

Grounding Tools to Help in Hard Times

Develop a reliable place, real or imaginary, where you feel calm and peaceful that you can pull into your mind when needed. It may be a beach, mountain desert, or forest scene or may be floating on a pink cloud, soaring, hang gliding. Practice it until you can pull it up at will and access that feeling.

Visual:

Keep your eyes open, look around the room. Name things you see. Name details you see.

Develop a "split screen" technique. Imagine one half on the screen is filled with your image of calmness or peace with the memory or flashback on the other half.

Physical:

Breathe! Take 3 slow, deep breaths.

Chew a piece of ice or eat some ice cream or drink cold water.

Put a cold cloth on your face.

Hold something cold such as a soda can.

Stamp your feet, clap your hands.

Stand up.

Take your shoes off and rub your feet on the floor.

Move around: stretch, walk, do yoga.

Pet your cat or dog if you have one.

Hold or cuddle a stuffed animal.

Take a shower, feel the warmth and imagine your stress washing away.

Take a bath with bubbles and make shapes with the bubbles.

Dig in the garden or container pot.

Walk through the home turning on the lights, then reverse your path and turn them off.

Ride a bike, go to the gym, swim at the pool or lake.

Hug a tree, feel the solidity, the bark, notice the shapes and colors of the leaves.

Olfactory:

Keep a small bag of lavender or other fragrance that is pleasant for you.

Peel an orange or lemon, notice the smell of the oils.

Spray yourself with your favorite fragrance.

Auditory:

Listen to music that helps you soothe and feel secure.

Speak out loud, recite your favorite poem.

Verbal:

Call a friend and talk about the last time you spent together.

Speak out loud.

Remind yourself, "That was then, this is now."

Name 5 things you can see. Name another 5 things you can see.

Complex:

Touch things around you and name them as you do.

Develop an ability to take your thought and store it in a secure place such as a lockbox, bank vault, safe, submarine under water, until you are with a safe person to assess it again.

List your affirmations and post them on the fridge for easy access when you want them.

Color or paint or do your favorite art medium or craft.

Buy cheap cups and saucers at a garage sale or thrift shop and break them into your garbage can or an oil drum.

Develop a list of 6 people who have agreed to be on your list that you can call. Tell them how they can help.

Journal

List and practice the skills that most fit you until you can use them anytime.