

WS2 Handout 27 (Slide 143): Suggestions for Stabilizing the Emotionally Overwhelmed Student

1. Ask the student to listen and look at you.
2. Find out if the student knows who and where he or she is and what is happening.
3. Ask the student to describe the surrounding environment.
4. Identify where the student and crisis intervener are currently located.
5. Consider employing “grounding” techniques. Foster grounding by stating the following:

After a frightening experience, you can sometimes find yourself overwhelmed with emotions or unable to stop thinking about or imagining what happened. You can use a method called “grounding” to feel less overwhelmed. Grounding works by turning your attention from your thoughts back to the outside world. Here’s what you do:

- Sit in a comfortable position with your legs and arms uncrossed.
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Look around you and name five nondistressing objects that you can see. For example, you could say, “I see the floor, I see a shoe, I see a table, I see a chair, I see a person.”
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Next, name five nondistressing sounds you can hear. For example: “I hear a woman talking, I hear myself breathing, I hear a door close, I hear someone typing, I hear a cell phone ringing.”
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Next, name five nondistressing things you can feel. For example: “I can feel this wooden armrest with my hands, I can feel my toes inside my shoes, I can feel my back pressing against my chair, I can feel the blanket in my hands, I can feel my lips pressed together.”
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.

You might have children name colors that they see around them. For example, say to the child, “Can you name five colors that you can see from where you are sitting? Can you see something blue? Something yellow? Something green?” (pp. 51–52)

Note. Adapted from *Psychological First Aid: Field Operations Guide* (2nd ed., p. 51–52), by M. Brymer et al., 2006, Los Angeles, CA: National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD. Adapted with permission.