

## How to get grounded

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Grounding—the interruption of the flashback, dissociation, flooding, or numbing—is a process of changing these altered states of consciousness through self-awareness and self-compassion.

As difficult as it may be to be self-aware in one of these states, self-compassion requires one to be observant of this state, and to practice necessary techniques to help return to a more normal states of awareness. The practice of grounding has already occurred in the program to date, in the ability to become conscious of one's own breathing. The basics are the same:

- Keep your eyes open (closed eyes will reinforce dissociation).
- Practice conscious breathing.
- Scan the room.
- Keep the lights on (to stay in touch with the present).
- Focus on the *present*, not the past or future.
- Remind yourself that the worst is over.
- Be gentle with yourself.

Grounding work can be practiced by participants any time, any place, and anywhere. Remind the men that since most grounding work is invisible to others, no one has to know that they are practicing it.

The best way to augment one's grounding practice is incorporating a combination of cognitive and physical techniques:

### Grounding by meditative breathing

- Notice your body sensations such as tension, breathing, or pulse.
- Practice diaphragmatic or square breathing (as we have been practicing).
- Practice progressive relaxation techniques (as we have been practicing as well).

### Physical grounding:

- Distract yourself with a practical task (such as a grocery list, crossword puzzle, reading, or housework).
- Run cool or warm water over your hands.
- Touch various objects around you.
- Dig your heels into the floor or stamp your feet.
- Notice your body sensations such as tension, breathing, or pulse.
- Go for a walk, stretch your body, or other light exercise.
- Eat something, describing the flavours.

### Mental grounding

- Remind yourself who you are, your age. Describe your surroundings.
- Say a safety statement (out loud if you can): 'My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am safe right now. I am in the present, not the past. I am located at \_\_\_\_\_ and the date is \_\_\_\_\_'.
- Count to 10, say the alphabet, slowly, and/or describe where you are and who you are with.
- Visualise people you care about, and a place where you feel safe.
- If applicable, make eye contact with a trusting person.

Statements like 'This feeling will pass' may also help. Treating yourself to something healthy (e.g. a warm bath, a nice meal), and playing soothing music also may help during this transition. Don't be surprised if you feel physically or emotionally exhausted afterwards—again, practice gentleness with yourself.

