

How Do I Cope LE 25

Self-Management Skills Module

Grade Level Range: Middle School - Adult

To Teachers:

If you have not already done so, please review the [Introduction to Teaching Self-Management](#) module for suggestions on teaching SES Skills, processing learning experiences, and applying skills in real-life situations. See the [Assessment & Grading Module](#) for tips and examples of assessing, evaluating, and grading SES learning experiences.

Managing and coping with unpleasant feelings and personal problems requires that we first be aware of the unhealthy and healthy ways we currently cope. Once we know this, we can better eliminate unhealthy coping methods and practice healthier ways of managing our feelings and personal problems. The purpose of this learning experience is to facilitate an awareness of unhealthy and healthy ways of coping with feelings and personal problems and to facilitate student awareness of the unhealthy and healthy coping mechanisms they currently use. As a follow-up activity, students can set a goal to eliminate an unhealthy way of coping and/or begin practicing a healthy way to cope with feelings and/or personal problems.

Procedure/Directions For How Do I Cope:

The following questions use the Focusing process: [Give the following directions](#).

1. Take out a blank piece of paper. Please do not put your name or heading on it; it will not be collected.
2. List all the things bothering you now that keep you from feeling wonderful. Let the answers come from within the place where you feel; try not to answer with your head. Ask yourself: "What are all the things keeping me from feeling wonderful right now?" If you do not want to write everything, make a mental list. (Wait 2 minutes)
3. Include on your list all personal and relationship problems you are experiencing. (Wait 1 minute).
4. Now include on your list all the things you are not identifying and do not want to think about. Ask yourself: "What have I left out?" "What don't I want to think about?" (Wait a minute)
5. Ask yourself, "What personal problem is bothering me the most right now?" (Wait 30 seconds.)
6. Put a check on your written or mental list next to the personal problem that is bothering you the most. (Wait 30 seconds).
7. Become aware of how you are dealing with this personal problem. Ask yourself: "How am I dealing with this personal problem?" (Wait 30 seconds).

8. Now, ask yourself, is this how I typically deal with personal problems? (Wait 30 seconds).
9. If this is not how I typically deal with personal problems, ask yourself: "How do I usually deal with personal issues? Let the answer come from within. (Wait 60 seconds).
10. Now ask yourself, " What relationship problem is bothering me the most right now?" (Wait 30 seconds.)
11. Put a check on your written or mental list next to the relationship problem that is bothering you most. (Wait 30 seconds).
12. Become aware of how you are dealing with this relationship problem. Ask yourself: "How am I dealing with this relationship problem?" (Wait 30 seconds).
13. Now, ask yourself, is this how I typically deal with relationship problems? (Wait 30 seconds). If this is not how I typically deal with relationship problems, ask yourself: "How do I usually deal with relationship problems? Let the answer come from within. (Wait 60 seconds).
14. Based on your response to these questions, you will now take the following inventory to identify how you typically cope with and manage your feelings and personal and relationship problems.
15. Distribute copies of How Do I Cope. Read each question slowly aloud, then give them time to think about their response before they record their answers. Say to them: "Let the answers come from within the place where you feel; try not to answer with your head."

Processing the Learning Experience:

1. Although not necessary, you may choose to have students calculate their scores.
2. Ask volunteers to share one of the healthy coping styles they currently use to cope with feelings and/or personal problems more effectively. Ask them to share a situation, how and why they felt this way, what they did or said, and what happened.
3. Ask volunteers to share one of the unhealthy coping styles they would be better off eliminating to cope with and manage their feelings and/or personal problems more effectively. Ask them to share a situation, how and why they felt this way, what they did or said, and what happened.
4. Next, ask volunteers to share one of the healthy coping styles they would be better off starting or using more often to cope with and manage feelings and/or personal problems more effectively.
5. When possible, summarize, or have them summarize, any similarities in the situations/relationships they are in when they cope in healthy and unhealthy ways.

Follow-Up Learning Experiences: Applying Relationship Skills In Real Life Situations

It is not enough to have students only use skills in class. They must be given opportunities to apply skills in real life outside of class. Using skills in real-life situations, processing the results, and modifying their response is necessary and must be continuous and ongoing.

Follow-Up Learning Experiences For How Do I Cope

Students develop a goal to cope in healthier ways using the My Goals Log LE and the My Goals Log (Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module). Using the My Goals Log allows students to change their behavior and develop goals that do not require a great deal of analysis or the exploration of alternatives and choices. The My Goals Log can be used to have students develop goals and evaluate their success at the midpoint and again at the end of the project.

Have students develop and implement the Coping in Healthier Ways Project in the Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module. The purpose of this project is to facilitate the development of competency in the ability to effectively cope with and manage their feelings in real-life situations. It is a more extensive project than the My Goals LE. It requires students to monitor their progress over time using self-monitoring charts and doing self-assessments of their effort, their progress, and/or the extent to which they completed the project.

If they have not already done so, have students complete the Acting on My Feelings in Healthier Ways LE (Self-Management Skills Module).

How Do I Cope With My Feelings and Personal & Relationship Problems

Unhealthy Ways to Cope with Feelings and Personal & Relationship Problems

Read the questions below and place a check (✓) on the number that best describes you. A “1” means you frequently cope with feelings and problems in this way, a “3” means you sometimes cope in this way, and a “5” means you never cope in this way.

1. The Extent to Which I Deny My Feelings and Personal Problems: To what extent do I deny my feelings and personal problems?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

2. The Extent to Which I Belittle, Minimize, or Downplay the Feeling or Problem (I try to convince myself the feeling or problem is too small to worry about): To what extent do I belittle the feeling or problem (I try to convince myself it is too small to worry about)?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

3. The Extent to Which I Face Down the Feeling or Problem (I tell myself not to let it get to me): To what extent do I face down the feeling or problem (tell myself not to let it get to me)?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

4. The Extent to Which I Lecture Myself About Why I Shouldn't Feel This Way or Have This Problem or That This Is No Big Deal: To what extent do I lecture myself about why I shouldn't feel this way or have this problem or that this is no big deal?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

5. The Extent to Which I Drown in the Feeling or Problem (I Sink Deeper and Deeper into the Discomfort, Hoping That it Will Make Me Feel Better): To what extent do I drown in the feeling or problem (I sink deeper and deeper into the discomfort hoping that it will make me feel better)?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

6. The Extent to Which My Feelings and Personal Problems Get the Best of Me: To what extent do my feelings and personal problems affect my actions in ways that are not good for me and/or others?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

7. The Extent to Which I Display Aggressive Behaviors (such as yelling, screaming, hitting, or other violent behaviors) When I Am Angry/Frustrated: To what extent do I express my feelings aggressively?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

8. The Extent to Which I Destroy Things When Angry/Frustrated: To what extent do I destroy things when angry or frustrated?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

9. The Extent to Which I Avoid Talking to People Who Trigger My Unpleasant Feelings: To what extent do I avoid talking with people who trigger my unpleasant feelings?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

10. The Extent to Which I Withdraw/Pull Away from Other People When I Have Unpleasant Feelings or Personal Problems: To what extent do I withdraw/pull away from people when I have unpleasant feelings or personal problems, thus rejecting a good source of help and encouragement when I need it the most?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

11. The Extent to Which I Blame How I Feel On Others: To what extent do I blame my feelings on others (say things like “he made me angry” or “she is irritating”)?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

Answer the following question to yourself. You do not need to record your answer.

12. The Extent to Which I Use Tobacco, Alcohol, Marijuana, and/or Other Drugs to Cope. To what extent do I use tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and/or other drugs to squash unpleasant feelings, to avoid feelings of inadequacy, to avoid personal or relationship problems, and/or because I feel depressed?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Frequently Sometimes Never

Healthy Ways To Cope with Feelings and Personal & Relationship Problems

Read the questions below and place a check (✓) on the number that best describes you. A “1” means you never cope with feelings and problems in this way, a “3” means you sometimes cope in this way, and a “5” means you frequently cope in this way. **Please note: the codes are the opposite of those for the unhealthy ways to cope.**

13. The Extent to Which I Am Aware of How I Feel & My Personal and Relationship Problems: To what extent am I aware of my feelings and personal and/or relationship problems?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

14. The Extent to Which I Am Aware of Why I Feel the Way I Do: To what extent am I aware of why I am feeling a particular way?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

15. The Extent to Which I Accept My Feelings and Personal Problems: To what extent do I accept my feelings and accept that I have a personal or relationship problem?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

16. The Extent to Which I Am Aware of How My Feelings Affect My Actions: To what extent am I aware of how my feelings affect my actions?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

17. The Extent to Which I Talk With Someone About My Feelings and/or Personal and Relationship Problems: To what extent do I talk with someone about my feelings and/or personal and relationship problems?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

18. The Extent to Which I Let the Feelings Out In Healthy Ways: To what extent do I do something with my feelings in healthy ways, such as write about them, get active (go for a walk, run, or some other physical activity), meditate, listen to relaxing music, visualize a peaceful, happy place, and/or practice positive self-talk?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequent

19. The Extent to Which I Talk to the Person (in a constructive way) Who Triggers the Feeling: To what extent do I talk with the person who triggers the feelings in a way to effectively resolve the misunderstanding, impasse, or conflict in the relationship?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

20. The Extent to Which I Solve the Problem: To what extent do I take effective action to change myself, my situation, my environment, and/or my relationships to solve the personal and/or relationship problem?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

21. Focusing: When I am Depressed or Have Felt Down for an Extended Period (more than several days), To what extent do I use the Focusing process to think about all the things that are bothering me, determine which one is bothering me the most at that time, decide precisely what it is about that situation that is bothering me, and stick with this process until I feel better about the problem because I now understand it and/or have come up with a way to change the situation?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

22. Reality Checking: If my unpleasant feelings are caused by my thinking/interpretations/assumptions instead of actual events, situations, environments, and/or relationships in the present, to what extent do I use the Reality Checking process to determine whether my thinking, interpretations, and/or assumptions are accurate, realistic, and/or rational?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

23. The Extent to Which I Get Help or Would Get Help: To what extent do I, or would I, get help from a trusted adult or professional if a feeling or problem seemed beyond my ability to solve by myself?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Never Sometimes Frequently

Calculate Your Total Score

Add your total points (for questions 1-11) and place below.

Unhealthy Ways to Cope with Feelings and Personal Problems Score _____

Add your total points (for questions 13-23) and place below.

Healthy Ways to Cope with Feelings and Personal Problems Score _____

Add up your number of points from both the Unhealthy and Healthy Ways to Cope.

How I Cope With Feelings & Personal Problems Score _____

Interpreting Your Results:

1. Your points for the unhealthy scale range from 11-55 (does not include # 12).
2. Your points for the healthy scale range from 11-55 points.
3. The total points range from 22-110 points.

The higher your score on the two scales and your total points, the more effectively you manage and cope with your feelings and personal problems. If you were perfectly healthy in coping with feelings and personal problems, your total score would be 110. If you were utterly unhealthy in the way you cope with feelings and personal problems, your score would be 22.

Using the information from the preceding pages, answer the following questions.

1. My Healthy Ways of Coping:

List your top 4 healthy ways of coping with feelings and personal problems you are currently using, starting with your highest scores. List what is outlined in bold. For example, if you scored a “5” on # 12, The Extent to Which I Am Aware of How I Feel, you would write: The Extent to Which I Am Aware of How I Feel (5), and it would be on the top of your list since it is 5. Put your scores in parentheses next to the way of coping.

2. My Unhealthy Ways of Coping:

List 4 unhealthy ways of coping with feelings and personal problems you are currently using, starting with your lowest scores. List what is outlined in bold. For example, if you scored a “1” on # 1, The Extent to Which I Deny My Feelings and Problems, you would write: The Extent to Which I Deny My Feelings and Problems (1), and it would be on the top of your list since it is a 1. Put your scores in parentheses next to the way of coping.

3. List at least 1 unhealthy coping style that I would be better off eliminating or reducing to cope more effectively with feelings and/or personal problems. Put your score in parentheses next to the way of coping.

4. List at least 1 healthy coping style I would be better off starting or using more often to cope with feelings and/or personal problems more effectively. Put your score in parentheses next to the way of coping.