



## **Grounding**

When we re-experience a trauma memory, we often experience it in all five of our senses; we see, hear, feel, taste and smell things associated with the event. This can make us feel as though we are back in that situation, and this often provokes fear and anxiety. **Grounding** is a technique that uses those five senses to reconnect us with the present moment and to reassure us that we are safe. It can be particularly helpful for people who experience dissociation, flashbacks and nightmares.

### **Sight**

Look around you, what can you see? Remind yourself where you are, that you are in the present and safe.

### **Sound**

What can you hear? Focus on each of the noises and use them to remind you of where you are.

### **Touch**

What can you feel? If you are sitting or lying down how does the chair or bed feel against your back? What is the air temperature like? How does the fabric of the clothes you are wearing feel? Some people also find it helpful to carry an object that reminds them they are safe e.g. pebble or stress ball.

### **Smell**

What can you smell right now? Try to detect different smells in the air and name what they might be. If you are at home things like plants, incense, and candles can be useful to bring us back into the present moment. If you find smell particularly helpful when trying to soothe yourself it may be useful to consider a small bottle of or piece of cloth dipped in essential oils which you can carry with you.

### **Taste**

Can you taste anything right now? Some people find it useful to chew gum or eat strongly flavoured sweets. Alternatively if you experience strong “taste memories” focusing on the lack of taste in the present moment can be helpful.

## Activity: 5-4-3-2-1

Wherever you are when you feel you are becoming distressed, try to take a moment to focus on each of your senses and try to come up with the following number of things you notice.

<b>5 things you can see</b> (e.g. birds, trees, a spot on the ceiling, pictures hung on the wall)	1 2 3 4 5
<b>4 things you can feel or touch</b> (e.g. your hair, your hands, the chair you are sat on)	1 2 3 4
<b>3 things you can hear</b> (e.g. a clock ticking, a car, a dog barking)	1 2 3
<b>2 things you can smell</b> (e.g. soap, your clothes, air freshener)	1 2
<b>1 thing you can taste</b> (e.g. chewing gum, coffee)	1