

COPING STYLES FOR STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

by:

Hainee C. Minas, Rpm
Bataan High School for the Arts

Coping styles are the various ways in which people choose to respond to stressors. According to Algorani and Gupta (2022), there are four main categories of coping, extending the basic two styles of coping (emotion-focused and problem-focused) with meaning-focused and social coping or support-seeking ways of coping.

The following are the categories of coping:

Emotion Focused Coping Style regulates (tolerates, reduces, or eliminates) the physiologic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that come along with experiencing stressful interactions, such as minor inconveniences, major life events, or serious threatening situations involving many people (Ben-Zur, 2020). For example, when a person is going through a trying or stressful period, he or she may decide to alter how they feel about the circumstance rather than addressing the problem directly.

Problem Focused Coping Style seeks to alter or get rid of the stressor. This kind of stress relief is effective if one has some influence over the circumstance that is bothersome. Active coping, planning, restrained coping, and the suppression of competing activities are examples of this type.

Meaning Focused Coping Style uses cognitive techniques to determine and control the situation's meaning. When one can't control the situation, religion, spiritual views, attitudes about justice, values, and existential objectives are used to make sense of the situation.

Social Coping (Support-seeking) Style happens when a person uses a social coping or support-seeking coping strategy when they ask the community for emotional or practical support. For example, consulting a colleague who has similar experience for advice and empathy.

Although coping aims to control stressful circumstances both internally and externally, these responses may be effective or ineffective and adaptive or maladaptive, depending on the result (Millacci, 2022). To get through difficult circumstances, it can be helpful to have effective and adaptive coping mechanisms.

Adaptive coping mechanisms enable a person to change a stressful circumstance or adapt his emotional reaction to stress. This includes deep breathing, meditation, exercise, journaling, talking with a friend, positive thoughts, taking a bath, reading a book and aromatherapy.

On the other hand, a negative method of coping with stress is known as a maladaptive coping mechanism. Maladaptive coping is a common occurrence in persons who have gone through trauma or abuse as a child. While these actions may momentarily help one cope with stress, this might eventually cause physical and emotional harm. Examples include drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, using drugs, anger outbursts, denying/ignoring the problem, self-harm, binge eating, negative thoughts and isolating self.

Since stress is inevitable, it is very important to learn, understand and use a healthy coping style. Effective coping techniques can often contribute to boosting mental and emotional health. People may be less prone to experience anxiety, sadness, and other mental health issues because of difficult or challenging events if they are able to handle stressful or traumatic situations (and the potential long-term effects these episodes may have).

People who frequently turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms and/or have trouble using them may eventually face a negative impact on their mental and emotional health. People who struggle to manage their anxiety, tension, or rage could develop the habit of turning to an unsuitable coping technique. Drinking alcohol can frequently make individuals feel less anxious in the present, but if someone starts to depend on alcohol or any other substance in the face of difficult circumstances, they might eventually develop a dependence on it over time.

Nevertheless, if handling stress is still a struggle, getting some help will be beneficial. A mental health professional can help develop and improve one's coping skills.

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