

Simple scripts to use in the moment to help manage allostatic load. Can be said quietly to self or others (in head or out of mouth), and useable in classrooms, hallways, or meetings:

For Staff:

1. **"Pause. Nothing needs to be solved right now."**
Gives the nervous system permission to slow.
2. **"This feels hard because my system is under load, not because I'm failing."**
Reduces shame and reactivity.
3. **"Slow my body first; the rest can wait."**
Redirects to regulation before problem-solving.
4. **"I can lower my voice and slow my breath."**
Directly calms the stress response.
5. **"I don't have to carry this alone."**
Promotes co-regulation and asking for support.
6. **"One step at a time is enough right now."**
Counters urgency and overwhelm.
7. **"This is a moment, not the whole day."**
Prevents stress from stacking cognitively.
8. **"I can reset after this."**
Signals that recovery is coming.
9. **"I'm allowed to step back and regroup."**
Normalizes boundaries and pauses.
10. **"Calm first, then think."**
Aligns with flip-your-lid physiological response.

For Students:

1. **"You're safe. I'm here with you."**
Signals safety and connection.
2. **"Your body looks overwhelmed—let's help it calm."**
Names the state without blame.
3. **"We don't have to fix this right now."**
Reduces urgency and pressure.
4. **"Let's slow our breathing together."**
Invites co-regulation.
5. **"Big feelings first, thinking later."**
Normalizes the process.
6. **"Your brain is in alarm mode—it will turn down."**
Externalizes the reaction.
7. **"Take a break with me."**
Offers support, not isolation.
8. **"We can start again when you're ready."**
Restores dignity and choice.
9. **"This is hard, and you're not in trouble."**
Reduces shame and fear.
10. **"Let's help your brain feel safe."**
Focuses on regulation, not behavior.

Grounding works best when:

- A. It's brief
- B. It's optional (never forced)
- C. It's paired with calm adult presence
- D. It happens *before* problem-solving

Grounding Skills (child and adult friendly):

1. **Feet on the Floor/Stomp Stomp Blow**
"Press your feet into the floor like you're making footprints."
Stomp one foot, then the other-->long exhale
2. **Wall Push**
Push hands into the wall for 10 seconds, rest, repeat.
3. **Chair Squeeze**
Sit tall and squeeze your legs and arms tightly, then release.
4. **Desk Press**
Push hands down into the desk and feel the pressure.
5. **Smell the Flower, Blow the Candle**
Inhale through the nose, exhale slowly through the mouth.
6. **Square Breathing**
Trace a square: breathe in, hold, out, hold (count to 3-4).
7. **Hot Cocoa Breath**
Pretend to smell hot cocoa, then blow gently to cool it.
8. **5-4-3-2-1 Senses**
Name 5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste.
9. **Texture Touch**
Hold a smooth stone, eraser, or fabric and describe it.
10. **Temperature Check**
Notice if hands feel warm or cool; press palms together. Rub them together to change temp.
11. **Spot the Colors**
Find 5 things in the room that are the same color.
12. **Object Description**
Pick one object and describe its shape, color, and size.

13. **Trace and Breathe**

Trace a finger around the desk or paper slowly while breathing.

14. **Animal Walks**

Bear walk, crab walk, or tiptoe like a mouse (short distance).

15. **Stretch and Reach**

Reach up high, then down low, then side to side.

16. **Shake It Out**

Shake arms, legs, hands for 10 seconds, then stop and notice sensations.

17. **Mirror Me**

Student copies slow movements the teacher models.

18. **Count Together**

Count slowly to 10 with the teacher. Bonus if you can breathe in after one count, out after the next (e.g., in on 1, out on 2 with extended exhale).

19. **Name and Notice**

"I see your shoulders relaxing. Your breathing is slowing."

20. **Have the student quietly name:**

- A. 3 strong things their body can do (e.g., "My legs can hold me up.")
- B. 2 things helping them right now (e.g., "My teacher is here.")
- C. 1 thing they're proud of today

Simple scripts to pair with grounding

- A. "Let's help your body feel steady."
- B. "Slow down with me."
- C. "Your body is learning how to calm."
- D. "You're doing a good job taking care of yourself."

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Strategies for managing the allostatic load
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