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# Coping Skills

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Below are some options for general coping. Remember to incorporate other coping skills that you have used or have previously found to be helpful.

## Self Soothing

### Breathing:

Take deep breaths from the diaphragm or stomach. Breathe in then, when you breathe out; very slowly release your 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. Take a bath or shower. Do yoga.

### Comfort Item:

Hold onto or wrap yourself in something comforting – a blanket, jacket, scarf, stuffed animal – anything that helps you feel more comfortable.

### Imagery:

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

### 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, salt water 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 and vent about what is bothering you – but keep it time-limited.

## Entertain yourself:

Computer game, crossword, cards, jigsaw, cook, read books, magazines, etc, do crafts, sudoku.....

## 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....

## Prayer

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

## Problem Solving

Is there something you can do 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'm safe now; he's not here; It's not my fault. I can get through this."

You already survived your past.

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.

### What would your mentor say?

Whom do you admire? What do you imagine they would say to encourage you?

### 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?

Radical Acceptance

Lifeline – is there someone else I can talk to about my options?

# Distracting

## Focus on your Senses Right now

Identify something you see, something you hear, something you smell, something you touch. While doing this stay mindfully focused on just your senses in the moment. Describe what you are sensing. Look at something specific. Smell something strong (scented lotion, candle, oil, spices). Touch different textures – not just with your hands – use your face, your feet, etc. Taste something minty or strong flavored, and/or brush your teeth.

## Mindful Eating:

Examine food (e.g., 1 raisin), watch hand move towards your mouth, take a moment to smell it, how body reacting to smell (e.g., mouth watering), how is food positioned in mouth? Begin chewing slowly, what tastes experiencing? When you swallow, feel muscles contract as you push food to your stomach, be aware of sensations (Can eat with non-dominant hand to increase awkwardness and increase likelihood you'll have to pay attention).

## Mindful Walking:

Walk slowly and carefully feeling your feet connect at each point on the floor. Without controlling breath too much, you can try pairing walking and breathing so that 1 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 towards the sensations of walking: your feet and lower legs. 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 (hard, soft, cracks, stones)? What are differences in walking on different surfaces?

## Your Ideas:

Document what you did and how you responded:

Date/Time	Mood Initially	What I did to cope	Mood afterwards	Reflection/ Thought