

Exploring Grounding Exercises Through Journaling

AUTHOR(S): Maryn Gordon

SUMMARY: In this session we will find a beautiful spot outside to learn and practice grounding exercises paired with thought provoking journaling prompts.

GOALS: Learn about grounding exercises, how they can use them themselves, and how they can be used during their work at camp.

AUDIENCE: Seasonal staff, all ages

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Paper, pens/pencils
- graphics of examples of grounding exercises (not necessary but nice to have)

SET-UP: This program can take place outside, inside, in a bunk, staff lounge, or anywhere a group can gather. Doing this program in a quiet space is the most ideal.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – *Introductions, setting group norms*
- 00:05-00:10 – *What are grounding exercises? Brainstorm as a group*
- 00:15-00:35 – *Journaling prompts*
- 00:35-00:45 – *Discussion about how you can bring this to camp this summer*

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:05 – Introductions, setting group norms

The session leader introduces the session topic and leads the group in a round of introductions (name, pronouns, camp, favorite camp meal).

The group sets a few group norms (Listening, sitting or standing however you feel most comfortable, all ideas are good ideas, etc.) (session leader can ask what we hope some group norms are, and list a few examples)

00:05-00:10 – What are grounding exercises? Brainstorm as a group

The session leader leads the group in a discussion about what grounding exercises are. Have participants share what they know, examples, ideas, and the purpose behind them.

00:15-00:35 – Journaling prompts

Session leader facilitates journal prompts about a few grounding exercises and leads the group through practicing a few.

Grounding Exercise 1

- Box Breathing
 - Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds – First we will all practice together
- Journal Prompts:
 - What did you notice while practicing this exercise?
 - Another way to use this exercise:
 - Breathe in for 4 seconds: What are 4 things you want to take in this summer
 - Hold for 4 seconds: What are 4 things you want to hold onto this summer
 - Breathe out for 4 seconds: What are 4 things you want to let go of this summer
 - Hold for 4 seconds: What are 4 things you want to keep from your growth this year and bring into camp (school, this conference, personally)

Grounding Exercise 2

- Using your senses
 - First let's practice this exercise to reorient yourself to your surroundings and help to ground you within your surroundings.
 - 5 things you can see
 - 4 things you can hear
 - 3 things you can touch
 - 2 things you can smell
 - 1 thing you can taste
- Journal Prompts:
 - How can you bring this exercise into your work at camp?
 - How can you use this in a new way to ground your programming, and your work with your campers/staff in themselves?
 - Examples of ways to change this exercise to adapt to the camper, or situation:
 - List only things you can see

- List things you've done that day
- List all the activities you can see from where you're sitting

Grounding Exercise 3

- Reorient yourself and recite things you know to be true
 - This can help to ground you back within yourself by reminding yourself of things that are true and things that you know *about* yourself during the times when you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or panicked.
 - My name is _____, I live _____, my eyes are _____, my hair is _____, my favorite color is _____, yesterday I did xyz, etc.
- Journal Prompts:
 - Make a list of things you know to be true about yourself today
 - How can you use this list to recenter yourself during times of stress?
 - Do you think this exercise could help campers when they're struggling?

Grounding Exercise 4

- Journaling Prompts to reflect on yourself, and your work at camp:
 - What is a grounding exercise you have used in the past, how has it helped you?
 - If you've never used one before, spend a few moments to think about what you think may help you in times of stress, anxiety, or you feel overwhelmed
 - How can you apply that to camp this summer when you need some time to yourself, or when you're talking to a camper that is feeling overwhelmed?

00:35-00:45 – Discussion about how you can bring this to camp this summer

The session leader facilitates a conversation about what grounding exercises participants gravitate towards, how they can use them in their work at camp this summer, and how they can call on them during times of stress at camp.

- What did you think about the grounding exercises?
- Is there one you'd like to share with the group that we didn't discuss?
- How do you think this could be useful at camp this summer for your fellow staff members or campers?

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

This program can be adapted for different ages, groups or settings. If you want to explore grounding exercises with campers, take a few of the examples and practice them during down time as a bunk. Or a supervisor could lead a session for their staff about grounding exercises and how to use them themselves, or with campers. This program doesn't need to be run in its entirety; small pieces can be used. It can also be solely discussion based, instead of journal prompts. Use it how you see fit!