

A person wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with intricate embroidery on the cuffs is sitting outdoors. Their hands are clasped together in their lap. The background is a soft-focus view of a sandy area, possibly a beach, with some greenery in the distance. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

# Thriving Through Trauma

**Week 2: Grounding**

Presented by CSUEB Counseling Services

A close-up photograph of a human hand, palm facing forward, against a dark background. A small, bright red mark is visible on the palm, near the base of the middle finger. The hand is positioned centrally, with the fingers slightly spread.

# **54321 Grounding Technique**

## A Few Zoom Guidelines

- Please mute your audio and type any questions into the chat box
- Your video can be off or on, whatever makes you most comfortable
- Confidentiality and Zoom limitations

## Community Agreements

- Speak to your own experience
- Share headlines, not details
- Step forward, step back
- Ask others before giving them feedback
- Assume positive intent from others
- Take responsibility for your needs
- Commit to all weeks of group
- Any suggestions?



# Weekly Check-In

Name, preferred pronouns, major, favorite color?

**How are you (*weather analogy*)? What way did you vibe more this week?**

- ☐ Grounding
- ☐ Compassion
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Choose Self-Respect
- ☐ Taking Care of Your Body
- ☐ Create a new story
- ☐ Structure your day
- ☐ Trust the process
- ☐ Reframe setbacks
- ☐ Focus on now/ your goals

A long, straight asphalt road stretches from the bottom center towards the horizon, flanked by dry, scrubby desert land. In the distance, low mountains are visible under a heavy, grey, and dramatic sky. The overall mood is contemplative and vast.

# Quote of the Day

“No feeling is final.”

-Rainer Maria Rilke *(20th C. German Poet)*

A stack of smooth, rounded stones of various shades of brown and grey, balanced on a beach. The background shows a calm blue ocean and a clear blue sky. The stones are stacked vertically, with the top stone being the largest and most prominent.

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# Grounding

What is it? What is the purpose?

# Grounding is ....

1. a **self-soothing** skill to use when you are dealing with a lot of stress, overwhelming feelings, and/or intense anxiety
2. a technique that helps **detach** from overwhelming emotions and **reorient** you to the present safety and to reality
3. emotional regulation & distress tolerance

Many people struggle with feeling either too much (overwhelming emotions and memories) or too little (numbing and dissociation). In grounding, you **attain a balance** between the two: conscious of reality, and able to tolerate it.

***Remember that pain is a feeling; it is not who you are.***



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# Grounding Examples

What does it look like?

# Mental Grounding



Describe your environment  
in detail



Play a "categories" game  
with yourself



Think of the words to an  
inspiring song, quote, poem



Remember a safe place



Read something, saying  
each word to yourself



Count to 10 or say the  
alphabet, very slowly

# Physical Grounding



Run cool or warm water over  
your hands



Grab tightly onto your chair  
as hard as you can



Touch various objects/  
textures around you



Dig your heels into the floor



Jump up and down



Clench and release your fists



Stretch, yoga, walking

# Soothing Grounding



Recite a **safety affirmation**  
or mantra



Picture people you care  
about



Watch **soothing videos** or  
shows/movies



Take a shower or bath



Plan a **safe treat** for yourself



Think of favorites - can be  
anything



Use **humor**

A person is shown in a meditative pose, sitting cross-legged on a dark yoga mat outdoors. They are wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and pants. Their hands are resting on their knees with palms facing up. The background is a soft-focus landscape with green grass and a hazy sky. A large, semi-transparent white circle with the number '3' inside is centered over the person's torso.

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# Tips and Guidelines

Tips and guidelines for successful grounding

# Grounding Guidelines

- Grounding can be done **any time, any place, anywhere**, and no one has to know
- **Use** when you are faced with a trigger, enraged, dissociating, having a substance craving, or whenever your emotional pain goes above 6 (on a 0-10 scale).
- **Stay neutral** - avoid judgments of "good" and "bad."
  - *Instead of "The walls are blue; I dislike blue because it reminds me of depression," simply say "The walls are blue" and move on.*

# Grounding Tips

1. No talking about negative feelings or journal writing
  - a. You want to distract away from negative feelings, not get in touch with them.
2. Practice regularly, especially when not triggered
3. As you practice, try it for a longer time
4. Keep an accessible list of which techniques work best for you
5. Create your own techniques
6. Start grounding early in a negative cycle
7. Get help from family and friends
8. Prepare in advance
9. Use audio cues, such as a recording of an exercise that works for you
10. Don't give up!



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# Reflect & Debrief



## Reflect & Debrief

### Reflect/ Debrief

Any thoughts? Questions?  
Reflections? Reactions?

### Check Out Question

1 thing you are taking away from the  
group & 1 technique you are committing  
to do for yourself this week

# Additional Resources

- **Mental Health apps:** Wysa, Clarity (CBT), Mindshift, MoodTools, Calm, Shine, Happify, Headspace, Days since, IAmSober, Worry Watch, PTSD Coach, DBT Coach
- **Counseling groups** throughout every week
- **Pioneers for HOPE** - support with food and housing @pioneersforhope
- Follow us on **Instagram** - @eastbayshcs
- **Downloadable slides and group handouts**





# **Next Week:** **Self-Talk & Compassion**



# Thanks for Joining!

**See you next week!**

With appreciation to the Allies Program (Sacramento, CA) for formatting this Safe Coping List. © Guilford Press, New York. From: Najavits, L.M. *Seeking Safety: A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse* (2002). Only for personal use with clients.