

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY COLLEAGUE WELLBEING SERVICE

GROUNDING EXERCISES

OVERVIEW

Grounding exercises are useful in bringing us back from distressing, anxiety-provoking or upsetting thoughts, images and overwhelm. They help us to reconnect with the present moment, moving away or distracting from anxious ‘what if?’ thoughts, or from ruminating on the past.

A phrase that sums up what grounding is: “Be where your feet are”, the idea of connecting with where you are in the exact moment, both physically and mentally.



EXAMPLES OF GROUNDING TECHNIQUES:

- Become aware of what you can feel physically, push your feet into the ground. If you are sitting, feel the carpet under your feet, feel the chair supporting you, notice creases in your clothing. Describe to yourself what you can see, e.g., I am sitting on a red chair, the fabric is soft with a check pattern, on the floor is.... etc.
- Look around your surroundings - look for all items around you that start with a particular letter or are of a certain colour, e.g., the letter B (books, bedframe, biro), or the colour blue (scrubs, curtains, folders, plastic tray), make a list of these in your head.
- Re-orientate yourself to the present. E.g., My name is _____, I am ____ years old, I have __ children, I live at _____. I can see _____, I

can hear _____, I can touch _____, etc. The year is _____, the month is _____, the day is _____, the time is _____, etc.

- Recite a recipe to yourself, ingredients, measurements, method, etc.
- Say the alphabet backwards.
- Subtract a number from 1000, e.g., subtract 7 until you get to 0, e.g., 1000, 993, 986, etc.
- Name categories, e.g., name as many European cities as you can in alphabetical order (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Dublin), different sports, types of dogs.
- 5-4-3-2-1: What are **5** things you can see? Go into detail – is there a pattern on the carpet? Is there a scuff on the door frame? What is the exact colour of the chair – not just blue, is it China blue?
4 things you can feel – notice the sensation of your clothing, the texture of the chair. Pick up an object, feel its weight, texture, temperature.
3 things you can hear – the clock ticking, the whirr of machinery, birds singing, the fridge humming, traffic in the distance.
2 things you can smell – an air freshener, coffee, cleaning products, or look for items which should smell, e.g., an unlit candle, flowers. **1** thing you can taste – if you don't have something to hand to focus your taste buds on, think of your favourite flavours - sweet or savoury.

NEED MORE HELP?

If you would like to find out more about anxiety management techniques you can access several resources via the Employee Assistance Programme, Vivup at <https://vivup.yourcareeap.co.uk>

Alternatively, if you wish to access support for anxiety you can self-refer to Vivup by calling 03303 800658 24/7.

Should you require support with work-related stress, burnout or a traumatic incident at work, email: sfh-tr.clinical-psychologists@nhs.net