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Grounding

Grounding is a technique that helps to keep you in the present. It can help you cope with stressful periods in your life, manage overwhelming feelings or intense anxiety, and keep your mind focused on the here-and-now instead of the past, future, or the current distressing event.

Grounding skills are divided into two categories: *Sensory Awareness*, which involves focusing on your five physical senses and *Cognitive Awareness*.

Five Senses Grounding Exercise:

- Identify 5 things you can see in the room with you.
- Identify 4 things you can feel (the back of the chair, my feet on the floor)
- Identify 3 things you can hear right now.
- Identify 2 things you can smell right now.
- Identify 1 thing you can taste, or 1 positive affirmation (I am valuable.)

What are the five things you can see? Look around you and notice five things you hadn't noticed before. Maybe a pattern on a wall, light reflecting from a surface, or a knick-knack in the corner of a room.

What are the four things you can feel? Maybe you can feel the pressure of your feet on the floor, your shirt resting on your shoulders or the temperature on your skin. Or, pick up an object and notice its texture. What are the three things you can hear? Notice all the background sounds you had been filtering out, such as air-conditioning, birds chirping, or cars on a distant street. What are two things you can smell? Maybe you can smell flowers, coffee, or freshly cut grass. It doesn't have to be a pleasant smell either; perhaps there is an overflowing trashcan or sewer. What is one thing you can taste? A piece of gum in your mouth, sip a drink, eat a snack if you have one, etc. What is one positive statement you can speak aloud? Example: I am deeply loved by God.

Cognitive Awareness Grounding Exercise:

Re-orientate yourself to the present place and time by asking yourself these questions:

1. Where am I?
2. What is today?
3. What is the date?
4. What is the month?
5. What is the year?
6. How old am I?
7. What season is it?



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Grounding Statements:

Use grounding statements such as, "I am Jo," "I am 23 years old", "This is the present, it's not the past", "I am safe here", "Today is ...", etc. to re-focus and help keep you anchored in the present.

Safe/Comfortable Place Protocol

1. Image a place (real or imagined) that evokes personal feelings of calm, safety, and comfort. This can be done with eyes open or eyes closed.
2. Now, notice the associated emotions and sensations. Consider what you think about the place, observe what you see, hear, feel, smell-- notice the feelings in your body.
3. Bilateral stimulation. (4-6 passes/taps). Integrate the bilateral stimulation. Cross your arms in front of you with your right hand on your left shoulder or arm, and your left hand on your right shoulder or arm. Tap your hands alternately slowly four to six times.

Hold the calming image in your mind, as you tap. Pause. Focus on your in and out breath 2 or 3 times. And repeat the bilateral process.

Breath Work

Grounding through Breathing:

The breath serves as a focus for your attention. Think of it as an anchor that holds you in the present moment and guides you back to the here-and-now when your mind wanders. By bringing awareness to your breathing, you are reminding yourself that you here now. Breathe in and attend to the feeling of breathing in; breathe out and attend to the feeling of breathing out. You may want to focus on the air coming in through your nose and out through your lips, or you can focus on your abdomen expanding and contracting as you breathe. You may want to count five breaths on the exhale, and keep counting groups of five breaths until you feel calmed. You may also want to use calming, grounding statements as you breathe, like:

- Inhaling – "I am breathing in calm and peace."
- Exhaling – "I am breathing out anxiety, stress." or "I am safe."

Yoga

Restorative yoga practices:

Focus on stretching and relaxing your body, especially after a stressful day for at least 10 minutes. There are many videos on YouTube that can be found on this practice.