

Coping Strategies

**INDIVIDUALS
ARE COPING
ALL THE TIME.**

COPING (CONTENDING)

Coping:

- ✓ Is the behavior that protects us from becoming psychologically and physiologically disorganized.
- ✓ Usually incorporates action-oriented behavior responses. It also employs cognitive, emotional, and perceptual appraisal processes.

COPING (CONTENDING)

Coping:

- ✓ May attempt to change the source of the stress
- ✓ May attempt to redefine the threat situation (meaning, degree of severity)
- ✓ Attempts to find accommodation and compromise (passive acceptance; resignation; religious beliefs; destiny)

COPING (CONTENDING)

Coping...

- ✓ Behavior that protects the individual from internal and external stress
- ✓ Prevents and manages tension and stress

REPERTOIRE OF EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS

1. Ability to orient oneself rapidly
2. Planning of decisive action
3. Mobilization of emergency problem-solving mechanisms
4. Appropriate use of assistance resources

REPERTOIRE OF EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS

8. Development of strategies (contingency plans) to convert uncertainty into manageable risk – “*process of situational mastery*” (worry work/rehearsal for life change stress).
9. Acknowledgement of increased dependency needs and seeking, receiving, and using assistance.

REPERTOIRE OF EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS

5. Ability to deal simultaneously with the affective dimensions of the experience and the tasks that must be carried out.
6. Appropriate expression of painful emotions
7. Acknowledgement of pain, without obsessing over troubled feelings

REPERTOIRE OF EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS

10. Tolerance of uncertainty without resorting to impulsive action
11. Reaction to environmental challenges (repertoire of “active mastery skills”) and recognition of their positive value for growth
12. Use of non-destructive defenses and modes of tension relief to cope with anxiety

COPING (CONTENDING)

PHYSICAL

- ✓ Relax
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Sleep
- ✓ Eat healthy
- ✓ Minimize:
 - ✓ Caffeine
 - ✓ Alcohol
 - ✓ Sugar
- ✓ Monitor health status
- ✓ **Seek help if needed**

COPING (CONTENDING)

EMOTIONAL

- ✓ Identify feelings
- ✓ Express feelings
- ✓ Be assertive
- ✓ Maintain open communication
- ✓ Find humor
- ✓ **Seek help if needed**

COPING (CONTENDING)

COGNITIVE

- ✓ Make a plan
- ✓ Set goals
- ✓ Get information
- ✓ Make small daily decisions
- ✓ Anticipate
- ✓ Problem-solve
- ✓ Reframe
- ✓ **Seek help if needed**

COPING (CONTENDING)

BEHAVIORAL

- ✓ Engage in enjoyable activities
- ✓ Avoid risky behaviors
- ✓ Spend time with others
- ✓ Prioritize demands
- ✓ Seek time for self
- ✓ **Seek help if needed**

COPING (CONTENDING)

SPIRITUAL

- ✓ Practice your faith
- ✓ Find spiritual support
- ✓ Pray or meditate
- ✓ Discuss your beliefs with others
having similar beliefs
- ✓ **Seek help if needed**

NEGATIVE COPING

- Avoidance
- Withdrawal
- Destructive venting of anger
- Giving up
- Excessive denial
- Poor reality testing
- Impulsive behavior
- Ritualistic behavior

NEGATIVE COPING

- Poor regulation of rest-work cycle
- Substance abuse
- Overeating
- Underrating
- Risk-taking
- Blaming
- Inability to use support systems

NEGATIVE COPING

- ✓ Excessive denial
- ✓ Withdrawal
- ✓ Retreat
- ✓ Avoidance
- ✓ Frequent use of fantasy
- ✓ Poor reality testing

NEGATIVE COPING

4. Emotional suppression, possibly leading to “hopeless-helpless-giving up” syndrome
5. Use of hyper ritualistic behavior with no purpose
6. Fatigue and poor regulation of rest-work cycle
7. Addiction
8. Inability to use support systems

NEGATIVE COPING

- ✓ Impulsive behavior
- ✓ Venting rage on weaker individuals
- ✓ Creating scapegoats

NEGATIVE COPING

- ✓ Over-dependent
- ✓ Clinging
- ✓ Counter-dependent behavior
- ✓ Inability to evoke “caring”
feelings from others

Resilience

Resilience

WHAT IT IS

- ☑ Positive adaptation in the face of adversity
- ☑ Ordinary
- ☑ Commonly demonstrated

WHAT IT IS NOT

- ☒ Extraordinary
- ☒ A constant characteristic

Resilience

10 Ways to Build Resilience...

- Make connections
 - develop a supportive network
- Avoid interpreting crises as overwhelming
- Accept that change is a part of living
- Move toward your goals
- Take decisive actions

Source: Levant, 2003

Resilience

10 Ways to Build Resilience...

- Look for opportunities for self-discovery
- Nurture a positive view of yourself
- Keep things in perspective
- Maintain a hopeful outlook
- Take care of yourself

Loss & Bereavement

Loss & Bereavement

Definitions...

Bereavement - *behavior reaction following death*

Grief - *affect that accompanies loss*

Mourning - *social behavior (different expressions in different cultures) following loss*

Loss & Bereavement

- Everything in the life of a survivor will suffer some degree of change due to the impact of the catastrophic event.
- With this change will come the realization of multiple losses so that **mourning** and **coping** with these events is a perennial activity of counseling the survivor.

Loss & Bereavement

Loss is an ongoing experience
post-disaster...

✓ Loved Ones

✓ Jobs

✓ Home

✓ Lifestyle

✓ Neighborhood

✓ Income

Bereavement

The fact of loss through death

Bereavement

Death is a consequence
of **disasters** and acts of **terrorism**.

Mass violence and terrorism
are intended to cause *mass death*.

Principles of Grief

- Grieving is a natural reaction to death
- Every death is unique and is experienced differently
- Grief is ongoing

Loss & Bereavement

Psychological & Physiological Manifestations of Loss...

- Quality and extent of loss
- Previous experiences with trauma
- Direct impact of the disaster
- Quality of support systems
- Capacity to cope
- Quality of resiliency

Stages of Bereavement

I. Immediate

II. Intermediate

III. Long-Term Effects

Stages of Bereavement

Immediate Grief Reactions...

- Shock, disbelief, unreality, nightmares
- Oscillation between intrusive reality and denial
- Range of emotions:
 - sad, fearful, angry, helpless
- Sleep and appetite disturbances
- Social withdrawal
- Disorganized behaviors

Stages of Bereavement

Intermediate Grief Reactions...

- Preoccupation with the image of the deceased
- Bodily symptoms
- Waves of distress
- Work problems
- School problems
- Social withdrawal
- Irritability
- Mood changes

Stages of Bereavement

Long-Term Effects ...

- Somatic/medical symptoms
- Interpersonal and social adjustment problems
- Damages to self-efficacy
- Utilization of health resources
- Internalizing and externalizing symptoms
- Decrements in academic performance

Loss & Bereavement

*Strengthening the behaviors of the survivor
who feels defeated and powerless...*

There is a **constant need** to remind
the survivor of his/her:

- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Capacity
- ✓ Skills
- ✓ Resources

Mediating Factors for Psychiatric Disorders

- Gender
 - Female: higher rates of PTSD, depression
 - Male: higher rate of substance abuse
- Marital status
- Pre-disaster level of functioning
- Preexisting psychiatric illness
- Social support

Source: North, 2003

Depression

Depression: Frequent Symptoms...

Changes In:

- a) Mood
- b) Behavior
- c) Relationships
- d) Thinking
- e) Bodily Functioning

Depression: Frequent Symptoms...

Changes In: MOOD

- Feelings of **sadness and depression**
- Irritability
- Loss of pleasure

Depression: Frequent Symptoms...

Changes In: BEHAVIOR

- Activity level
- Vocational/occupational performance
- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Tearfulness
- Impaired parental functioning

Depression: Frequent Symptoms...

Changes In: RELATIONSHIP

- Social avoidance
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Interpersonal conflicts

Depression: Frequent Symptoms...

Changes In: THINKING

- Low self-esteem
- Self-deprecation
- Preoccupation with death/suicide
- Inability to think or concentrate
- Negative expectations about the future
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Self-absorption

Depression: Frequent Symptoms...

Changes In: BODILY FUNCTIONING

- Appetite
- Body weight
- Sleep
- Psychomotor activity
- Somatic complaints