

Coping with Emotions

ABOUT COPING

Coping is when we make an effort to solve a personal problem, especially one that causes us stress. Everyone has their own way of dealing with things and we tend to choose what comes easily and feels most natural to us. Often this is influenced by our personalities, interests, the things we are naturally good at and our previous experiences. Things people do to effectively cope with stress or deal with an emotion that isn't helpful include; addressing the problem head on and problem solving, relaxation, seeking fun, seeking help from others, changing thinking styles or personal beliefs and addressing lifestyle factors such as sleep, diet and exercise.

There is no one perfect way to cope with problems, we need to have as many skills as possible at our disposal so that we can match coping strategies to the specific problems we are faced with. There are however, coping preferences that are more likely to be successful. Consider the following table with some examples:

OFTEN EFFECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving (dealing with the cause) • Seeking practical help from others • Seeking social support (talking about it) • Learning new skills to help with the problem
SOMETIMES EFFECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing how you think about a situation • Dealing with the emotional consequences (e.g. cheering yourself up, calming down)
RARELY EFFECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal • Denial / wishful thinking • Substance use

SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

It pays to think about our coping ability from time to time, to ensure we are doing all we can to avoid being stressed or unhappy for long periods of time. Planning ahead when we are feeling relatively calm is also a really good idea as sometimes it can be difficult to make good decisions when we are highly stressed or upset.



There are three key goals when completing this activity:

1. To reflect on personal coping styles;
2. To learn more about what effective coping looks like;
3. To devise personalised coping plans.

Step 1: Invite your child to complete the “ways of coping survey”, followed by the coping preferences activity. Give them time to work on this independently, ideally somewhere private where they can reflect uninterrupted.

Step 2: Invite your child to discuss what they learnt from this activity. This activity can be a good opportunity to discuss how we are coping with the current situation. To encourage an open conversation, come prepared to share your own insights about the things you are doing to effectively cope with the challenges you currently face.

If your child doesn't enjoy worksheets, just ask them to write their answers down however they prefer. As with many of the Aristotle EI activities, this is suitable for adolescents as well as adults. Feel free to try the activity yourself! You might even like to discuss what you learnt with your son/daughter and encourage them to share with you too.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS LOTS OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS THEY AREN'T SURE HOW TO DEAL WITH?

- Reassure them that it's natural to respond this way given the current challenges we all face.
- Encourage them to keep talking with you about how they're feeling. Sometimes, strong emotions can be alleviated just by letting them out and talking.
- Don't feel like you need to solve anything right away. Just listen at first.
- If your child would like assistance, help them find solutions to the cause of their feelings (e.g. If it's loneliness, help them make connections with friends or family. If it's sadness, find time for activities that bring joy. If it's anxiety, help them to see the issue from a different perspective).
- Seek additional help if you think you need it.

If you feel your son needs further help and wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz. The school counsellor, Jenelle Hooson, is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).



Here are some support options specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25:

- [Need to Talk?](#) Free call or text 1737 any time to speak to a trained counsellor, for any reason.
- [Youthline](#): 0800 376 633 (24/7), or free text 234 (8am-12am), or email talk@youthline.co.nz
- [What's Up](#): online chat (7pm-10pm) or 0800 WHATSUP / 0800 9428 787 children's helpline (12pm-11pm weekdays, 3pm-11pm weekends)
- [Kidsline](#) (ages 5-18): 0800 543 754 (24/7 but between 4pm and 9pm calls are answered by a Kidsline Buddy, specially-trained year 12 and 13 students)

Further resources to help parents support their children during this time:

<https://www.allright.org.nz/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>

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