



Self-Management

Coping is Cool!

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

We all have days where we feel like the world is out to get us, like anything that can go wrong will go wrong! While our initial instinct might be to go home, turn on Netflix and forget about our whole day, it's imperative to have healthy coping skills for when these "no good, terrible awful, very bad" days rear their ugly heads again!

So, how do we know what coping skills are healthy and which ones are just making our problems worse? We can assess our different coping strategies by using some of these questions to see if they are helpful or harmful overall.

1. How does this strategy make you feel when you finish it?
2. Can you engage in this strategy in various settings?
3. Will this strategy help you cope in the future?
4. Does this strategy harm yourself or others?
5. Does this strategy help you accomplish your goal or the task at hand?

This strategy reinforces the skills taught in the high school student-directed strategy *How to Cope*.

Key Takeaways:

- Students will recognize moments that may trigger an emotional response for them.
- Students will understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies.
- Students will recognize appropriate times to use healthy coping skills.

Duration + Materials:

- 25 minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Coping Skills-** Skills that help to tolerate, minimize, or deal with stressful situations.
- **Assess-** Evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, or quality of.



Activity:

- Teachers will use pre-teaching materials to introduce healthy and unhealthy coping skills.
- Teachers will present the following coping skills to the group and use the questions above to work through whether they are healthy or not. If the group deems that the coping skill is unhealthy, work together to replace it with a healthy skill.
 - You are overwhelmed with the amount of studying you have to do for finals. To help you relax and clear your head you decide to go for a run. When you get home, you feel ready to study again.
 - You are fighting with your friends. Instead of talking with them about how you are feeling you decide to make pointed social media videos and hope that they reach out to you.
 - You are upset with your teacher for giving you a poor grade on a paper that you worked extremely hard on. Instead of talking about it, you pick a fight with your brother when you get home from school and take it out on him.
 - You are feeling extremely overwhelmed with your college applications. You have been working on them every night for a week, so you decide that Friday night you are going to see a movie with your friends to help you relax. You wake up Saturday morning feeling refocused and make a check list to help you stay on track.
- Use the pre-teaching questions to guide the students through each of these scenarios.
- If the students decide that one of the coping skills is unhealthy use the discussion questions below to brainstorm a healthy replacement.
- Work together with students to create a list of healthy coping skills that they can pull from when they are feeling overwhelmed.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you think this coping technique impacted another person negatively? How?
- How did this coping technique negatively impact the person using it?
- What do you think you would do differently in this situation?
- Have you ever engaged in an unhealthy coping technique?
- What do you think would be a better coping technique for this problem?

Supplemental Materials:

Healthy Coping Skill	Unhealthy Coping Skill
Leaves you feeling rejuvenated and ready to tackle the problem at hand	Leaves you feeling more tired and unmotivated
Helps you with a difficult task or to work through a hard problem	Leads you to avoid the problem entirely
Does not hurt anyone	May hurt yourself or others
Leaves you more prepared for future problems	Leads to you avoiding future problems

Reinforcement Activities:

- Provide praise for students and reinforce situations where you see students utilizing healthy coping skills.
- Model healthy coping skills for the class when things do not go as planned during a lesson, activity, or other situation.