

# Chapter 19

## Dip Your Toe In Sensory Grounding Script

*A lot of what is difficult about trauma is the way that the past or future worries show up in the present. The ability to find your way back to the present, to this current moment, is a valuable resource. Even if things in the present aren't necessarily where we would like them to be or where they need to be, the present moment probably is safer than the worst parts of a bad memory or the worst parts of a future worry. The present is where we actually are, and it's the only place where we can take actual and specific actions to keep ourselves safe if we need to.*

*The goal of this exercise is simply to help develop the ability to be more present when you want to be or when you need to be.*

*In this exercise, I will ask you to check your senses one at a time very quickly, typically for just a few seconds each. I won't ask you anything about it until the end, and I don't need or expect you to have any specific response to this exercise. The whole exercise should be over in about 45 seconds. Does this sound like something that all parts of you are willing to quickly try? We can stop at any time and for any reason.*

Before starting, see if the client can source something for the sense of smell (candle, essential oil, drink, ChapStick, etc.) and for the sense of taste (drink, piece of candy, etc.). For each of the questions below, the client does not need to answer you out loud; they just need to explore and notice the answer internally. If they would like, they can speak the answer.

*Look around your current room and notice several things that you see, the color or colors of each object, and notice that if you were to touch it would it be hard, soft, or some other texture? [Wait four seconds.] Good.*

*If there is a piece of furniture near you, place a hand on it and notice if it is warmer, cooler, or the same temperature as your hand. [Wait 2 seconds.] As you move your hand across that object, is it completely smooth or do you notice a texture? [Wait two seconds.]*

*I'm going to be really quiet, Just notice what you hear in order of loudest first. [Wait four seconds.]*

*If you have something near you that has a smell, just engage with that smell. [Wait four seconds.]*

*If you have something near you that has a taste, just taste it and notice the taste. [Wait four seconds.]*

*How did that go? Did it make anything worse? Did that resource let you feel any more connected to this current room? [If not, that's okay, normalize that.]*

If the client reports a generally positive or neutral response: *Good. Which of the senses seemed the most helpful in connecting you to the present moment and this current room?*

Notes:

- Normalize any difficulties.
- The goal of this resource is to promote very brief grounding in the present. Grounding can serve as a powerful containment exercise for rumination and can be a core element in stopping flashbacks once they start.
- Encourage the client to do grounding often when needed, but have the client practice it between sessions for several days at baseline levels of stress so that it is rugged enough to be used when really needed.