



## Big List Of Coping Skills

**Here's a printable list of Coping Activities you can try. Look through the list and put a star by the activities that you think would help you or that you would like to try. Save a list of your favorite coping skills in a place that you can easily access, like as a note on your phone or as a written list above your bed.**

# Sensory Coping Skills:

## Smell:

- Slowly smell a favorite scent- cinnamon, vanilla, perfume- you can use an essential oil diffuser or put a drop into a diffuser necklace or piece of paper
- Put on some scented lotion
- Use an essential oil
- Use a Bath Bomb to make a scented bath

## Touch:

- Hold a warm rice pack or heating pad
- Take a Hot Bath
- Shower in the dark
- Pet an animal
- Wash your face with very cold water
- Hold an ice cube and notice what cold feels like
- Feeling a comfortable texture (like a child holding a blanket or an adult holding a rosary, rubbing something smooth like a stone or a piece of satin)

## Taste:

- Drink a hot drink slowly
- Eat a small treat slowly, savoring the taste

## Sound

- Go someplace very quiet and sit very still
- Go for a walk by yourself with headphones on, listening to music you love.

## Proprioceptive (Body Movement)

- Go for a walk
- Exercise or Play a sport
- Stretch your muscles
- Do one yoga pose
- Swing on a swingset
- Rock in a rocking chair
- Step outside for a breath of fresh air

# Relaxation Coping Skills:

- Simply taking deep, slow breaths can trigger the relaxation response
- Yoga, Tai Chi, and exercise can also be relaxing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Use guided imagery to imagine yourself in a calming place
- Taking time to rest and recharge, a few minutes throughout your day, a few hours throughout your week.
- Taking vacations
- Go get a manicure, pedicure, massage, acupuncture, or chiropractic adjustment
- Hug someone you love for 10 seconds
- Give yourself a hug or a self-massage
- Lay on your floor on your back for five minutes and just breathe, try to make your stomach go up and down with each breath.
- Do an activity that you find immersive and calming- for some people this is sports, for others is a hobby, one of my relaxing hobbies is metal detecting. When I'm out metal detecting I don't worry about things going on at home because my mind is completely focused on the task at hand, and then when I'm done I go home feeling more relaxed and energized than before.
- Try making yourself some comfort food, like grilled cheese and tomato soup. The process of cooking and eating a delicious meal can be great for boosting your mood.
- Take care of your body in a way that makes you feel good- paint your nails, do your hair, put on a face mask, etc
- Time in nature, soak in some sunlight
- Gardening, or another repetitive task that is soothing like knitting.
- For many people, physical movement is relaxing when the problem is emotional-so for those of us who work at desks, relaxation may look like mowing the lawn or chopping wood, building something with our hands, etc.

# Emotional Processing Coping Skills:

- Brain Dump
- Talk with a friend, or someone who's not involved
- Journaling-write frequently about what's going on and take the time to explore it
- Tell a cat/pet everything you're feeling, or even tell him the worst thing you've ever done, his calm reaction may help you feel reassured that you're ok
- Go someplace you feel safe and allow yourself to cry
- Write a song, poem, or short story expressing how you feel
- Practice Mindfulness or meditation- you could use the App "Stop, Breathe, and Think"
- Prayer, reach out to a higher power
- Read Sacred or Inspirational Text
- Express emotion through art or music
  - Paint quickly focusing on color
  - Use clay to shape your feelings abstractly
  - Create a playlist of songs that express your emotions- ie a "Sad Day" Playlist or an "Angry" Playlist
  - Play an instrument, choose a song that matches your emotions
  - "Sing it out" to a song that expresses how you feel
- Use an app like "Mooditude" or "Insight Timer" to track your emotions, check in with yourself throughout the day and take a moment to process your emotions and thoughts instead of letting them build up
- Take a moment to give yourself some credit. Notice and write down some of the hard things you've done that day. Give yourself some credit for the little successes like getting out of bed, checking something off your to-do list, staying calm in a tough situation, etc.
- Take a few minutes before bed to pay attention to your feelings, write about them or draw a "mind map" notice the different "parts" you may have a "proud part" of you and an "angry part" at the same time. Take a minute to acknowledge each of your "parts", listen to them, give them a minute to be heard. Then remind yourself that it's ok to feel, everything is going to be all right.
- Write a list of things you are grateful for

# Distraction Coping Skills:

**(These are only effective in the short term, don't over-rely on distraction)**

- Coloring
- Humor-watch a funny clip on YouTube
- TV- be incredibly careful! TV(and most things with screens) is a powerful distraction that takes up and turns off much of the brain and essentially prevents the brain from resolving issues. Screens also do not trigger the relaxation response in the body that many other coping skills do.
- Read a book
- Do a crossword
- Go shopping (again, shopping can be addictive and expensive)
- Take macro photos of bugs, flowers, objects
- Paint your nails a fun color. Wear silly socks
- Sing along to a song
- Bake cookies
- Sort through and edit your photos

# Self Care: Emotion Processing:

- Ask for help when you need it. This may sound too simple, but trying to handle everything by yourself can make you feel overwhelmed and anxious.
- Allow yourself to feel your emotions
- Practice self-compassion with your mistakes (see the attached exercise)
- Take the time to face your emotions and let yourself feel them, hurt, and work through them
- Plan some "Me time" into your calendar. Schedule weekly time to take a step back, look and your life and make some goals.
- Go to Therapy or attend a support group
- Cut out some activities from your life so that you're not too busy
- Take 5 minutes at the end of each day to make a list of a few good things in your life. It can be easy to only focus on the negative in our lives, spend time looking for the good and you'll find it.

# Take Care of Your Body

- Exercise-find a form of movement that you enjoy- going to walks, Zumba, gardening, whatever is enjoyable for you.
- Go to bed early, get enough Sleep (See attached Sleep hygiene)
- Eating healthy- decrease caffeine, eat more veggies, include fermented food for gut health
- Take care of your hygiene, take a shower, do your hair and makeup, put on some perfume and some clothes that you like
- Wear clothing that makes you feel confident and comfortable. Buy clothing that fits you now, even if you plan to lose or gain weight.
- Clean your house, organize your living space in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
- Get enough sleep
- Take a nap
- Relax on the weekends
- Take the sabbath off
- Get out in nature, soak in some sunlight
- Plant some seeds

## Make Progress:

- Write a To-Do List, then do one of the items
- Make a plan to save money or get out of debt, take one small step in that direction
- Fix one thing around your house
- At the beginning of each week plan your week out and intentionally schedule “me time.” And other self-care throughout the week, including taking care of some tasks you would normally avoid.
- Clean one area, de-junk one area, or organize one drawer.
- Do your homework
- Forgive someone you’ve been harboring a grudge towards
- Set Healthy Boundaries
- Say no. Learn how to tactfully say no to invitations or requests at times when you already feel overwhelmed.
- Be Assertive, learn how to express your wants and needs in a kind way.
- Make a list of your goals or values (the characteristics you want to embody)

# Find Joy in the Journey:

- Make your place of work a little brighter: intentionally relax during breaks (go for a walk or do a breathing exercise), build relationships with coworkers by chatting with them and doing kind things for them, decorate your office the way you like, take in treats for your coworkers
- Practice Mindfulness- be where you are at. Just stop, breathe and look around you, look for something beautiful and you'll find it. (Image of plant growing out of a crack, etc. )
  - o Sometimes when I'm completely overwhelmed by my children and all the responsibilities I have, I just stop, set my phone to the side and look up, I look my children in the eye, I look around me, and I am reminded of their beauty and goodness, and I feel a bit calmer and more connected to them.
- Take a moment at the end of each day and consciously list a few good things in your life. This can help refocus your emotions on all the positive things that happen each day, even when it doesn't seem like it.
- Turn off notifications on your phone- choose what you want to look at instead of letting your phone choose for you.
- Start a passion project, schedule in time to work on it.
- Take care of your soul, take time to pray, meditate, or read sacred texts or motivational texts, spend time in nature
- Develop a Hobby-
  - o Crafting- painting, drawing, knitting, sewing, woodworking- some of mine include photography and metal detecting
- Use a site like meetup.com, find something you're interested in, and commit to attending at least one meeting.
- Read a book on something you're interested outside of work
- Volunteer at a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, animal shelter or other place where you can help those who are less fortunate.
- Learn a new board game you've never played such as chess, backgammon, or othello.

Find a way to incorporate humor into your life, even into difficulties. Hang out with a group of your old friends and Laugh your head off. Go to a comedy show. Do some improv classes. Watch funny videos on the internet. Practice taking difficult events and finding a way to make them funny.

# Connection:

## Choose one way to strengthen your social bonds

- Find someone to thank- write them a note or express appreciation
- Take a few extra lunch items to share with someone at work
- Do a random act of kindness
- Hug someone you care about for at least 8 seconds
- Start a cycle of encouragement. Tell someone near you what you appreciate about them. They may return the favor when you need it most.
- Call your mom, dad, or any other family member you care about just to say hi.
- Send a completely random care package to someone you love. Who doesn't love a surprise?
- Intentionally reestablish contact with someone you've lost touch with or have unresolved conflict with. If there is conflict, resolve it and let go of the unnecessary baggage.
- Call your friend or sibling when you know they can't answer and leave a ridiculously funny made up song as your voicemail. You'll spread a little laughter while also laughing in the process
- Make brownies and give them away to a neighbor, family member, friend, or someone you know that could use a pick-me-up. Enjoy any leftover batter.
- Write a review of a business you like. Send that positive energy into the universe and share some love for your favorite local places!
- We all get busy, but make it a point to make a date night with your significant other.
- Make sure to interact with others face to face. Make eye contact. This impacts the brain in much more soothing ways than digital interactions.
- Take the time to connect with family and friends, schedule it in ahead, put in on the calendar.
- If you want cuddles or a massage or quality time or whatever from your partner, ask for it! Sometimes the easiest way to get your needs met is to voice your needs in the first place.