

Healthier Coping Skill Options to Meet Different Urges

If you feel overwhelmed or stressed, try:

- Exercising to release some of the feelings.
- Take a break.
- Do some deep breathing.
- Listen to some music or create your own.
- Release emotions by drawing how you feel, punching a soft object (like a pillow or clay), rip up pieces of paper, or bang some pots and pans.
- Journal or write things down (this may help you process how you're feeling or may help you unload some of the stressors you're carrying and look at them more clearly).
- Repeat calming mantras or try meditating.
- Spend some time outside.
- Talk to a friend, coworker you like, or family member.
- Calm yourself down and then reflect on why you feel overwhelmed. Create a list of what's overwhelming you and come up with some concrete action steps you can take to tackle some of those items.
- Allow yourself to take a break. Do something you enjoy for a few minutes.
- Get a hug. Physical touch can reduce stress and promote overall well-being.
- Reduce your obligations. What are you doing that can be taken off your plate or delegated to someone else to do for right now?

If you feel the urge to escape:

- Go for a run or walk.
- Get a change of scenery.
- Immerse yourself in a movie, book, or video game.
- Call a friend to hang out or go do something.
- Focus on someone else's life (watch a reality TV show, read what people write in to an advice columnist, volunteer, help someone with a problem they have, etc.).
- Plan a vacation (planning a vacation helps bring some relief for up to 8 weeks before it takes place).
- Soothe your sympathetic nervous system (your FLIGHT/fight/freeze response) by doing some deep breathing, using progressive muscle relaxation, or doing something relaxing.
- Visualize a place in your mind to escape to.
- Try something new. It could be hiking a new trail, exploring a new part of town, or picking up a new hobby. Trying something new can help you feel renewed.

If you feel the urge to numb yourself, try:

- Writing or drawing about your pain
- Splash some cold water on your face.
- Shock your system with something cold like holding an ice cube or a frozen orange.
- Take a hot shower, cuddle up with a blanket, drink some warm tea, or eat a bowl of comforting soup- the feeling of warmth can help people feel calm and grounded and can release relaxing chemicals.
- Loosen up your body by stretching, doing yoga, exercising, or going for a walk. This helps release tension and a build up of intense emotions.
- Name what you're feeling to reduce its intensity and feel more in control of your body again.
- Practice some grounding techniques.
- Eat something sour or spicy to evoke a different sensation.
- Allow yourself to feel some of the emotions. Carve time out for yourself to do this.
- Participate in activities that produce pleasant physical sensations, like bathing or showering, eating food you enjoy, or spending time outside.
- Reach out to a crisis hotline like texting HOME to 741741 or call the substance abuse and addiction hotline 1-844-289-0879. Both are available 24/7.