



Coping Skills

Through our lives we develop styles or ways of responding to difficult situations. These ways are called coping skills. They can be negative or positive. Negative coping skills are unhealthy ways that we respond, such as: smoking, drinking, over or under eating, zoning out, withdrawing, using pills or drugs, avoiding, or taking it out on others. Positive coping skills are healthy safe ways to aid in staying calm and in control when faced with difficult situations. Some help you to remain calm in the situation; others help you to do some problem solving to prevent the problem from surfacing again. First, jot down some that have or have not worked in the past.

Coping skills that have worked:

Coping skills that didn't work:

Suggestions:

- Take a walk
- Stop. Look. Listen. Think.
- Count to 10
- Take space
- Breathe deeply
- Drink cold water
- Call a friend
- Write in a journal
- Draw or color
- Get some fresh air
- Make a list
- Take a bath or shower
- Ask for help
- Visualize a calming place
- Exercise
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Listen to music or play an instrument
- Read
- Check your thoughts
- Let yourself cry
- Express emotions
- Positive affirmations
- Use "I feel" statements
- Yoga
- Being involved in a club or activity
- Eating properly
- Get enough sleep
- Stretch
- Massage
- Do your nails or hair
- Spirituality
- Gardening
- Researching your favorite things
- Run
- Surround yourself with positive supportive people
- Stay organized and clean
- Find a hobby
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Things to remember:

- Positive Coping takes practice; it takes 30 to 60 times of practice to master a new skill.
- Coping skills don't solve your problems.
- Coping skills don't automatically kick in when you are upset.
- Every coping skill isn't appropriate for every situation
- If you find your coping skills aren't working, try something new. You may want to speak with your therapist or doctor when you find your coping skills don't help.
- Keep track of what has worked for you.
- Inform your family of how you plan to cope and ask them to support you in coping.

Strengths:

When life gets tough it is hard to remember our positive qualities and strengths. That is why it is important to have a list of strengths, or have encouraging mantras for ourselves. Part of coping is remembering you are capable of and worth feeling better. Take some time to list your strengths below.

How do you think you could use your strengths to make your coping skills work better for you? _____

How do you think you could use your strengths to start working on your problems?
