

Coping Card for Anxiety and Difficult Emotions

Things I can do to cope (e.g., exercise, playing music, relaxation exercises, hot shower, journaling)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

People I can contact to distract and/or support me (e.g., friend, therapist, mentor, relative, religious leader)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Three positive things I can focus on right now (e.g., something good in my life, something positive that happened, a beautiful sunset, people who care about me, an inspirational thought, a nice memory)

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Tips for healthy coping:

1. Work on getting enough sleep and eating well—without basic self-care, it is difficult to manage anxiety, stress, and moods.
2. Work on being more active. Exercise is proven to help reduce stress and raise mood when done regularly.
3. Identify stressful or triggering situations and be prepared in advance with strategies for dealing with them. Have “escape plans” for difficult social situations (e.g., if going to parties makes you anxious, go with a friend or plan to stay for only 45 minutes).
4. Work on building acceptance for yourself and your ups and downs. Everyone feels stressed or low at times. Sometimes, accepting that certain situations are likely to make you feel stressed or down is more helpful than “fighting” it or thinking you “should” never feel stressed or low.
5. Practice challenging any unhelpful or exaggerated thoughts. That doesn’t mean denying your feelings or worries—it just means recognizing when thought patterns are contributing to anxiety or low mood and working on changing those patterns. For example, thinking “I’m a loser” every time something goes wrong is probably less helpful than focusing on what went wrong and how to do something different or accepting that you’re human and will make mistakes.
6. Tell someone you trust that you are having a hard time and ask for support, distraction, or advice.
7. Engage in distraction and diversion. Watch your favorite comedy sketch or movie. Play in the dirt. Find what works for you.
8. Practice relaxation. Practice deep breathing. Go for a walk. Find what works for you.
9. **If you are feeling suicidal or at risk of harming yourself in some other way, call CAPS’ crisis services any time at 831-459-2628 or call 911 if there is imminent risk to you or someone else.**

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