



FaithWorks Counseling

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Grounding Exercises for Anxiety & Stress

Grounding is a way to bring your mind back to the present moment when you feel anxious, overwhelmed, or disconnected. These exercises help you focus on your body, your senses, and your surroundings.

Why Use Grounding?

- Helps reduce racing thoughts
- Calms physical symptoms of anxiety
- Brings focus back to the here and now
- Useful during panic attacks, flashbacks, or strong emotions

The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique

A quick way to use your five senses to feel more present.

1. **5 things you see** – Look around and notice five objects, colors, or shapes.
2. **4 things you feel** – Notice the chair beneath you, your feet on the floor, your hands touching your clothing, or another texture.
3. **3 things you hear** – Pay attention to background sounds (traffic, birds, a fan, your breathing).
4. **2 things you smell** – Notice scents around you (coffee, soap, fresh air). If you can't smell anything, think of a favorite smell.
5. **1 thing you taste** – Notice the taste in your mouth or take a sip of water/tea.

Breathing Exercise: 4-7-8 Breathing

- Inhale through your nose for **4 seconds**.
- Hold your breath for **7 seconds**.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth for **8 seconds**.
- Repeat 3–4 times.

This slows down your nervous system and helps you relax.

Other Simple Grounding Strategies

- **Touch something cold or warm** (ice cube, cup of tea, cool water).
- **Name objects by category** (animals, foods, colors).
- **Stretch or move your body** (stand up, walk around, roll your shoulders).
- **Say your name and today's date out loud** to remind yourself where you are.

Tips for Success

- Practice grounding **every day**, not only during distress, so it becomes easier when you need it.
- Choose the exercises that work best for **you**.
- Keep this handout handy as a reminder during stressful times.

Remember: Grounding doesn't make problems disappear, but it helps you feel calm and steady so you can handle them more effectively.