**GROUNDING SKILLS**

"Grounding,” means getting back in touch with the here and now when you’ve been stuck in a feeling, a memory, or a foggy or dissociated state of mind. It involves deliberately directing your attention to things that can remind you where you are and that you’re safe. To get grounded it is important to use all of your senses and any helpful information that is available.

Grounding is a helpful, important skill to have, but it takes practice. At first it may only work a little bit or for a short time. Practice the skill and consider getting help to continue to work on staying grounded. Having another person to talk you through it can really help. If you have a tendency to "space out" (dissociate) in order to mentally and emotionally remove yourself from a tough situation, consider trying to stay in touch with the real world by deliberately feeling your physical surroundings – your hand upon the arm of the chair or your feet on the floor – and take some breaths. Reassure your hurting inner child that you are now in a safe space and you are prepared to take care of him/her.

Steps to Grounding:

1. Things You See: Name 5 things you can see right around you. For example, in a living room you may see: the brown rug, the tan chair, the beige curtains, a lamp, a plant, etc.
2. Things You Hear: Name as many things you hear as you can. For instance: the clock ticking, the furnace running, people talking in another room, a car going by.
3. Things You Feel: First pay attention to and name things your body is in contact with. For example: the chair, floor or bed beneath you; your feet resting against the floor; your clothing against your skin. Next take a touch tour, touching as many different things as you can, naming the object and sensation as you go. For instance: the pile of the carpet, the texture of the wall, a soft blanket, a pet’s fur, water from a faucet, a cold ice cube.
4. Things You Smell: Look for and name some smells to help you get grounded: fresh air coming through the window, a bar of soap, a jar of spices, perfume or lotion.
5. Things You Taste: Taste something that helps you connect with the here and now: tea or coffee, a soft drink, a piece of gum, or food.
6. Things That Remind You of the Time You’re In: Look at reminders of what year it is, how old you are, what part of your life you’re in, such as: a calendar with the year printed on it; recent pictures of yourself or your family or friends; a current newspaper or magazine; your driver’s license; something from a current job or other activity.

Take a moment to switch your focus from your emotions to something simple – like your breathing. Just allow yourself to take some slow, deep breaths. While you’re doing that, remind yourself of the concrete facts around you. "I am an adult now. I am in a safe place now. I can feel what I need to feel in a safe way."