



The Four Elements

Centering Exercise

Each of the four elements help to center you in the here and now through a different sense (taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell) even if it is just imagined.

Use the four elements as a way to remember these different senses. They will help to reduce anxiety and stress in the moment, reduce your heart rate, and help you to feel a sense of calm in the present moment.



Earth

Grounding for safety in the present moment

Take a minute or two to 'land'... to be here now... place both feet on the ground. Feel the chair supporting you... look around and notice 3 new things... what do you see? ... what do you hear?



Air

Breathing for centering

Breathe in through your nose as you count 4 seconds, then hold for 2 the count of two and exhale for 4 seconds. Take 10 slow, deep breaths this same way, inhaling and exhaling fully.



Water

Calm and controlled

Imagine eating fruit or drinking water. When you are anxious or stressed, your mouth dries because part of the stress emergency response is to shut off the digestive system. When you start making saliva, you switch on the digestive system and the relaxation response.



Fire

Light up the path of your imagination

Bring up an image of your SAFE PLACE (this could be a memory of when you felt good about yourself). What do you feel? Where do you feel this in your body? What do you see when you look around? Can you hear anything? Taste anything?

Sanar Institute

Reclaim Your Life After Trauma



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