
COPING SKILLS

Below are some ideas for general coping. It is recommended you build a toolbox of coping skills that work for you and that you find to be helpful.

Self-Soothing

BREATHING: *Take deep breaths from the diaphragm or stomach. Breathe in and then when you breath out, very slowly release the breath out.*

EXERCISE: *Change your focus, get your body moving.*

MUSIC: *Use a relaxing or lively tune or music that inspires you. Consider dancing.*

RELAX YOUR BODY: *Progressive muscle relaxation. Download guided relaxation exercises. Take a bath or shower. Do yoga.*

IMAGERY: *Look at and director your attention towards a picture or photograph of a beautiful and calming scene (i.e., beach, mountains).*

COMFORT ITEM: *Hold onto or wrap yourself in something comforting – a blanket, jacket, scarf, stuffed animal – anything that makes you feel more comfortable.*

VISUALIZATION: *Visualize a place you love, either that you have been at, or that you enjoy imagining yourself to be there. Describe it paying attention to using all five senses (e.g., the beach: what it looks like, how the sand feels, what it sounds like: wind and waves, saltwater smell)*

Do Something Positive

DO ONE POSITIVE THING: *Do something positive for yourself or for someone else. Every day is an opportunity to do something to move you towards your goals or towards being more positive.*

SOCIALIZE: *Call someone and talk about something pleasant, encourage them to talk about something pleasant, plan to do something pleasant. Call someone to vent about what is bothering you but keep it time limited.*

ENTERTAIN YOURSELF: *Computer games, crossword, cards, jigsaw, cook, read a book, magazines, do crafts, sudoku, etc.*

LIST YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS: *What have you done that was challenging for you, what have you put effort into, what have people said you do well, etc.*

PRAYER: *Use whatever prayers, rituals, spiritually inspiring readings, music or activities that get you in touch with something larger than yourself.*

PROBLEM SOLVING: *what steps can you take towards solving the problem?*

Dealing with your thoughts and assumptions

SELF-STATEMENTS/COGNITIVE COPING: *What can you say to yourself to help you feel better? Examples include “I am safe now, I can get through this, you have survived everything you have faced so far”. Use your skills to identify the thoughts bothering you and see if you can identify an alternative true way to think about what is happening.*

REDIRECT UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS: *Notice if you have a lot of self-critical or otherwise discouraging thoughts. Push these away and identify something positive you can do.*

REALITY CHECK: *Is there something I need to do about this right now? Is there something I could do about this right now? Is there another way to think about this? Is there someone else I can talk to about my options?*

Distracting

FOCUS ON YOUR SENSES: *Identify something you see, something you hear, something you smell, something you touch, something you taste. While doing this stay mindfully focused on your senses in the moment.*

MINDFUL WALKING: *Walk slowly and carefully, feeling your feet connect at each point on the floor. Without controlling your breath too much, you can try pairing walking and breathing so that one foot touches the ground at each in and out breath. See how many steps seem natural to take during each inhalation and exhalation. Direct all attention toward the sensations of walking. Which part touches the ground first? Pay attention to how your weight shifts from one foot to the other. What are the feelings in your knees as they bend? What is the texture of the ground? What are the differences in walking on different surfaces?*