



FAITH
HELPS
LLC

COPING SKILLS FOR DISTRESSING TIMES

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GROUNDING EXERCISES

5 × 5 × 5 Exercise

Identify:

- 5 things you can see
- 5 things you can feel
- 5 things you can hear

As you do this, pay attention to details and ask yourself:

- What colors do you see?
- What textures can you feel?
- Do you notice blemishes, patterns, or different shapes?
- Do the items you touch feel cold, warm, hot, or room temperature?
- What sounds are familiar? Which ones are unfamiliar?
- Can you identify what is creating the sounds you hear?

Frozen Lemon, Lime, or Orange

Take a frozen lemon, lime, or orange and engage as many of your senses as possible.

- Place the frozen fruit on different parts of your skin (e.g., the backs of your hands, wrists, shoulders, neck, legs, or ankles). What differences do you notice?
- Can you smell the fruit? Try describing it in detail as if explaining it to someone who has never seen or heard of it before.
- What do you see? Notice blemishes, imprints, bruises, or changes in color and texture.
- As it melts, what changes do you notice? Allow yourself to get messy if needed.
- Is the fruit changing shape? Becoming softer or mushy?
- Try pressing your finger into the fruit and slowly pulling it apart. Notice the sound.
- If you feel comfortable, taste it. Is it sour, sweet, or bitter? Is it still cold, or has it warmed closer to room temperature?

GROUNDING EXERCISES

Past vs. Present Orientation

This exercise helps reorient you from a past experience to the present moment. Triggers can sometimes cause emotional or psychological flashbacks. Noticing the differences between then and now can help reduce anxiety, maintain calm, and support continued functioning. Ask yourself the following questions. Modify them as needed based on the type of trigger.

Situational Triggers

- What is different about this situation compared to the past?
- What day, time, and year is it right now?
- How is the environment or location different?
- What is different about the temperature or weather?
- How are you different now?
- In what ways have you grown since then?

Person Triggers

- What is different about this person compared to the person from the past?
- How is their voice different (tone, rate of speech, accent, dialect, vocabulary)?
- How are their facial features different (complexion, freckles, wrinkles, makeup, blemishes, birthmarks)?
- How is their hair different (length, color, style)?
- How is their body type different (height, weight, build, clothing)?
- What other differences can you identify (occupation, life circumstances, how they interact with you)?

Item Triggers

- What is different about this item compared to the one from your past?
- How does its shape, size, or color differ?
- Are there differences in texture or temperature?
- Are there blemishes, cracks, damage, or unique characteristics?

GROUNDING EXERCISES

The Diver's Response

The diver's response triggers a physiological shift in blood flow that can reduce panic, anxiety, and stress responses. Activating this reflex can help calm the body, reorient to the present, and improve clarity of thought.

Option 1: Submerge your face—covering your eyes and upper cheeks—in a bowl of cold water for up to 30 seconds, or as long as is safely comfortable. Repeat as needed.



Option 2: Place a cold, wet cloth over your face, ensuring it covers your eyes and upper cheeks.



GROUNDING EXERCISES

Deep Breathing

Breathing is closely connected to our thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. Breathing exercises activate the parasympathetic nervous system, encouraging the body to enter a resting state. Practicing different breathing techniques can reduce anxiety, lower stress, and increase mindfulness.

Diaphragmatic (Belly) Breathing: Often referred to as a “healthy breathing technique,” diaphragmatic breathing strengthens the diaphragm and maximizes oxygen exchange in the lungs.



Get in a comfortable seated position or lay flat on a comfortable surface.



Place both hands on your belly.



When you breathe in, feel your belly expand like a balloon.



When you breathe out, let your belly release back in, like a balloon deflating.



Continue breathing this way for 3 - 5 minutes.



Each time you exhale, imagine letting go of stress and tension.



GROUNDING EXERCISES

Breath Prayers

Breath prayers combine slow, intentional breathing with short phrases to promote calm, focus, and a sense of connection during distress. They can be especially helpful when words feel hard to find or thoughts feel scattered.

How to Practice:

1. Inhale slowly through your nose.
2. As you inhale, silently say the first half of a short phrase.
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth.
4. As you exhale, silently say the second half of the phrase.
5. Repeat for several breaths.

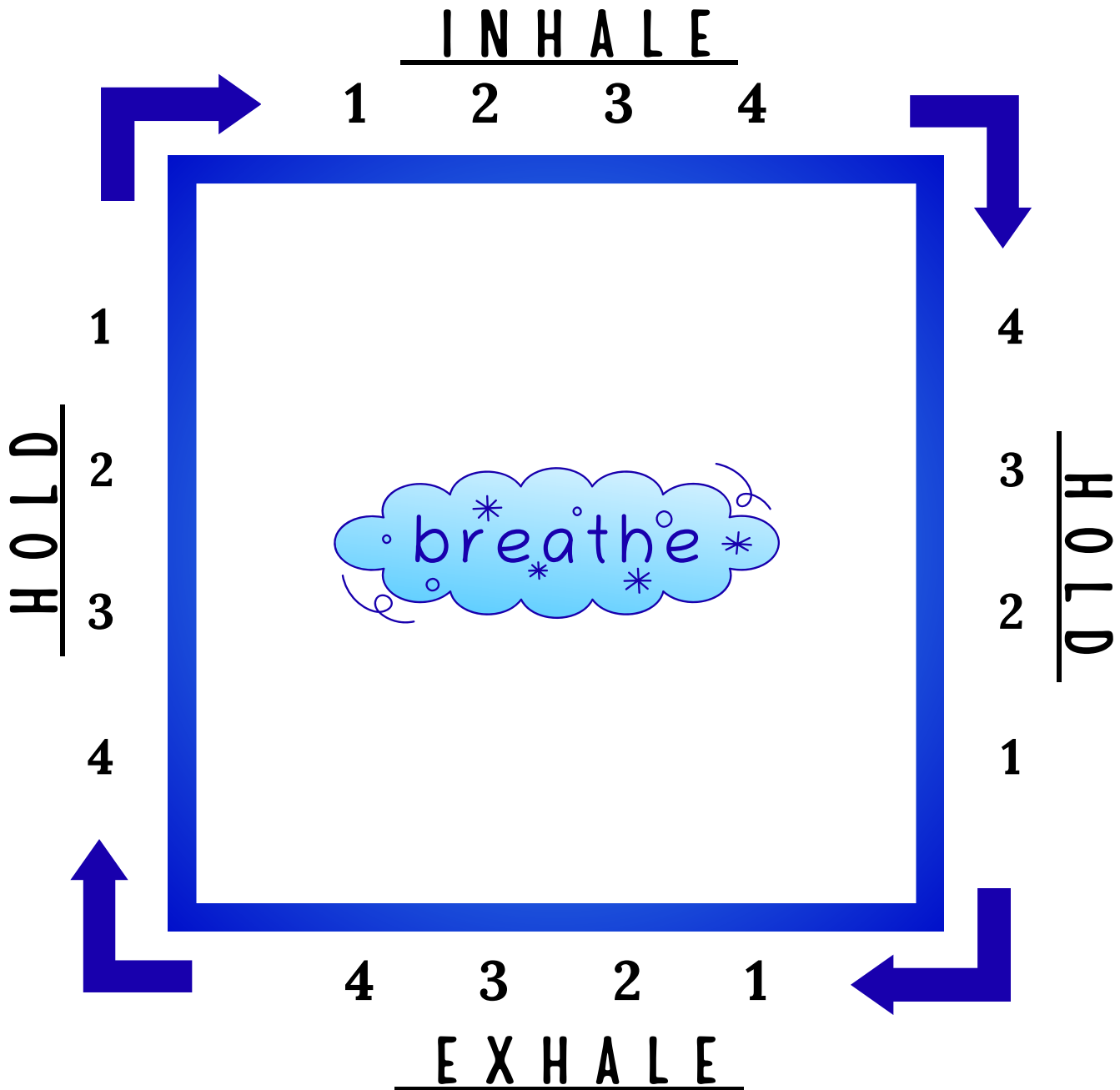
Examples:

- **Inhale:** "Be still" | **Exhale:** "and know."
- **Inhale:** "God is near" | **Exhale:** "I am not alone."
- **Inhale:** "Peace in" | **Exhale:** "fear out."
- **Inhale:** "I release" | **Exhale:** "what I cannot control."

GROUNDING EXERCISES

Box Breathing

Inhale for a count of four seconds, hold for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, and hold again for four seconds. Repeat several cycles.



GROUNDING EXERCISES

Hand-on-Heart Breathing

This gentle breathing practice supports emotional regulation by engaging the parasympathetic nervous system and increasing feelings of safety, comfort, and self-compassion.

How to Practice:

1. Place one hand over your heart. If comfortable, place the other hand on your abdomen.
2. Inhale slowly through your nose for a count of four, noticing the rise of your chest or belly beneath your hand.
3. Exhale gently through your mouth for a count of six, allowing your shoulders and jaw to soften.
4. Continue for 5–10 breaths, or longer if helpful.

Optional Supportive Phrases:

- *“I am safe enough right now.”*
- *“This is hard, and I am allowed to go slowly.”*
- *“I can meet this moment with kindness.”*

Helpful When:

- *Emotions feel overwhelming or tender*
- *You notice self-criticism or shame*
- *You need grounding that feels soothing rather than activating*



GROUNDING EXERCISES

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Breathe in as you tense a muscle group, and exhale as you release it. Pay attention to the sensations in your body and the contrast between tension and relaxation.

1. Lie comfortably on the floor or another supportive surface.
2. Take a few deep breaths to settle your body.
3. Inhale and tense the muscles in your feet.
4. Exhale and release the tension.
5. Inhale and tense your calf muscles.
6. Exhale and release.
7. Continue working your way up your body, including your legs, abdomen, chest, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, and face.

1. SIT
ON A CHAIR...



2. "SCRUNCH"
UP YOUR
FACE...



THEN...
RELAX
IT...

3. TENSE
YOUR
ARMS...



THEN...
RELAX
THEM

4. TENSE UP YOUR
SHOULDERS
AND CHEST...



THEN...
RELAX
THEM

5. TENSE UP
YOUR LEGS...



... THEN RELAX!

IMAGE SOURCE: <https://adresources.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/progressive-muscle-relax.gif>

GROUNDING EXERCISES

Body Activation

Body activation uses gentle movement to help release built-up tension, reduce feelings of shutdown or freeze, and re-engage energy in the body.

Simple Options:

- Stand and press your feet firmly into the floor for 10–20 seconds.
- Gently stretch your arms overhead, then let them fall back to your sides.
- Push your palms together or against a wall for several breaths.
- Slowly roll your shoulders forward and backward.

Helpful When:

- You feel stuck, numb, or frozen
- Energy feels low or heavy
- You need to reconnect with your body



This document is intended as a supportive resource and not a substitute for professional mental health care.



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WANT TO LEARN MORE?

My life coaching services are designed to help you move from inspiration to transformation — not by overwhelming you, but by walking with you as you build discipline, strengthen your mindset, and pursue the purpose God has placed on your life. Whether you're navigating transition, needing structure, craving deeper spiritual growth, or simply tired of doing everything alone, you don't have to figure it out by yourself.



If you're ready to

- *take intentional steps toward your goals,*
- *build habits that actually stick,*
- *strengthen your mindset and resilience,*
- *grow spiritually and emotionally, and*
- *move confidently into the future you've been preparing for...*

I'd be honored to walk along side you!

SCHEDULE A FREE CALL