



Effective Coping

Navigating Stressful Situations with Positive Techniques

What is Coping?

We all react to stress or stressful situations differently. Your reaction and how you deal with the stressful situation is called coping. There are a number of common ways or strategies that people use when coping with extraordinary stress in their lives. These strategies, while effective at normal levels of stress, can stop working when stress reaches overwhelming levels. Thus, it is important to pay attention to how you have been coping and whether your coping style has been helpful in lowering your stress.

Positive or effective coping strategies are those that help to reduce anxiety, lessen other distressing reactions, and improve the situation. These types of coping actions improve things not only for today but for the future as well. It is important to remember that individuals have their own way of making sense of traumatic events, and each individual must listen to and respect their own way.

Suggestions for Effective Coping Strategies Include:

- Exercise: set up a daily exercise routine as this will provide you with an overall sense of well-being
- Learn some relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, prayer, or meditation
- Use humor to bring some fun and relief to a situation
- Access your social support groups for companionship
- Do things that have typically made you feel good, relaxed, or happy in the past, such as taking a hot bath or baking cookies
- Find ways to distract yourself and take your mind off of stressors: go see a movie, read a book, engage in a hobby
- Express yourself – in addition to speaking with others, you can write or use art to release emotions
- Use your religious or spiritual beliefs for solace and guidance



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