

Coping Strategies

What is coping?

People often think 'coping' is about doing well or even thriving. However, most of the time, coping is about just getting by in hard circumstances. It's that inner strength or resilience that allows you to put one foot in front of the other when you feel like giving up.

Coping strategies are the actions we take to deal with stress, problems, or uncomfortable emotions. Unhealthy coping strategies often provide instant gratification or relief, but have long-term negative consequences. In contrast, healthy coping strategies do not always feel good in the moment, but they contribute to long-lasting positive outcomes.

What are coping skills?

Positive coping skills can include exercise (walks, biking, and going to the gym), healthy eating habits, regular sleep, talking with others, social activities and outings, hobbies (reading, writing, doing models, collecting stuff) and any other activities that a person can think of that fall here. Prescriptions medications can even be a positive coping mechanism if they help manage mental health symptoms. Many individuals do not think of chores, work and getting one's self ready in the morning (self-care) as coping skills, but they are. Think of it this way, if you are feeling bad in the morning, do you really want to take a shower and get yourself ready for your day? If you do, do you feel a little better?

Negative coping skills include abusing or drinking too much alcohol, abusing drugs (as in illegal, over the counter, and prescription drugs), problem gambling, doing something illegal (i.e. robbing someone for kicks, or to support other negative coping skills, tagging buildings, intentionally hurting animals or people, physical or sexual abuse). It can also involve not knowing how to control the level of the emotions by being too loud and verbally abuse to others, smashing things, dwelling on suicide, over the top giddiness, or being too afraid of everything and staying inside. These types of coping skills rarely make people feel better and usually mask or hide the issues. The issues that are being covered up by these coping skills are typically not being worked through.

The **Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping Strategies** worksheet looks at the importance of using healthy coping strategies, and guides you toward applying this knowledge in your own lives. The first page of this worksheet uses examples and real-life scenarios and the second page encourages you to explore a problem you are dealing with, and the various coping strategies you are using in response.

This worksheet is great for people who are dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, or addiction.

Resources:

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping Strategies

Suggestions for Coping Strategies

100 Coping Strategies

Coping Strategies

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-strategies>

Teach your teenager coping skills for wellbeing

<https://parents.au.reachout.com/skills-to-build/wellbeing/things-to-try-coping-skills-and-resilience/teach-your-teenager-coping-skills-for-wellbeing>