

Coping Skills Workshop

Student Workbook



Mississippi State University Student Counseling Services

<https://www.counseling.msstate.edu/>

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Unhealthy Coping Strategies Versus Healthy Coping Strategies

Examples of Unhealthy Coping Strategies	Examples of Healthy Coping Strategies
Drug/ Alcohol use	Exercise
Overeating	Talking about your problem
Procrastination	Healthy eating
Sleeping too much or too little	Seeking professional help
Social withdrawal	Relaxation techniques
Self-harm	Using social support
Aggression	Problem-solving techniques

Describe a problem you are currently dealing with: _____

My unhealthy coping skills include: _____

The consequences of unhealthy coping strategies are: _____

My current barriers to using coping strategies are:

Emotion Regulation

- 1). What happened?
- 2). Why do you think that situation happened?
- 3). How did the situation make you feel emotionally and physically?
- 4). What did you want to do as a result of how you felt?
- 5). What did you do and say?

Check the Facts

Event → Thoughts → Emotion

Our emotions can also have a big effect on our thoughts about events.

Event → Thoughts → Emotion

Examining our thoughts and checking the facts can help us change our emotions

Three steps to Check the Facts:

1. Ask “What is the emotion I want to change?”
2. Ask “What is event prompting my emotion?”

Challenge judgments, extremes, and black and white thinking. Describe the facts that you observed through your senses.

3. Ask “Am I interpreting the situation correctly?”

Are there other possible interpretations?

Additional Questions That May or May Not Fit Each Situation:

4. “Am I thinking in extremes?” *also, think of as many other possible outcomes as you can*
5. “What is the likelihood of the worst thing happening?”
6. Even if the worst thing were to happen, can I imagine coping well with it?” *Imagine saying, “So what?”*

Opposite Action

Emotion	Action	Opposite Action
Angry	Fight, yell, argue	Avoid, taking a time out, be kind rather than attacking
Sad	Withdrawing from others	Visit and communicate with friends
Fear/ Anxiety	Avoid	Do things to increase your sense of control

Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

1. What is the original thought you want to challenge?

2. What makes me think that thought is true?

3. What makes me think that thought is not true or not completely true?

4. What's the worst that could happen? What could I do then?

5. What's the best that could happen?

6. What will probably happen?

7. What could happen if I change my thinking?

8. What would I tell my friend [think of a specific person] if this happened to them?

9. What is my alternative thought?

10. What should I do now?

Distress Tolerance

1). Distraction thorough ACCEPTS: In the moment, it may feel like a painful emotion will never pass. But given time, emotions lessen in intensity until they disappear. Distractions help buy you time and make it through an emotional downswing. The acronym ACCEPTS offers tips for how to do this.

ACCEPTS

Activities: Engage in activities that require thought and concentration. This could be a hobby, a project, work, or school.

Contributing: Focus on someone or something other than yourself. For example, you can volunteer or do a good deed.

Comparisons: Look at your situation in comparison to something worse. Remember a time you were in more pain, or when someone else was going through something more difficult.

Emotions: Do something that will create a competing emotion. Feel sad? Watch a funny movie. Feeling nervous? Listen to soothing music.

Pushing away: Push negative thoughts out of your mind. Imagine writing your problem on a piece of paper, crumpling it up, and throwing it away. Refuse to think about the situation until a better time.

Thoughts: Occupy your mind so you don't have room to dwell on painful feelings. Count backwards from 1,000 by 7, recite a poem in your head, or read a book.

Sensation: Find safe physical sensations to distract you from negative emotions. Wear a rubber band and snap it on your wrist, hold an ice cube in your hand, or eat something like a sour lime.

2). GIVE: Ways to improve a relationship or maintaining a good relationship. The acronym GIVE teaches skills for growing strong relationships.

(Be) Gentle: Always be kind and respectful. Don't attack, threaten, or express judgement during your interactions. People tend to respond better to gentleness than harshness.

(Show) Interest: Listen to the other person without interrupting. Instead of mind-reading, ask follow-up questions. Make it your goal to understand the other person, even when you disagree.

Validate: Outwardly acknowledge the other person's thoughts and feelings. You can do this with words (e.g., "This has been really difficult...") or actions (e.g., helping the person).

(Use an) Easy manner: Laugh, smile, and be lighthearted. No one wants to be pushed around or bullied—being relaxed and likable is more likely to help you achieve your goals.

Plan for Barriers

Possible Situations	1. 2. 3.
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Old Coping Skills	1. 2. 3.
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New Coping Skills	1. 2. 3.
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Possible Barriers	1. 2. 3.
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How to Overcome Barriers	1. 2. 3.
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