



The Collective
ACT Clinicians



GENTLE GROUNDING EXERCISES

For When You're Feeling Overwhelmed

When your nervous system feels like it's running on overdrive, gentle grounding can help bring you back into your body and the present moment. This guide offers simple, body-based grounding techniques designed to support you during moments of overwhelm or emotional dysregulation. We've also included breathwork tips and a curated Spotify playlist to support your emotional reset.

What's Inside:

- Tools for Emotional Regulation
- Breathing Exercises
- Journaling & Self-Reflection
- Trauma-informed insights and sensory-adaptive options
- A scannable QR code linking to a calming Spotify playlist

Scan for
Spotify Playlist



Who Is This Guide For?

- Professionals
- Parents
- Students
- Anyone curious about reconnecting w/their body in a safe and affirming way
- Anyone dealing w/anxiety, trauma responses, or sensory overload



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What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of paying full, non-judgmental attention to the present moment. It means being aware of what's happening right now: your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the environment around you, without trying to change or judge it.

Mindful Breathing

- Sit comfortably and close your eyes if you want.
- Take slow, deep breaths—in through your nose, out through your mouth.
- Focus your attention on the feeling of the air moving in and out.
- When your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your breath.
- Do this for 2-5 minutes.



MINDFUL BREATHING

Mindful Breathing Technique



BOX BREATHING

Inhale 4 counts → Hold 4 → Exhale 4 → Hold 4. Repeat 3 times.

Helpful before stressful conversations or meetings.

DOUBLE EXHALE METHOD

Inhale slowly through the nose, exhale twice as long through the mouth. Calms the nervous system quickly.

Try in the car, bathroom breaks, or right before sleep.

HAND BREATHING

Trace one hand with your finger. Inhale as you trace up a finger, exhale as you trace down.

Great for kids or adults who prefer visual and tactile cues.

Trauma-Informed Insights and Sensory-Adaptive Options

- **Always Give Yourself Permission:** Skip any technique that feels too intense or inaccessible.
- **Avoid Forced Stillness:** For trauma survivors, stillness can be triggering. Movement-based grounding may be more effective.
- **Weighted Options:** Use a weighted lap pad, warm blanket, or body sock for deeper body awareness.
- **Low-Stimulation Variations:** Utilize dim lighting, don't utilize sound (skip Spotify playlist if overstimulated by sounds), only utilize the text-only instructions if you have sensory sensitivity.
- **Visual + Tactile Anchoring:** For clients with sensory sensitivities or who are nonverbal, consider using a visual cue card or fidget item paired with a printed or symbolic version of "I AM Here." Or hold a smooth grounding stone or textured card while reading the phrase.

Grounding Techniques

Relaxing and meditative practices for you to connect with the present moment.

- **54321 Sensory Scan**

Identify 5 things you can  4 things you can  3 things you can  2 things you can  and 1 thing you

This is a classic, fast-acting way to anchor into the present moment.

Clinical tip: This works well for those experiencing panic or dissociation.

- **Barefoot on the Ground**

If safe, step outside barefoot and simply notice the texture beneath your feet, grass, pavement, or floor.

Adaptive Option: If barefoot isn't possible, press your palms or back firmly against a wall.

- **Temperature Shift**

Hold an ice cube, splash cold water on your face, or press a cool cloth to your neck. This engages the vagus nerve and interrupts panic.

Note: Can be overstimulating so use a warm compress instead if needed.

- **Naming and Tapping**

While tapping lightly on your chest or thighs with both hands, name what you're feeling: "I feel anxious," "I feel tense," "I'm okay."

Clinician Tip: Pair with breathwork for deeper effect.

- **"I Am Here" Anchor Phrase**

Repeat a grounding affirmation like, "I am safe. I am present. I am okay." Say aloud or in your mind while placing one hand on your heart. Alternative w/breath: "Inhale I AM, Exhale Here. Repeat 3-5 times or if feeling really activated repeat 7-10 times while pressing your feet into the floor or wrapped in a weighted blanket."



Journal Prompts

- What did I notice in my body?



A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a dashed brown border, intended for journaling.

- How did this shift my emotions?



A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a dashed brown border, intended for journaling.

- What grounding tool do I want to try again?

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a dashed brown border, intended for journaling.

