

Self-Soothing and Grounding Corner

Self-soothing and grounding skills are important when you are dealing with the aftereffects of traumatic experiences. Small sounds, sights, smells, and experiences can trigger strong and powerful emotions, intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, or nightmares. Self-soothing and grounding skills can be helpful because they can remind you that you are in the present moment, that you are safe, and that the traumatic event is not currently happening.

One way to remind yourself to use the skills is to create and set up a self-soothing or grounding corner or space in your room that contains items that engage your five senses, a place you can go when you feel overwhelmed so that you can take care of yourself and feel okay again. The space doesn't have to be in your room; it could be a safe place you like to go (e.g., your walk in closet, another room in the house, your beanbag chair). The idea is that you can be creative about where and how you set up your self-soothing space.

Then, choose items to put in your space. Ideally, the items should engage each of your five senses and that you find soothing and grounding (see back of the page).

Jot down ideas for each of the five senses below.

Sight (example: photos of loved ones/pets, soothing images from magazines, photos of a place where you felt safe, bubbles you can blow, Buddha board)

Sound (example: a rain stick, a bell, a voice recording from someone special, an extra ipod with soothing songs/relaxation exercises)

Smell (example: scented lotions, aromatherapy oils or sprays, candles, your favorite old baseball)

Taste (example: hard candies like Lemonheads, gum, a cup for juice)

Touch (example: a soft stuffed animal, a warm blanket, a pillow you can heat in the microwave, a feather, a smooth rock you picked up on a hike, squishy stress toys)