

Grounding Activity: The 5 Senses Hand

Grounding activities help children and adolescents turn their attention away from distressing thoughts, worries or memories by focusing on their immediate surroundings instead. In this exercise, kids can use their five senses to — see, touch, hear, smell and taste — while purposefully observing the many details of their environment. This activity can help children feel more calm, safe and present in the moment when their mind is distracted, confused or anxious.

Before starting this exercise, have the child first pay attention to their breathing and ask them to take 5 deep breaths to relax and prepare for the activity.

Use the 5 Senses Hand activity on the next page to guide the child through the steps below:

5 	Look for FIVE things you see around you. It could be a pencil, a picture on the wall, the color of the floor, anything in your environment.
4 	Find FOUR things you can feel nearby. It might be the sensation of your clothing, sunshine on your skin, the texture of a stuffed animal or the ground under your feet.
3 	Listen for THREE things you hear. This could be any sound you begin to notice. Maybe you hear something happening outside, music playing or a ticking clock.
2 	Identify TWO things you can smell. If smells are hard to notice right away, take a brief walk to find a scent—maybe the soap in a bathroom, food in the kitchen or something outside like freshly cut grass.
1 	Think of ONE thing you can taste. Can you still remember the taste of a recent meal or drink? If not, have a small snack for this step like raisins, fruit or yogurt. While eating, carefully focus your attention on the different flavors you taste.

The 5 Senses Hand



This grounding activity is one way to cope effectively with strong emotions. Once finished with the 5-4-3-2-1 steps, this worksheet may also be colored-in as an additional calming activity using the sense of sight, touch, sound and smell (depending on the drawing materials used).

