

Personal Coping Manual

Mental Health Mastermind

Notes

Your Range of Emotions

Your emotions exist along several continuums, from general to specific, positive to negative, and mild to intense. When learning how to best support your emotional wellness, it's helpful to get a feel for how you feel across these continuums. Start to pay attention to the way your body feels, where you carry certain emotions, and the indicators that an emotion is becoming overwhelming. Also notice the situations or habits that help support the way you *want* to feel.

Types of Coping

Because we are so complex, with these ranges of emotion and personality traits, it's helpful to learn which style of coping works best for us under which circumstances. Here are few types of coping to get familiar with:

Emotion-focused coping: Work with stress and distress at an emotional level. This is where you give yourself space to sit with and express emotions, write about or share with a friend how you're feeling, and do things that help you feel the way you want to feel. When engaging in emotion-focused coping, it's important to be accepting of whatever you're feeling rather than judging it or trying to make it go away. Emotion-focused coping is a natural fit for people who identify as feelers rather than thinkers, but even analytical types can benefit from getting more in touch with and accepting of their emotions. Emotion-focused coping is also useful in situations where you have little control over circumstances.

Solution-focused coping: Tackle problems by finding solutions, tactics, and strategies. This is where you look at a problem and what's within your control in solving it. When facing uncertainties, make a list of what you know and the questions you can ask to get more information. From a solution-focused perspective, it's important to remain open-minded and curious about potential solutions rather than dwelling on all the obstacles ahead of you. Solution-focused coping is a natural fit for more thinking or analytical types, but it's a useful skill for feelers to learn, too. Solution-focused coping is also useful in situations that need to be simplified or where actions must be taken.

Solitude: Using introspection and time alone for coping. Taking time to yourself to read a book, meditate, or exercise are all examples of using solitude for restoration. Introverts and extraverts alike need time to themselves, so it's important for anyone to learn how to make the most of alone time. It's important to be mindful of whether your solitude is restorative or is becoming isolation. A good rule of thumb is to find a balance that works for you and get to know your personal warning signs of isolation.

Social Support: Spending time in healthy relationships, reaching out for support when you need it. Calling a friend for a heart-to-heart, fun traditions with friends and family, and keeping in touch with important people are all examples of how social support can support your well-being. Like solitude, everyone needs some degree of social time in their lives. Pay attention to how you feel in your

relationships and the people you feel most comfortable with. Those people that feel good to be around are often the best people to reach out to in times of need.

Grounding: Finding your way back to the present moment. When our inner experience is overwhelming, sometimes the only tool available to us is finding our way back to the present moment and riding it out. Taking a walk outside, washing the dishes, breathing, taking a shower, listening to music, or anything that engages your five senses can be a grounding experience. It's important to keep in mind that the goal of grounding isn't necessarily to feel good but rather to feel more stable in the distressing situation or have more space to think. Grounding can be a great steppingstone to other coping skills.

Recognizing Relief

Because our emotions are so complex, it can be hard to recognize relief when we feel it. It's common to want to feel happy as quickly as we can when dealing with a painful situation, yet our emotions might not work that way. Sometimes, relief can look like frustration after hopelessness, boredom after anger, or disappointment after total despair. Whatever coping skills you use, pay attention to the small signs of relief.

Work

Recognize Your Range of Emotions

General or Specific?

GENERAL

Name a time you felt good for no identifiable reason. What general feelings of positive emotion did you experience?

Using your responses above, what emotions would you like to experience more often to feel generally good in your life?

Name a time you felt bad for no identifiable reason. What general feelings of distress did you experience?

Using your responses above, what warning signs would you look out for to pull yourself out of a state of general distress?

SPECIFIC

Name a time you felt good about a specific situation. How could you tell this situation was giving you positive emotions?

Using your responses above, what could you do or what feelings could you cultivate to feel good about many specific situations in your life?

Name a time you felt bad about a specific situation. How could you tell this situation was causing you distress?

Using your responses above, what warning signs would you look out for to pull yourself out of a state of distress over a specific situation?

Mild, Moderate, or Intense?

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

How does mild positive emotion feel for you?
How does moderate positive emotion feel for you?
How does intense positive emotion feel for you?

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

How does mild negative emotion feel for you?
How does moderate negative emotion feel for you?
How does intense negative emotion feel for you?

Name Your Coping Style

Are you a thinker or feeler? How could this knowledge inform your chosen coping skills?
When in your life do you need to honor your feelings?
When in your life do you need to focus on strategy or tactics?
Are you more social or solitary? How could this knowledge inform your chosen coping skills?
When in your life do you need solitude? How could you use that time to support your well-being?
When in your life do you need others? How could you use that time to support your well-being?
When and where do you feel most grounded? How could you build this into your daily life?
When in your life do you need to ground yourself before you can move forward? What are 5 things you can do in that situation.

Recognizing Relief

<p>When I'm sad, relief feels/looks like...</p> <p>Here's what I can do to offer myself that relief:</p>
<p>When I'm angry, relief feels/looks like...</p> <p>Here's what I can do to offer myself that relief:</p>
<p>When I'm anxious, relief feels/looks like...</p> <p>Here's what I can do to offer myself that relief:</p>
<p>When I'm confused, relief feels/looks like...</p> <p>Here's what I can do to offer myself that relief:</p>
<p>When I'm jealous, relief feels/looks like...</p> <p>Here's what I can do to offer myself that relief:</p>

Name your own signs of relief and how you could offer yourself relief:

Homework:

Continue to build on your personal coping manual by observing your emotions and what kind of relief you need when you're down.

Here are some articles and resources that can help:

[36 Ways to Find A Silver Lining During Challenging Times \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/36-ways-to-find-a-silver-lining-during-challenging-times)

[Maladaptive Coping: 15 Examples & How To Break The Cycle \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/maladaptive-coping-15-examples-how-to-break-the-cycle)

[Humor in Psychology: Coping and Laughing Your Woes Away \(positivepsychology.com\)](https://www.positivepsychology.com/humor-in-psychology-coping-and-laughing-your-woes-away)

[An Indispensable List of Coping Skills Everyone Should Know About \(fullerlifecounseling.org\)](https://www.fullerlifecounseling.org/an-indispensable-list-of-coping-skills-everyone-should-know-about)

[Healthy Coping Skills for Uncomfortable Emotions \(verywellmind.com\)](https://www.verywellmind.com/healthy-coping-skills-for-uncomfortable-emotions)

[Greater Good in Action \(berkeley.edu\)](https://www.berkeley.edu/greater-good-in-action)

[Free personality test, type descriptions, relationship and career advice | 16Personalities](https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test-type-descriptions-relationship-and-career-advice)