



## **GROUNDING FOCAL POINTS: DURING MINDFULNESS PRACTICE AND IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

Grounding focal points are physical or functional parts of the body that can be tuned into and noticed at any time. These points are *grounding* because they can literally ground someone to the present moment and often help shift a teen out of or away from a difficult emotional state. It can be helpful for a teen to pay attention to these points as a calming function. In addition, they can literally ground someone who is in an acute or chronic traumatic state back to the here and now. These points are also *focal* because they are key points of the body that are a constant either physically or physiologically. Listed here, they can be used any time teens want.

- Fingers and/or hands
- Toes and/or feet
- Breath and breathing
- Heartbeat
- Heart-rate variability

### **Grounding Focal Points During Mindfulness Practice**

In or out of session, grounding focal points assist teens during mindfulness practice when they are having difficulties either with (1) the practice itself, and/or (2) thoughts that are difficult, overwhelming, and unmanageable at that particular point in time.

### **Grounding Focal Points During Everyday Life**

Grounding focal points can also assist a teen in everyday life, during a difficult or heightened emotional state or when thoughts are running rampant. Often teens learn to use these points before a test; during homework, or athletic or competitive performance; in a difficult conflict; or to reduce reactivity or impulsivity.

### **Points to Focus On Particularly During Difficult or Stressful Practice or Life Moments**

- Fingers and/or hands
- Toes and/or feet

### **Points to Avoid Focusing On During Stressful Situations**

- Breath and breathing
- Heartbeat
- Heart-rate variability

*Note:* These points are good for beginning use in everyday practice situations, but focusing on them during stressful situations could elicit more stress. Once they have developed over time during practices, they can be used skillfully during more stressful situations.



## Ways to Notice Each of the Points

### Fingers and/or Hands

- Noticing each of your fingers
- Wiggling your fingers
- Noticing the air or sensations on your fingers or hands
- Touching a single finger to the thumb
- Counting fingers
- Noticing each of your hands
- Noticing both of your hands

### Toes and/or Feet

- Noticing each of your toes
- Wiggling your toes
- Noticing what surrounds your toes and/or feet (e.g., socks, shoes, etc.)
- Walking with shoes on or off
- Walking on different surfaces, such as grass or concrete

### Breath and Breathing

- Counting your breaths
- Saying to yourself as you breathe, “Breathing in one, and breathing out one, breathing in two, and breathing out two.” Do this for as long as you need or want.
- Noticing where you bring air in (your nose or mouth) on the next in-breath
- Noticing where you release air (your nose or mouth) on the next out-breath
- Noticing your stomach rise on the in-breath
- Noticing your stomach fall on the out-breath
- Noticing your breathing: is it deep? Shallow?
- Noticing where your breath goes when you inhale

### Heartbeat

- Noticing whether you are aware of your heartbeat
- Noticing what makes it speed up or slow down
- Noticing what your heartbeat feels like right now
- Noticing whether you can feel your heartbeat when you place your hand(s) over your heart
- Noticing whether you can hear your heartbeat

### Heart-rate Variability

- Noticing that your heart rate varies as you breathe
- Noticing that your heart rate is faster on the in-breath
- Noticing that your heart rate is slower on the out-breath