

# Understanding & anchoring: Trauma recovery guide

Trauma is a physical and emotional response to an overwhelming event. When we experience trauma, our brain's internal security system stays on high alert to keep us safe.

## What is Trauma?

Trauma isn't just about what happened; it's about how your body and brain processed it. Common reactions include:



**Intrusions:**  
Unwanted memories or flashbacks to the event.



**Avoidance:**  
Steering clear of people, places, or thoughts that remind you of the event.



**Hyperarousal:**  
Feeling constantly "on edge" or easily startled.



**Negative Shifts:**  
Changes in how you see yourself or the world.

## The Grounding Anchor

Grounding is a way to tell your brain that you are safe in the here and now. Use these tools whenever you feel overwhelmed by a memory or a physical sensation. 5-4-3-2-1 Technique:

**5**

**Things You See:**  
Focus on colors or shapes

**4**

**Things You Feel:**  
The fabric of your shirt, the chair beneath you

**3**

**Things You Hear:**  
The hum of the fridge, birds outside

**2**

**Things You Smell:**  
Coffee, fresh air, or even your own skin

**1**

**Thing You Taste:**  
A sip of water or a piece of gum

## If your mind is racing, bring your focus back to your physical body:

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**The Chair Check:**  
Notice exactly where your body makes contact with the chair. Feel the support beneath you.



**Temperature Shift:**  
Hold an ice cube or splash cold water on your face to 'reset' your nervous system.

Healing from trauma takes time and patience. These tools are designed to support your work in session. If you feel stuck, share these reflections with your provider.