

A GROUNDING AND REGULATION TOOLKIT

Simple ways to reconnect with the present moment

Grounding helps bring attention back to the present when anxiety, panic, distress, overwhelm or difficult memories pull you away from a sense of safety. Regulation means noticing what your nervous system needs and offering appropriate support.

Not every technique suits every person. This toolkit gives you choices so you can discover what feels safe, accessible and genuinely helpful.

Encouragement

You are not trying to force feelings away. You are giving your body enough safety and support to stay with the present moment.

Orient to the present

When distress rises, begin by gently reminding your brain where you are. Keep your eyes open if that feels safer and move slowly enough to notice each answer.

Name the here and now

Say your name, the date, where you are and what is happening. Try: "I am in my room. It is Tuesday. I am having a strong feeling. I can see the door and hear traffic. This moment is different from the past."

Use the room

Turn your head slowly. Find three corners, two windows or doors, one source of light and one object you like. Notice distance, colour and shape. Let your surroundings show your brain that you are here.

The 5-4-3-2-1 senses practice

Notice 5 things you can see • 4 things you can feel or touch • 3 things you can hear • 2 things you can smell • 1 thing you can taste. Describe details rather than rushing. If five steps are too much, choose one object and notice its colour, temperature, texture, weight and edges.

COACHING PROMPT: Which sense helps me feel most present, and which senses should I avoid when overwhelmed?

A regulation menu for body and mind

Regulation is personal. Some nervous systems need less input; others need movement, pressure or rhythm. Choose one or two strategies rather than trying everything at once.

Breath

Let the breath move as comfortably as possible. Try a gentle, steady in-breath and out-breath without forcing depth or holding.

Pressure

Press feet into the floor, palms together or your back into a chair. Use a weighted item only if safe and comfortable.

Movement

Walk, sway, stretch, shake out hands, push against a wall or use repetitive movement that feels regulating.

Temperature

Hold a cool or warm object, wash hands or notice fresh air. Avoid extremes that could injure skin.

Rhythm

Count, hum, tap, rock, listen to a familiar beat or repeat a reassuring phrase.

Connection

Sit near someone safe, hear a familiar voice, stroke a pet or send a simple message

Permission to stop

If a technique makes you more distressed, dizzy, numb, trapped or disconnected, stop and choose something else. Grounding is an invitation, not a test you can fail.

ENCOURAGEMENT: The right tool is the one that helps your nervous system, not the one others prefer.

A toolkit for difficult moments

When thinking is hard, short instructions are easier to use. Save this page to your phone or ask someone you trust to read one step at a time.

1. Pause Reduce demands. Sit or stand somewhere physically safe.

2. Orient Name where you are and find one stable object in the room.

3. Connect Feel feet, chair or hands making contact with a surface.

4. Choose Use one sense, one movement or one steady rhythm.

5. Reassure Try: "This is a strong moment. I do not have to solve everything now."

6. Support Tell or message someone: "I need calm company, not questions."

7. Recover Lower expectations afterwards and allow food, drink, quiet or rest as appropriate.

Make a small grounding kit

Consider a smooth object, textured fabric, strong mint if safe, calming scent if tolerated, headphones, familiar photograph, written coping phrase, water, fidget item and contact details for support. Avoid anything unsafe for your health, allergies or environment.

SUPPORTIVE PHRASE: "I am here. I can go slowly. One small step is enough."

Build your regulation plan

Complete this during a steadier moment. A personal plan reduces decision-making when you are distressed and helps supporters respond in ways that suit you.

My early signs

Changes in thoughts, speech, body, senses or behaviour.

My common triggers

Situations, memories, environments or unmet physical needs.

Tools that help

Grounding, movement, sensory support, rhythm or connection.

Tools to avoid

Anything that increases distress, pain, dizziness or shutdown.

What others can do

Useful words, practical actions and the amount of space I need.

Aftercare

Rest, food, hydration, quiet, routine or follow-up support.

A final word of encouragement

Grounding does not erase what happened or demand instant calm. It offers a bridge back to the present, one sensation, breath, movement or safe connection at a time.

Until next time, give yourself space to breathe. With love, Maggie.