



WELCOME TO OUR

# March Newsletter

## Focus: Coping Skills



This month, we are exploring what the term “coping” refers to and examining different types of coping skills.

So what exactly is “coping”?

Broadly speaking, “coping” refers to a person’s ability to manage difficult situations in life. When we say a person is coping, we imply that the person is maintaining a certain level of physical and emotional well-being despite the challenges they are facing.

Coping also involves taking specific steps to ensure that a person’s mind and body does not become overwhelmed by the negative things happening around it.

### In this newsletter you will find:



Defining “coping” and identifying different coping skills. Understanding what influences a person’s ability to cope with what is happening both internally and externally.

## Coping

DOES IT REQUIRE AN “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” APPROACH?

Coping is a disciplined process that requires a person to control their mind and behaviors in a way that makes them feel “okay” even amidst chaotic events.

Coping requires a person to direct their attention away from the problem and towards a solution or something that gives them hope. This can include God, another person, a pet, their work, exercise, another location etc. Different people will draw hope from different things and sometimes, just thinking about these things will bring a level of calmness to the person’s mind.

On a behavioral level, coping requires a person to engage in certain actions to relieve stress or to reduce negative emotions. Again, different people will have different views on what behaviors should be applied to cope with a situation and sometimes, behaviors are situationally dependent. In other words, some behaviors can be applied in certain situations that may not be appropriate or useful in others.

For example, a warm bath can help to reduce muscle tension caused by stress about an upcoming exam, however it will not be helpful as a coping technique when you feel overwhelmed whilst giving a presentation in front of a large audience. In such case, a couple of deep breaths are better suited.



## Self-Care Tip

### THE ABC TECHNIQUE

This exercise helps with by drawing your attention away from the overwhelming emotion by purposefully choosing to focus on something else. Simply say the ABC backwards by starting at Z and ending with A. Most people do not practice this and starting at Z takes tremendous effort which unconsciously results in several changes within the body such as a change in breathing.



## Coping Techniques

### WHEN DO I NEED HELP?

There are no right or wrong way to process trauma or other situations that are causing you to feel overwhelmed, however there are healthy and unhealthy ways to cope. Typically, if you don't feel comfortable with the idea of sharing your coping techniques, it might be an indicator that they are not healthy. An example of this could be drinking to cope or spending hours on the internet.

## Coping Skills

### WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Coping skills are largely influenced by learnt behavior from others as well as our past. Learnt behavior is not necessarily age specific, however it mostly refers to the things that were consciously or unconsciously taught to us in childhood by parents, siblings, teachers, friends and other important people in our lives. Learnt behavior can be obtained through direct interactions (i.e. a parent telling you to count to 10 when you are angry) or through indirect interactions such as watching how your parents or older siblings cope with a specific event. Most adults practice the coping skills they observed in their childhood homes and it can be challenging (but not impossible) to unlearn the unhealthy coping skills or patterns of behavior that they were taught.

Examples of helpful distractions / good coping skills are: going for a walk, praying, reading a book, doing something fun with family and friends, counting to 100, spending time with your pets, saying the ABC backwards, a little exercise, deep breathing, gardening, taking a warm bath, journaling, going outside, building puzzles, playing sport etc.

Some harmful distractions/ bad coping skills: drinking, gambling, smoking, self-isolation, substance abuse (i.e. using drugs), self-harming, engaging in risky behavior, working too much to avoid going home and thinking about the problem, watching porn, masturbation, endlessly scrolling through social media posts, aggressive behavior, too much video games or television etc.



Self-care is not the same as being lazy. Self-care is intentionally making sure you are coping.



## What Is New?

### NEW SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Zehira-Kedesh recently joined Pinterest under two different accounts: **“Zehira-Kedesh”** for all counseling related topics and information and **“Zehira-Kedesh Pastoral Quotes”** which covers matters related to the Christian faith. Note that the content on these accounts does not merge and was intentionally kept separately.

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