

Grounding anchor card

Grounding is not relaxation. It is a way of telling the body, through the senses, that the danger is not here now.

When the system leaves the window of tolerance, thinking your way back can be hard. Grounding uses the senses and the breath to help the body notice that it is here, now. It is a stabilisation tool, used to come back toward the window, not a way to make the feeling disappear.

i This is a stabilisation tool, not a cure. Grounding does not erase distress or replace treatment. It is one way to help the system settle in the moment, so that more becomes possible. Different techniques suit different people, and there is no single right one. Print this and carry it if that helps.

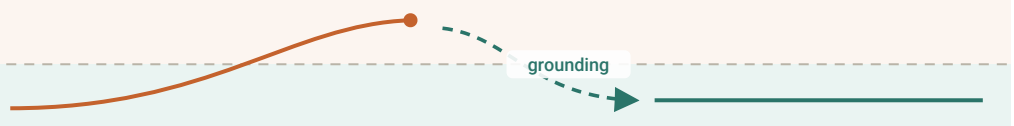
WHAT GROUNDING DOES

HYPERAROUSAL

out of the window

WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

present, able to think



grounding can help the system come back to the window

WHAT GROUNDING IS

A signal of present safety, through the senses

- A tool for the moment the system leaves the window
- Worth practising while calm
- Portable, and usable almost anywhere
- A way to come back, not a way to feel nothing

WHAT GROUNDING IS NOT

Relaxation, or making the feeling go away

- A cure for trauma, or a replacement for support
- A test you can pass or fail
- Useful only in a crisis
- Guaranteed to work every time

WHAT IS ON THE CARD

Page 2 is a card you can print and carry. Three techniques, and space to make them yours. Practise them when you are calm, so they are there when the system is not.

1 ORIENT

Find where you are

Look around, name the place and the date, notice the danger is not here now.

2 FIVE SENSES

5-4-3-2-1

Name what you can see, hear, touch, smell, and taste.

3 BREATH

Lengthen the out-breath

A longer out-breath than in-breath, repeated a few times.

4 MAKE IT YOURS

Your anchor

A phrase, a person, or a place that helps you feel here.

WHAT ONE ENTRY MIGHT LOOK LIKE

MY ANCHOR PHRASE

Something true that brings me here

That was then; this is now. It is today, and I am in my own home. I am safe enough in this moment.

REMEMBER

Practising grounding before it is needed can help. Some people find a routine learned while calm is easier to reach for when the system is not. It will not always work, and that is not a failure.

Choose one or two techniques to start with. The aim is a routine the body knows, not a perfect method.

Coventry, P. A., et al. (2020). Psychological and pharmacological interventions for PTSD and comorbid mental health problems following complex traumatic events: Systematic review and component network meta-analysis. *PLOS Medicine*, 17(8), e1003262. · Kezelman, C. A., & Stavropoulos, P. A. (2019). *Practice guidelines for clinical treatment of complex trauma*. Blue Knot Foundation. · Siegel, D. J. (1999). *The developing mind*. Guilford Press.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

If you are in immediate danger, call 000. For support at any time: Lifeline 13 11 14 · Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 · 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732.

Grounding anchor card

This is a quick reference for the moment your system leaves the window.

Use whichever part helps. Practise it when you are calm, so it is there when you are not.

GROUNDING CARD · CARRY THIS

ORIENT

Tell the body where it is.

- Look slowly around the room
- Name the place and today's date
- Notice that the danger is not here now

5-4-3-2-1

Move through the senses.

- 5 things you can see
- 4 you can hear, 3 you can touch
- 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste

BREATH

Make the out-breath longer.

- Breathe in for a count of four
- Breathe out for a count of six
- Repeat slowly, a few times

MAKE IT YOURS

MY ANCHOR PHRASE

Something true that brings me here

WORKS BEST FOR ME

The technique I reach for first

MY SAFE ANCHOR

A person or place that helps

A NOTE ON USING THIS

Grounding is a way to come back toward the window, not a way to feel nothing. If it does not work in a given moment, that is not a failure. If distress is frequent or overwhelming, that is worth bringing to a GP or to someone like us.

WHEN YOU HAVE A ROUTINE THAT HELPS

Bring it into a session, or share it with someone you trust.

Building stabilisation tools is often where trauma work begins. If you would like to talk it through, the Meet and Greet is a short call to see if we are the right fit.

MEET AND GREET

Free

15 minutes

Online or in-person

No obligation

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