

Coping strategies

Looking after yourself when times are hard



Negative emotions like anger, sadness, fear and loneliness are not all bad. They actually provide us with some really important feedback about how we feel about a specific situation, person or time. So we don't want to not feel those feelings, they're important, but you also don't want to hold onto negative emotions past the point where they are ready to be released.

That's when they can become unhealthy for your mind and body. You know how a grudge against a person or situation feels when it's gone on for too long, that's an example of when you just need to deal with that emotion. When you start to feel overwhelmed it's important to have a release.

So how can you use some coping strategies when times get tough emotionally? Follow the steps on the next page to review your go to strategies and collect more helpful ideas for dealing with strong emotions.





How to release emotion

- Ask yourself whether you need to change your situation, or you need to find a better way to cope with the situation. This will tell you whether you need to pick some problem focused coping skills, or some emotion focused coping skills.
- Write down the potential actions you could take to 'cope'. An example of an emotion focused action could be taking a long walk, and a problem focused action could be writing a to do list.
- Write all of these actions down (whether you think they're good or bad) on separate pieces of paper / post it notes. The actions are likely to fall into one of three categories: very useful, temporary fix, good for nothing.
- Dump the 'good for nothing' actions. Temporary fix actions can also be helpful for now, but won't make anything better or easier longer term. Keep the 'very useful' strategies and collect them in a box or write them down. Why not add some extras from our positive coping strategies?
- Ask yourself some reflective questions: what coping strategy do you gravitate towards? Why? What strategies are more helpful?

Problem focused coping

Problem solving

Ask for some help

Choose to walk away

Make a to do list

Establish boundaries

Work on managing your time better

Emotion focused coping

Take time to vent

Listen to some music

Give yourself a pep talk

Forgive yourself

Take a long bath

Meditate / breathe

FURTHER INFO

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