

# Grounding

Grounding is a set of skills that help us to reconnect with ourselves and our surroundings by focusing on our senses and bringing us back into the present moment. Grounding can help you cope with:

- Flashbacks
- Intrusive thoughts or memories
- Dissociation / Feelings of detachment
- Overwhelming emotion

It is likely that people who have experienced trauma may not be fully present, so it is important to firstly check in and notice how present you feel and then you can experiment with different ways to come back into your body. Everyone finds some work for them better than others or there are some that they just do not like. You might want to try some out and see how they feel and what works for you. Here are some examples below:

## **A focus on the Body**

- Lie on the ground
- Press your toes into the floor or walk barefoot
- Squeeze something
- Splash cold water in your face

## **Using our sense of smell**

- Smell can be a powerful way to re-orientate yourself. It is important for this to be a distinctive and sharp smell but not one you find unpleasant or reminds you of something from the past.
- You can purchase essential oils that you can carry around with you. Examples of strongly smelling scents include citrus based, olbas oil, tea tree oil.

## **Self-soothing**

- Have a shower or bath
- Light a candle
- Hug a teddy

## **Observing**

- Look around you, observe what is in the room
- Out loud name five objects that you can see in the room. These need to be physical objects (eg lamp, table, chair, television, carpet, poster, bin)
- Now listen for a moment. Say out loud five sounds that you can currently hear in the room or just outside it. These should be things you can hear now
- Now pick up an object that you see near you (eg a book, a pen, a watch). Thoroughly feel the object, describing out loud the texture of the object
- Now say to yourself "I am here in [name location], the date is [say date], and I am safe here" What I was feeling is just a memory, it is not real"

# Grounding

## Breathing Exercises

- Learning to focus on slowing our breathing is a key skill, particularly as people who have experienced trauma are likely to take shallower breaths without noticing.
- Practice 4-7-8- breathing (Inhale for 4, Hold for 7, Exhale for 8)
- Focus on diaphragmatic breathing: Place one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Notice which hand moves when you breathe in and out and try to only breathe into your stomach and not into your chest. It might help to imagine there is a balloon in your stomach that fills with air and then decompresses as you breathe in and out.



## Distract Yourself

- Find all of the green objects in the room
- Say the day and date aloud
- Open a window and pay attention to what is outside

## Grounding Statements

- Say aloud one thing you can see, one thing you can hear and one thing you can feel with your body. For example:
- I can see the kitchen table
- I can hear music from the next flat
- I can feel my hands touching the chair
- Say to yourself 'I am here in [name location], the date is [say date] and I am safe here. What I was feeling is just a memory, it is not real'.

## Grounding to Objects (both reminders and touch)

- A grounding object is a physical object you can hold which carries a positive meaning for you can distract you when needed. When you start to re-experience unpleasant memories or feelings, hold your grounding object and focus on how it feels.
- It can be useful for the object to be something you did not own when the trauma happened, and should be small enough to carry with you. It should be a reminder of where you are now.