



Empowering survivors of

Gender-Based Violence

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES – QUICK GUIDE

A Practical Tool for Moments of Stress, Anxiety, Flashbacks, or Overwhelm

What Is Grounding?

Grounding techniques help bring your attention back to the present moment when difficult emotions, trauma memories, flashbacks, anxiety, or panic begin to take over.

Grounding works by helping your brain and body recognise that you are here, now, and safe.

Remember:

You do not need to use every technique. Try different methods and find what works best for you.

When Might Grounding Help?

You may find grounding useful if you are experiencing:

- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Panic attacks
- ✓ Flashbacks
- ✓ Racing thoughts
- ✓ Feeling overwhelmed
- ✓ Dissociation
- ✓ Feeling emotionally numb
- ✓ Hypervigilance
- ✓ Difficulty focusing

Technique 1: The 5-4-3-2-1 Method

This technique helps reconnect you with your surroundings using your senses.

Look Around and Identify:

5 Things You Can See

Examples:

- A picture on the wall
- A tree outside
- A lamp
- Your shoes
- A cup

4 Things You Can Feel

Examples:

- Your feet on the floor
- Your clothing against your skin
- The chair beneath you
- A cool breeze

3 Things You Can Hear

Examples:

- Birds outside
- Air conditioning
- Traffic
- Music

2 Things You Can Smell

Examples:

- Coffee
- Soap
- Fresh air

1 Thing You Can Taste

Examples:

- Water
- Mint
- Gum

Take a slow breath and remind yourself:

"I am here. I am safe. This moment will pass."

Technique 2: Box Breathing

When anxiety increases, breathing often becomes shallow and rapid.

Box breathing can help calm your nervous system.

Follow These Steps:

Breathe in for 4 seconds

Hold for 4 seconds

Breathe out for 4 seconds

Hold for 4 seconds

Repeat 4-5 times.

Imagine tracing the sides of a square as you breathe.

Technique 3: Orienting to Safety

Trauma can sometimes make the body feel as though danger is still present.

Slowly look around the room.

Notice:

- Where you are
- The date
- The time
- People around you
- Exits and entrances
- Signs of safety

Then say:

"I am in (location)."

"Today is (date)."

"The danger is not happening right now."

"I am safe in this moment."

Technique 4: Use Temperature

Strong physical sensations can help interrupt distress.

Try:

- Holding an ice cube
- Splashing cool water on your face
- Holding a warm cup of tea
- Wrapping yourself in a blanket

Notice the sensation and focus your attention on it.

Describe it to yourself:

- Is it warm or cool?
- Soft or firm?
- Light or heavy?

Technique 5: Count and Focus

Choose one category and slowly count:

- 10 blue objects
- 10 round objects
- 10 things beginning with a certain letter

This helps shift your brain from fear mode into thinking mode.

Technique 6: Ground Through Movement

Gentle movement can help reconnect you with your body.

Try:

- ✓ Stretching
- ✓ Walking
- ✓ Rolling your shoulders
- ✓ Stamping your feet
- ✓ Gentle yoga
- ✓ Wiggling your fingers and toes

Notice the movement and sensations in your body.

Technique 7: Create a Comfort Statement

Prepare a statement you can repeat when distressed.

Examples:

- "I am safe right now."
- "This feeling will pass."
- "I survived difficult things before."
- "I can cope with this moment."
- "I am stronger than I feel right now."

Choose one that feels meaningful to you.

My comfort statement:

If You Are Experiencing a Flashback

Remind yourself:

- ✓ This is a memory, not the present.
- ✓ I survived the event.
- ✓ I am safe now.
- ✓ I can slow my breathing.
- ✓ I can focus on my surroundings.
- ✓ This feeling will pass.

Try naming:

- Your full name
- Your age
- Today's date
- Where you are right now

This can help reconnect you with the present.

Create Your Personal Grounding Plan My Top Three Grounding Techniques

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Things That Help Me Feel Safe

People I Can Contact for Support

A Gentle Reminder

Grounding does not make difficult feelings disappear.

It helps you move through them safely.

If one technique does not work, try another. Different situations may require different approaches.

Be patient and compassionate with yourself.

You are not failing.

You are practising.

And every time you ground yourself, you are strengthening your ability to care for yourself and support your own healing.

Remember:

Pause. Breathe. Notice. Ground.