Welcome to Module #1

TO BEGIN OUR TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY WE MUST BEGIN WITH GROUNDING…

What is grounding and why is it so important to get grounded as we begin our journey of healing?

Grounding is a self-soothing skill that:

1. You can use it when you are having a bad day or dealing with a lot of stress, overwhelming feelings, and/or intense anxiety.

2. Helps keep you in the present and reorients you to the reality of the “here and now”.

3. Is a practice that can help you pull away from ruminative thinking, unwanted memories, and challenging emotions.

4. May help distract you from what you’re experiencing and refocus on what’s happening in the present moment.

Signs of being ungrounded:

Mentally

1. Feeling dizzy
2. Feeling “spaced out”
3. Inability to focus and concentrate
4. Forgetfulness
5. Losing track of time
6. Unable to track what people are saying to you
7. Unable to communicate effectively
8. Trouble completing tasks, jumping from one task to another

Emotionally

1. Agitated
2. Overwhelmed
3. Restless
4. Discontent with your surroundings, yourself, and the people around you
5. Anxious

Physically

1. Tiredness after waking
2. Feeling out of your body
3. Clumsy
4. Rapid heartbeat
5. Shaky hands
6. Sweating
7. Tired and wired at the same time
8. Insomnia

As a therapist, I regularly witness how grounding techniques can quickly help shift the energies of anxiety, overwhelm, and overthinking in most of the clients who come into my office. I'm also aware that people (including myself) easily forget or downplay the need for a daily grounding practice and continue to experience unnecessary suffering.
Indeed, stress, intense emotions, trauma, and shock can cause us to feel "out of our bodies," and disconnected from ourselves just when we need ourselves the most.

Our modern technological world has led to a sedentary, indoor lifestyle, where we are cut-off from nature, our emotions, and our bodies. Our brains get addicted to the "ping" on the phone that lets us know we received a text, an email or a Facebook post.

Research shows dopamine levels, an important biochemical in the reward pleasure system of our brains, increase with such reinforcements making us more and more likely to keep using the phone to continue the pleasurable connection.

Adolescent brains, still developing, are particularly vulnerable to this conditioning, perhaps explaining part of why mental health issues have skyrocketed among our teens. Phone scrolling allows for quick shifting between topics and screens and ruptures an experience of being present in the moment. How often do any of us sit down to check email on our phones only to get pulled into many minutes, even hours of passive scrolling?

The good news is that grounding can be a simple and pleasurable self-soothing process that allows us to keep coming home to ourselves, to our bodies, to the earth we walk upon.

More thoughts on grounding…

- Grounding techniques alleviate anxiety, overwhelm, and overthinking.
- Modern lifestyle disconnects us from nature, emotions, and physical sensations.
- Technology fosters addiction to notifications, boosting dopamine levels.
- Adolescent brains are especially susceptible to this conditioning.
- Grounding offers a simple, enjoyable self-soothing method.
- It reconnects us with ourselves, our bodies, and the natural world.

ALL CHANGE BEGINS WITH AWARENESS AND GETTING AWARE OF YOURSELF WITHIN YOUR BODY IS THE BEGINNING OF GROUNDING…

START WITH A QUICK BODY SCAN TO GET PRESENT -

Notice your feet on the ground. Can you focus your attention there?

Notice the outline of your body and feel your essence within your body– your human vessel.

Bring your awareness here in your body right now.

Notice if you can feel your energy throughout your body or is the activity mainly in your mind.

Overthinking tends to be something we all do, especially in the modern world that tends to be left brain-dominate and elevates the role of mind above other aspects of ourselves including our emotions, somatic sensations, our spirits, our souls. Grounding helps us to reduce the mental chatter, come into our bodies, and in alignment with ourselves.

Grounding techniques for the body:

THESE TECHNIQUES USE YOUR FIVE SENSES OR TANGIBLE OBJECTS — THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH — TO HELP YOU MOVE THROUGH DISTRESS.

1. Take a slow walk outside, noticing your feet on the ground

2. Put your hands in water - notice the temperature and let your hands warm up or cool down

3. Pick up and touch items around you – notice temperature, texture, feeling

4. Breathe deeply – in on the count of 5, out on the count of 5

5. Savor a food or drink

6. Savor a scent – flowers, essential oils, food

7. Listen to and name what you hear in your surroundings

8. Go outside barefoot and put your feet directly on the ground, soaking up the electromagnetic frequencies of the earth

Grounding techniques for the mind:

THESE GROUNDING EXERCISES USE MENTAL DISTRACTIONS TO HELP REDIRECT YOUR THOUGHTS AWAY FROM DISTRESSING FEELINGS AND BACK TO THE PRESENT.

1. Take a moment and name what is around you

2. Think in categories – name fish, name states, name favorite foods

3. Use math – run through the time table in your head or count backwards from 100

4. Recite something – a song or a poem

5. Use an anchoring statement – I am Martha, I am 52, I live in….

6. Imagine leaving painful thoughts behind or shutting them behind a door that you can lock.

Grounding techniques for the emotions:

1. Picture the voice or face of someone (including a pet) you love.

2. Practice self-kindness - Repeat kind, compassionate phrases to yourself (for example: “I am allowing myself to rest today”)

3. List your favorite things

4. Visualize your favorite place

5. Touch something comforting

6. List positive things that have happened to you or in the world

7. Listen to music – choose your fight song, or your soothing song

Here are some additional tips to help you get the most out of these techniques:

PRACTICE. It can help to practice grounding even when you aren't experiencing distress.

START EARLY. Try doing a grounding exercise when you first start to feel bad. Don't wait for distress to reach a level that's harder to handle.

AVOID ASSIGNING VALUES. For example, if you're grounding yourself by describing your environment, concentrate on the basics of your surroundings, rather than how you feel about them.

CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF. Before and after a grounding exercise, rate your distress as a number between 1 and 10. What level is your distress when you begin? How much did it decrease after the exercise? This can help you get a better idea of whether a particular technique is working for you.

Song – “Feet on the Floor” Guided Visualization

Original composition by Carrie and Chris Ishee

Creative Expression

- Create an image of what came up from the visualization allowing your unconscious to speak.
- Follow your impulses and let intuition be your guide.
- Allow yourself to choose the colors, lines, and images that arise as you create.
- Have fun. This is not about creating a beautiful image, it is a right brain expression exploring the concept of groundedness.

Journal

- Look at your image and allow the image to speak to you without thinking too much
- Journal whatever comes up without editing it.
- Ask the image what it wants you to know and keep asking it questions
- Write down its response as you listen to the wisdom coming from your unconscious mind.

Movement

Take a 10-15 minute walk outside, intentionally paying attention to your feet on the ground. Practice “Walking as if you are kissing the earth with your feet.”

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Self Inquiry

DO THIS WHENEVER YOU FEEL UNGROUNDED...

EACH DAY ASK YOURSELF AND JOURNAL:

1. How present in my body do I feel right now?

2. How engaged am I with my senses?

3. How present am I to what is around me or how caught up in my thoughts am I?

4. Are my thoughts about the past and future, or about what is happening now?

5. Notice what environments, activities, or people help you to feel grounded.

6. Notice what environments, activities, or people make you feel ungrounded.

MY FAVORITE THINGS THAT HELP ME FEEL SAFE:

MY FAVORITE SONG THAT HELPS ME FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED:

MY SAFE PERSON OR ANIMAL TO VISUALIZE

MY SAFE PLACE TO VISUALIZE WHEN I FEEL UNSAFE

A POWERFUL AFFIRMATION TO SELF, CONFIRMING SAFETY

Daily Practices for Grounding

WHAT PROCESSES ARE MOST EFFECTIVE IN HELPING ME GROUND?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TAKE-AWAY OF THIS MODULE?