

POSITIVE COPING SKILLS

Coping skills are anything you do to successfully deal with any situation. Coping skills are to be practiced regularly, not only in distressing situations or to deal with stressful emotions. Regular practice of healthy coping increases the likelihood of using the skill and proper use.

PHYSICAL SKILLS	EMOTIONAL/MENTAL SKILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a bath or shower ● Use a stress ball ● Walk in nature ● Ride a bike ● Exercise or play a sport ● Punch a punching bag ● Get enough sleep ● Eat healthy foods ● Limit caffeine and alcohol ● Deep/slow breathing ● Play an instrument, sing, dance, act ● Go for a drive (if this is safe for you) ● Play a game ● Clean or organize your environment ● Read ● Care for or play with a pet ● Rip up paper ● Go swimming ● Yoga ● Listen to body signals ● Rest or take a break ● Garden ● Gentle stretching ● Finish a task or chore ● Cook or bake (if this is safe for you) ● Knit, sew, or crochet ● Have sex (be physically + emotionally safe) ● Take a nap ● Pop Bubble Wrap ● Punch a pillow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catharsis (yell in the bathroom, not at another person) ● Cry (set a timer if needed) ● Laugh or use humor ● Pray or meditate ● Schedule time for self ● Talk to someone you trust ● Set boundaries and say “no” ● Write a note to someone you care about ● Spend with healthy supports ● Make a gratitude list ● Brainstorm solutions ● Keep an inspirational quote with you ● Write a list of goals ● Act opposite of negative feelings ● Write a list of pros and cons for decisions ● Write a list of strengths ● Accept a challenge with a positive attitude ● Color or doodle ● Make a worry box ● Visualize a stop sign and redirect your thinking ● Do a puzzle, crossword, or word search ● Complete a thought record ● Journal ● Attend spiritual service/event ● Listen to music ● See a counselor ● Say positive affirmations ● Use a self-help app ● Take a moment to think and choose before you act ● Watch TV or a movie



JOURNAL PROMPTS

Journaling can be used as a way to relax and/or release thoughts and feelings that may be contained in your mind. Consider the following prompts to assist in processing and relaxing.

- What is your favorite way to spend a lazy day?
- Write a diary entry, dated 10 years in the future.
- Write about something presently, in your life, that is “worth it.”
- Come up with a mathematical formula to express something you know/believe. (Example: Long Saturday run + Frappuccino = Happiness)
- Complete this thought: “I wish I had paid more attention when...”
- What area of your life do you tend to enjoy in excess instead of moderation?
- Write about three realistic goals you would like to achieve in your lifetime.
- What do you need right now?
- It is the end of your life and you are up on stage being presented with a major award. What award is it, and what have you won it for?
- What color best describes how you feel today?
- Write about a time everything changed in the blink of an eye?
- What is the biggest trigger for stress in your life?
- What was the last thing you read, heard, or saw that inspired you?
- Complete this thought: “I wish an alarm would notify me whenever...”
- What expert do you wish could come teach you what they know?
- If you could have one talent that you do not naturally have, what would it be?
- Do you absolutely hate any food that other people usually like?
- What is something you have learned lately?
- You have magic soap. What does it wash away?
- Write about an experience you had when you lost track of time.
- Write a one-minute “Thank You” note to someone.
- What bad habit would you like to change?
- Describe a “first day” in your life (first day of marriage, of school, etc.).
- Write about an item you use frequently that you think (or hope) will be obsolete in 20 years.
- If you could go back in time exactly 10 years and give yourself some advice, what would you tell yourself?
- How do you soothe yourself when you are upset?
- What, in your opinion, is strength?
- How do you usually respond to compliments?
- What has made you angry this week?
- What is your favorite holiday, and what do you love about it?
- Do you like your name? Do you feel it suits you? If you could change your name, would you? What would you change it to?
- Write about a moment when you felt proud of yourself.



Love and Kindness Meditation

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This meditation can be done anywhere – sitting in a chair, on the floor/ground propped up, in the morning or evening in bed, washing dishes, going for a walk, etc. I recommend in a space where you can close your eyes or have a soft gaze on the floor. To start, root down with either your feet, body, or sitting bones and begin to slow down your breathing. Relax shoulders down the back, release the jaw if clenched, and be comfortable. As you breathe, pay attention to the air as it enters your nose, cool and fresh – send the breath into your heart center. Fill up your chest, ribs, and diaphragm with fresh air and once you exhale through your nose notice the change in temperature to warm air. Follow this breathing until you feel calm – inhaling and exhaling from the nose. You can place your hands on your heart and notice your hands moving up and down, and each inhale and exhale.

As you settle into your breathing, picture yourself in front of you. Could be current “you”, or a younger “you.” Send yourself love as you inhale and expand your heart and repeat silently to yourself:

May I be happy.
May I be healthy.
May I be safe.
May I feel at ease.

(Repeat 3x or more)

After the 3rd round or so, come back to the breath and your heart center. Next, picture a loved one – family member, friend, partner, spouse, or someone you know that is sick and suffering. Repeat:

May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you be safe.
May you feel at ease.

(Repeat 3x or more)

Bring yourself back to your breath and heart center. Next, picture your extended family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and repeat:

May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you be safe.
May you feel at ease.

(Repeat 3x or more)



Bring yourself back to the breath and heart center. Now, picture the world, sending love and kindness to everyone, as we're in this together.

May everyone be happy.
May everyone be healthy.
May everyone be safe.
May everyone feel at ease.

(Repeat 3x or more)

Find your breath and focus back on the inhales and exhales. Place your hands on your heart center and give a little massage or acknowledgement to your heart. When ready, if eyes are closed, gently open, bringing yourself back into the space/room.

Namaste ☺



THOUGHT RECORD

EVENT/SITUATION	THOUGHT	EMOTION (Rate intensity 0 – 10)	BEHAVIOR	ALTERNATIVE THOUGHT
<i>Example:</i> Supervisor at work is angry.	“I must have made a mistake.” “I’m going to be fired.”	Anxious (8) Sadness (5)	Spend time obsessing over mistakes. Quit job before they can fire me.	“My supervisor could’ve been angry about anything. They’re usually happy with my work so, even if I made a mistake, they will talk with me.”

