

Coping Skills List

When to use this: When you are feeling difficult/intense emotions and need support navigating those emotions.

What are coping skills?: At times, we all get stuck in intense emotions. A coping skill is a tool you can use to help you feel less stuck in the intense emotion. Coping skills help you regulate the emotions you are feeling intensely, so you can find a sense of balance. They can be especially helpful in navigating difficult emotions.

Directions:

1. Circle, star or highlight coping skills that you would like to try when you are feeling intense/difficult emotions from each category.
2. Add in additional ideas in the blank spaces under each type of coping skill.
3. Remember - what works in one scenario or one time might not in another. You can always return to the list for additional ideas.

Understanding & Processing Coping Skills:

Taking time to understand our emotions helps us put things in perspective, gather our thoughts, and problem solve.

With others or on your own, try to:

- Journal
- Use the Circle of Control activity (you will learn this in a later lesson!)
- Talk to someone you trust
- Ask others about their experiences to help you gain perspective
- Write a letter to someone
- Write what's bothering you, and then throw it away
- Write your worries and put them away in a box
- Use positive self-talk: "Talk to Yourself Like You Would To Your Friend" (you will learn this in a later lesson!)
- Write poetry, songs or music
- Draw or make art
- Engage in photography
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Distraction:

Spiraling (thinking a lot) about a problem can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Taking time away from it to enjoy something else can help you have a clearer mind when you return to the problem.

With others or on your own, try to:

- Watch something on TV, movies, Youtube, etc.
- Go see a movie with family/friends
- Make music alone or with others
- Listen to different sounds such as audiobooks or music
- Read books, graphic novels, comics
- Watch something funny
- Play a board game or video game
- Play a puzzle or crossword
- Connect with a friend
- Bake or cook
- Do a craft project or art project
- Go to a community center place of gathering
- Spend time with a pet
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Movement Coping Skills:

Movement can help release endorphins (feel-good hormones) and decrease cortisol (stress hormones)

With others or on your own, try to:

- Shake out each limb (moving each arm and leg 8 times each, then 4 times, 2 times, and then 1 time each!)
- Dance to music you love
- Run or walk
- Go for a bike ride
- Jump rope
- Swing
- Exercise
- Play a sport
- Do wall-push ups
- Use a punching bag
- Do yoga or stretch
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Grounding Coping Skills

Reconnecting with your 5 senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste) helps you be present in the moment and reorient you to the here and now

With others or on your own, try to:

- Do some deep breathing exercises: [tracing your hand](#), box breathing, [bubble breathing](#), [box breathing](#), [shape breathing](#) (you can print the shape breathing exercise [here!](#))
- Take a nature walk/mindful walk
- Use your senses in the [5-4-3-2-1 activity](#)
- Practice with a guided meditation
- Imagine your favorite place (engage your senses by thinking about what it looks, smells, or sounds like)
- Take a shower or bath
- Splash your face with cold water
- Try [progressive muscle relaxation](#)
- Carry a small object (rock)
- Drink water, tea, hot cocoa
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Connecting Coping Skills:

Tap into your support system and spend time in community with others.

First, write down some of the people and community in my support system:

Then try to:

- Ask for support and ask questions
- Call a friend
- Write a note to someone you care about
- Talk with a caregiver/parent/teacher/counselor or trusted adult
- Attend an affinity space
- Engage in a service activity to support others
- Engage in an advocacy activity to advocate for a cause you care about
- Spend quality time with a community you are connected to such as:
 - Faith-based/spiritual
 - Sports team
 - School club
 - Family and friends
 - After-school activity
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Adapted from: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/>