

On the Spot: Grounding Techniques

Tell Yourself if you are having a flashback or panic attack: this is okay, this is normal, this is temporary.

Remind Yourself the worst is over, it happened in the past and you are in the present now.

Remember to take deep breaths, focus on breathing (in through your nose, out through your mouth).

Steps to Take:

Open your eyes (with lights on) look around the room and notice color, shapes, objects, name them.

Listen to sounds – traffic, music, talking, ventilation.

Notice your body (how your clothes are feeling on your skin, how it feels to stand on the ground, your hair as you move your head).

Use 5,4,3,2,1 (think about five things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell and 1 slow deep breath.

Mental Games:

Out loud say the street of your house, what is the street adjacent? In-front? Name all the streets around your house until you can't anymore. Or until regulated breathing.

Support from The Gatehouse:

After your intake appointment the programs available to you are:

- Phase 1 Program
- Weekly Co-ed Drop-in
- Partners Support 1-day workshop (attended with your partner)

Six one-on-one support sessions are also available to you.

Please note that the programs offered at The Gatehouse are peer-support based and not counselling. For more information and to register call (416) 255-5900.

Emergency / Crisis Resources:



If you are in crisis and need of immediate support call 911. You may also request a Mobile Crisis Intervention Team, in this case a mental health nurse will accompany the officer.

Toronto Distress Centre: (416) 408-4357

Gerstein Crisis Centre: (416) 929-5200

Assaulted Women's Helpline:

(416) 863-0511

Spectra Helpline: (416) 920-0497

Spectra (Brampton/Mississauga):

(905) 459-7777

York Region Crisis Line: 1 (855) 310-2673

Rape Crisis Centre Toronto: (416)-597-8808

CMHA-Peel-Mobile Crisis: (905)-278-9306

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For Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse:

..... Learning More about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The following information is solely meant to provide general information about PTSD. It does not substitute the information from a person's healthcare provider. It is recommended for individuals to contact a qualified health professional for additional information surrounding their unique situation.

What is PTSD?

PTSD is a natural emotional reaction to trauma experiences that involve actual or threatened serious harm to oneself or others. Anyone who faces an intense, terrifying event may continue to have strong feelings about it even after the danger is gone. For some people, the thoughts or memories of these horrible events seriously affect their lives including their sleep, work and relationships.

Causes

PTSD is a response to traumatic life events. I.e., car crashes, fires, natural disasters, bombings, rape, torture, or seeing a family member, friend or other person harmed/killed. Some people experience traumatic events and do not develop PTSD. Risk factors make a person more likely to get PTSD, protective factors do the opposite.

Risk Factors

- past trauma
- history of mental health/substance use problems
- feeling helplessness/extreme fear
- small to no support system
- feeling guilt, shame or responsibility for the event or its outcome
- additional stress after trauma

Dr. Ruth Lanius, PTSD Association of Canada, July 15 2018, Retrieved from: <http://www.ptsdassociation.com/coping-strategies-1/> CAMH, 2018, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Retrieved from: <http://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/posttraumatic-stress-disorder>

Signs and Symptoms

- re-experiencing the traumatic event
- experiencing unwanted memories of the event
- acting or feeling as if the event is happening again
- feeling upset when reminded of the event
- staying away from activities, places or people that are reminders of trauma
- avoiding friends and family
- losing interest in previous enjoyable activities
- being unable to feel pleasure
- constantly worrying
- having a hard time concentrating
- getting angry easily
- having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, recurring nightmares
- fearing harm from others
- experiencing sudden attacks of dizziness, fast heartbeat or shortness of breath
- having fears of dying

Options in Therapy

Trauma or Narrative Therapy
Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR)
Peer Groups
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
Exposure Therapy

Post-traumatic stress disorder © 2016 National Institute of Mental Health
Mayo Clinic Staff (2017). Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Retrieved from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967>

Coping Strategies

Grounding

Being grounded means being full present in your body and/or feeling connected to the earth. Grounding techniques can help us to stay rooted in our bodies and alleviate stress, panic attacks and can help when experiencing a flashback.

Mindfulness

A mental state achieved by focusing your awareness on the present moment whilst acknowledging/accepting ones feelings, thoughts and body.

Self Help Strategies

- Get to know your triggers and know your limits: Respect your trauma
- Extend empathy onto others and avoid judgmental attitudes
- Confide in someone or try peer support: Focus on solutions

You can go for a walk, listen to some music hold on to a grounding object (bracelet, putty, stone or a personal object that may have personal meaning or comfort to you). Support PTSD treatment with a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating, avoiding drugs/alcohol and getting enough sleep.

Mind for Mental Health, May 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/self-care-for-ptsd>