

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping Skills

Healthy coping skills are activities that support your wellness, help you feel calm, generate positive feelings about yourself, and do NOT cause secondary problems in your life. Examples include deep breathing, taking a walk, talking to a trusted friend, and engaging in healthy hobbies. Unhealthy coping skills often help you feel calm but do not contribute to your wellness, often create a sense of shame, and produce secondary problems in your life. Examples include alcohol, drugs, avoidance, compulsive shopping, and compulsive eating. Use this worksheet to help you gain more awareness about your habits of coping.

Top 5 Healthy Coping Skills	When I Will Use My Skill	How My Skill Helps Me
Example: Deep Breathing	Traffic, Moments of Conflict, When kids are difficult	Calms my brain, relaxes my muscles, helps me not yell
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Top 5 Unhealthy Coping Skills	When I Currently Use This Unhealthy Skill	Secondary Problems This Unhealthy Skill Causes
Example: Drinking Alcohol	End of stressful day, when I'm anxious, after a fight with spouse	Thinking gets fuzzy, don't resolve my problems, lethargic
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Great job identifying your skills. Now try using your Top 5 Healthy Coping Skills before you engage in using your most commonly used Unhealthy Coping Skills. Notice if you still need your Unhealthy Coping Skills after you've engaged your Healthy Coping Skills. Keep practicing because repetition changes your brain!