

## Activities, Exercises and Techniques to help 'ground' (to accompany RESTORE secondary resource)

Please make age/context appropriate for your setting.

These quick activities use the senses or things you can touch to help move through distress. They are designed to help focus on what is happening physically, either in the body or in the surroundings, instead of being trapped by the thoughts in mind that are causing anxiety.

- Wiggle your fingers, tap your feet. Pay attention to the movement; you are in control of what their body is doing, right here and now.
- Describe the furniture in the room.
- Describe how the chair you are sitting on feels.
- Focus on your feet, how they feel on the ground, can you feel your little toe, can you feel your feet in your socks.
- Follow the outline of your hand with a finger.
- Play a gentle sound - listen to it to the very end of the sound.
- If you have a dog or cat, cuddle and pet them.
- Take a look outside. Count the number of trees and street signs.
- Turn up the radio or play your favourite song loudly. You could even dance!
- Write out what's going on. Keep writing until you start to notice it makes a difference and it lets out some of the things you're anxious about.
- Hold onto something comforting. Maybe a blanket or a cushion.
- Eat or drink something. Is it hot or cold? Sweet or sour?
- Use your voice. Say your name or pick up a book and read the first paragraph out loud.
- Take a look outside. Count the number of trees and signs.
- 5,4,3,2,1. Count five things you can see. Count four things you can hear. Count three things you can feel. Count two things you can smell. Count one thing you can taste.
- Write a letter or card to someone you care about.
- Run your hands under cold water. Notice the sensations of the water.
- Hold an ice cube and let it melt in your hand.
- Play a distracting game on your tablet, computer, or smartphone.

## **Meditation Script: Tuning into our minds and bodies<sup>1</sup>**

**Set Up:** Create a quiet and uncluttered space for young people to lie down on the floor. If possible, have blankets and pillows available for them to lie on, or over up with, depending on their preferences.

**Adult Narration:** *We are going to practice listening to our bodies now. So, let's take a moment to settle down. We can sit on a pillow, or on the floor, lie on our backs, or lean against a pillow. If we want to, we can close our eyes, but we don't have to. Do what feel most comfortable. Now, get comfortable, and make any adjustments you need to feel cosy.*

*Close your eyes and take a nice, deep breath, and blow out slowly. And some more nice, deep breath. Now quietly, and to yourself, simply pay attention to anything you are feeling right now. It might be an itch on your big toe, or the feel of the cool floor, or maybe it's even a thought or a feeling running through your mind, Just try to pay attention and notice. There's nothing right or wrong about what we feel in our bodies and our minds, so we don't need to change anything. For now, let's be very still and quiet so we can listen to our bodies. We'll take two minutes to do this and when I ring the bell or tell you it's time to sit up, we will sit up slowly and talk about what that was like.*

Ring a bell or gently bring the young people back after two minutes.

*Now wiggle your fingers and toes a bit, and sit up.*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Beyond Behaviors, Mona Delahooke, 2019