

# Grounding Techniques

A few activities to try out - on your own and with others - to help build resiliency, regulate emotions, and improve overall well-being.

## When in the 'Limit' Zone, on the way to Hyperarousal *Defending · Winding up · Fidgeting*

### 1 The ABC Technique

A simple activity helping to manage stress and anxiety by acknowledging your feelings, breathing rhythmically, and then choosing what to do next.

- **Acknowledge:** Recognize how you feel in the moment.
- **Breathe:** Focus on your breathing, taking deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. You can try counting to ten slowly as you breathe.
- **Choose:** Consciously decide what you will do next.

### 2 The 4-4-8 Breathing Technique

A box breathing activity using your breath to activate your parasympathetic nervous system, which helps calm the body, reducing the its stress response.

- **While sitting, breathe in through your nose for a count of 4, taking the breath into your stomach.**
- **Hold your breath for a count of 4.**
- **Release your breath through your mouth with a whooshing sound for a count of 8.**
- Without a break, breathe in again for a count of 4, repeating the entire technique 3-4 times in a row.
- Focus on counting when breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing out.

### 3 The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique

A sensory-based activity helping to bring your mind back to the present moment by drawing attention to the physical world. Yes, we like letters and numbers.

- Look around and **acknowledge 5 things** you can see, like the colour of a wall, a piece of furniture, or the view outside a window.
- **Identify 4 things** you can touch, and notice their textures, like the feeling of your clothing, the chair you're sitting on, or the ground beneath your feet.
- Tune into the sounds in your environment, and **focus on 3 things** you can hear, like traffic outside, birds chirping, or the hum of an appliance.
- If possible, **notice 2 things** you can smell, like your coffee, the essential oils in the diffuser, or a scented hand lotion.
- If you have something to eat or drink, savour its flavour, **identify 1 thing** you can taste. Alternatively, notice the taste in your mouth.

## When in the 'Limit' Zone, on the way to Hypoarousal *Disconnecting · Disassociating · Leaving*

### 1 Physical Activation

- **Shake it Out:** You don't need to be a Swiftie. Stand up and shake your arms, legs, and/or whole body to increase energy flow.
- **Jumping Jacks or High Knees:** Like gym class in the 90's, engage in a short burst of cardio to increase your heart rate.
- **March in Place:** Yeah, this isn't about looking cool. Lift your knees high and swing your arms as if walking briskly.

### 2 Sensory Stimulation

- **Clap Your Hands:** Bring together your hug grippers firmly and notice the sensation and sound.
- **Cold Splash or Ice:** Splash cold water on your face or hold an ice cube in your hand to stimulate alertness.
- **Textured Object:** Hold or rub a textured object - like a rough stone, velcro, or fabric - to engage your senses.

### 3 Creative Engagement

- **Doodle or Draw with Bright Colours:** Get yourself some colourful pens, crayons, or paints and create that work of art that belongs in a museum.
- **Write Rapidly:** Set a timer for 2-3 minutes and write whatever comes to mind without stopping (and without judgment).
- **Build Something:** Grab that old box of Lego, break into the kids' craft box, or get outside and grab some twigs and rocks. Doesn't matter, just let loose and build!

### 4 Energizing Breath

- **Bellows Breath:** Sit upright. Inhale and exhale quickly through your nose, aiming for about 2-3 breaths per second.
  - Perform this for 10 seconds initially, gradually increasing as it becomes more comfortable.

