



GROUNDING

What is grounding?

Grounding techniques are strategies to help you stay present in the “here and now”. They can be very helpful when you feel overwhelmed by emotional pain, or if you find yourself “checking out” and getting lost in your thoughts. It works by focusing outward on the external world, rather than inward toward the self. Grounding can be used to cope with anger, sadness or cravings. They can be especially helpful for people who have experienced trauma as a way to regain their grounding and centering.

Ways of grounding

There are three major ways of grounding, mental, physical, and soothing. “Mental” means focusing your mind; “physical” means focusing on your senses (e.g., touch, hearing); and “soothing” means talking to yourself in a very kind way. You may find that one type works better for you, or all types may be helpful.

Mental Grounding

Describe your environment in detail, using all your senses—for example, “The walls are white; there are five pink chairs; there is a wooden bookshelf against the wall...” Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers, and the temperature. You can do this anywhere.

- Play a “categories” game with yourself. Try to think of “types of dogs,” “jazz musicians,” “states that begin with A...”
- Describe an everyday activity in great detail. For example, describe the meal that you cook (e.g., “First I peel the potatoes and cut them into quarters...”)
- Say a safety statement. “My name is _____; I am safe right now. I am in the present, not in the past.”
- Read something, saying each word to yourself. Or read each letter backward so that you focus on the letters and not on the meaning of the words.
- Use humor. Think of something funny to jolt yourself out of your mood.
- Count to 10 or say the alphabet, very s...l...o...w...l...y.

Physical Grounding

- Run cool or warm water over your hands.
- Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can.
- Touch various objects around you: a pen, keys, your clothing, the wall....
- Dig your heels into the floor—literally “grounding” them! Notice the tension centered in your heels as you do this. Remind yourself you are connected to the ground.
- Carry a grounding object in your pocket, which you can touch whenever you feel triggered.
- Jump up and down
- Notice your body: the weight of your body in the chair; wiggle your toes in your socks; the feel of your chair against your back...
- Stretch. Roll your head around; extend your fingers...
- Clench and release your fists.
- Walk slowly; notice each footstep, saying “left or “right”...
- Eat something, describing the flavors in detail to yourself.
- Focus on your breathing, notice each inhale and exhale.

Soothing Grounding

- Say kind statements, as if you were talking to a small child-for example, "You are a good person going through a hard time. You'll get through this."
- Think of favorites. Think of your favorite color, animal, season, food, time of day...
- Picture people you care about (e.g., your children), look at a photograph.
- Remember the words to an inspiring song, quote, or poem.
- Remember a safe place. Describe the place that you find so soothing.
- Say a coping statement: "I can handle this."
- Plan a safe treat for yourself, such as a certain desert.
- Think of things you are looking forward to in the next week-perhaps time with a friend, going to a movie.

Do these exercises slowly and respectfully. If at any time you find the exercise disturbing or feel emotions build up inside of you, stop and let things settle. As you learn to maintain a focus on your external environment, internal emotional pain will begin to diminish.

Do you need more help?

Don't be afraid to reach out for more help. If you're not sure who to talk to, consider calling **Timmins Family Counselling Centre** to learn more about grounding and if counselling is right for you.

You can reach us at **705-267-7333**.

You can also visit our website at www.timminsfamilycounselling.com