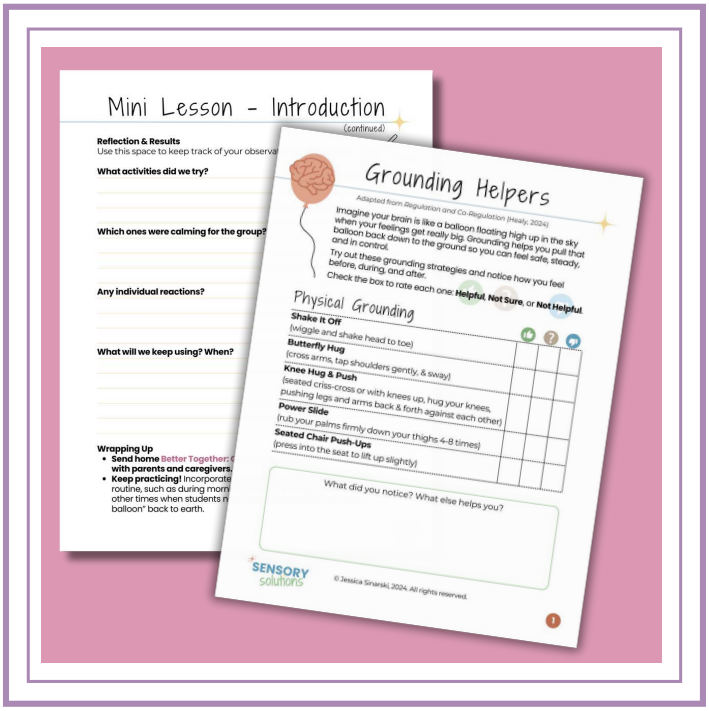
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GROUNDING helpers

Lessons + Printable Activity



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tips for use

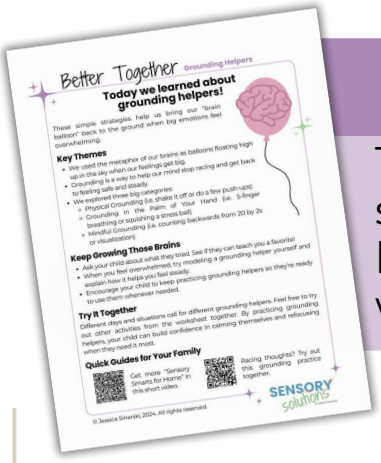
ASCA standards:
- M 5
- B-SMS 6
- B-SS 9

Use these lessons and activities with the whole class, small groups, or individual students to learn and practice more self-regulation skills.

Grounding helpers should first be explored while students are regulated enough to focus. Over time, they can be incorporated into de-escalation efforts.

Integrate the practices that are helpful for your students into your regular routines.

Encourage kids to keep trying new things, as our grounding preferences change over time and in different situations.


Better Together Grounding Helpers

Today we learned about grounding helpers!

Those simple strategies help us bring our "brain balloon" back to the ground when big emotions feel overwhelming.

Key Themes
- We used the metaphor of our brains as balloons floating high up in the sky when our feelings get big.
- Grounding is a way to help our mind stop racing and get back to feeling safe and steady.
- We explored three big categories:
  - Physical Grounding (i.e. shake it off or do a few push-ups)
  - Grounding in the Palm of Your Hand (i.e. 5-finger breathing or squishing a stress ball)
  - Mindful Grounding (i.e. counting backwards from 20 by 2s or visualization)

Keep Growing Those Brains
- Ask your child about what they tried. See if they can teach you a favorite!
- When you feel overwhelmed, try modeling a grounding helper yourself and explain how it helps you feel steady.
- Encourage your child to keep practicing grounding helpers so they're ready to use them whenever needed.

Try It Together

Different days and situations call for different grounding helpers. Feel free to try out other activities from the worksheet together. By practicing grounding helpers, your child can build confidence in calming themselves and refocusing when they need it most.

Quick Guides for Your Family

Get more "Sensory Smarts for Home" in this short video.

Racing thoughts? Try out this grounding practice together.

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Building Bridges

To bridge the gap between home and school, send **Better Together: Grounding Helpers** home with each student, along with their worksheet.

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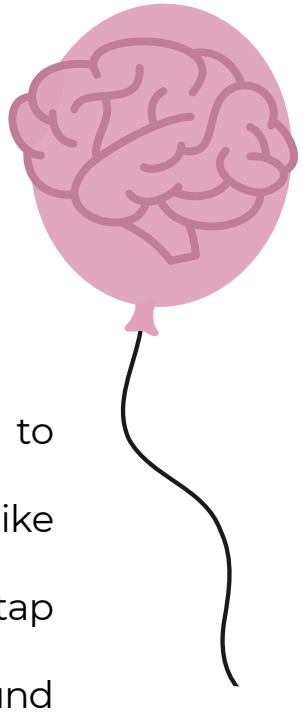
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Mini Lesson - Introduction

Learning Objectives

- Empower young learners to build self-regulation skills by exploring and practicing grounding techniques.
- Build emotional awareness, stress management, and resilience in age-appropriate ways.

Lesson: Introduction to Grounding



- Explain grounding using simple language: “Sometimes, we feel like a big balloon floating away. Grounding helps us bring the balloon back to the ground so we feel calm and strong.”
- Use visuals or props (e.g., a small balloon to demonstrate “floating away”).

Activity

Try a few of these as a group, encouraging students to share what they notice.

- **Shake It Off:** Shake arms, legs, and whole body like wiggly noodles.
- **Butterfly Hug:** Cross arms over the chest and tap shoulders gently.
- **Tree Pose:** Stand tall with feet firmly on the ground and arms out like branches.
- **Five Finger Breathing:** Use one finger to slowly trace each finger on your other hand. Breathe in on the up, breathe out on the down.
- **Rainbow Colors:** Look around the room to find something in each color of the rainbow
- **Knee Hug & Push:** Seated crisscross or with knees up, hug your knees, pushing legs and arms back and forth against each other.

Tips for success:

- For younger students, just try one or two activities at a time.
- For older students or after you have introduced the activities, you could also set up centers to give them a chance for small group practice and discussion.
- Find additional options in the advanced lesson.

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Mini Lesson - Introduction

(continued)



Reflection & Results
Use this space to keep track of your observations and progress.

What activities did we try?

Which ones were calming for the group?

Any individual reactions?

What will we keep using? When?

Wrapping Up

- **Send home Better Together: Grounding Helpers to share the lesson with parents and caregivers.**
- **Keep practicing!** Incorporate grounding activities into your daily routine, such as during morning announcements, after recess, or other times when students need some help pulling their "brain balloon" back to earth.

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Mini Lesson - Advanced

Lesson and activity adapted from *Regulation and Co-Regulation* by Ginger Healy
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"Grounding" can have multiple meanings. Here we are talking about a strategy or technique to reduce pain, discomfort, or dysregulation. Discovering helpful grounding techniques and practicing them regularly can help students find more safety, calm, and focused attention.

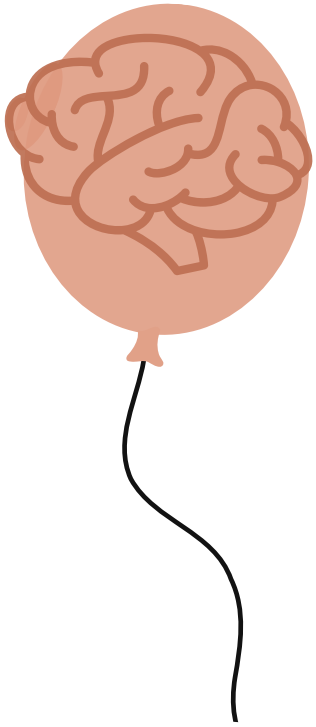
Learning Objectives

- Increase students' regulation skills through awareness and practice of grounding strategies.
- Identify helpful grounding techniques that can be used when frustrated, distracted, or dysregulated in the future.

Lesson

Grounding is like hitting the "pause" button when your feelings are getting really big.

Imagine your brain is like a balloon floating high up in the sky when you're upset, scared, or stressed.



Grounding helps you pull that balloon back down to the ground so you can feel calm and in control again.

It works by focusing on things around you—like what you can see, touch, hear, or even smell. It's like telling your brain, "Hey, let's take a break and pay attention to what's right here."

Grounding is a way to help your mind stop racing and get back to feeling safe and steady.

Activity

The following pages contain 3 categories of grounding techniques to explore. These can be separated out over several days or used throughout the day at different times.

This worksheet can also be used over and over to help students discover what helps them in different situations.

Be sure to provide time for reflection and discussion in students' preferred forms of communication.

Wrapping Up: Send home Better Together: Grounding Helpers to keep the learning going!

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Grounding Helpers

Adapted from *Regulation and Co-Regulation* (Healy, 2024)

Imagine your brain is like a balloon floating high up in the sky when your feelings get really big. Grounding helps you pull that balloon back down to the ground so you can feel safe, steady, and in control.

Try out these grounding strategies and notice how you feel before, during, and after.

Check the box to rate each one: **Helpful**, **Not Sure**, or **Not Helpful**.

Physical Grounding

	👍	?	👎
Shake It Off Wiggle and shake head to toe.			
Butterfly Hug Cross arms, tap shoulders gently, and sway.			
Knee Hug & Push Seated crisscross or with knees up, hug your knees, pushing legs and arms back and forth against each other.			
Power Slide Rub your palms firmly down your thighs 4-8 times.			
Seated Chair Push-Ups Press into the seat to lift up slightly.			

What did you notice? What else helps you?

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Grounding in the Palm of Your Hand

			
French Fry Fingers Interlock fingers, push, and pull without letting go.			
Palm Circles Use a finger to draw circles on your palm, small to large and back.			
Texture Rub Feel around your desk for a texture that you enjoy.			
Squish & Squeeze Squeeze a stress ball or soft object in your hands.			
Five Finger Breathing Use one finger to trace each finger on your other hand, breathe in on the up, breathe out on the down.			

Mindful Grounding

			
Count It Back Start at 20, count backwards by twos.			
See the Rainbow Find all the colors of the rainbow around the room.			
Rooted & Strong Imagine your feet are powerful roots and your body is tall and strong like a tree.			
See the Future Visualize how you'll feel after you get through this.			
Brave Reminder Place your hand on your heart or belly and remind yourself: I AM BRAVE!			

Great work! Keep practicing so you can pull your 'brain balloon' back down to earth more easily when things get tough.

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