



Coping Skills Toolbox: go-to's when dealing with anxiety and depression

Coping skills are techniques used to deal with stress and anxiety. These can be positive or negative in nature. The ability to contrive positive, good coping skills and begin implementing them into your daily life takes effort and practice. There are countless lists you can obtain searching online or coming up with ones that work best for you. It is a process. Looking over ideas and lists of positive techniques is a great start; thinking about activities or objects that are calming can lend to best practices as well as asking a friend or family member.

Once you have a handful of skills that help during stressful times you are on your way to coping in a healthy manner. This is where making a coping skills toolbox can be extremely helpful. Breaking those skills down into categories can help give options when you find yourself in varying situations. For example, you may not be able to use the same coping skill in the privacy of your own home that you would need in a crowded party or sitting at a desk in school or work. By creating your own coping skills toolbox, you have access to the most useful techniques for all kinds of situations. This helps you not to resort to negative coping skills out of habit.

Beginning a Coping Skills Toolbox:

Break your toolbox down into categories: Relocate, Relax, Reframe, Re-center, Redirect.

Examples for each category:

Relocate: a list or picture of places that are calming—a favorite nature preserve, your bedroom, a tree down the street, Bora Bora.

Relax: a list of grounding techniques ex. 5 senses), stress ball, fidget toy, worry stones, massage roller, aromatherapy.

Reframe: reframing negative thoughts by providing a journal to adjust fixed mindsets and write out emotions.

Re-center: Meditation cd's, soothing music, cards with yoga poses, mini Zen garden.

Redirect: Puzzles, books, colored pencils and coloring book or sketchpad.

Build your Toolbox:

Use your five senses.

1. Something to touch, ex. stress ball, silly putty
2. Something to hear, ex. Music, meditation guides on your smart phone
3. Something to see, ex. A favorite object, happy pictures
4. Something to taste, ex. Mints, tea, gum
5. Something to smell, ex. Aromatherapy, brewing coffee

Distraction.

Taking your mind off the problem for a while. Examples: Working out, doing puzzles, books, artwork, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, positive websites, music, movies, etc.

Opposite Action. Doing something the opposite of your impulse that’s consistent with a more positive emotion.

1. Affirmations and Inspirations, ex. Looking at or drawing motivational statements or images)
2. Something funny or cheering, ex. Funny movies/TV/books)

Emotional Awareness. Tools for identifying and expressing your feelings

Ex. A list or chart of emotions, a journal, drawing/art supplies

FEELINGS WORD GUIDE							
SAD	HAPPY	HURT	HELPED	INSECURE	CONFIDENT	TIRED	ENERGIZED
<i>Depressed</i>	<i>Hopeful</i>	<i>Abused</i>	<i>Cherished</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>	<i>Determined</i>
<i>Lonely</i>	<i>Supported</i>	<i>Forgotten</i>	<i>Befriended</i>	<i>Hopeless</i>	<i>Brave</i>	<i>Bored</i>	<i>Inspired</i>
<i>Disgusted</i>	<i>Charmed</i>	<i>Ignored</i>	<i>Appreciated</i>	<i>Doubtful</i>	<i>Certain</i>	<i>Drained</i>	<i>Creative</i>
<i>Angry</i>	<i>Grateful</i>	<i>Judged</i>	<i>Understood</i>	<i>Scared</i>	<i>Assured</i>	<i>Sick</i>	<i>Healthy</i>
<i>Frustrated</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>Offended</i>	<i>Commended</i>	<i>Anxious</i>	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Exhausted</i>	<i>Renewed</i>
<i>Annoyed</i>	<i>Amused</i>	<i>Victimized</i>	<i>Empowered</i>	<i>Defeated</i>	<i>Successful</i>	<i>Dull</i>	<i>Vibrant</i>
<i>Discouraged</i>	<i>Optimistic</i>	<i>Rejected</i>	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>Worthless</i>	<i>Valuable</i>	<i>Weary</i>	<i>Alert</i>
<i>Upset</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Cursed</i>	<i>Blessed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Forgiven</i>	<i>Paralyzed</i>	<i>Enlivened</i>
<i>Despairing</i>	<i>Joyful</i>	<i>Destroyed</i>	<i>Healed</i>	<i>Ugly</i>	<i>Beautiful</i>	<i>Powerless</i>	<i>Strengthened</i>
<i>Uninterested</i>	<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Hated</i>	<i>Loved</i>	<i>Pressured</i>	<i>At ease</i>	<i>Dejected</i>	<i>Motivated</i>
<i>Disappointed</i>	<i>Thrilled</i>	<i>Despised</i>	<i>Esteemed</i>	<i>Forced</i>	<i>Encouraged</i>	<i>Listless</i>	<i>Focused</i>
<i>Hateful</i>	<i>Loving</i>	<i>Mistreated</i>	<i>Taken care of</i>	<i>Stressed</i>	<i>Peaceful</i>	<i>Burned out</i>	<i>Rejuvenated</i>
<i>Bitter</i>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Crushed</i>	<i>Reassured</i>	<i>Nervous</i>	<i>Relaxed</i>	<i>Fatigued</i>	<i>Invigorated</i>
<i>Sorrowful</i>	<i>Celebratory</i>	<i>Injured</i>	<i>Made whole</i>	<i>Worried</i>	<i>Secure</i>	<i>Blah</i>	<i>Animated</i>
<i>Mournful</i>	<i>Overjoyed</i>	<i>Tortured</i>	<i>Saved</i>	<i>Embarrassed</i>	<i>Comforted</i>	<i>Stale</i>	<i>Refreshed</i>

Mindfulness. Tools for centering and grounding yourself in the present moment

Ex. Meditation or relaxation recordings, grounding objects (stone, paperweight, sand), yoga mat, deep breathing.

Crisis Plan. Contact info of supports and resources, for when coping skills aren’t enough.

Family/friends, therapist, psychiatrist, hotline, 911