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Grounding Techniques

source: P. Stubbs

As survivors we all at one time or another may experience flashbacks and/or periods of intense anxiety surrounding the memories of abuse. During those times it's important to find ways to ground ourselves in the here and now until the feelings pass. Below is a compilation of all the techniques I know about that may help you through. If you find the list useful, go ahead and print it out and post it where it would most benefit you. As with anything, if a particular technique makes you uncomfortable, don't try it; only you know what will work best for you. If you use or know of a technique that I missed, please don't hesitate to email me using the link at the bottom of the page. Thank you.

Try to ground yourself by trying any one of the techniques listed below. Once you have found techniques that work for you type them up and print them out and keep them handy to ensure you'll use them when you need them:

- Pull up the daily newspaper on your browser, like [The Washington Post](#). Notice the date and read a current article.
- Stomp your feet to remind yourself where you are. Press your feet firmly into the ground.
- Try to notice where you are, your surroundings including the people, the sounds like the t.v. or radio.
- Concentrate on your breathing. Take a deep cleansing breath from your diaphragm. Count the breaths as you exhale. Make sure you breath slowly so you don't hyperventilate.
- Cross your legs and arms. Feel the sensations of you controlling your body.
- Call a friend and ask them to talk with you about something you have recently done together.
- Take a warm relaxing bubble bath or a warm shower. Feel the water touching your body.
- Mentally remind yourself that the memory was then, and it is over. Give yourself permission to not think about it right now.
- Keep a rubberband on your wrist and pluck it -- feel the slight sting as it touches your skin.
- Realize that no matter how small you feel, you are an adult. If you have kids think about them now.
- Find your pulse on your wrist and count the beats per minute. Concentrate on feeling the blood pulse throughout your body.
- Go outside and sit against a tree. Feel the bark pressing against your body. Smell the outside aromas like the grass and the leaves. Run your fingers through the grass.
- If you are sitting, stand. If you are standing sit. Pay attention to the movement change. Reminding yourself -- you are in control.
- Rub your palms, clap your hands. Listen to the sounds. Feel the sensation.
- Speak out loud. Say your name, or your child's name or significant others name.
- Hold something that you find comforting, for some it may be a stuffed animal or a blanket. Notice how it feels in your hands. Is it hard or soft?
- Eat something. How does it taste, sweet or sour? Is it warm or cold?
- If you have a pet (a dog, cat, hamster, gerbil) use that moment to touch them. Feel their fur and

Speak the animal's name out loud.

- Go to a mirror and make yourself smile. Watch your reflection as the expression changes. How does it make you feel.
- Visualize a bright red STOP sign to help you stop the flashback and/or memory
- Step outside. If it's warm, feel the sun shining down on your face. If it's cold, feel the breeze. How does it make your body feel?
- During a non-crisis time make a list of things that are in your house and what room they are in. Give this list to friends that you can call during a flashback so they can help remind you what is around you.
- During a non-crisis time make a list of positive affirmations. Print them out and keep them handy for when you are having a flashback. During a flashback read the list out loud.
- Take a walk outside and notice your neighborhood. Pay attention to houses and count them.
- Listen to familiar music and sing along to it. Dance to it.
- Make a list of known triggers and give it to your therapist. Ask them if they can help you find a way to desensitize those triggers so they aren't quite so powerful.
- Write in your journal. Pay attention to yourself holding the pencil. Write about what you are remembering and visualize the memory traveling out of you into the pencil and onto the paper. Tear the paper up or seal it in an envelope. Give it to your therapist for safekeeping.
- Go online and talk with an online friend. Write an email.
- Imagine yourself in a safe place. Feel the safety and know it.
- Watch a favorite t.v. program or video. Play a video game.
- If you have a garden, work in it. Feel your hands running through the dirt.
- Wash dishes or clean your house.
- Meditate if you are comfortable with it.
- Exercise. Ride a bike, stationary or otherwise. Lift weights. Do jumping jacks.

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