

Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms

The following is a list of common coping mechanisms. Check off the ones you tend to use and add ones of your own:

- Avoiding issues
- Sleeping too much
- Excessive drug or alcohol use
- Impulsive spending
- Over or under eating
- Isolating
- Overcontrol
- Complaining to others
- Avoiding challenging activities
- Relying on self-medication or addictions to cope with difficult emotions.
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Explore your coping mechanism and its effects by answering the following questions:

Coping mechanism	
In what situation did you use this coping mechanism?	
What survival benefit does this coping mechanism have?	
What needs are not being met behind this coping mechanism?	
What bodily sensations did you feel with this coping mechanism?	
What emotions did you feel with this coping mechanism?	
What thoughts did you experience with this coping mechanism?	
What happened because of this coping mechanism? (feelings, thoughts, and consequences)	
What could a healthier way of coping be? (use the coping skills list at the end of these worksheets)	

Use this tracking sheet to track coping skills you tried and your response:

Initial mood	Coping activity	Mood afterwards	Reflection/ Thoughts

Coping Skills List

- Allow yourself to cry
- Find things that make you laugh
- Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself
- Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, and places and seek them out
- Light scented candles, oils or incense
- Listen to the radio
- Look at pictures of loved ones
- Make a playlist of upbeat songs
- Seek out peer support
- Try some adult coloring as a form of anxiety and/or stress release
- Try some mindful exercises to help bring you into the present moment
- Watch a funny movie
- Do arts and crafts
- Do jigsaw puzzles
- Hobbies (stamp collect, model build, etc.)
- Listen to a podcast
- Play musical instruments
- Sketch, paint
- Soak in the bathtub
- Take photographs
- Watch TV, videos
- Write (e.g. poems, articles, blog, books)
- Write in your journal
- Cook your favorite dish or meal
- Do some stretching exercises
- Do yoga, tai chi, or Pilates, or take classes to learn
- Exercise
- Get a massage
- Go borrow a friend's dog and take it to the park
- Go dancing
- Go for a bike ride
- Go for a drive in your car
- Go for a swim
- Go out and spend 10 minutes under the sun
- Go out for something to eat
- Go shopping
- Go to a spa
- Have a warm drink
- Jump on a trampoline

- Lift weights
- Sleep or take a nap
- Take a walk
- Do the dishes
- Mow the lawn
- Organize your work space
- Organize your wardrobe
- Repair things around the house
- Wash your car
- Walk barefoot on soft grass
- Call a trusted friend or family member
- Give your pet a bath
- Join a support group
- Take children places
- Bake something to share with others (e.g. family, neighbors, friends, work colleagues)
- Do 5 minutes of calm deep breath
- Do something nice for someone in secret
- Donate blood
- Donate money to a charity of your choosing
- Give positive feedback about something
- Go to your church, mosque, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship
- Prayer
- Read inspirational literature
- Volunteer at an animal shelter