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MEADOW THERAPY

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# COPING TOOLBOX



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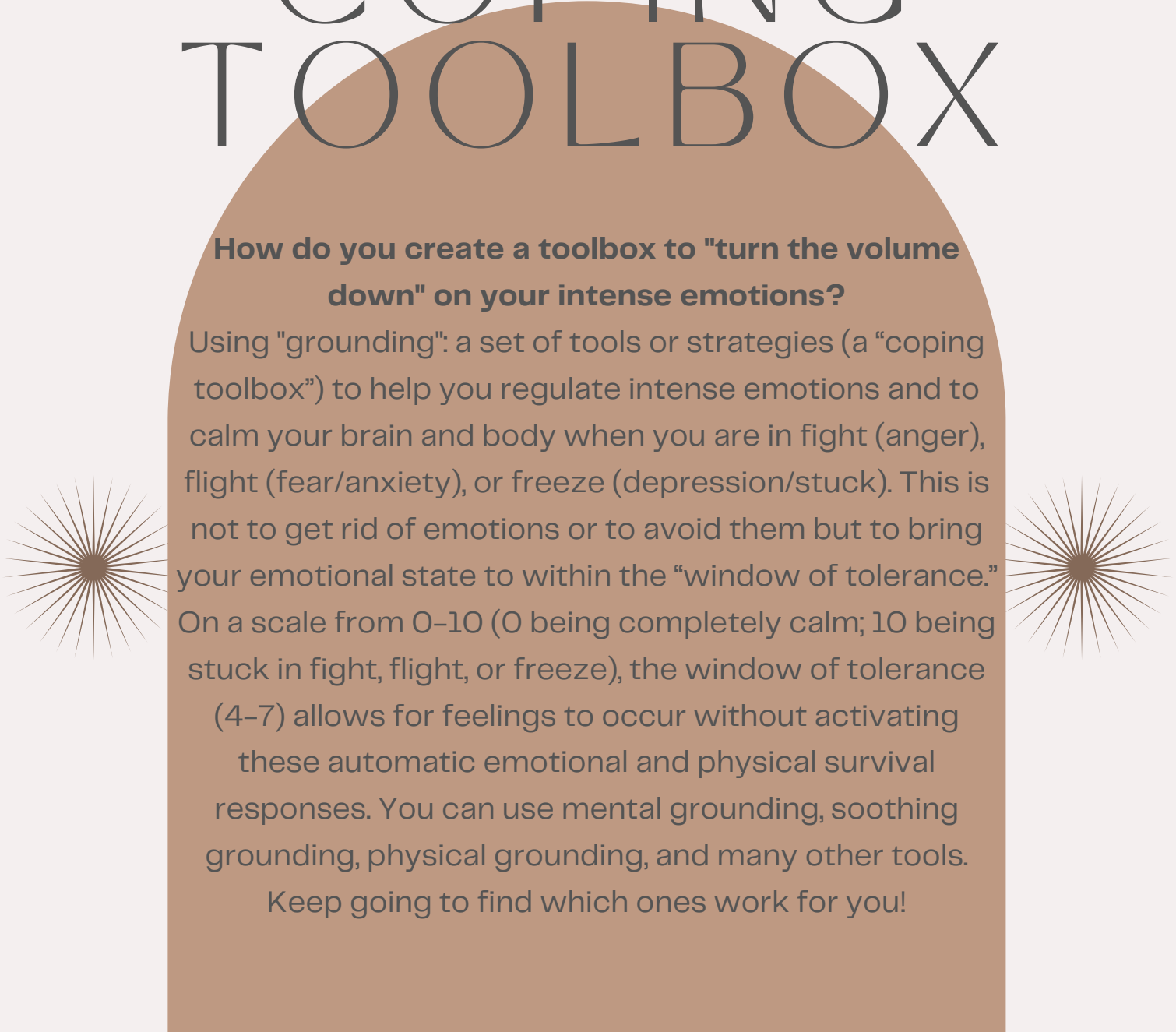
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# COPING TOOLBOX

## **How do you create a toolbox to "turn the volume down" on your intense emotions?**



Using "grounding": a set of tools or strategies (a "coping toolbox") to help you regulate intense emotions and to calm your brain and body when you are in fight (anger), flight (fear/anxiety), or freeze (depression/stuck). This is not to get rid of emotions or to avoid them but to bring your emotional state to within the "window of tolerance." On a scale from 0-10 (0 being completely calm; 10 being stuck in fight, flight, or freeze), the window of tolerance (4-7) allows for feelings to occur without activating these automatic emotional and physical survival responses. You can use mental grounding, soothing grounding, physical grounding, and many other tools. Keep going to find which ones work for you!

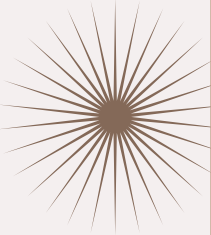
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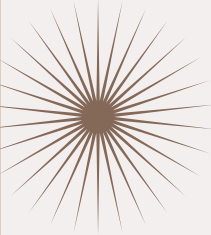
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# MENTAL GROUNDING

**Mental grounding helps to reactivate the frontal lobe (rational/thinking part of the brain) to help regulate fight, flight, or freeze.**



The Color Game (find an object wherever you are right now of each color of the rainbow ROYGBV)	The Categories Game (start listing things from different categories until you slow down, then move to the next category. E.g. flowers, shapes, colors, states, etc.)
Meditation	Orient yourself to time, date, and place
Name objects where you currently are	Move your eyes and head to look around the space you're in. Up, down, side to side, behind you.



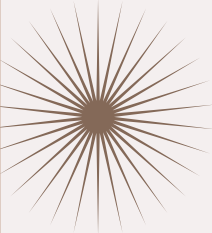
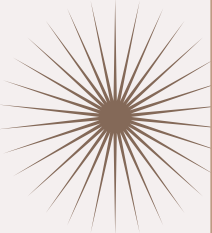
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# PHYSICAL GROUNDING

**Physical grounding helps to orient your body to the current moment and can particularly help with dissociation or the freeze response by allowing you to be more in touch with your physical body and sensations again slowly and gradually.**



Run your hands under warm or cold water	Put your feet flat on the floor
Progressive muscle relaxation (start at your feet and tense your muscles for about 3 seconds and release them. Repeat throughout your muscle groups until you reach your head)	Breathing exercises (4-7-8 breathing, ujjayi breathing, bubbles)
Yoga	Shake your whole body/Get up to move

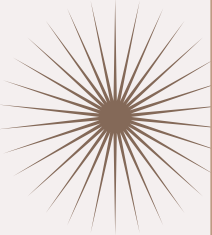
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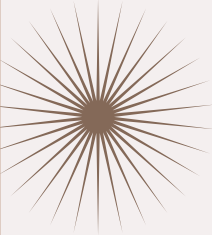
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# SOOTHING GROUNDING

**Soothing grounding helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest) so that your body can begin to calm down, your heart rate can slow and your other necessary bodily functions can resume.**



Tell yourself soothing statements such as "I am safe," "I am ok at this moment"	Safe space exercise (imagine a space where you feel calm, at peace, or close to a 0 on your emotional scale. It can be real or imagined. Describe it in great detail using all your senses)
Give yourself a hug	Take a bath or shower
Ask for a hug from a safe person	Gently rub an activated area like your chest or stomach



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# OTHER TOOLS

**These tools are great to experiment with. See whether they help "turn down the volume" on each of the different responses (fight/flight/freeze). Try them when you are feeling a little of one thing, or a lot of another. See if you can stay curious about your body, brain, and responses!**



Journaling	Call safe and supportive people
Name your experience with compassion ("I'm in a flight response"; "I'm noticing myself dissociating")	Create a sensory experience (find objects that are soft/rough/smooth, etc. for you to play with, touch, or just enjoy)
Dancing/Listening to music	Creating art
Compassionate self-talk	Cooking/Baking
Get out into nature/look at photos or videos of nature	Blow bubble

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