

## **Contain, Calm, and Ground**

Everyone has times when they have a disturbing feeling, obsess about an unhelpful thought or image, or worry about the future. At times you may be able to express your feelings, examine your thought patterns, better understand your reactions, and care for yourself through the feeling. There may be other times when you need to move away from the thought or feeling in the moment. Using the imagery of a container may help you calm and “ground” in the present moment.

Imagine a container that can hold feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, and images when needed. Start by choosing what your imaginary container will be. Be creative and find what appeals to you. It could be a safe, a chest, a piece of luggage, or a box. It could be something in nature like a deep hole, a cave, a far-away planet, an anchor that sinks in the ocean, or a creature. It could be a flash drive, a filing cabinet, or a book.

Use your imagination to further consider how your container is constructed. What does it look like? How do you control opening it, getting items in it, and closing it? How do you make sure items stay in it? Where does the container go when you are not using it?

Practice visualizing the container, filling it up with anything that you need to contain, making sure the container stays closed, and then putting away the container. Know that you can return to the thoughts, feelings, sensations, and images anytime you need to return to them. Once you put away the container, do something calming and then “ground” in the present moment. For example, to calm yourself you might do deep breathing, talk to a supportive person, or enjoy a fun activity. You might “ground” in the present by focusing on the work task that you need to do next or planning what you will have for dinner. Check out EAP’s blog posts for ideas on increasing calm in the moment and on grounding techniques. If it helps, just remember to “Contain, Calm, and Ground.” Feel free to contact EAP to talk to a counselor about containment, calming, and grounding techniques to use when needed.