

# GROUNDING SKILLS

## What does it mean to be grounded?

It means being in your body, being aware of your body, being in the present, feeling emotions and being responsible for your safety and well-being.

## If you are having difficulty staying grounded you may want to ask yourself:

- Do you want to be grounded or do you dissociate because it's easier/less painful?
- Are you afraid of your feelings?
- Do you know what it feels like to be in your body?
- Do you know what it feels like to be grounded?
- How do you feel about your body?
- Do you blame your body?
- When do you dissociate (what happens immediately prior?)?
- What are your physical warning signs that you're becoming ungrounded?

## Possible Physical Warning Signs:

- Tension in body
- Anxiety in body
- Tightness in chest
- Difficulty breathing or quickening of breath
- Blurred vision
- Numbness of body or specific body parts
- Dizziness
- Floating sensation

## Steps to Ground

1. Make a decision to want to stay grounded, do the work and feel the feelings.
2. Learn your own personal warning signs.
3. Make a list of grounding skills to try and carry this list with you.
4. Practice grounding skills as often as possible  
-especially when you are feeling grounded already.
5. Journal about your dissociation and your process with grounding.

## Grounding skills during groups

- Bring your list and read it over before group begins
- Move feet on the ground-tap and change rhythms  
-if holding grounding stone-change rhythms
- Breathe deeply
- Switch body positions or move to another chair
- Stretch
- Tighten and relax body parts
- Speak up (either about the feeling or about the topic at hand)
- Ask questions and be involved
- Focus on other clients in the group  
-say other clients names in your head as you look at them
- Listen to what people are saying
- Drink water
- Don't get too comfortable

## General grounding skills

- Walk & move body
- Exercise and stretch
- Talk to someone
- Focus on objects

It is important to remember that everyone is different and everyone's body is different. Find out which grounding skills work for you by practicing them everyday.

The most important factor in making the grounding skills effective is to practice them when you are already grounded. Then if you begin to dissociate, you will know how to use them. And doing them when grounded may actually keep you from dissociating.

## IDEAS TO FACILITATE GROUNDING

1. Utilize a safe place.
2. Visualize setting aside overwhelming memory/emotion.
3. Change sensory component/input:
  - Sight, for example, take a walk, read a book.
  - Touch, for example, cuddle teddy bear, use hand lotion
  - Sound, for example, TV, radio, talk to staff/peer.
  - Taste, for example, eat something
  - Smell, for example, perfume
4. Become absorbed in an activity
5. Express something verbally, yell, if necessary
6. Write in journal
7. Do anger work with staff
8. Breathing exercises
9. Relaxation exercises
10. Call an internal support
11. Visualize a STOP sign
12. Use positive affirmations
13. Connect with the here and now, look around room, identify objects.
14. Talk in the mirror
15. Transfer emotion/memory into mirror
16. Monitor self talk-change negative to positive
17. Identify cognitive distortions and replace with counter statements
18. Dance
19. Repeat grounding phrase-"I'm here right now"
20. Identify (in writing) all problems. Then put into two groups:
  - Group 1: Those you have control over
  - Group 2: Those you cannot controlConcentrate on only one of those that can be controlled.
21. Decide what is important and what is not
22. Keep it simple KIS
23. Use transitional (safe) object
24. Pray-serenity prayer
25. Exercise
26. Draw
27. Find a safe person
28. Listen to a tape of your therapist
29. Listen to a tape of self-affirmations
30. Give self permission to address ONE THING AT A TIME -"Rome wasn't built in a day!"
31. Identify the trigger