

# COPING SKILLS & TECHNIQUES

Department of School Psychologists and Social Workers

*Lauren Zakaib, Stephanie Peoples, Cynthia Allen, & Bethany Kardy*

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# What Are Coping Skills and Strategies?

Coping skills and strategies are methods a person uses to deal with or handle *stressful* situations and experiences.



# TRIGGERS



According to Webster Dictionary, *Triggers* cause an intense and usually negative emotional reaction in someone.

- They can be environmental (things that happen to us) or emotional (things that elicit painful feelings, usually related to prior experiences). Usually these go together (eg., your boyfriend/girlfriend breaks up with you and you feel rejected).
- When we experience a trigger, we may lose control or become very upset.
- Triggers warrant our use of coping skills, which is when we engage in a positive or negative behavior in order to deal with our feelings
- It is important to understand our triggers so that we can make good choices about what coping strategies we use.

## Examples of *Environmental* Triggers

- Getting a bad grade on an assignment/test
- Hearing about something that upsets you
- Your boss at work has to talk to you about your performance
- Your parents tell you they are splitting up
- Your boyfriend/girlfriend breaks up with you
- You have an important test coming up
- Your family is told they have to move
- Someone refers to you using an non-preferred pronoun
- Someone humiliates you on social media
- Your car breaks down

## Examples of *Emotional* Triggers

- Someone rejecting you
- Feeling helplessness over painful situations
- Someone discounting or ignoring you
- Someone giving you a disapproving look
- Someone blaming or shaming you
- Someone being judgmental or critical of you
- Someone not appearing to be happy to see you
- Someone trying to control you
- Feeling intense anxiety/panic

## Scenario 1

# Identify the Trigger

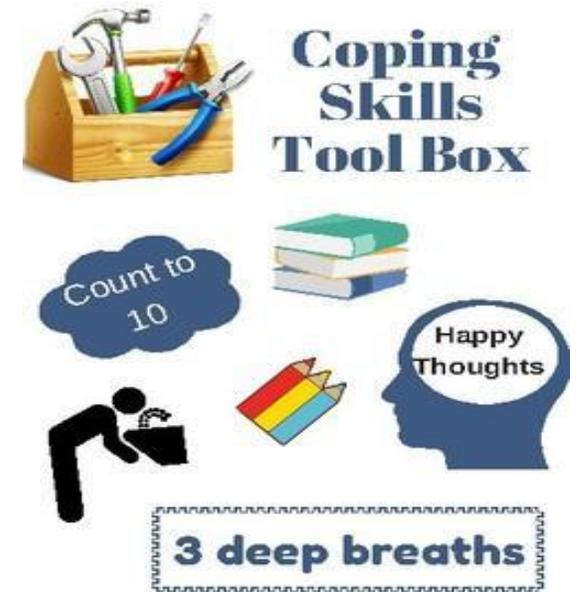


Emily is a 15 year old sophomore. She has had the same group of friends since middle school. They are very close and do everything together. On Monday during lunch, she hears her friends talking and laughing about a party that they had gone to over the weekend, a party that Emily knew nothing about. She hadn't heard from her friends and stayed home Saturday night and watched Netflix. Upon hearing her friends talking, she immediately felt her face get hot and her eyes started to water. The bell rang and she went to her third period class. The teacher asked her for her homework and she yelled, "Okay, lady!" and slammed her fists on the desk. Her teacher sent her to the Dean where she was given a detention.

# Who Uses Coping Skills?

# everyone™

- Parents
- Teachers
- School Staff
- Siblings
- Postal workers
- Doctors
- Counselors
- Cashiers
- And so many more...





# Healthy Coping Skills



## Emotional & Mindful

- Journaling
- Making a gratitude list
- Meditating
- Prayer
- Mindful breathing
- Talking to a friend
- Talking about your feelings
- Slowly counting to 10
- Say something kind to yourself
- Drawing or painting
- Reading
- Listening to music

## Physical

- Exercising (going for a walk, working out, etc.)
- Standing up and stretching
- Taking a relaxing bath or shower
- Doing something physical you enjoy (skateboarding, playing basketball, etc.)
- Squeezing a stress ball
- Laughing
- Sleeping (if you are not getting enough)
- Taking a break

# Unhealthy Coping Skills

## Unhealthy Coping Skills:

- Overeating/Emotional eating
- Substance use
- Avoidance behaviors (e.g., sleeping to avoid the problem)
- Withdrawing/Isolating yourself
- Denial
- Blaming
- Self-harm
- Aggression toward people
- Negative thinking
- Ignoring feelings



# MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

***Mindfulness*** is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, and is used as a therapeutic technique.



# How to Identify Healthy Coping Skills

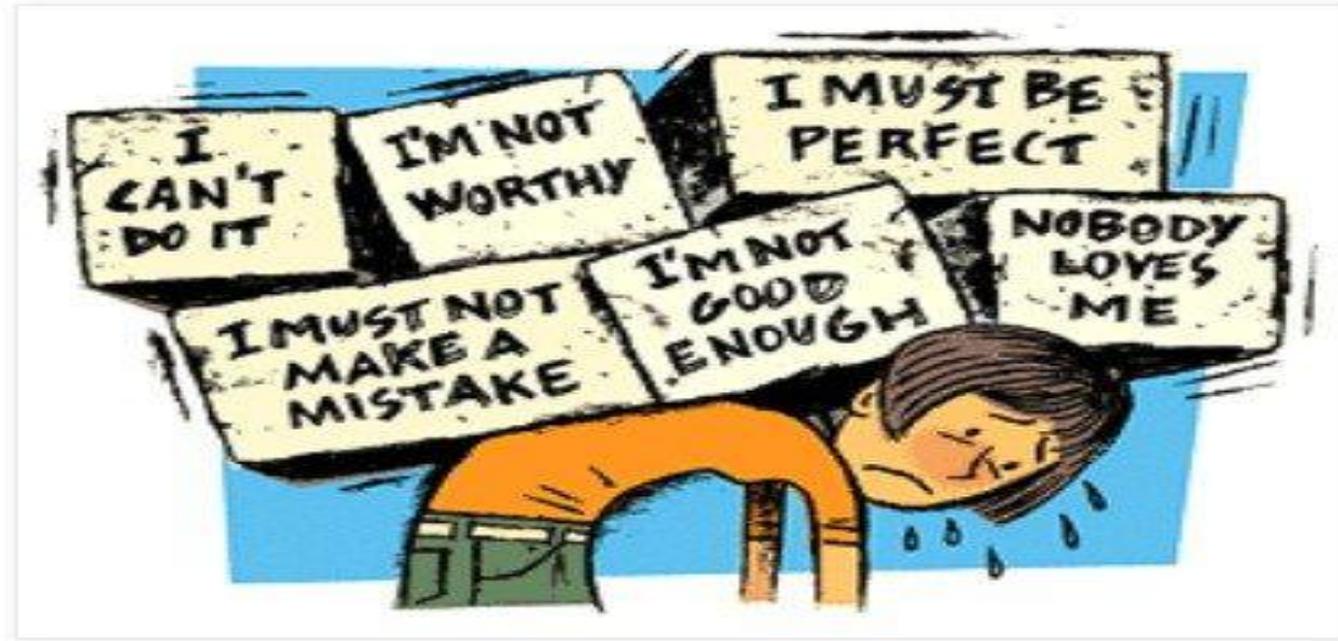
## Ask yourself:

- **Is this helping me?**
- **Does this make me feel more relaxed?**
- **Does this feel good for my body?**
- **Is this making my problem smaller?**





# NEGATIVE THOUGHTS



*Negative thinking is a thought process where people find the worst in everything, or reduce their expectations by considering the worst possible scenarios.*

*Negative thoughts can cause stress, worry, or sadness over time.*

# Unhelpful Thinking Patterns



- All or nothing thinking- “If I’m not perfect, I failed.”
- Overgeneralizing- “Everything is always horrible.”
- Mental filter- Noticing failures but not seeing successes.
- Disqualifying the positive- Discounting the good things.
- Jumping to conclusions- Mind reading/fortune telling.
- Catastrophizing- Blowing things out of proportion.
- Emotional Reasoning- Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.
- Should/Must- Words that cause guilt
- Labeling- Assigning labels to ourselves “I’m a loser.”
- Personalization- “This is my fault” or “This is your fault.”

**END NEGATIVE  
SELF-TALK  
WITH THIS SIMPLE METHOD**



# When Do You Use Coping Skills?



Coping skills are helpful to manage high stake situations or intense feelings like:

- Disappointment, anger, frustration, rage
- Anxiety*: Restlessness, upset stomach, cold sweats, extreme nervousness, heart beating too fast.
- Persistent, obsessive thoughts leading nowhere
- Stressful life circumstances (e.g., death, illness, break-up, move)
- Personal triggers activated
- Strong negative emotional reaction to something

# Why Use Coping Skills?



- **Using coping skills slows down our response time and provides a chance to think of different solutions.**
- **They help us gain confidence in our abilities to control our motivation, behavior, and social environment.**
- **Being trained in coping skills has been shown to reduce depression, anxiety, and stress.**
- **They help us stay healthy with a better outlook of the future.**



# Positive VS. Negative Outcomes of Using Coping Skills

## Positive Outcomes

- You may impact others in a positive way
- The brain and body receive a break from stress.
- You may begin to feel better.
- Other parts of life will not become a problem.
- You might discover new ways to manage life's difficulties
- The problem is worked through.

## Negative Outcomes

- The problem keeps repeating
- New problems/addictions.
- May begin to experience feelings of being overwhelmed.
- May begin to lose sleep and have problems concentrating.
- May become irritable and have difficulty getting along with others

# Back to Emily

Emily is a 15 year old sophomore. She has had the same group of friends since middle school. They are very close and do everything together. On Monday, during lunch, she hears her friends talking and laughing about a party that they had gone to over the weekend, a party that Emily knew nothing about. She hadn't heard from her friends and stayed home Saturday night and watched Netflix. Upon hearing her friends talking, she immediately felt her face get hot and her eyes started to water. The bell rang and she went to her third period class. The teacher asked her for her homework and she yelled, "Okay, lady!" and slammed her fist on the desk. Her teacher sent her to the Dean where she was given a detention.

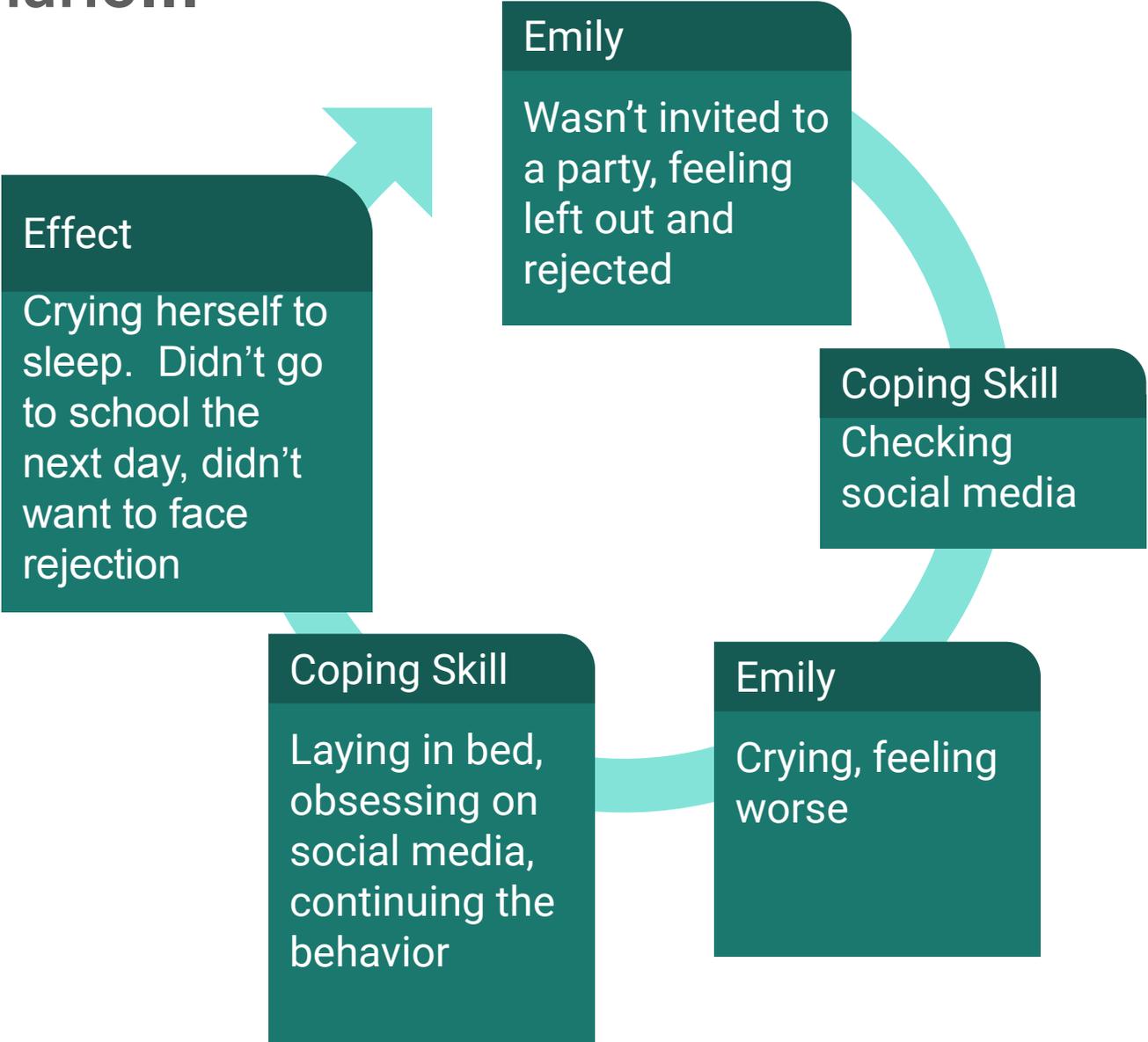


How could Emily have used coping skills and changed her outcome?



**When Emily got home, she checked Snapchat and Instagram and saw pictures from the night of the party posted. There were dozens of comments and likes. She spent the rest of the night checking her various social media accounts and crying.**

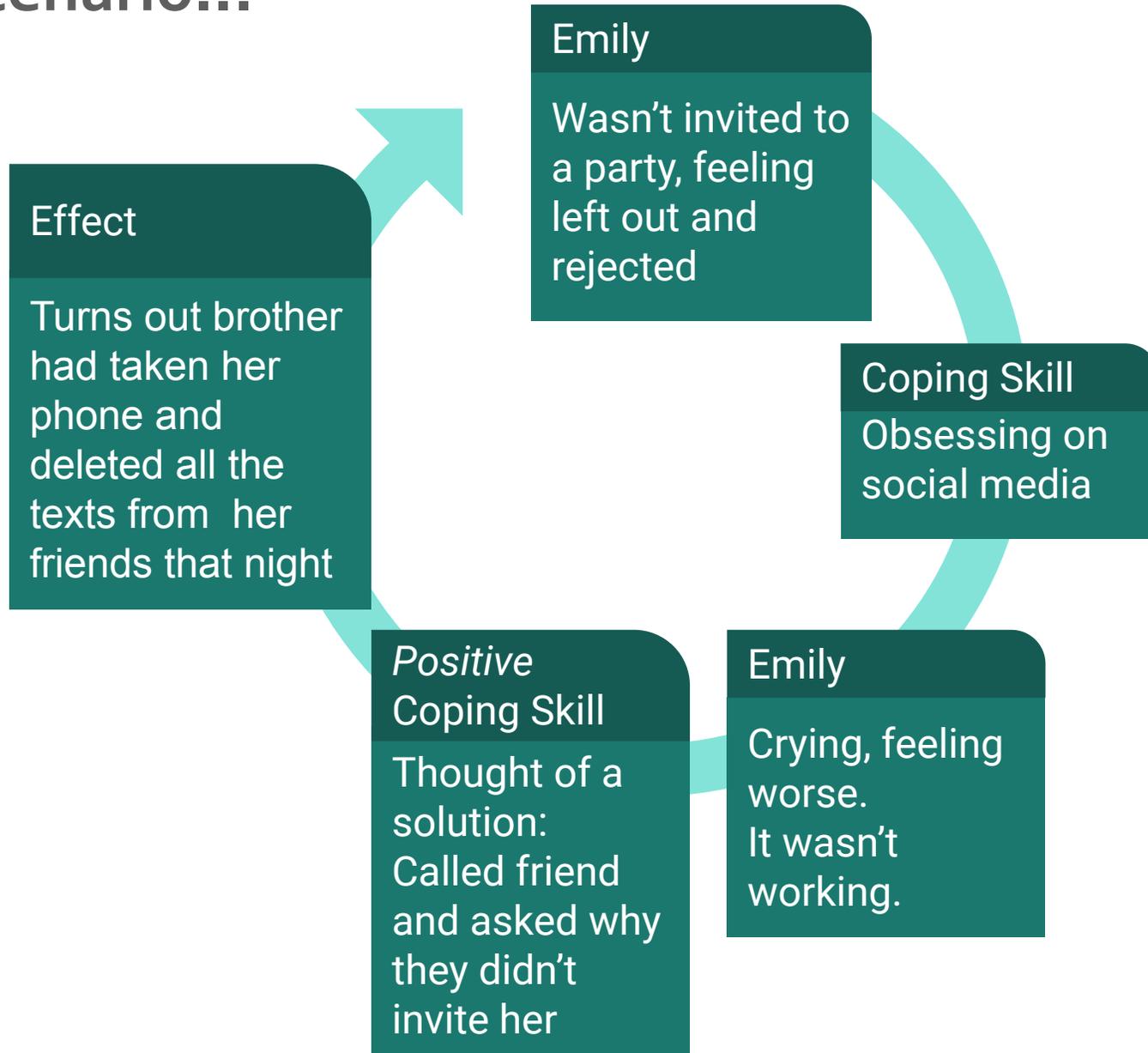
# Current scenario...



Check your  
thinking?

What positive coping skills could Emily have engaged in that would have helped her situation or made her problem smaller?

# Possible scenario...



## Another possible scenario...

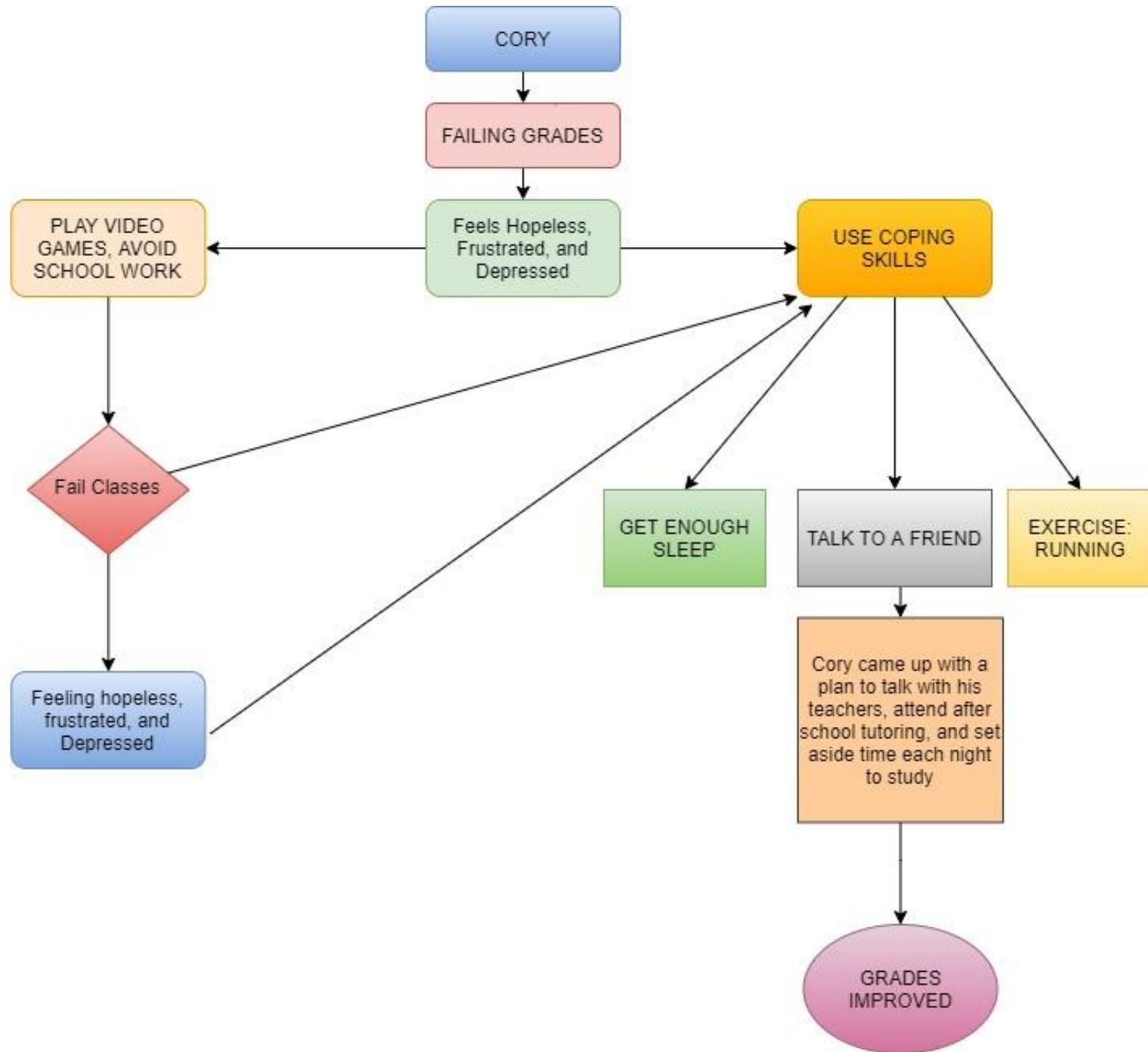


## Scenario 2



**Cory has been struggling with getting to class on time, paying attention in class, and completing his work. He finds that when he gets home, he has forgotten what he was supposed to do for homework in his classes and finds other things to do instead. Cory's mother asks him if he has any homework, but he tells her the teachers didn't assign anything. He checks his grades in Focus and sees that the only class he is passing right now is P.E. Cory decides to play video games late into the night.**

# Cory's decision tree



# What About My Friend?



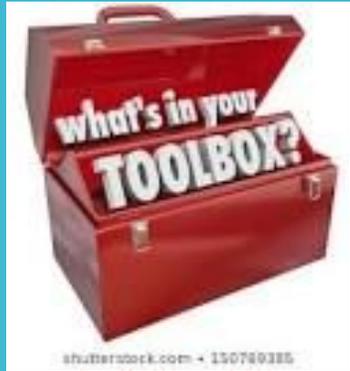
## When a friend is struggling with something:

- **Talk with an adult you can trust.**
- **Understand that the experience they are working through will not change overnight.**
- **Be a good listener.**
- **Help them identify positive or negative coping skills.**
- **Ask if they would go with you to talk to someone.**

# How to Apply Coping Skills in Your Daily Life



- **Know who to talk to when you get stuck. Try to name 2 adults along with your friends.**
- **Know what coping skills work for you, but have a back-up. It's important to be able to try something that may be even more effective.**
- **Be willing to stick with a decision once it is made. Sometimes we overthink things and try to change our mind in the middle of our solution.**
- **If what you choose isn't working, talk to someone, or try something else.**



## Activity

**Identify** your personal coping skills to create a toolbox for yourself when you're feeling *mad, sad, frustrated, and out of control.*

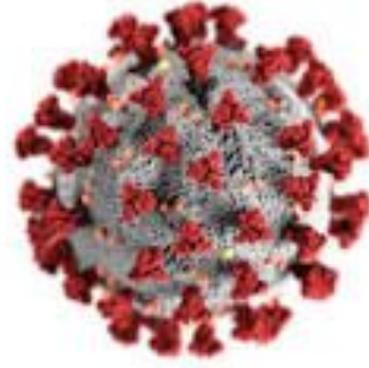
How do I  
know if it  
worked?

**Did the problem become  
BIGGER or SMALLER?**



**If we work through things we  
experience in life, our problems  
generally stay smaller and more  
manageable.**

# COVID-19



**The COVID-19 Pandemic provided us with an example of a situation that all of us shared. The stay-at-home orders required us to alter our lives in unprecedented, challenging ways.**

**What coping strategies did you use to get through this time?**

**Were your coping strategies effective?**

*Use your  
resources  
and talk to people  
who care about  
you:*

Parents  
Grandparents  
Guardians/Mentors  
Teachers  
School Staff  
Coaches

# You Are Never Alone

SUPPORT



QUESTIONS



# REFERENCES

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- Negative Thinking Examples. (n.d.). In *YourDictionary*. Retrieved from <https://examples.yourdictionary.com/negative-thinking-examples.html>
- YourDictionary. (2016, July 29). Negative Thinking Examples. Retrieved from <https://examples.yourdictionary.com/negative-thinking-examples.html>.
- YouTube Kwik, J. How to End Negative Self-Talk. 1.27.2020 3:52  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XkviCyYmZ0>

CHECK OUT  
THESE  
APPS!



### Relax Melodies: Sleep Sounds

Meditation, Calm, White Noise



4.8 ★★★★★

194K Ratings

#50

Health & Fitness

4+

Age

#### What's New

[Version History](#)

Version 11.1

16h ago

Hello Sleepers, in this release we improved the performance and fixed some bugs.

We also released a new meditation "Medita [more](#)

#### Subscriptions



### Headspace: Meditation & Sleep

Stress less & relaxing sounds

GET

In-App Purchases



★★★★★

4.9, 654K Rating



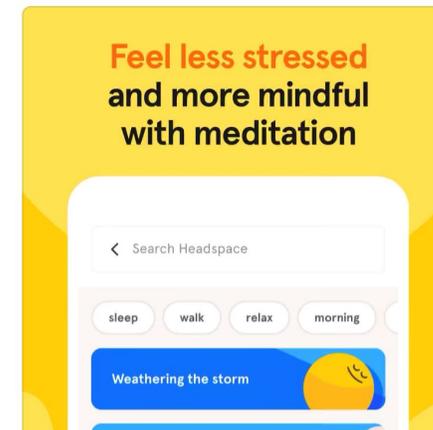
Apps

#9

Health & Fitness

4+

Age



CHECK OUT  
THESE  
APPS!



## Calm

Meditation and Sleep Stories



4.8, 838K Ratings



Apps

#2

Health & Fitness

4+

Age

### What's New

[Version History](#)

Version 4.25

1w ago

Thanks for using Calm! This update contains multiple bug fixes and performance improvements.

[more](#)

### Subscriptions



## Insight Timer - Meditation App

Meditation for Sleep & Anxiety



4.9 ★★★★★

220K Ratings

#81

Health & Fitness

4+

Age

### What's New

[Version History](#)

Version 15.7.0

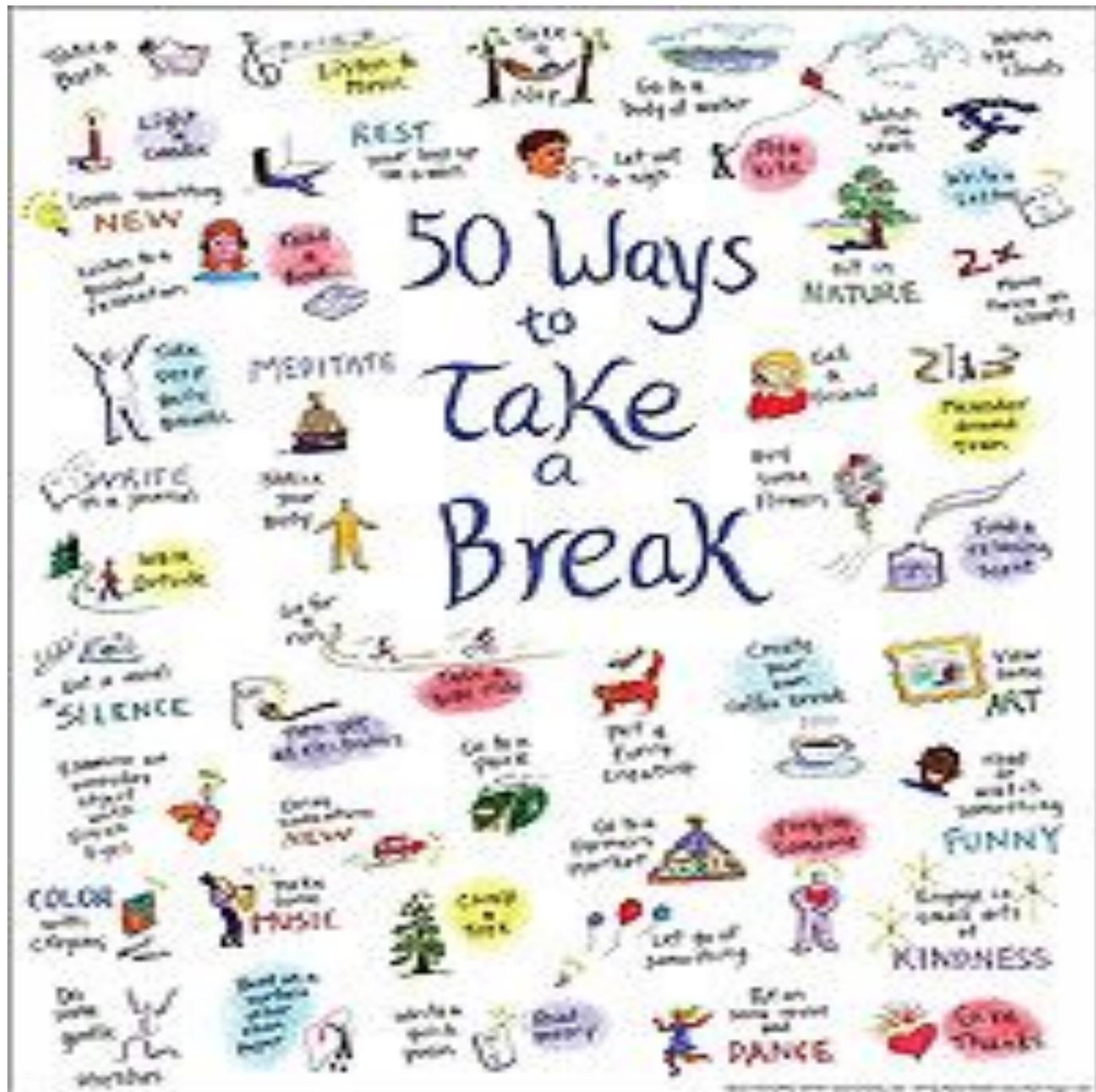
2d ago

This release contains new app-wide filters so you can quickly turn on or off entire sections of our library.

[more](#)

### Preview





# 99 Coping Skills

1. Exercise (running, walking, etc.)
2. Put on fake tattoos
3. Write (poetry, stories, journal)
4. Scribble/doodle on paper
5. Be with other people
6. Watch a favorite TV show
7. Post on web boards and answer others' posts
8. Go see a movie
9. Do a word-search or crossword
10. Do schoolwork
11. Play a musical instrument
12. Paint your nails, do your make-up or hair
13. Sing
14. Study the sky
15. Punch a punching bag
16. Cover yourself with Band-Aids where you want to cut
17. Let yourself cry
18. Take a nap (only if you are tired)
19. Take a hot shower or relaxing bath
20. Play with a pet
21. Go shopping
22. Clean something
23. Knit or sew
24. Read a good book
25. Listen to music
26. Try some aromatherapy (candle, lotion, room spray)
27. Meditate
28. Go somewhere very public
29. Bake cookies
30. Alphabetize your CDs/DVDs/Books
31. Paint or draw
32. Rip paper into itty bitty pieces
33. Shoot hoops, kick a ball
34. Write a letter or send an email
35. Plan your dream room (colors/furniture)
36. Hug a pillow or stuffed animal
37. Hyper-focus on something like a rock, hand, etc.
38. Dance
39. Make hot chocolate, a milkshake or a smoothie
40. Play with modeling clay or Play-Doh
41. Build a pillow fort
42. Go for a nice long drive
43. Complete something you've been putting off
44. Draw on yourself with a marker
45. Take up a new hobby
46. Look up recipes, cook a meal
47. Look at pretty things like flowers or art
48. Create or build something
49. Pray
50. Make a list of blessings in your life
51. Read the Bible
52. Go to a friend's house
53. Jump on a trampoline
54. Watch an old happy movie
55. Contact a hotline/your therapist  
If you want, you can call us  
1-800-448-3000
56. Talk to someone close to you
57. Ride a bicycle
58. Feed the ducks, birds or squirrels
59. Color
60. Memorize a poem, play or song
61. Stretch
62. Search for ridiculous things on the internet
63. "Shop" on-line (without buying anything)
64. Color-coordinate your wardrobe
65. Watch fish
66. Make a CD/play-list of your favorite songs
67. Play the "15 Minute Game" (Avoid something for 15 minutes, when time is up start again)
68. Plan your wedding/prom/other event
69. Plant some seeds
70. Hunt for your perfect home or car on-line
71. Try to make as many words out of your full name as possible
72. Sort through/edit your pictures
73. Play with a balloon
74. Give yourself a facial
75. Play with a favorite childhood toy
76. Start collecting something
77. Play a video/computer game
78. Clean up trash at your local park
79. Look at [yourlifeyourvoice.org](http://yourlifeyourvoice.org)
80. Text or call an old friend
81. Write yourself an "I love you because..." letter
82. Look up new words and use them
83. Rearrange furniture
84. Write a letter to someone that you may never send
85. Smile at five people
86. Play with your little brother/sister/niece/nephew
87. Go for a walk (with or without a friend)
88. Put a puzzle together
89. Clean your room/closet
90. Try to do handstands, cartwheels or backbends
91. Yoga
92. Teach your pet a new trick
93. Learn a new language
94. Move EVERYTHING in your room to a new spot
95. Get together with friends to play frisbee, soccer or basketball
96. Hug a friend or family member
97. Search on-line for new songs/artists
98. Make a list of goals for the week/month/year/5 years
99. Perform a random act of kindness

*YOUR Life YOUR Voice*  
[www.yourlifeyourvoice.org](http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org)

BOYS TOWN

# 101 Stress Relievers

Need a quick—or not so quick—stress-break? Fresh out of ideas? Try one of these:

*Stop and look out the window.*

Work a crossword puzzle.

ANGRY? TALK TO A FRIEND ABOUT IT.

Apologize for a mistake. **Meditate.** Stand up and stretch.

**Ask for help.**

Call up an old friend. **Run.**

*Change coffee break to exercise break.*

 Build a model ship.

**TELL** someone "I love you." a joke. **STOP AND YAWN.**

**DANCE.**

Close your eyes. What do you see?

**Count to ten—or 1000—before exploding.** Count your blessings—make a list.

**CLIMB A MOUNTAIN.**

 Cut back on caffeine.

**WATCH A REALLY GOOD MOVIE.**

Plan ahead.

**EAT AN ORANGE SLOWLY, SEGMENT BY SEGMENT.**

Eat a good breakfast.

**DAYDREAM** spend your coffee break at the beach.

**Do one thing at a time.**

Fly a kite.

Get a massage. Get a pet.

**LEARN TO SAY NO.**

**Find someone you're grateful to and thank them.**

**GO FISHING.**

 Get a good night's sleep.

**GO**

for a brisk walk. swimming. to work a different way.

Hug a tree.

Hug someone you love.

**LOOK**

Leave the car at home and take the bus.

Lie in a hammock.

**LIFT WEIGHTS.**

Listen to the birds.

at the big picture. closely at a flower, leaf, blade of grass or tree trunk. off into the distance.

Read a good book.

**MAKE LOVE.** Make a list. Then follow it.

WASH THE CAR. Plant a flower.

Ride your bike to work.

Smell a rose.

**PUT**

Play a round of golf.

- Take a child to the playground.
- Take a deep breath and let it all out.
- Take a leisurely stroll.
- Take a long bath.
- Take a nap.
- Take an herb tea break.
- Take one day at a time.
- Take the back roads.
- Take the stairs.
- Take time for the sunset—or sunrise.
- Take up knitting.

**Massage your temples.**

Quit smoking.

Write a poem.

Write a letter to the editor.

Roll your shoulders up and around in a circular motion.

Sit by a fountain or stream. Close your eyes and hear the water.

Practice Yoga.

Work out at the gym.

Do a good deed.

**WEAR EARPLUGS WHEN IT'S NOISY.**

TALK TO YOURSELF: "I CAN DO A GREAT JOB." "I CAN STAY CALM UNDER PRESSURE."

Paint a peaceful scene—in your imagination.

**Make time for play.**

Spend an evening without TV.

**Write...** down your fears. down your dreams. your congressman.

**PRACTICE LAUGHING OUT LOUD.**

Watch a cloud for five minutes. Watch an ant or other insect for five minutes.

Sit by a fire. Turn cocktail hour into exercise hour.

Walk barefoot in the grass.

CLASP YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD AND STRETCH YOUR SHOULDERS.