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Coping Styles and How to Use Them

Coping skills are tools we use in order to manage the many different moving parts of our lives. Whether it be stress from work, grief from loss, loneliness, a specific incident or anything else that might affect your day-to-day life, coping skills are what we use to take care of it all.

It's important, therefore, that we implement healthy coping skills in order to be able to properly face our problems. Here we focus on four of the different styles of coping skills that a person can use.

1. Emotion-Focused Coping

Emotion focused coping is when you cope by facing your emotions directly. It's specifically helpful when you're having trouble dealing with a change or enacting a change in your situation as well as when you're experiencing something which is out of your control. This set of coping skills is used specifically to combat distractions from dealing with one's own emotional burdens. Using coping strategies available in emotion-focused coping can help you calm down before facing said emotions.

Examples include:

- Taking part in a hobby
- Expressing your emotions through the artistic form of your choice
- Caring for yourself and your body
- Journaling your feelings and thoughts so you can release them from your brain
- Practicing mindfulness or meditation in order to truly *feel* in the moment.
- Practicing breathing exercises in order to regulate emotions.

2. Problem-Focused Coping

Problem focused coping is when you cope by directly addressing the problem or issue that is causing the emotional disturbance involved for the need of coping to arise. These skills are most useful when being targeted toward creating a change or easing the problem a person is



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experiencing, often from removing something from their lives. Examples of this are very situational and personal to the issue at hand.

Examples include:

- You're afraid of public speaking but you need to lead a conference (problem)
 - Find a job in which leading conferences aren't a major aspect (solution)
 - Take a public speaking class (solution)
 - Practice in front of people who you're comfortable with (solution)
- You've been feeling empty or consistently sad for over three months without it getting better. (problem)
 - Reach out for help (solution)
 - Start going to talk therapy (solution)
 - Talk to your therapist to see if medication is an option you should explore (solution)

3. Meaning-focused Coping

Meaning-Focused Coping occurs when one uses cognitive (workings of the mind) techniques to gain and understand the meaning behind what we experience that is putting us in the position of needing to cope. There are many specific skills one can use in this form of coping.

Examples Include:

- Benefit Finding - looking into the positive outcomes of the misfortune being coped with
- Adaptive Goal Processing - re-evaluating one's goals moving forward and making sure they're feasible and realistic with the current circumstance
- Reordering Priorities - reevaluating the placement of different life priorities after the misfortune being coped with has taken place
- Infusing Ordinary Tasks with Positive Meanings- creating positive feelings in your normal everyday life to balance out what you're coping with



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4. Social Coping

Social Coping, also known as Support-Seeking Coping, occurs when a person seeks support from their personal support system (family, friends, partner, etc), a mental health professional and/or their community in order to cope with what it is they're dealing with.

Examples include:

- Spending time with a loved one
- Asking a trusted person for opinions/advice
- Accepting support from others
- Asking for help or seeking out mental healthcare from a professional if needed