

Coping Techniques

What is Coping?

Coping is:

- "Any conscious or non-conscious adjustment or adaptation that decreases tension and anxiety in a stressful experience or situation" is how the American Psychological Association describes the coping mechanism.

Coping Behavior:

- The American Psychological Association described Coping Behavior as "A characteristic and often automatic action or set of actions taken in dealing with stressful or threatening situations. Coping behaviors can be both positive (i.e., adaptive), examples include meditation, exercise, mindfulness; or negative (i.e., maladaptive, avoidant), examples include drugs, not seeing a doctor in serious events, or suppressing them.

Coping Strategies:

- We all have coping strategies which are the actions, a series of actions, or the thought process used in meeting a stressful or unpleasant situation and how we modify one's reaction to the situation.

What are some healthy Coping strategies?



Exercise

- Exercise can be one of the best anti-stressors there is. When we say exercise we don't mean you need to buy a gym membership. But studies show just going out and walking at a steady pace for two hours a week total will account for enough exercise for stress reasons. The reason why exercise is such a powerful de-stressor is that what happens when we exercise is a neurochemical called dopamine is released into our brain. If you have ever heard of the term "runner's high" this is where it comes from!



Being in Nature

- There is a multitude of studies showing the overwhelming benefit of being in nature. This benefit doesn't function the same if we are in a busy city street surrounded by concrete and steel either! What we mean by being in nature is being surrounded by green spaces with trees, plants, the sun, maybe even some wind! The deeper you are into a natural landscape the better natural detoxifier it becomes!



Sleep

- One-third of our lives is during sleep. If sleep wasn't that important why would it be the activity we do most in our lives? Sleep essentially affects every single part of our bodies. 7-9 hours is enough sleep for an adult or elderly person (children require just as much or more) with anything under 7 being insufficient and within two nights of that, you will start to have effects from sleep deprivation. The effects of lack of sleep range from increased risk of injury, weight gain, inability to focus, increased depression, heightened nervous system, and many more. If there is one key point to focus on in your life to help aid you with difficult times it would be making sure to get enough quality sleep.



Mindfulness

- Over the past few years, the word "mindfulness" has got a lot of play in the media for being a "quick fix" for anxiety or other mental health symptoms. Well, first off, it is not a quick fix but it will help you adjust to everyday life with better skills in regards to your wellness. A quick strategy could be to turn the water at the sink on either as cold as it goes or on a hot (not hot enough to burn you) temperature. When it gets to the requested temperature place your hands under it and just allow your mind to feel all the sensations. Since our brain can only have one conscious thought happening at a time it will focus directly on the sensations happening in the present moment.



Good Nutrition

- There are three essential pieces to our health that most people take for granted. We have covered the first two, which are physical activity and sleep. The last one is having proper nutrition and making sure you are getting all your vitamins and minerals. There is an assortment of strategies to keep track of what we have eating on a daily basis. The easy strategy is to make sure you are eating as many whole foods as you can in your diet with an assortment of colorful vegetables and fruits. One of the more modern discoveries in psychology is the gut-brain axis which means that what we eat can directly affect how we feel!



Cultivating Social Support

- Lastly, make sure to develop healthy relationships in your life that you can turn to in times of distress. Not everybody in your life will be someone you want to go to in times of distress, which is why this one is more of a strategic one. The key to relationships in this form is that they are not one-sided in which you turn to this person in times of need, but when they reach out in similar times you can't be there for them. Secondly, when we say be strategic, it means that if you know someone is not great with being there for you then try to avoid going to them since you know it might end up causing you more distress than before.