

Grounding & Mindfulness

What is “grounding” and “mindfulness”?

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one’s awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one’s feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. *Grounding techniques help you stay “in the moment” when your body and mind are returning to a place of trauma or stress.*

Why practice grounding and mindfulness?

Trauma impacts our body and brains. When reminded of trauma, people respond in different ways. Some feel “flooded” with memories, or emotions like fear, sadness, or anger. Others “check out” emotionally, feel numb, or disconnected from what’s happening around them. Often, people have bodily sensations, like their heart racing, sweating, sudden pain or aching, or shortness of breath. These are normal responses to surviving trauma, but they can be disruptive and upsetting. *Practicing mindfulness and grounding techniques can help you to stay in the “here and now” and regain a feeling of safety and control.*

EXAMPLES OF GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

Mental Grounding	Physical Grounding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your environment in detail, using all of your senses. Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers, and temperature. • Play a categories game. Try to think of “TV shows”, “songs”, “ice cream flavors”... • Say a safety or coping statement. “My name is _____; I am safe right now; I am in the present, not in the past; this feeling will pass.” • Say kind statements, as if you were talking to your best friend. For example, “You are a good person going through a hard time. You’ll get through this.” • Remember the words to an inspiring song, quote, prayer, or poem. • Visualize a place that is calming and safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch various objects around you: a pen, keys, your clothing, a table, a wall. Notice textures, colors, materials, weight, temperature. • Dig your heels into the floor. Remind yourself that you are connected to the ground. • Carry a grounding object in your pocket – a small object (stone, ring, coin, piece of cloth, beads, etc.) that you can touch or pull. • Stretch. Extend your fingers, arms, or legs as far as you can; roll your head around gently. • Clench and release your fists. • Eat or drink something. Describe the flavors or notice the temperature in detail. • Focus on your breathing, noticing each inhale and exhale. Take deep “belly breaths.”