



WHY GROUNDING IS NOT THE SAME AS RELAXATION

by Jenna Froelich, LCPC, CDVP

Whether online, in a podcast, or in your daily life, you've probably heard the terms "relaxation" and "grounding." I've seen the terms used interchangeably, but there is actually a key difference and it's very helpful to understand it since grounding and relaxation are not equally effective for all anxiety. Relaxation has been shown less effective with anxiety stemming from more intensely distressing experiences like PTSD and trauma responses, so knowing the difference can help you choose the right coping tool with a little more precision.

Relaxation techniques are strategies whose specific focus is (unsurprisingly!) relaxation – of the mind or body. For example, breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness or other forms of meditation can relax body tension, calm racing thoughts, or ease the physical symptoms of anxiety.

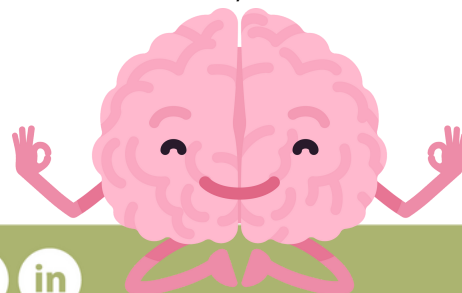
However, for people who've experienced severe stress such as trauma, "relaxed" can actually feel unsafe and scary in and of itself, so trying to "relax" can actually trigger more distress. Grounding works better here because the purpose of grounding is not to relax, but to become either literally or figuratively grounded, as in focused, in the present. You can do that literally, for example, by pressing your feet firmly into the ground (I know "go touch grass" is usually a passive-aggressive suggestion, but in this case, I say it sincerely!) or metaphorically by looking around the room and naming everything you can see. Such strategies help to detach from psychological pain that is so intense that simple distraction, relaxation, or other usual coping skills may not work.

Grounding can look similar to relaxation in some ways (e.g., both may use breathing techniques), but breathing for relaxation is as simple as that – breathing to calm, whereas grounding may use focus on the sensation of your breath to detach your mind and body away from triggering thoughts, sensations, or emotions, to a more neutral stimulus such as your breath. As a caveat, such body-focused types of grounding may not work for people for whom body sensations are a big trigger, but there are other categories of grounding you can use instead, perhaps a mental task like naming all breeds of dog you can think of. Learning different categories of grounding can help you find what will work best for you.

So, to summarize: relaxation is about calming the mind and body and grounding is about detaching the mind and body (from whatever is distressing). It can help to talk to your therapist more about these two different categories of coping strategies and determine in what situations you should use either/or.

In the meantime, below is a link to a handout on grounding techniques that I find really comprehensive. Look it over, maybe pick 1-2 strategies to try, and then practice them. You can check in with your therapist and identify which, if any, may work best for you.

[Grounding Techniques Handout](#)



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SPRING HOLIDAYS:

April:

Autism Awareness Month

Celebrate Diversity Month

Dog Appreciation Month

National Alcohol

Awareness Month

Sexual Assault Awareness

Month

April 1st - 7th:

National Public Health

Week

April 21st - 27th:

National Volunteer Week

April 1st: April Fool's

Day

April 2nd: Autism

Awareness Day

April 7th: World Health

Day

April 18th: Tax Day

April 26th: National

Pretzel Day





MEET THE STAFF



Lindsay Sher, LCPC

Q: When did you know you wanted to be a professional counselor?

A: I have always been fascinated with the human condition and discovering we can be empowered to take control of our journeys; it just took me a minute to realize this was my profession. I started behind the scenes with a Health Communications degree and worked in marketing for mental health facilities and sales for medical companies. I did some self-reflection during a work absence to raise my family and realized I wanted to directly connect with people. It is then I put the pieces together and returned to earn my masters degree in Mental Health Counseling.

Q: What do you do for self care?

A: Rest.

Q: What is your favorite coping skill?

A: Anything with breathwork and mindfulness. There is something beautiful in slowing down and feeling wholly present.

Q: What is a fun fact about you?

A: I am a classically trained pianist and still perform and engage in my art professionally.

Q: What is your favorite movie and/or TV show?

A: Brothers and Sisters, This is Us, Gilmore Girls, Parenthood....maybe it's the therapist in me that loves a show that highlights some good family dynamics!



THIS IS US

SPRING HOLIDAYS:

May:

Mental Health

Awareness Month

National Pet Month

Military Appreciation
Month



May 5th - 11th:

National Pet Week

May 12th - 18th:

National Women's
Health Week

May 5th: Cinco de
Mayo

May 12th: Mother's
Day

May 18th:
International Museum
Day and Armed Forces
Day

May 27th: Memorial
Day





SPRING HOLIDAYS:

June:

Pride Month 

Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

June 2nd: National Cancer Survivor's Day

June 4th: National Cheese Day

June 8th: World Oceans Day

June 15th: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

June 19th: Juneteenth

June 21st: Summer Solstice

June 27th: National PTSD Awareness Day and National HIV Testing Day

June 30th: World Social Media Day and National Meteor Watch Day

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



BEI Commercial Real Estate

BEI is our office management company at our St. Charles location! They have been making steady improvements to our building, such as updating our lobby and painting common areas. We are excited to see the ongoing improvements made to the building!



BROKERAGE / MANAGEMENT / CONSULTING

NEW LOCATION - ANNA, IL

Our location in Anna, IL has moved! We are now located at 156 E. Vienna St., Anna, IL 62906. This new location will enable us to expand our services and provide a more comfortable environment for our clients. Our previous location was located on Enterprise Drive in Anna, IL.



REMINDERS AND UPDATES

Out of the office reminders:

- Danielle Slyder, LCPC, ATR is out of office 5/27 and 6/19.
- Lindsey Kovalik Bianchini is out of office 4/23 - 4/28, 5/27 and 6/25.
- Elizabeth Bremner, LPC is out of office 6/3 and 6/10.
- Erin Lowry, MSW Intern is out of office 4/11.

Please speak to your therapist about your session needs during those times. Additional dates may be communicated to you by your therapist.

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