



Wednesday Workshop: Supporting Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence

Podcast Transcript

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Staying Grounded in Turbulent Times Transcript

Presented by Marissa, Adult Domestic Violence Advocate, and Teresa, Dual Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Counselor

Marissa: Hello and welcome to The Women's Center's Wednesday Workshop podcast, intended for survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence as a time to learn and grow in order to move beyond their trauma. Each session will feature instruction on a healing topic. This week our topic is grounding through turbulent times. If you don't know what grounding is, or how to incorporate it into your daily life, stick around. We're going to be diving deep into the topic and how it can aide in healing.

We are at your hosts, my name is Marissa, I'm the Adult Domestic Violence Advocate with The Women's Center.

Teresa: And I am Teresa I am the Dual Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Counselor. We'll get started by kind of and going into what is grounding like Marissa had said. If you haven't heard of this before, grounding is a technique or a skill that anyone can use to help keep themselves in the present moment. So you might have heard of this term grounded before, grounding skills, it seems to be a really hot topic and a big buzz word that we're hearing a lot these days. This really ultimately helps us when we're feeling triggered when we're under a lot of stress, when we're struggling with things like anxiety or fear, and we might find ourselves feeling overwhelmed, or detached from what's going on around us. Ultimately, the goal of grounding is to help us reorient back to the here and now so you're more aware of the here and now, your surroundings, to help you be more present for what's going on around you. We might be experiencing heightened levels of fear or stress if we're currently living with an abuser during the Safer at Home order, or experiencing added stress of Covid-19 on top of

enduring abuse, or you know, feeling triggered from the abuse that we've experienced in the past.

Everyone's situation looks different right now, and whether you are currently still in an abusive relationship and navigating how to stay safe during this or if you're considering leaving, or if you have left and are just feeling really overwhelmed with coping with these external stressors, like the coronavirus, grounding tools can really help us. Ultimately, this is a really great tool that anyone, regardless of different age, what tools you have at home and what's around you, you can definitely implement.

We know that right now, abuse in itself is an extreme amount of stress to live under and an extreme amount of distress to survive through. But, Covid-19 brings up these extra stressors that we might be experiencing and we might be having a really difficult time staying present in the current moment, because it's not an easy place to sit. We might be experiencing things like fear and worry about our own health, worry about the health of loved ones, we might be experiencing changes in sleep or eating patterns and, also, just difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping. All of these added on top of what we might be experiencing with an abuser only further amplifies what grounding is good for right now.

Marissa: Some folks may be asking themselves why do they need grounding? Especially folks who've experienced trauma. We know that trauma is not only the traumatic experience itself, but also the debilitating symptoms that individuals go through afterwards. Our bodies, in a sense, sort of short circuit due to the amount of energy we're putting into protecting ourselves. It really doesn't know what to do with that extra energy. In that, short-circuiting stays with us after the traumatic event has occurred. This can look like a couple different things to many different people. Often times, we'll see things like shock, dissociation, flashbacks, hyper-vigilance, jumpiness, sleeplessness, intense anxiety, as well as some things like substance dependence or abuse, disordered eating or some mental health diagnoses.

Like Teresa had mentioned, we really are in uncharted territory right now, especially for survivors of abuse. There's all kinds of fear, stress, anxiety, triggers and or safety concerns that are really elevated right now due to Covid-19. So with that, grounding strategies are more important now than ever and they can help us bring ourselves back to the present when the future may feel unknown.

Teresa: There are a couple different types of coping strategies. And so, grounding is a really great coping strategy, or part of a coping strategy, to utilize like Marissa had said, under such a stressful and uncharted territory like we are experiencing right now. But

there are two different types of coping, healthy and unhealthy coping strategies. And we ultimately adapt to cope with the environment that we're in and what's available at that time. The question comes down to, "is this a helpful pattern that I'm creating or responding to different stressors or triggers in my life?" To give you an idea of what some unhealthy coping skills might be it might be, it might be, you know, initially really comforting due to instant gratification and familiarity of those different coping skills. That might look like avoidance for some people. It could be avoiding to experience any type of emotion. And we know that when we attempt to numb out one emotion such as sadness or anger, you know, we're going to numb out all emotions ultimately. We might also find unhealthy coping skills such as numbing out feelings through substance use or dependence as well. And also isolating yourself from friends and family members.

And so we know ultimately, especially for survivors living in the time of Covid-19, that isolation piece and being home a lot more, we might find ourselves really struggling to cope in a healthy way and to reach out to friends and family because of this. Even now, with having to stay home more, we still have ways we can connect with loved ones too. We just have to get a little bit more creative, maybe, about the way that we're reaching out depending on what is safe to do so. These unhealthy coping skills might have been something that you used in the past to survive through that abusive environment or relationship that you are in, or to cope with effects of trauma that you've experienced. We ultimately know that unhealthy coping skills can keep individuals feeling stuck in those triggers that they're experiencing. Or they might feel stuck in that unprocessed trauma. And this can be exhausting both short and long term. And so, it can have effects, you know, physically and emotionally. And just affect our overall well-being.

On the flip side, we know that healthy coping, you know, it is ultimately going to be a little bit more unknown, or a little bit foreign and uncomfortable to practice if we are used to avoiding, if we are used to numbing out, just to survive if that was what was available for us at that time. When we're coping with trauma and abuse in a healthy way, ultimately, some ways to do that is going to be through connecting with your support system, whatever that looks for you right now. You know, that is calling a hotline if that is your support system, if that is the safest way for you to engage in a support system right now. Or it could be relaxation techniques that you found work for you when you're feeling triggered, or when you're feeling stressed or reminded of that abuse. It can also look like taking up some new hobbies. Or re-engaging in some hobbies that it wasn't safe enough to when you were still in that relationship or still with that partner. And also are getting some fresh air and some exercise. If that is, you know, stepping outside and feeling the fresh air in your lungs. If that is you know walking around the block or just stepping outside of your apartment, of the place that you're living. You know, coping

with some of these triggers in a healthy way can really benefit us in the short and long-term.

But looking at healthy coping, especially right now too, during Covid-19. Thinking about taking some breaks for yourself. And also some breaks for from social media, and with the news. And it's really important to carve out some time in your day to unwind. Practice deep breathing or some relaxation techniques maybe that you learned when coping from trauma and abuse in a healthy way. You know, take that walk, call a friend, call a hotline. Another idea too, to practice some healthy coping skills, is to take care of your body. So, eating healthy meals, getting exercise, getting plenty of sleep right now, and avoiding substance use if you can. We know, again, unhealthy and healthy coping mechanisms are they also can be looked at in the light of what is helpful and what is unhelpful. So, if we were using those unhealthy coping strategies to kind of get through trauma to get through abuse, or get through a hard time, that is totally valid. You know, what's important is that you've survived through this, and you know ultimately that we can try to implement some healthy coping strategies for ourselves moving forward.

Marissa: It's important to mention the cycle of anxiety and what that may do to us, especially in a time like this. We know that an anxiety producing situation leads to some uncomfortable symptoms, such as worry and fear. We may be having some physical symptoms too, like a racing heart, sweating, or that feeling of being overwhelmed. And those uncomfortable symptoms are controlled by avoiding the anxiety producing situation. Some examples of such kind of avoidance include: skipping class to avoid a presentation. Using substances to numb those feelings like Teresa had mentioned. That can also look like procrastinating on challenge tasks. Avoidance of the anxiety producing situation, you know, that gives us that immediate sense of relief. We feel a little bit of a weight lifted off of our shoulders, we're like "Phew, one less thing to think about". Those symptoms of anxiety lessen, but only temporarily.

So again, while we might get that sense of relief from it, from avoiding an anxiety-producing situation, the fear that initially led to that avoidance, that very same thing that tends to worsen. And our brain learns that when anxiety is avoided, the symptoms go away. As a result, those symptoms of anxiety will worsen the next time, and we're more likely to avoid. So we can really find ourselves going into this cycle and sort of being lost in it when we're relying more on those unhealthy coping skills. This is just to show how important it is to try to break from those and if you're having trouble, you know what, let someone know. Try to reach out to your supports, and you don't have to go through this alone.

Teresa: How do you kind of move through those different cycles of anxiety like Marissa was talking about? How do we start replacing those unhealthy coping or grounding strategies that we might have utilized, that might feel really uncomfortable to start practicing again. We might initially pressure on ourselves to overhaul our coping strategy library right away, but ultimately, this is something that keeps time. It's definitely a trial-and-error. We know that it's key to try out different practices to see what works best for you. Because we know that everyone responds differently to different grounding strategies, and different coping strategies that work for them to get them outside of that cycle of anxiety.

We know that no two people process or heal from trauma the same way, and they don't deal with stressful and distressing experiences in the same way either. We know that on average it takes 21 days to form a habit, so know that it's okay to have moments where we're finding yourself utilizing unhealthy coping strategies or unhealthy grounding strategies. It might take a little bit more practice to kind of implement those healthy coping strategies and grounding techniques more consistently. But ultimately, this is something to be gentle and patient with yourself on. This is uncharted territory. Maybe healthy coping skills are a completely new realm, maybe grounding techniques are a completely new realm for you.

This is ultimately really uncharted territory to that we're living in right now and that you're doing the best that you can just to get through and to survive. Just know that maybe if you are finding yourself going to an unhealthy coping strategy or grounding yourself in a way that might be unhealthy for you, if you do that one time but then you know, you try to implement a healthy coping strategy next time, that's progress in itself.

Ultimately the goal is to kind of just shift some of those strategies that you might have used in the past through trial and error. So, you know, just recognize that won't happen overnight, much like healing, and that's okay. Progress takes time and it's different for everyone.

Marissa: What's the benefit of grounding strategies? Why are we spending so much time talking about this? There are a lot of great benefits to start incorporating grounding in your life. You may feel like you're better able to manage those overwhelming feelings, or intense anxiety. Going back to that cycle, you may feel like you no longer have to avoid something that's making you unhappy. That you may feel like you start to have the tools to face it and and work through it. You may also start regaining some mental focus from those intense emotional states. You might be able to break yourself out of those feelings. You can also counter dissociation as well. The nice thing about grounding is that it brings your right into the present, and so when you're experiencing something, or

let's say you're experiencing a trigger from a past traumatic incident. you know where you might not be feeling in the present when you're in that trigger, trying to ground yourself will bring you back into the present. Where you do have these tools to a cope and manage.

The other really nice thing about grounding strategies is that you can use them anywhere. You can use them at work, school, you can use them at home. The nice thing about this really being an exercise for your mind, is that you can do this in front of other people without them knowing that you're doing this. If you're in a situation where you're living with your abuser and you might not have that physical space away from them, you know you can still try to use some of these techniques while in the same room. It's really cool, everyone can engage in some sort of grounding activity and usually everyone's got like a strategy or two that really, really works for them.

Teresa: There are a couple of different approaches to grounding that you can take. And this is going to look different for everyone, what you respond to might not be what you know, the person next to you or your friend might respond to you when you're feeling triggered. And with that being said too, both of these different things you might find that you know today maybe just one type works for you and maybe tomorrow it's going to be something different. So we'll kind of breakdown what these two different approaches to grounding are so that you have a better idea of how to practice them more specifically, and the benefits of each one.

The first type of approach to grounding is through sensory awareness. This is ultimately to direct focus on some specific sensory aspect of your body, or the outer or inner environment. Examples of sensory awareness grounding exercises might look like holding a pillow or a stuffed animal or a ball. It might also look like placing a cool washcloth on your face or your forehead. Holding something cool like a can of soda, or a water bottle. It can also look like listening to some soothing music or music that you really enjoy... a playlist that really gets you going and feel like you're in the zone for. It also could be you putting your feet firmly on the ground and you know, pressing your heels into the ground or wiggling your toes. And lastly, it could also look like focusing on someone's voice in a neutral conversation that you might be having. So if you are feeling really activated, if you're feeling triggered and you want to, you want to practice some of the sensory awareness. A couple of you know, go to's that I always talk about, is putting a piece of citrus in the freezer. This is a really fun one too because it activates so many different senses at once, so you're not only getting that you know that physical sensation of that cold object, but it's also the weight of that piece of fruit, and then if you like scratch the skin of an orange ,it's that sensory aspect too where you're smelling it. Ultimately, if you are going to use citrus in the freezer as a sensory grounding exercise,

you're able to engage in three different senses in one time which is really cool. And that's something that you can tap into at any point of the day if you're home. Knowing that we're around our space is a lot more than maybe we were before, that's something that we can easily use. It's also really cool too to engage in sensory awareness by carrying around a cold water bottle. Because people won't know that you are engaging in grounding. You know if that's a concern of yours.

If you're out in public and worried about someone noticing you feeling triggered, that's a really great way to ground yourself through sensory awareness as well. With that, you always have to, you know when you're feeling that cold temperature or you taking a sip of the water or a sip of the warm tea that you're having, you have to take a breath. And that's like one grounding strategy that I think everyone can engage in, because you know we've got to just slow down. You know, what it's not just good for our bodies, it's not just good for our brains, but we're really just taking a moment grounding ourselves, and re-centering with our breath in our body. You may already be doing from sensory awareness grounding too if you are a coffee drinker or a tea drinker. Just a smell like coffee grounds in the morning might be something that you don't even know you're engaging in that's grounding.

The other type of grounding techniques that we are going to talk about is grounding through cognitive awareness. and so, this is on the flip side of sensory awareness, where we're directing that focus by re-orienting yourself with the time in the place of the present moment. So, this might look like describing the room that you're in down to small little details around you. It may also look like the categories game. And that is naming all the foods you can think of, maybe for example, off the top of your head, every sports team that you can think of. Just to kind of reground yourself. It could also look like repeating a safety mantra that you've identified to be grounding for you. As well as counting, alphabet games reciting poems, favorite quotes, or songs. So, we'll go into some specific different exercises both cognitive and sensory awareness exercises that you can utilize at home in public or at work.

Marissa: To start with the cognitive awareness exercise, this one's really cool because you can speak it out loud or you can talk it through in your mind. you can do that with pretty much any cognitive exercise. We can start by asking ourselves some basic questions: where am I? What is today? What is the date? What is the month? What is the year? How old am I? What season is it? You get the idea, just sort of general questions with pretty obvious answers you don't have to think through them too much. You can ask some or all of these questions. If there's something I didn't mention that you think would really resonate with you, add it in. I think these questions would be really great as a sort of as a morning refresher, especially in a time like this where the

days are really running together. You know if you can remind yourself what day it is, what's going on, where you are, that can really help bring it back into the present and get that sense of time back.

Teresa: An example of a sensory awareness exercise is going to be through something called the 5 4 3 2 1 exercise. This is something that is good to use if you are an adult, if you have teens and kiddos at home to you can definitely engage them in this as well if you're finding you know they're not grounded or you're struggling with getting grounded and you want to do that with someone. These are really, really applicable through or through a lot of different ages. The 5 4 3 2 1 exercise is ultimately going to guide you through five different senses. You going to start out by naming five things that you can see in the room that you're currently in. This could be the chair you're sitting in, the color of the walls, maybe the color of a pillow or a blanket by you, so on and so forth, name five things that you see with you.

You're then going to move on to a naming four things that you can feel. Examples of this might be that chair on your back, your feet on the floor. This might also look like maybe the sweatshirt you're wearing, or the blanket that sitting next to you, you know feeling that. You'll then move through at three things that you can hear next. This might be others talking, cars driving, by birds outside, rain. And then you're going to move on to two things that you can smell. And if you can't smell two different things, name two things that you like the smell of. Then lastly, name one positive thing about yourself. So really the purpose of this is just to kind of get you in touch with those different senses. you can do this one time and if you find that you feel a little bit more grounded after that, that's great, if not try it again in a work trip maybe two or three times if you're feeling like it's helpful but you just need a little bit extra.

Marissa: I gotta say that's one of my favorite exercises.

Teresa: I would definitely agree. I like it too because everyone can do it, it's not something that is super noticeable, you know, you can kind of do it in the quiet of your home with your abuser, so it's a great one to use.

Marissa: Yeah, Totally.

Marissa: To continue this conversation on some more sensory awareness exercises, I want to take us into something called progressive muscle relaxation or PMR. I'm going to break it down because this sounds a little intimidating at first. It is a deep relaxation technique used to control stress, anxiety, it can also help relieve insomnia and symptoms of certain types of chronic pain. So, this is a really powerful exercise.

So PMR really is a practice of tensing and tightening one muscle group at a time, followed by relaxation phase with that release of tension. It can begin with your lower extremities and end with the face. So, you know, if we're going with that start with our toes. So, when we inhale, let's contract our feet and our toes. Let's scrunch them up, let's hold that for about 5 to 10 seconds, and then when we exhale, release that tension in that muscle group. Give yourself about 10 to 20 seconds to relax, and then move on to the next muscle group. So, while you're doing this, try to focus on any changes you feel when that muscle group is relaxed. I know when I go through this, you know, moving up through the muscle groups in my body, I often feel like that's the place that where you relax where they feel more lengthened. And imagery might be helpful in conjunction with that release of tension. If you want to think of an object, or different lights, you can practice this seated, lying down. It is best in a quiet, relaxing space if that is accessible to you, but that's not a requirement.

I mean, I've sat through meetings while relaxing and tensing my muscle groups, and that is a very valid thing to do. And it really does help so it's just one of the many things again that can be incorporated into your grounding routine.

Teresa: Visualization and guided imagery is a non-verbal instruction or direct suggestion the body and your unconscious mind to act as though you're in that peaceful and safe environment and that's real. This ultimately can become a learned cue to help recall memories and sensations, but help you return to a more relaxed and calm state. And there is no single way to correctly practice this, you know really trying and finding what works for you.

You know, one exercise I will walk clients through or work for me is is creating, you know, a safe place that you can turn in your head. You know, a really safe environment like a beach, or maybe a park, maybe it's, you know, a forest you hike in or your favorite path that you walk on every day. whatever that is for you, you know, really just taking that time to just kind of take in the environment around you when you close your eyes, or you're thinking about that in your head. It can be as simple as that, or you can find where you can find different guided imagery on YouTube or Facebook, different social media groups have a bunch of different resources related to this. So, find what works for you. Some people really like having someone else guide them through it, and some people just really like having that safe place to return to in their head.

Marissa: This next practice that we want to look at can either be done in conjunction with that guided imagery, or on its own. I am talking about deep breathing. So that can really help increase the serotonin in our bodies, and that helps calm the mind to help us balance emotions and enhance our mood. It helps to balance the oxygen in our body

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when that balance is disrupted, it triggers chemical changes in our body that can cause dizziness, shortness of breath, confusion. It's really helpful to practice deep breathing to center our thoughts. If you're able to sit somewhere comfortable sit or lay it down somewhere comfortable, start by inhaling through your nose while counting to five. hold your breath counting to 7, and then exhale through your nose counting to 9. And you can repeat that as often as you need, if you need to change up the numbers, if it's hard to get all the way to 5, 7 and 9, you know, maybe we try 3, 5, 7 or you know whatever works for you. Something that I find helpful is it something called square breathing where I breathe, I inhale, hold and exhale the same amount of time.

Teresa: Another sensory awareness practice that you can use is, is going to be one that you can use with a piece of paper and a pen. Again, this is going to be a really great one if you are an adult, if you have teens, or kiddos, this is something that you can really adopt you regardless of the age to that that you're using it for.

Ultimately, you will want to trace whatever hand you don't write with on a piece of paper to outline that hand. And then take a moment to label each finger as one of the five senses. From there, you're going to you're going to identify different positive experiences or sensory experiences related to each one of those things. So, for example if we're looking at your thumb, and that is labeled as smell. You know, that's the sense that the thumb represents. You know I might write down my favorite smell. So maybe a chocolate chip cookie is a really grounding, comforting thing for me. I would write that either, you know, within that finger, or right outside of that finger, and then go through the four different fingers too: touch, taste, sight and hearing. I always have to think about which sense comes next. But take a moment, you know, figure out which one you have a positive association with, and write that down. When you're done with that, posting it somewhere where it can be easily seen or memorized could be beneficial for you. You know, if it's safe to do so, you can check in with yourself and your body if you would need to practice that sensory grounding and awareness. It also has is just kind of nice too to have it as a reminder of how "Oh remember my favorite place, and I can hear the waves crashing", or whatever that might be. It's a good breather in between a lot of the stress that we all may be experiencing or when we're feeling triggered to just take a moment and reground ourselves.

You can use this when you feel triggered, when you feel grounded, but ultimately use us and breathe deeply and slowly. If you are feeling triggered and needing to ground yourself through this. And put your hand in your line of vision if you're not buy that piece of paper. Even holding out your hand in front of you and walking through the different senses through each finger and identifying those different positive associations can be really beneficial. Again, this may be something that works for you might not be,

just kind of cool to just try out some of these different exercises and see which one works for you all.

Marissa: And with all of these exercises in mind, it also can be really helpful to have some tangible tools to help us ground ourselves and cope through whatever we have facing us. So, I'm going to talk a little bit about what's called emergency grounding kits. So, that is a small kit that you can make, that has grounding or sensory tools that are ready for you at a moment's notice. I do want to say by no means is this an end all be all cure to a bad day, but it can certainly be useful and empowering to feel that we're more in control of the situation when we have an assortment of suggestions. And you know, there's also something really cathartic to putting this kit together for ourselves. It's a really deep and fulfilling act of self-care.

So, some things you can have in this little kit, and it can be as big or as small as you want. I can be a backpack, you can have it be a Ziplock bag, you know whatever you feel makes them for you. You can keep your favorite essential oils, or maybe a hand lotion or a hand warmer. You can also put something cute, something like a fuzzy stuffed animal, or like any sort of fidget. You can also keep a personal small token in a bag that you can take with you anywhere. A token would be a note from a best friend, a picture of somebody you love, something that when you look at it just really helps fill you up. To the point of essential oils, wanted to recommend a couple of scents that might be particularly calming. One of those is sage. That helps calm anxiety and helps with mental fatigue, and improve mood. Other calming scents are of course the lavender, rose, frankincense. I really love bergamot, as one of those calming scents. That one really is a great one, but you know that's not an exhaustive list. You know if something else really works for you go for it.

Some folks have grounding stones or crystals that they keep with them to you know, that can be a good fidget tool or you know that can be something to help ground you spiritually as well if that's something that you partake in. There are a couple of stones that are particularly grounding. obsidian is a healing and protective stone, and hematite some say help to spell negative emotions and it helps stabilize and ground folks. You might also want to think about carrying some calming tea, or you know, like a little flavor pack of a beverage that you really like. Or maybe some snacks too. It's important to get some electrolytes in. Low amounts of electrolytes can have a negative effect on our mood. It can make us feel irritable, and can aggravate some of those anxiety responses. so if that looks like a little flavor packet of Gatorade or maybe a sodium rich food like a bag of pretzels or crackers. Things like that can really help not only bring us back into the moment with our senses, but can help with whatever chemical imbalances we're dealing with too.

Teresa: The different exercises to ground yourself in that Marissa and I have been talking about, can also be done in a number of different environments. But the environment that we might be practicing it in, might not always be safe or comfortable to us. Right now especially, we might be living with an abuser, and we might be unable to leave home maybe as much as we would've before due to Covid-19 in the Safer at Home order. So, trying to think about where can you go, or what can you surround yourself with in the environment that you're in to create that sense of safety. You know whether that is within yourself, or with in the room that you're actually occupying. Can you grab a you know blanket that makes me feel safe? Can you wear your favorite sweatshirt? Can you use essential oils that Marissa was talking about? You're really thinking about what can you do to promote that sense of safety within yourself. Also, you know, this is where that safe place exercise I mentioned earlier could really come into play too.

Envisioning a place that you can go to in your mind to ground you. To kind of get yourself in that safe environment, even if you might not physically be feeling safe with where you're at. Grounding work should be done to manage triggers, but it's also way to gather your thoughts and reorient yourself to that present moment. Maybe from work to home life, or that might even just be right now if you are working from home or if you are living with an abuser or if you're experiencing a lot of you know added stress and triggers. Getting you through each hour. If that is 5 o'clock when you're done with work, practicing a grounding techniques so that you can kind of put that punctuation mark at the end of the day. if that is using grounding techniques during a time where you know tensions are really high, and you're feeling like you're walking on eggshells.

Important to recognize the times that you might need to use them in. It's also beneficial too, to try to practice grounding in spaces with natural or soft lighting. Again, like if you don't have access to this right now, just depending on the environment that you're living in, that's okay. You can kind of go inside safe place you know within yourself or within that, you know, space that you've identified that you go back to. And lastly, try to be in comfortable clothing or in a comfortable setting if you can. If you're feeling triggered, you know what's your favorite sweatshirt? Or your favorite pair of jeans? Or socks? Really allowing yourself to feel that sensory grounding. If you can't control and keep that environment safe that you're in right now, maybe it is promoting a sense of safety and security within the clothing that we're wearing and how comfortable it feels to us. And that can be really grounding in itself.

Marissa: We wanted to share a couple of resources, particularly some phone apps that can really help ground. Especially in a time where we might not be able to make it to

support system, or a yoga class, or you know, whatever we may have been doing previously to try to ground ourselves. The really cool thing is that, you know, so many resources are moving on to digital platforms and access to resources has really increased lately. With that, we wanted to share a couple of helpful apps that may that may be a part of your grounding strategies.

The first one I want to mention is called ACT Coach. This helps folks work through unpleasant thoughts, feelings and impulses without avoiding them or being controlled by them. Another very popular app that I've heard a ton about, is called Calm, Meditate, Sleep, Relax. To my knowledge that one has a lot of really great reviews. It's a meditation app that focuses on breathing exercises, reducing anxiety, sleeping better, all kinds of things like that. Another one is Happify for stress and anxiety. It gives some fun games to help conquer fears, manage anxiety and overcome some of that negative feeling. The last one I wanted to mention is called sleep genius. This one helps guide the brain through each stage of the sleep cycle and helps gently wake you up which is always a great thing.

Teresa: To give you a couple of other resources as well and there is a great foundation called The Younique Foundation. and unique is spelled y, o, u, n, i, q, u, e. and they have an awesome section on their website on managing triggers, and from there you'll find different things like guided imagery, or you know, additional grounding strategies, or additional apps. Or the apps that Marissa had mentioned previously, those are on that website too. just a really great wealth of knowledge.

There's also a really cool resource from the Ohio Domestic Violence Network called "Just Breathe". It's a wellness booklet that really focuses on self-care and grounding strategies that you can use regardless of where you're at. They have some really cool self-care plans in there that you can fill out, as well as, you know, really effective quick ways to promote some calm within yourself. Take a look at that if you're interested.

Related to Covid-19, there are also a number of different resources that talk about managing stress, how to deal with triggers right now just living in the time that we're in. The first one I want to talk about is through the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims, and they have recommendations on self-care as well as grounding techniques for survivors of violence. They have different infographics on their website for survivors specifically and how to deal with Covid-19. and also, they are in a format where you can print them off, if you have access to a printer, and you can use them as a bookmark if it's safe to do so.

The CDC also is a really great resource. They have a whole section right now dedicated on how to deal with stress during Covid-19 and how to cope with it. they also have, they will direct you to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or better known as SAMHSA. That is s, a, m. h, s, a. And they have a great website dedicated to coping tips for traumatic events and disasters, specifically related to Covid-19 right now.

Lastly, there is a disaster distress helpline too if you are really struggling with, you know the facts of Covid-19, in the Safer at Home order. There is a phone number that you can call as well as a text line. That phone number is going to be 1.800.985.5990. And the text line is "TalkWithUs" to the number 66746. So depending on what you are looking for for resources, we got some great ones related to coping and managing triggers, and grounding techniques for survivors specifically.

And also, you know, blending in too, with what we know, we're under a lot of stress under Covid-19, if that's a primary concern for you make sure to check some of these out as well.

Teresa: Thank you for joining us to learn more about how to stay grounded in turbulent times.

Our next session will be on ways in which we cope, and which will talk more about specific coping strategies that you can utilize.

If you would like to talk to an advocate about your own experience, please call our 24-hour hotline at 262.542.3828. Learn more about The Women's Center at www.twcwaukesha.org. Thank you and be well.