

SCD Skills Workshop- Toolkit

Student Counselling & Development

Fall 2019

Grounding Technique

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. This is a calming technique that can help get you through tough or stressful situations.

How to practice 5-4-3-2-1 Technique:

Take a deep belly breath to begin.

5 - LOOK: Look around for 5 things that you can see and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the picture frame.

4 - FEEL: Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel the hair on the back of my neck, or I feel the pillow I am sitting on.

3 - LISTEN: Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your stomach rumbling. Say the three things out loud.

2 - SMELL: Say two things you can smell. If you're able, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favorite smells.

1 - TASTE: Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favorite thing to taste. Take another deep belly breath to end.



Relaxation Techniques

Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a simple yet powerful relaxation technique that is easy to learn and can be done almost anywhere.

How to practice deep breathing:

Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.

Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.

Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.

Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

If you find it difficult breathing from your abdomen while sitting up, try lying down. Put a small book on your stomach and breathe so that the book rises as you inhale and falls as you exhale.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a two-step process in which you systematically tense and relax different muscle groups in the body. With regular practice, it gives you an intimate familiarity with what tension feels like in your body. This can help you react to the first signs of the muscular tension that accompanies stress and as your body relaxes, so will your mind.

How to practice progressive muscle relaxation:

Start at your feet and work your way up to your face, trying to only tense those muscles intended.

Loosen clothing, take off your shoes, and get comfortable.

Take a few minutes to breathe in and out in slow, deep breaths.

When you're ready, shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.

Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.

Relax your foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and how your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.

Stay in this relaxed state for a moment, breathing deeply and slowly.

Shift your attention to your left foot. Follow the same sequence of muscle tension and release.

Move slowly up through your body, contracting and relaxing the different muscle groups.

It may take some practice at first but try not to tense muscles other than those intended.

Mindfulness Meditation

Meditations that cultivate mindfulness have long been used to reduce stress and manage emotions. Some of these practices bring you into the present by focusing your attention on a single repetitive action, such as your breathing or a few repeated words. Other forms of mindfulness meditation encourage you to follow and then release internal thoughts or sensations. Mindfulness can also be applied to activities such as walking, exercising, or eating.

Using mindfulness to stay focused on the present might seem straightforward, but it takes practice to reap all the benefits. When you first start practicing, you'll likely find that your focus keeps wandering back to your worries or regrets. But don't get disheartened. Each time you draw your focus back to the present, you're strengthening a new mental habit that can help you break free of fretting about the past or stressing about the future. Using an app or audio download can also help focus your attention, especially when you're starting out.

How to practice mindfulness meditation:

If you have a stopwatch with an alarm set it for a couple minutes where you are totally immersed in the mindfulness meditation.

Find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted or distracted.

Sit on a comfortable chair with your back straight.

Close your eyes and find a point of focus, such as your breathing—the sensation of air flowing into your nostrils and out of your mouth or your belly rising and falling—or a meaningful word that you repeat throughout the meditation.

Don't worry about distracting thoughts that go through your mind or about how well you're doing. If thoughts intrude your relaxation session, don't fight them, just gently turn your attention back to your point of focus, without judgment.

Adapted from <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>