

Personal Coping Skills Toolkit Worksheet

Introduction

A personal coping skills toolkit is a collection of strategies that help you manage stress, anxiety, and difficult emotions. Having a variety of coping skills at your disposal can improve emotional resilience and mental well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This worksheet will guide you in creating your own personalized coping toolkit.

Step 1: Identifying Stressors

Before building your toolkit, it's essential to identify common stressors in your life. **What situations or thoughts cause you stress or anxiety?**

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|--|---|
| 1. Work or academic pressure | 8. Overcommitting and lack of boundaries |
| 2. Relationship conflicts | 9. Negative self-talk |
| 3. Financial difficulties | 10. Feeling a lack of control over situations |
| 4. Health concerns | Other: _____ |
| 5. Uncertainty about the future | |
| 6. Social expectations | |
| 7. Major life transitions (e.g., moving, career changes) | |
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Step 2: Selecting Coping Strategies

Below are different types of coping strategies. Select those that resonate with you or add your own.

A. Emotional Coping Strategies (Helps manage emotions)

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|---|--|
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing exercises | • <input type="checkbox"/> Practicing self-compassion |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Progressive muscle relaxation | • <input type="checkbox"/> Watching or listening to something uplifting |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Journaling thoughts and feelings | • <input type="checkbox"/> Using grounding techniques (e.g., 5-4-3-2-1 sensory exercise) |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Expressing emotions through art or music | • <input type="checkbox"/> Writing positive letters to yourself |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Talking to a trusted friend or therapist | |

B. Cognitive Coping Strategies (Helps change unhelpful thinking patterns)

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|--|---|
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging negative thoughts | • <input type="checkbox"/> Reframing situations |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Practicing gratitude | • <input type="checkbox"/> Visualizing a calming place |
| • <input type="checkbox"/> Using positive affirmations | • <input type="checkbox"/> Creating a mantra for resilience |

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- ☐ Engaging in mindfulness meditation
- ☐ Keeping a list of past successes and strengths
- ☐ Reading self-improvement or motivational books

C. Behavioral Coping Strategies (Involves actions to reduce stress)

- ☐ Engaging in physical activity (e.g., walking, yoga, dancing)
- ☐ Practicing a hobby or creative activity
- ☐ Following a structured daily routine
- ☐ Using relaxation techniques (e.g., taking a bath, listening to calming music)
- ☐ Engaging in acts of kindness
- ☐ Spending time in nature
- ☐ Cooking or baking a favorite meal
- ☐ Decluttering or organizing a space
- ☐ Limiting screen time and social media

D. Social Coping Strategies (Involves seeking support from others)

- ☐ Spending time with loved ones
- ☐ Joining a support group
- ☐ Seeking professional counseling
- ☐ Practicing effective communication
- ☐ Setting healthy boundaries
- ☐ Volunteering or helping others
- ☐ Reaching out to an accountability partner
- ☐ Scheduling social activities to maintain connections
- ☐ Engaging in team or group activities.

E. Problem-Solving Strategies (Helps address challenges directly)

- ☐ Breaking problems into smaller, manageable steps
- ☐ Prioritizing tasks with a to-do list
- ☐ Seeking advice or guidance from experts
- ☐ Practicing time management
- ☐ Learning new coping skills for specific stressors
- ☐ Making a pros-and-cons list for decision-making
- ☐ Developing contingency plans for challenges
- ☐ Using visualization to mentally rehearse solutions
- ☐ Adopting a growth mindset for obstacles

Which strategies will you include in your toolkit?

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Step 3: Creating Your Personalized Coping Plan

Now that you have identified helpful coping strategies, create a plan for when and how you will use them.

- In moments of immediate stress, I will:

- When I feel overwhelmed, I will turn to:

- Daily self-care practices I will commit to:

- Long-term coping strategies I will develop:

Step 4: Reviewing & Adjusting Your Toolkit

Your coping toolkit is a work in progress. As you practice these strategies, take note of what works best for you.

- Which strategies have been most effective?

- Are there any strategies that need adjustment?

- What new coping strategies would I like to try?

References

- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping*. Springer.
- Skinner, E. A., Edge, K., Altman, J., & Sherwood, H. (2003). "Searching for the structure of coping: A review and critique of category systems for classifying ways of coping." *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(2), 216-269.