

# Using Grounding Techniques

*Grounding techniques use the five senses to connect you with the present and move your attention away from what's going on in your mind. You can use them when you feel overwhelmed by thoughts and feelings. They can also reduce the likelihood of slipping into flashbacks or dissociating.*

## Refocus your attention.

Concentrate on something in your environment: colours, shapes, textures; the feeling of the arms of a chair, the titles of books on a shelf or pictures on a wall. Describe these things to yourself in detail.

Try noticing:

- 5 things that you can see;
- 4 things that you can hear;
- 3 things you can touch;
- 2 things that you can smell;
- 1 thing that you can taste



## Visualise a "grounding" image.

Rehearse a soothing image using your 'mind's eye' or imagination, which helps you to feel in control and safe – a place you've been to or a place you can imagine, like a beach or a landscape.



## Find a "grounding" object.

Find a comforting object that you can carry around with you.

Focus on this object when you feel overwhelmed – pay attention to how it feels, looks or smells.

This could be a stress ball, pebbles, sea shells, aromatherapy oils or a photo of a loved one.



## Develop a "grounding" phrase.

A few words or a tune which is a reminder that you are surviving in the present. Phrases can range from a brief "I am OK" to lengthy statements like:



**"I am surviving and I am doing my best".**

## Count backwards.

Some people find it helpful to count backwards. Start with a random three digit number (e.g. 158) and then count down in sevens. E.g. "158, 151, 144, ...".



## Smell.

Smell can be very powerful in grounding you to the present. Find a pleasant but strong smell to carry around, like after-shave, perfume or an aromatherapy oil. If you feel overwhelmed by intrusive thoughts, feelings, or flashbacks, inhale the smell slowly and deeply 5 times. Focus on the smell and how it makes you feel.



## Connect to the present.

If you suffer from flashbacks and/or dissociation, keep a piece of paper with today's date and a photo of something that makes you feel safe. Focus on today's date and the photo.

Tell yourself:

**'Today is Friday 20th April 2020.  
I am in my home in ...  
I feel safe in this photo...  
I am ... years old.  
I am safe right now'.**

