



GROUNDING

Create Personal Calm

Instructions:

Review this handout. Then, answer the reflection question that follows.

What is Grounding?

Grounding is a set of simple strategies that can help you detach from emotional pain (e.g. anxiety, anger, sadness, self-harm). It is basically a way to distract yourself by focusing on something other than the difficult emotions you are experiencing. You may also think of grounding as centering, distracting, creating a safe place, or healthy detachment.

Although grounding does not solve the problem that is contributing to your unpleasant emotions, it does provide a temporary way to gain control over your feelings and prevent things from getting worse. Grounding anchors you, gives you a chance to calm down, and allows you to eventually return and address the problem that is triggering the unpleasant emotions to begin with. And grounding can be done anytime, anywhere, and no one has to know.

Ways of Grounding:

There are three types of grounding. You may find that one of these types works better for you, or that each is helpful.

- 1) Mental (focusing your mind)
- 2) Physical (focusing your senses)
- 3) Soothing (talking to yourself in a very kind way)

Mental Grounding

- 1) Describe your environment in detail, using all of your senses. Describe objects, sounds, textures, colours, smells, shapes, numbers, and temperature.
- 2) Play a categories game with yourself. Try to think of types of dogs, jazz musicians, animals or famous people that begin with each letter of the alphabet, cars, TV shows, writers, sports, songs, cities.
- 3) Describe an everyday activity in detail. For example, describe a meal that you cook.
- 4) Imagine. Use a pleasant or comforting mental image. Again, use all of your senses to make it as real and vivid as possible.
- 5) Read something, saying each word to yourself. Or reach each letter backwards so that



you focus on the letters and not the meaning of the words.

- 6) Use humor. Think of something funny to jolt you out of your mood.
- 7) Count to 10 or say the alphabet very slowly.

Physical Grounding

- 1) Run cool or warm water over your hands.
- 2) Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can; notice the sensations and the experience.
- 3) Touch various objects around you: a pen, your clothing, the table, the walls. Notice the textures, colors, weight, temperature. Compare the objects you touch.
- 4) Carry a grounding object in your pocket- a small object you can touch whenever you feel unpleasant emotions rising.
- 5) Notice your body: the weight of your body in the chair, wiggling your toes in your socks, the feel of your back against the chair.
- 6) Stretch. Extend your fingers, arms, legs as far as you can; slowly and gently roll your head around.
- 7) Clench and release your fists.
- 8) Jump up and down.
- 9) Eat something in a savoring way. Describe the experience in detail to yourself.
- 10) Focus on your breathing, noticing each inhale and exhale. Repeat a pleasant word to yourself on each exhale.

Soothing Grounding

- 1) Say kind statements, as if you were talking to a friend or a small child.
- 2) Think of favourites. Favourite colour, animal, season, food, time of day.
- 3) Picture people you care about and look at photographs of them.
- 4) Remember the words to an inspiring song, quotation of poem that make you feel better.
- 5) Say a coping statement: "This feeling will pass", "We can do so much more than we think we can".
- 6) Plan a safe treat for yourself, such as a piece of candy, a nice dinner, a warm bath.
- 7) Think of things you are looking forward to in the next week- time with a friend, going to a movie, or going on a hike.



Tips:

- Practice!
- Try to notice which methods you like best.
- Start grounding early on in a negative mood cycle.
- Create your own method of grounding.
- Make up an index card or type in your phone a list of your best grounding methods.
- Create an MP3 of a grounding message that you can play when needed. Consider asking your counsellor or someone close to you to record it if you want to hear someone else's voice.
- Don't give up!

3 Grounding Strategies I am committed to learning, practicing, and applying:

1)

2)

3)

After practicing or applying these grounding strategies, what have you noticed? Do you feel more in control? Do your emotions change? Are you able to calm yourself and focus on something other than the unpleasant emotions and situations?