

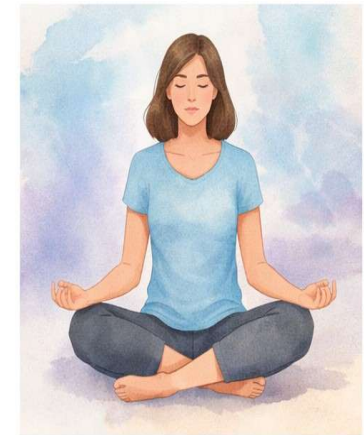
Understanding and Processing Grief and Trauma

Session Focus: Grounding + Cognitive Coping Skills

Today's Agenda

By the end of today, participants will be able to:

- 1) Identify common grief + trauma body responses
- 2) Practice two grounding skills you can use anywhere
- 3) Try a simple CBT reframing tool
- 4) Complete a short journaling prompt + homework plan



Grounding

Check-in + Group Agreements

Quick check-in (2 minutes):

- One word for how you feel today
- Your stress level (0–10)
- One support you used this week (if any)

Agreements (reminder):

- Confidentiality
- Respect
- Choice + consent
- Take breaks as needed
- No advice-giving (we validate + listen)



Why this matters:

Safety + predictability support regulation.
You do not have to share details to participate.

Psychoeducation: How Grief + Trauma Show Up

Common reactions are normal—especially after loss or trauma.

Grief reactions may include:

- Waves of sadness or longing
- Guilt or anger
- Sleep or appetite changes
- Foggy thinking
- Changes in identity and roles

Trauma responses may include:

- Hypervigilance (on edge)
- Avoidance or numbing
- Intrusive memories
- Irritability
- Body tension or shutdown

A helpful way to track what's happening:

Body signals → Thoughts → Emotions → Behaviors

Today we practice skills that help your body feel safer, so your brain can think more clearly.

Skill Concept: Window of Tolerance

When we're outside our window, thinking gets harder. Regulation helps bring us back.

Hyperarousal (too much):
panic • anger • racing thoughts • body tension

Window of tolerance (just right):
present • able to learn • able to connect

Hypoarousal (too little):
shutdown • numb • foggy • disconnected

Quick question:

Where are you right now? (hyper • window • hypo)

Skill Practice: Grounding

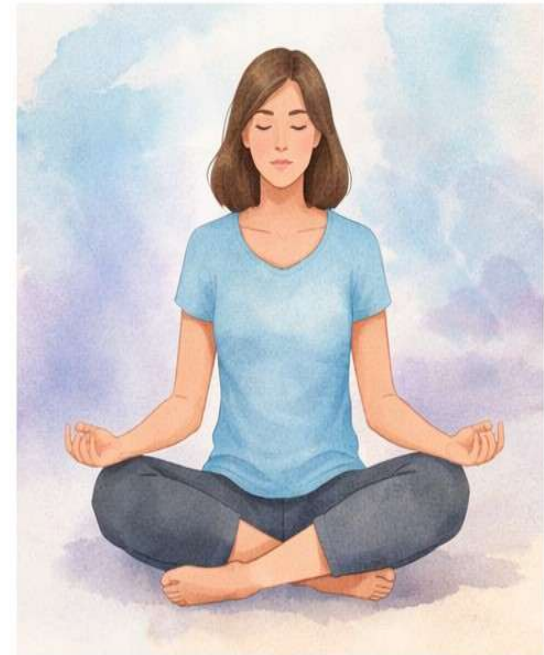
5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)

Inhale 4 • Hold 4 • Exhale 4 • Hold 4
Repeat for 4 rounds

Tip: If counting is hard, breathe with a slow song rhythm instead.



Notice:

What changed in your body?

Skill Practice: CBT-Informed Reframing

3-step tool: Catch it • Check it • Change it

- 1) Catch the thought (what did my mind say?)
- 2) Check the thought (evidence for/against?)
- 3) Change the thought (a kinder, truer statement)



Thoughts → Feelings → Actions

Changing your thought can shift how you feel and what you do next.

Tip: start with one small, believable reframe.

Example:

Old thought: "I should be over this."

New thought: "Grief comes in waves. I'm learning ways to cope."

Try it:

Write one thought you've been having about your grief or trauma, then practice reframing it.

Wrap-up + Between-Session Practice

Homework (choose one):

- Practice 5-4-3-2-1 once per day
- Box breathing (4 rounds) when stressed
- Journal: What was my trigger? What helped?
- Reframe one unhelpful thought this week

Journaling prompt (2-5 minutes):

“One thing I want to remember is...
One coping tool I'll try is...
One support I can reach out to is...”

Optional: bring your reflection next week.



Before you leave:

- Rate your stress (0-10)
- Name one skill you'll use
- Ask for support if you need it