

# 102 Coping Skills

- 1) Listen to music
- 2) Go for a walk
- 3) Take a relaxing bath or shower – only if there is nothing around to self-harm with
- 4) Drink some tea
- 5) Deep breathe (5 counts in, 5 counts out), square & rectangle breathing, in through your nose – out through your mouth
- 6) Call/text a friend or someone close to you
- 7) Meditate
- 8) Stretch
- 9) Think about something you are grateful for, make a list
- 10) Squeeze an ice cube tightly, throw it outside & watch it shatter
- 11) Watch a funny video/movie
- 12) Eat your favorite snack while savoring the flavors
- 13) Take a nap – only if you're tired
- 14) Journal (write your thoughts/feelings)
- 15) Express yourself creatively (e.g. drawing, coloring, painting, or poetry)
- 16) Read a book
- 17) Cook or bake
- 18) Dance
- 19) Sing, or play an instrument

- 20) Hug someone or hug a pillow/stuffed animal
- 21) Write something positive about yourself for every letter of the alphabet – decorate it and hang it where you will see it every day.
- 22) Smile, towards at least 5 people
- 23) Use positive affirmations (e.g. “I can do this, I am a capable person”)
- 24) Plan something fun to look forward to in future (prom, wedding, graduation, etc.)
- 25) Move EVERYTHING in your room to a new spot
- 26) Watch your favorite TV show
- 27) Play a board game or cards
- 28) Make a list of goals for the week/month/year/5yrs
- 29) Take pictures of something – challenge yourself to find 15 different kinds of the same thing (flowers, trees, people – with permission, rocks, bugs, etc.)
- 30) Exercise (e.g. running, yoga, jump rope, push ups)
- 31) Watch fish
- 32) Take moment to notice something beautiful (e.g. focus on the colors/textures of an object, gaze up at the sky)
- 33) Pray, or contemplate on your hope
- 34) Light a candle and relax
- 35) Write a letter (to yourself or someone else)
- 36) Focus on self-compassion (i.e. how would I talk to myself if I were talking to a good friend/someone I love?)
- 37) Think of 3 foods for every letter of the alphabet without skipping any.
- 38) Let yourself cry
- 39) Clean or organize something, rearrange furniture

- 40) Brush your hair 100x
- 41) Compliment someone
- 42) Count backwards from 500, or forwards as far as possible (out loud or written)
- 43) Review old photos of positive memories
- 44) Paint your nails (not red or black)
- 45) Spend time with a pet
- 46) Do a relaxation exercise
- 47) Write a fairy tale/story
- 48) Make friendship bracelets and give one to someone who looks lonely
- 49) Help someone else - volunteer or even around the house, clean up trash in park
- 50) Eat something healthy & refreshing (e.g. fruit, vegetable)
- 51) Go to McDonalds and order an ice cream cone off the dollar menu
- 52) Print your favorite religious verse or inspirational quote on a card and memorize it
- 53) Decorate your mirror with positive affirmations and your favorite photos
- 54) Visualization - close your eyes and imagine yourself in a beautiful place - how does it smell, what do you see, what do you hear, what do you feel - use all 5 senses
- 55) Go to the mall and people watch
- 56) Collect rocks, shells
- 57) Make a list of your choices in a situation
- 58) Attend a self-help group or read self-help articles or books
- 59) Create a schedule for your day
- 60) Spend time with someone positive

- 61) Sit in a hot tub, sauna or pool
- 62) Read inspirational quotes
- 63) Write a list of compliments about a friend or teacher and give it to them
- 64) Name 3+ of your positive attributes
- 65) Take care of your physical appearance (e.g. do your hair/makeup)
- 66) Take responsibility for your part of a problem
- 67) Make a difficult situation into a learning experience, focus on the learning opportunity
- 68) Visit a pet store, animal shelter or feed animals outdoors (birds, ducks, etc)
- 69) Aromatherapy (e.g. smell something pleasant and inhale deeply)
- 70) Go for a drive
- 71) Sew or knit
- 72) Complete something you've been putting off
- 73) Do a puzzle, word search, Sudoku, etc.
- 74) Go out to eat or go somewhere very public
- 75) Have a picnic
- 76) Go to the library or museum
- 77) Make a collage (e.g. make an inspiration board of your future goals)
- 78) Build a pillow fort
- 79) Put on fake tattoos
- 80) Read jokes or comics
- 81) Try to make as many words out of your full name as possible

- 82) Ask yourself: "What do I need right now?" and take steps towards it
- 83) Go window shopping or "shop online" without buying anything.
- 84) Rip paper into itty-bitty pieces
- 85) Search for ridiculous things on the internet
- 86) Draw on yourself, or cover yourself with Band-Aids where you want to cut
- 87) Dance
- 88) Garden
- 89) Think of something you accomplished that you are proud of, what steps led to that - positive and negative?
- 90) Focus on being in the present moment (rather than being in the past or future)
- 91) Write a blog
- 92) Make a list of your personal coping skills, one for each letter of the alphabet
- 93) Play a sport
- 94) Teach your pet a new trick
- 95) Catch yourself when you are over-thinking something, and take a break
- 96) Write a thank-you card to someone
- 97) Wash dishes
- 98) Get a massage (or self-massage)
- 99) Be with nature (e.g. forest, beach)
- 100) Contemplate on love (love for self, for others, the world)
- 101) Look up new words and use them
- 102) Think of 10 more coping skills to add to this list

# **Teach Coping Skills:**

## **Why should I do it:**

- Improves kids self-confidence and self-esteem
- Increases instruction time
- Improves students' independence
- Helps students to be more assertive
- Decreases the time it takes to deal with students' crises, issues, meltdowns, etc
- Provides students a good life long skills
- Helps to empower students
- Improves behaviors
- Improves student problem solving

## **When should I do it:**

- All students should be taught coping skills and they should regularly be modeled for all students
- When a student frequently has melt downs, falls apart, cries, experiences anxiety, has issues with friends
- When students seem to have trouble handling criticism, failure, disappointment, conflict, decision making, etc
- When students have trouble appropriately expressing emotions, like sadness, disappointment, frustration, happiness, excitement, etc
- When you are having to frequently stop to console, encourage, or settle kids down

## **How do I do it:**

- Depending on the situation, need, and child, there are numerous ways to teach kids coping skills
- Always try to use active listening skills
- Use a clam tone
- Be firm when necessary and set boundaries
- Use support and resources below for specific lesson plans, ideas, strategies, and skills

# Coping Skills

<b>Distraction</b>	Conversation, listen to talk radio, read, do puzzles, TV, computer games, jigsaws, solve a problem, make a list, learn something new, cleaning & tidying, gardening, arts & crafts.	<b>Pros</b> Gives your heart & mind a break. Great for short term relief. Great to get through a crisis.	<b>Cons</b> Can't do it for too long. Doesn't resolve any underlying issues. Meds can make it hard to concentrate.
<b>Grounding</b>	Use body & senses: smell fragrances, slowly taste food, notice the colours around you. Walk on the grass barefoot, squeeze clay or mud, do yoga, meditate, exercise.	<b>Pros</b> Helps slow or stop 'dissociation' (feeling numb, floaty or disconnected). Reduces physicality of anxiety.	<b>Cons</b> Sometimes it's better to stay a bit dissociated (that's how your mind protects you).
<b>Emotional Release</b>	Yell, scream, run! Try a cold shower. Let yourself cry... and sob. Put on a funny DVD and let yourself laugh! Try boxing, popping balloons, or crank up some music & dance crazy!	<b>Pros</b> Great for anger and fear. Releases the pressure of overwhelming emotion.	<b>Cons</b> Hard to do in every situation. Feels odd. Some people might think you're acting 'crazier' (be selective with how & where you do this)
<b>Self Love</b>	Massage hands with nice cream, manicure your nails, cook a special meal, clean your house (or just make your bed), bubble bath or long shower, brush hair, buy a small treat.	<b>Pros</b> Become your own best friend, your own support worker. Great for guilt or shame. You deserve it!	<b>Cons</b> Sometimes can feel really hard to do, or feel superficial (but it's not).
<b>Thought challenge</b>	Write down negative thoughts then list all the reasons they may not be true. Imagine someone you love had these thoughts – what advice would you give them?	<b>Pros</b> Can help to shift long-term, negative thinking habits. Trying to be more logical can help reduce extreme emotion.	<b>Cons</b> The more emotional you feel, the harder this is to do. In particular, feelings of shame can make this very hard.
<b>Access your higher self</b>	Help someone else, smile at strangers (see how many smiles you get back), pray, volunteer, do randomly kind things for others, pat dogs at the local park, join a cause	<b>Pros</b> Reminds us that everyone has value and that purpose can be found in small as well as large things.	<b>Cons</b> Don't get stuck trying to save everyone else and forget about you!