



Coping Skills



Coping means to invest one's own conscious effort, to solve personal and interpersonal problems, in order to try to master, minimize or tolerate stress and conflict. The psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skills. These are meant as a guide and should be tailored specifically for the person who needs them. It's important to understand that some techniques might work better than others and it varies per person and by the situation you are dealing with.

Counting

Counting gives you time to relax and calm down before responding to a situation.

Try these methods:

- **Counting Backwards:**
Count backwards from 10 to 0.
- **Counting Random Sequence of Numbers**
Count from random numbers you aren't used to like from 157 to 203.
- **Counting Specific Items:** This is also a method of grounding. For example, count how many chairs are in the basement or count how many times someone on the TV says the word 'no'.

Grounding

Grounding techniques help you turn your attention away from negative thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocus on the present moment.

- **54321 Technique:**
Purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. What are **5** things you can **see**? What are **4** things you can **feel**? What are **3** things you can **hear**? What are **2** things you can **smell**? What is **1** thing you can **taste**?
- **Categories**
Choose 3 categories and name as many items as you can in each category. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.
- **Alphabet**
Pick a category and name an item for each letter of the alphabet.

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Deep Breathing

Deep breathing reverses the fight or flight response and sends messages to the brain to begin calming the body.

- **5-10:**

Breathe in slowly for at least 5 seconds. Hold your breathe for 5-10 seconds. Breathe out very slowly. Repeat the process until you feel calm.

- **Diaphragmatic:**

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling your stomach pressing into your hand. Keep your other hand as still as possible. Slowly exhale keeping your upper hand completely still.

- **Lion's Breath:**

Be in a comfortable seated position. Press your palms against your knees with your fingers spread wide. Inhale deeply through your nose and open your eyes wide. At the same time open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue, bringing the tip down toward your chin. Exhale by making a long 'ha' sound.

Imagery

- **5 Senses:**

Think of a place that's calming for you; the beach, playing with a pet, a friends house, another country you visited on vacation. Paint a picture using your 5 senses:

What do you see?

What do you hear?

What can you feel?

What can you taste?

What can you smell?

- **Mindfulness Meditation**

This can help with getting rid of unwanted imagery. To practice mindful meditation, sit or lay down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and bring your attention to your breathing. Relax your muscles and just sit with your breath. It's normal for your thoughts to wander; acknowledge your thoughts without judgement and then return your attention to your breathing. Practice until you feel calm again.

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