

Coping Skills for Teens

1. Self Soothe

- Tune into each of your 5 senses- sight, sound, taste, touch, smell. Engage your senses in some way that feels comforting or relaxing. You may enjoy a cup of hot cocoa, noticing the chocolate aroma, the warmth in your body and the sweetness on your tongue. You may take a warm shower or bath and pay extra attention to the smells of your soaps, the bubbles and sounds of the water dripping.

2. Breathing Exercises

- While counting: Breathe in slowly through your nose while counting to 4, hold for 2, then exhale through your mouth counting until 6. The key is to have your exhale super slow and controlled, making sure your exhale is longer than your inhale.

3. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Tense and release different muscle groups one at a time. Start at your toes and work your way up to your head. Notice the difference in sensation in your body after you release your muscles.

4. Distract Yourself

- Take a temporary break from the problem at hand. Go do something else. Make sure to bring your thoughts with you. You may do something you enjoy, or something that you need to get done. Focus only on this new task. Then, go back to the original matter.

5. Engage in a Pleasant Activity

- Spent time everyday doing something purely for pleasure! Pay full attention to whatever it is you are doing so you can fully enjoy it! This can be watching funny videos, painting your nails, shooting some hoops, listening to music, reading, whatever you like!

6. Mindfulness

- Do one thing mindfully- focus only on that one thing in the moment. Pay attention and notice things about your experience using your 5 senses. Observe and describe what you notice. Let go of judgments and just be in the present.

7. Imagery

- Use your imagination to take yourself somewhere magical- anywhere you choose! Envision yourself on a hike through a jungle, notice the sights and sounds around you. Or imagine yourself accomplishing something amazing and feel all that pride. You can even find some guided imagery scripts/recordings online to help you get started.

8. Pros and Cons

- Before making a big decision, especially when you are feeling emotional or indecisive, write out a pros and cons list. The positives about both doing, or not doing, whatever the situation is. Also list the negatives, or the cons, about both options as well. Consider the quality or value of your responses, not just the quantity.

9. Write yourself a letter

- On a good day when you are feeling pumped or motivated- write yourself a note! Tell yourself how amazing you are and that you believe in yourself. Give yourself advice that you may need to get through a difficult moment. Be your own cheerleader!

10. Get Support

- Spend time with others- even if this is the last thing you feel like doing. You can use friends or family members as a break from your stressors, or you can lean on them and let them know what you need. Never forget how much you are loved and that others are there to help you!