

# THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING GROUNDING SKILLS

## WHAT IS GROUNDING?

Grounding is a way to lessen or change feelings. Grounding guides you to focus on something other than the difficult emotions you are experiencing. When your mind is racing or your heart is pounding, grounding brings you back to the here and-now and guides your attention **towards present safety**. Grounding interrupts the thoughts in your mind that are causing you to feel distressed, anxious or sad. It gives you a little space to find ways to improve the moment despite pain or difficulty.

To be **grounded** is to feel the world around you moment to moment. For example, take a moment right now to feel your feet on the floor and your seat in the chair. That awareness of physical sensation is one type of grounding.

You may also think of grounding as centering, distracting, creating a safe place, or healthy detachment. Although grounding does not solve the problem that is contributing to your unpleasant emotions, it does provide a temporary way to gain control over your feelings and prevent things from getting worse. Grounding anchors you, gives you a chance to calm down, and allows you to eventually return and address the problem that is causing the painful emotions to begin with.

Grounding can be done anytime, anywhere, as a way to selfsoothe, relax and use your full senses to feel more at peace. You may need to 'turn your mind' many times. Be persistent.

*"The important idea in grounding is to zero in on small details and sensations. This takes you out of thinking and reacting and into your immediate surroundings or physical experience".*

## HOW DOES MEDITATION SUPPORT GROUNDING SKILLS?

While grounding can be applied to any situation throughout the day, meditation is usually practiced for a specific amount of time, from ten to twenty minutes or more. By taking regular time to meditate and practice mindfulness of breathing or thoughts, your skills build up and are more available during times of crisis.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

Like any new skill, it is best to practice grounding ahead of time. That way you can go into a difficult situation with greater confidence and calm.

If you expect to be in a challenging situation, sit quietly and deliberately imagine what might happen and how you want to respond. This way, you face the anticipated stressful situation on your own terms, with a powerful sense of control.

Once you have learned and practiced these techniques, you will gradually learn to stay grounded in the middle of difficult conversations or other stressful moments.

Check out the techniques below. Practice each one a few times. Maybe different ones can help you at different times; with practice, you will discover the technique(s) that work best for you.

You can also ask friends what they do to stay grounded and be mindful, and share what works. On the actual day, take a note card where you have written down which techniques you want to use.

**Remember, if the technique is not immediately helpful, repeat or shift the technique. Be patient.** Let time pass. It may take several minutes to let the emotion fade. Grounding yourself isn't always easy. It may take some time before the techniques work well for you, but don't give up on them.

Once you have calmed down and your mind stops racing, you will be able to think more clearly.