

Grounding Practice Reference Sheet

WHAT?

Grounding is a simple set of strategies used to detach from emotional pain. Distraction works by focusing outward on the external world rather than inward on the self.

It is important to engage in grounding practice when you feel overwhelmed with emotional pain so that you can gain control over your feelings and keep yourself safe.

WHY?

Grounding helps you to anchor you to the present moment. Many people struggle with either feeling too much (overwhelming emotions and memories) or too little (numbing and dissociation). With the practice of grounding you learn how to attain balance between these two extremes.

TIPS

- Practice anytime and anywhere.
- Practice when you are: triggered, having a flashback, dissociating, craving, emotional pain goes above a 6 (on a scale from 0-10).
- Keep your eyes open and scan the room.
- Rate your mood before and after your practice.
- No talking about negative feelings or journal writing.
- Stay neutral - resist urges to judge experiences as “good” or “bad” ie. “the walls are blue; I dislike blue because it reminds me of...”
- Focus your attention on the present vs. the past or future.
- Grounding is not the same as relaxation training. Grounding is more active, focuses attention on distraction and is intended to help extreme negative feelings.
- One type of strategy may be more helpful than another or a combination of strategies may work best for you. Try a variety and notice what works best for you. Highlight the strategies that work best for you so they stand out when you need them.

STRATEGIES

Mental Grounding - To help focus your mind

<p>Describe your environment in detail ie. the walls are white, there are 5 pink chairs, there is a bookshelf in the corner. Try describing objects, sounds, textures, colours, shapes, numbers, temperatures</p>	<p>Play a categories game Try to think of “types of dogs”, “names of musicians”, “vegetables that start with the letter A”, “song titles”, “car makes and models” etc.</p>
<p>Do an age progression If you have regressed to a younger age (ie. 8 years old) you can slowly work your way back up (ie. I am now 9, I am now 10, I am now 11) until you reach the present age</p>	<p>Describe a familiar activity in detail For example describe a meal you cook (ie. first i peel the potatoes and cut them into quarters, then i boil the water, I made an herb marinade of oregano, basil, garlic and olive oil...”</p>
<p>Imagine Use an image - glide along on skates away from your pain; change the TV channel to a better show, think of a wall as a buffer between you and your pain.</p>	<p>Say a safety and grounding statements “I am safe right now”, “I am in the present”, “I am okay”</p>
<p>Read something Say each word to yourself or read each letter backwards so that you focus on the letters and not the meaning of the words.</p>	<p>Count to 10 or try saying the alphabet backwards Try doing this very slowly.</p>
<p>Repeat a favourite saying to yourself over and over Like the serenity prayer or a mantra</p>	<p>Humour Think of something funny or your favourite joke</p>

Physical Grounding - sensory focus with touch, hearing, smell

<p>Run cool or warm water over your hands Notice the sensations of warmth or cool on your skin - where do you notice it first?</p>	<p>Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can Notice the tension in your hands, feel the texture of the arm of the chair</p>
<p>Touch various objects around you Touch a pen, keys, your clothing, the table, the walls. Notice the textures, colours, weight, temperature. Compare objects to each other - is one cooler? lighter? smoother?</p>	<p>Dig your heels into the floor Literally root your feet to the floor. Notice the tension centered in your heels. Notice that you are connected to the ground.</p>
<p>Carry an object in your pocket Carry a small object - one that has meaning to you ie. a rock, ring, piece of cloth. Touch this and think about what it means to you.</p>	<p>Move your body Try to jump up and down Stretch and notice the muscles engaged in the stretch. Roll your shoulders, roll your arms, extend your legs.</p>
<p>Notice your body Try a progressive tension and release of your muscles ie. start at your feet and work up your body; flexing and releasing your muscles; notice the difference between tension and release ie. flex and release muscles in your feet, legs, stomach, hands/arms</p>	<p>54321 Identify 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste</p>
<p>Eat something Describe the flavours to yourself in as much detail as you can. See if you can notice where on your tongue you register the flavour ie. the back, front or sides.</p>	<p>Breathing Notice each inhale and exhale. Try to take as slow an inhale as you can; exhale even slower if you can. Try repeating a soothing statement to yourself on each exhale (ie. I am safe, I am relaxed)</p>

Soothing Grounding - practice compassion and self-caring

<p>Say a kind statement in a gentle tone Say something as if you were talking to a small child or an animal. (ie “ you are okay”, “you are a good person and it will be okay”, “you will get through this”).</p>	<p>Think of favourites Think of your favourite colour, animal, season, food, vacation, TV show, place to visit, flower.</p>
<p>Picture people/animals you care about Picture your children, picture your pets - look at photographs of them. Consider what you like best about them.</p>	<p>Listen to soothing music or nature sounds Try to notice the different sounds that make up the whole. Can you pick out specific sounds or instruments?</p>
<p>Think of the words to an inspiring song, quote or poem that is important to you Recite the words that help you to feel better.</p>	<p>Remember / think a safe place Describe a place that you find very soothing (ie. the beach, mountains, favourite room). Consider the sensory details of your safe place - the colours, sounds, shapes, smells, textures.</p>