

Coping Skills

Coping with distress can be tough. Sometimes we get so overwhelmed that we find ourselves coping in unhealthy or maladaptive ways, even if we don't intend to. But if we can catch these urges in the moment and replace them with healthier options, we can build our resilience over time.

Awareness is the first step. Take a look at each type of unhealthy coping and circle how frequently you use each example on the following scale:

1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Regularly

Unhealthy Coping

Avoiding

Procrastinating important tasks	1	2	3
Putting problems off	1	2	3
Withdrawing from friends or family	1	2	3
Ignoring health symptoms or appointments	1	2	3
Overworking to avoid other problems	1	2	3
Skipping work or school	1	2	3
Other: _____	1	2	3

Escaping

Sleeping more to escape stressful situations or feelings	1	2	3
Excessive screen time (scrolling, binge-watching, gaming)	1	2	3
Substance use (alcohol, nicotine, drugs)	1	2	3
Compulsive spending or gambling	1	2	3
Other: _____	1	2	3

Suppressing Emotions

Bottling feelings up instead of expressing them	1	2	3
Shutting down emotionally	1	2	3
Pretending everything is fine when it isn't	1	2	3
Using humor to avoid vulnerability or stressful topics	1	2	3
Other: _____	1	2	3

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



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1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Regularly

Aggression

Yelling or lashing out	1	2	3
Blaming others for your distress	1	2	3
Breaking or throwing things	1	2	3
Passive aggressive behavior	1	2	3
Self-harm or reckless behavior	1	2	3
Other: _____	1	2	3

Over-Control

Micromanaging others	1	2	3
Overplanning or rigid scheduling	1	2	3
Trying to fix other people's problems to avoid your own	1	2	3
Refusing help because you have to do it "all yourself"	1	2	3
Other: _____	1	2	3

In general, healthy coping helps us solve the problem that is distressing us, express or regulate our emotions about the situation, take a break to recharge, or get help. Circle how frequently you use each example, and check the box if you'd like to use this skill more often.

☐ = I'd like to do this more often, 1 = Rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Regularly

Healthy Coping

Problem-Solving

Breaking a task down into smaller steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Making a to-do list or a plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Asking for advice when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Finding helpful resources (advice, books, videos)	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3

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Expressing Your Emotions

Expressing your emotions to someone you trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Expressing your emotions creatively (through journaling, art, music)	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Crying or letting feelings out	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Singing, humming, or dancing to music that lets your feelings out	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3

Regulating Your Emotions

Physical exercise to feel better in the moment	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Stretching, yoga, or body relaxation exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Practicing gratitude or using positive affirmations	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Focusing on your strengths, values, or what is most meaningful to you	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Spending time in nature	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Practicing mindfulness or meditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Spiritual or religious practices like prayer or reflection	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3

Healthy Distraction

Listening to music or a podcast	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Enjoying a hobby	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Spending time with pets	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Enjoying time with friends and family	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Volunteering or helping others	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3

Connection and Support

Engaging with a support group or community	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Reaching out to a therapist, psychiatrist, or doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Asking for help or support from friends or family	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3

The next time you're feeling distressed, **pause and take a breath**. You might feel an urge to avoid the problem, procrastinate, or bottle up your feelings. But by just taking a moment before you react, you can make a conscious choice to cope in a way that helps you in the long term and builds your resilience.

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



325+
Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

