and the time is ____.
- Read something: read labels, read a book. Say the words out loud. Sing the words.
- Use humor. Tell a joke. Read some cartoons.

Physical Grounding

- Trace your hands with a pen.
- Touch various objects around you: a pencil, keys, table, chair, walls. Notice colors, textures, weight, temperature. Compare the objects. Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can.
- Press your feet into ground to remind you that you are connect to the ground.
- Carry a small object in your pocket, like a small rock, coin, toy. Touch it when you feel triggered.
- Notice your body: Wiggling your toes in your shoes, feel your back against the chair. You are connected to the world.
- Stretch. Extend your fingers, arms or legs as far as you can; roll your head around.
- Exercise. Go for a jog. Jump up and down. Do some push-ups. Walk slowly, noticing each footstep, saying "left," "right" with each step.
- Eat something. Describe the flavors in detail to yourself.
- Focus on breathing. Noticing each inhale and exhale. Repeat a pleasant word with each breath.
- Hold your favorite stuffed animal. Describe the details of your stuffed animal.

Soothing Grounding

- Say kind and coping statements, "you are okay, you are here, you are safe, this feeling will pass."
- Think of favorites. Think of your favorite color, animal, season, food, time of day.
- Picture people or things you care about (family, friends, dog; look at photographs of them).
- Remember the words to an inspiring song, quotation or poem.
- Remember and describe a safe place that you find very soothing (the beach or mountains) and focus on the sounds, colors and objects of this soothing place.
- Think of fun things in the future (next vacation, getting ice cream).
- Call a friend and talk about fun things.

Adapted from Najavits LM. "Seeking Safety"