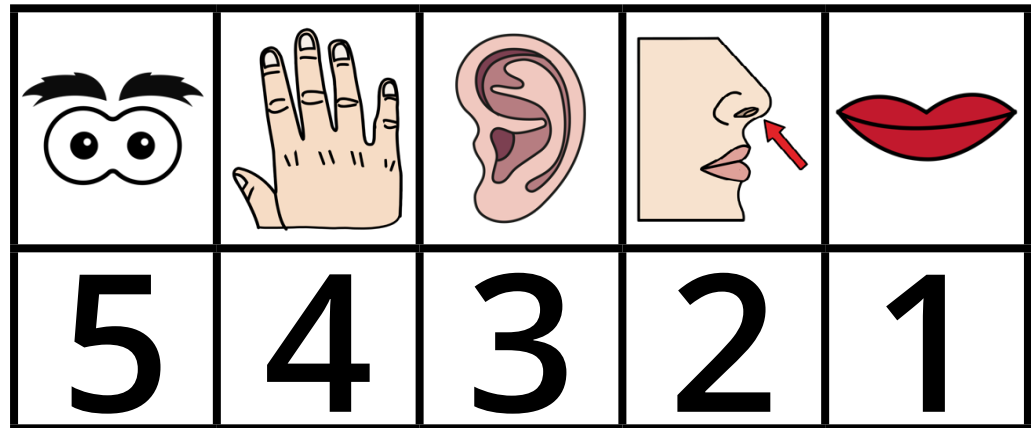


Grounding: An Overview

Definition and Purpose	Grounding is an intervention that falls under Cognitive Behavioral/Instructional Strategies (CBIS), which is a group of evidence-based practices for autistic learners. According to the most recent 2020 evidence-based practice report from the National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice, "Cognitive Behavioral/Instructional Strategy interventions are based on the belief that learning and behavior are impacted by cognitive processes. These interventions teach learners to examine their own thoughts and emotions and then use step-by-step strategies to change their thinking, behavior, and self-awareness." (Steinbrenner et al., 72). Grounding is based on principles of mindfulness. A learner is taught to bring their awareness and focus to physical sensations in their immediate environment and in the present moment.
Why Teach Grounding	» Grounding can help learners to feel safe and in control during times of stress, worry, or high distractibility. » Grounding can be helpful when a learner is having overwhelming, uncomfortable, and/or internal experiences (i.e., thoughts, feelings, sensations). » Grounding provides an opportunity to shift one's attention back to the present moment and may provide the student with more awareness and mental resources to attend, problem-solve, or respond effectively.
When to Teach Grounding	» Coping skills, such as grounding, should be introduced when the student is in a calm, well-regulated state. » Once learned, these skills are practiced regularly to build fluency, so that a learner can use coping skills when needed most.
Considerations for Teaching Grounding	» Grounding can be a useful technique that momentarily pulls a learner's attention away from difficult or uncomfortable internal thoughts, feelings, and sensations and places it on aspects of their physical environment. » It is important to consider when a learner may benefit from using grounding. Grounding should not be used to escape from a task a learner needs to engage in. » For autistic learners and those with developmental disabilities, using visual supports, such as a task analysis, can be helpful to support learning. These visual supports can also be used as visual reminders or prompts for the learner to use grounding at different times of the day.

Grounding in Action

This is an example task analysis visual that takes a learner through a sequenced Grounding activity. The pictures indicate each of the five senses (e.g., eyes for sight, hands for touch, etc.) and the numbers indicate the how many items in the learner's environment they can identify with the particular sense (e.g., find five items you can see; four items you can touch, etc.).



Using First-Then to Support Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process for gathering, analyzing, and summarizing information about the relationship (i.e., function) between a person's challenging behavior and their environment (Cooper, et al., 2019). An FBA provides specific information around how interventions should be individualized in consideration of a person's skills, preferences, sensitivities, and environment. For students in schools, an FBA is conducted to address one or more of the following situations:

- » a change of placement to a more restrictive setting is considered due to a student's behavior;
- » a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is removed from current placement for more than 10 school days for behavior determined to be a manifestation of their disability;
- » the IEP provides for the use of restraint or isolation;
- » a student's behavior impedes learning for self or peers;
- » a student's behavior threatens safety of self or others;
- » when determined appropriate by the student's IEP team;
- » a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is considered ineffective by virtue of incomplete or flawed understanding of the student's behavior; and/or
- » a student's behavior limits student engagement, inclusion, and/or independence.

An FBA may be conducted, as appropriate, in the following situations:

- » a student with an IEP is removed from current placement for more than 10 school days for behavior not determined to be a manifestation of their disability, or
- » a student with an IEP is removed to an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 school days for a zero-tolerance offense.

Using Grounding to Support Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) <i>Continued</i>	Ultimately, a complete FBA will present one or more functional hypotheses supported by available evidence as to why behaviors of concern are occurring, along with an appraisal of student's skill deficits that are impacting the behavior targeted within the FBA. The results of this FBA are used to individualize the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP focuses on decreasing challenging behavior and increasing appropriate behavior (Cooper, et al., 2019). Grounding is a type of coping skill that can be taught as a functionally equivalent replacement behavior for dysregulated behavior. Once the student engages in the replacement behavior, they should receive reinforcement through a token system or other reinforcement system.
BIP and Antecedent (Prevention) Strategies	A behavior intervention plan (BIP) should include specific strategies or actions to set the student up for success and help prevent occurrences of challenging behavior. Antecedent strategies should be incorporated as part of a comprehensive BIP that includes the explicit teaching of a replacement behavior and reinforcement to increase the likelihood the student will engage in the replacement behavior. Below is an example of a grounding description within a BIP.

EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION WITHIN A BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

Intervention Description	Staff teach grounding <coping strategy that matches the behavioral function determined in the FBA>. When <student needs to engage in a coping strategy as determined by the FBA>, they use the grounding task analysis to engage in grounding. Five minutes before transitioning from homeroom to math class, the student will engage in the grounding strategy. Immediately after the student completes the grounding strategy, the educator will say, "Great job using your strategies! You've earned a token!" paired with providing a token for the student's token board.
Who will implement?	The educator
When will it occur? (e.g., time of day, days of week)	Prior to transitioning from homeroom to math class
When will the intervention begin?	11/10/24
Materials Needed	Grounding Instructional Outline, grounding visual supports

Learn More	View TRIAD resources and trainings at triad.vkclearning.org . Visit the online learning portal to access additional free courses. To access, first register for an account. If you already have an account log in here .
References	» Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yücesoy-Özkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team. https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/EBP-Report-2020.pdf » Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2019). <i>Applied Behavior Analysis (3rd Edition)</i>. Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.