

EMDR-Informed Grounding Script (Stabilization)

Grief & Trauma Psychoeducational Class — Facilitator Script + Participant Version

Portfolio Evidence Statement (Copy/Paste)

I used an EMDR-informed grounding script that included brief stabilization strategies such as breathing, sensory grounding, and present-moment orientation, used as needed to support regulation during activation.

Purpose

This brief grounding script supports stabilization when participants become activated during grief and trauma processing. It aligns with EMDR-informed preparation/stabilization principles by prioritizing present-moment orientation, dual awareness, and nervous-system regulation before returning to content. It can be used in group or individual settings.

When to Use

- A participant reports distress rising above a manageable level (e.g., 6/10 or higher).
- Signs of activation: rapid breathing, shaking, tearfulness that escalates, blank stare, dissociation, agitation, shutdown.
- Before/after emotionally heavy activities (timeline/narrative work, triggers discussion, body-based grief responses).

Facilitator Notes (Trauma Class Fit)

- Invite choice and consent: participants can pass, keep eyes open, or step out.
- Use calm tone, slower pacing, and short sentences.
- Avoid forcing imagery; keep interventions present-focused.
- Normalize reactions: “Your body is doing what it learned to do to protect you.”
- If anyone appears dissociated, emphasize sensory/present-moment grounding and keep it very concrete.

Grounding Script (Facilitator Version)

Estimated time: 2–5 minutes (repeat as needed).

1) Permission + Orientation (15–30 seconds)

- “Let’s pause for a moment and come back to the present.”

- “You’re safe right now. We’re here together, in this room, in this moment.”
- “You can keep your eyes open or closed—whatever feels safest.”

2) Breathing for Regulation (30–60 seconds)

- “Place one hand on your chest or stomach—optional.”
- “Breathe in through your nose for 4... hold for 1... and out slowly for 6.”
- “Let the exhale be the longer part. We’ll do three rounds together.”

3) Sensory Grounding (60–90 seconds)

- “Name 5 things you can see.”
- “Name 4 things you can feel (feet on the floor, chair under you, fabric on your hands).”
- “Name 3 things you can hear.”
- “Name 2 things you can smell (or two things you like to smell).”
- “Name 1 thing you can taste (or one thing you’d like to taste).”

4) Present-Moment Orientation + Dual Awareness (30–60 seconds)

- “Look around and find three neutral or comforting objects in the room.”
- “Remind yourself: ‘I’m noticing feelings, but I’m here, in the present, and I’m okay right now.’”
- “Notice your feet again—press them gently into the floor for 5 seconds... and release.”

5) Containment (Optional, 60–90 seconds)

- “If a hard thought or image is showing up, you don’t have to hold it all right now.”
- “Imagine placing it into a strong container—like a safe box, a vault, or a jar with a tight lid.”
- “You can choose to reopen it later in a supported way. For now, we set it aside.”

6) Coping Reminder + Return to Choice (15–30 seconds)

- “Check in: where is your distress now from 0–10?”
- “You can choose your next step: stay, take a sip of water, step out for a moment, or simply listen.”
- “When you’re ready, we can gently return—or we can pause longer.”

Grounding Script (Participant Handout Version)

Use this anytime you feel activated. You can do just one part or all of it.

- Name the present: “I am here. I am safe right now.”
- Breathe: In 4... hold 1... out 6 (x3).
- Senses: 5 see / 4 feel / 3 hear / 2 smell / 1 taste.
- Feet on floor: press 5 seconds, release.
- Containment (optional): place the hard thing in a safe container for later.
- Check distress 0–10. Choose your next step: pause, sip water, step out, or continue.

How This Fit Into the Grief & Trauma Class

This grounding script was used as-needed during skills practice and processing activities (e.g., grief timeline/narrative work, trigger identification, and coping-strength reflection). It supported emotional pacing by allowing participants to downshift activation, regain present-moment orientation, and re-engage with learning and meaning-making safely.

Link Placeholder

LINK TO GROUNDING SCRIPT: [PASTE LINK HERE]

Documentation Note (De-Identified)

Document use of grounding in session notes as: activation observed/reported, stabilization strategies used (breathing, sensory grounding, orientation, containment), participant response, and return-to-activity choice.