



# Stabilisation Care Pack

Adult Resource

Helpline: 0330 363 0063

[www.rapecentre.org.uk](http://www.rapecentre.org.uk)

Email: [support@rapecentre.org.uk](mailto:support@rapecentre.org.uk)

**rasasc**



**Rape and  
Sexual Abuse  
Support Centre**

for adults, children and young people  
in Cheshire and Merseyside

Charity Number: 1049826



# Useful Support Contacts

Here is a list of websites and contact numbers for organisations which provide mental health support and services for people across Cheshire & Merseyside.

**RASASC** (Cheshire & Merseyside) Rape and sexual abuse support centre – 0330 363 0063

**St Mary's SARC** Sexual assault referral centre (Cheshire) - 0161 276 6515

**Safe Place SARC** Sexual assault referral centre (Merseyside) - 0151 295 3550

**Refuge** National Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0808 2000 247

**Samaritans** Suicide prevention/mental health support- 116 123

**Frank** drug and alcohol support - 0300 1236600

**NHS crisis mental health support** 111 choose option 2 for 24/7 - 111

**CALM Campaign Against Living Miserably** 5pm to midnight – 0800 58 58 58

**National suicide prevention helpline** UK mental health support - 0800 689 5652

**Advocacy & legal support** via Infoline - 0300 123 3393

**GamCare** The National gambling helpline 24/7 - 0808 8020 133

**Victim Support** Support for victims of all types of crime- 0808 1689 111

**BEAT** National eating disorder organisation - 0808 801 0433

**SHOUT** 24/7 text support service for anyone struggling to cope. Text the word 'Shout' to 85258

**LGBT Foundation** Support for LGBTQ+ Community - 0345 3 30 30 30

**MIND** mental health support line - 0300 102 1234

**If you need urgent help for your mental health,  
call 999 or go to A&E now.**



**It's okay to  
ask for help**

# Introduction

The following information in this care pack consists of practical resources that you may find useful in helping to recover from the trauma you have experienced. Trauma can cause strong feelings and difficult experiences. It can take time and support to be able to recover. But there are things you can try that might help with how you're feeling. These resources are healthy coping strategies for you to incorporate into your everyday life, to help cope with difficult feelings in the moment and to support your body with its journey towards healing.

After a trauma, it's normal to experience flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms. Grounding techniques help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

However, not all grounding techniques work for everyone, so use the tools that you find most helpful and remember that the use of grounding techniques become easier and more effective with practice.

It's not always easy to look after our wellbeing... or to know where to start. Remember that good days for your wellbeing won't always look the same.

We don't always have the same levels of energy or motivation.

Be kind to yourself and do what feels right for you at the moment.

If you find your coping strategies don't work in certain circumstances, it may be worth reaching out for further support with the helplines provided.

Remember, you are not alone and help is available.



# 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your 5 senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

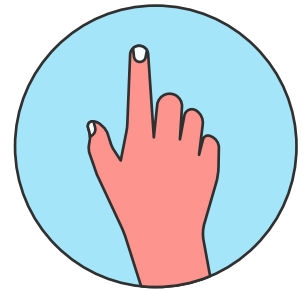
## What are 5 things you can see?

Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.



## What are 4 things you can feel?

Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, & other physical qualities.



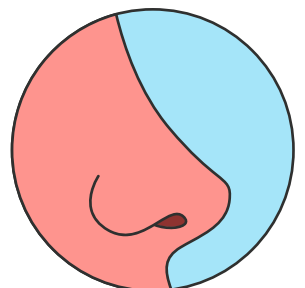
## What are 3 things you can hear?

Pay attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.



## What are 2 things you can smell?

Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.



## What is 1 thing you can taste?

Carry gum, candy, or small snacks for this step. Pop one in your mouth and focus your attention closely on the flavours.



# Calm breathing

During periods of anxiety, the body triggers a set of symptoms called the stress response. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, heart rate increases, and muscles become tense. In opposition to the stress response is the relaxation response. Breathing becomes deeper and slower, and symptoms of anxiety fade away. Deep breathing triggers this response.



## How to do it:

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, if you would like to do so. When you're learning, try placing a hand on your stomach. If you breathe deeply enough, you should notice it rising and falling with each breath.

### 1. Inhale.

Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.

### 2. Pause.

Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.

### 3. Exhale.

Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.

### 4. Repeat.

Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.



## Tips:

Counting out your breaths serves a second purpose. It takes your mind off the source of your anxiety. Whenever you catch your mind wandering, simply return your focus to counting.

When this is practiced regularly, calm breathing provides both immediate and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

# Grounding Objects

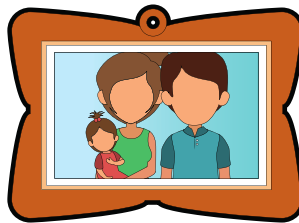
A grounding object is a small physical item that you can touch and feel, that is representative of stability and equilibrium for you.

Identifying a grounding object for yourself is a practical way to manage distress and discomfort so that you can refocus and get back on your path. This could include navigating anxiousness, managing low moods, or working through an unsettling experience like a flashback or dissociation.

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## How to do it:

Select an object that you can carry in your pocket to help ground yourself, to comfort and touch when you need to. The object could be anything, like a small stone, crystal, keyring, fidget toy, or something that has personal meaning to you.



If you are feeling distracted or overwhelmed, hold the object and focus your attention on it.

Allow your senses to respond to the object and notice how it makes you feel when holding the object.

Does it help you to feel comforted? or gain a sense of security?

Allow the object to remind you of a positive memory or affirmation such as:



# Categories game

This grounding technique helps your mind to focus on something else, ideally something more pleasant or neutral.

In the context of mental health, organizing and grouping can be used to manage thoughts, feelings, and emotions by focusing on something else.

Categories can also be applied to manage tasks and responsibilities, breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable parts and reducing stress and anxiety.

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## How to do it:

Choose at least three of the categories below and name as many items as you can in each one. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.



For a variation on this activity, try naming items alphabetically. For example, for the fruits & vegetables category, say "apple, banana, carrot," and so on.

You can also create your own set of categories linking to your hobbies & interests.



# Muscle Relaxation Technique

This is an exercise that reduces stress and anxiety in your body by having you slowly tense and then relax each muscle.

This exercise can provide an immediate feeling of relaxation, but it's best to practice frequently. With experience, you will become more aware of when you are experiencing tension, and you will have the skills to help you relax.

During this exercise, each muscle must be tensed, but not to the point of strain. If you have any injuries or pain, you can skip the affected areas.

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## How to do it:

1. Find a comfortable space and position either lying down or sitting with your back straight and your feet on the floor. Close your eyes or focus on a spot in front of you.



2. Start by clenching your toes as much as you can for a few seconds then releasing them. Notice the difference between the two feelings.



3. Match this to your breathing. Tense your muscles as you take a deep breath in and relax as you breathe out.



4. Move up your body to your thighs, your stomach and all the way to your shoulders and hands, clenching and relaxing each muscle in turn. Take time to notice any parts of your body that feel tense, tight or tired. You can repeat if you still feel tense.



5. Take a moment to relax, then slowly and gently begin to move. When you feel ready, you can stand up slowly.





# Calm/Safe Place

The Calm/Safe Place Exercise is a visualisation technique to help when you are feeling overwhelmed or activated by a trauma or PTSD trigger. If you struggle to find a safe place you identify with, you can replace the word “safe” with “calm.”

## How to do it:

If you feel able to, close your eyes or look where you feel more comfortable.

Take a few deep breaths to regulate and calm your body.

Imagine that you are in a place where you feel safe, calm, and free. It might be a place you have been before or it might be a place you create in your imagination.



When you look around, what do you notice?

What do you see?

What do you hear?

Who are you with?

What are you doing?

What do you smell?



Notice what sensations you feel in your body.

Do you feel calm? More at peace? A little bit lighter?

Can you remember your strengths? Abilities? Talents? Attributes?

Before you leave your safe place, take one more look around and see what else you notice.

When you're ready, open your eyes and continue to keep those feelings of calmness and strength with you.

Give your safe/calm space a name or a phrase, so whenever you bring this name to the forefront of your mind, it will take you to your safe/calm space.

Remember, this special place, lives within you and you can visit it any time you choose. Every time you visit this safe place, you are reminded of your strength and of what makes you special.

