



Coping Skills for the Caregiver

What are coping skills?

Coping skills are the way a person deals with and processes a stressful situation or emotional issue that comes their way. Coping skills aid a person in how to face the situation, take action, or solve a problem with efficiency.

Why do I need Coping Skills?

We all need ways to deal with life when things do not go our way, or we are under stress. Individuals taking care of family or friends with food allergies face even more stressors. How do you react in stressful situations or after the fact? What do you do after your child has another reaction, when your child can't go to an event because of their food allergy, or when your child gets bullied at school? We all need coping skills to deal with these hard situations in a way that will allow us to process them and move on. You could cope in a healthy way, such as identifying the positive aspects of a situation or taking action to improve the situation, or you could engage in a negative coping strategy, such as over-drinking. And remember, the way you cope with hard issues will be how your children learn to cope!

Healthy Coping Strategies:

- Label your feelings, try to figure out what you are REALLY feeling!
- Breathing exercises or meditations (try this 30 second simple "[breathe bubble](#)" exercise to get an idea)
- Developing a self-care routine
- Walking or participating in other physical activities
- Talking to supportive friends or being part of a support group
- Know when to ask for help
- Engage in problem-solving
- Create a pro and con list
- Pray
- Therapy
- Do an activity (e.g. take a bath, read or do a puzzle)
- Count to 10

Unhealthy Coping Strategies:

- Over-drinking
- Gambling
- Abusing drugs
- Verbal abuse
- Smashing things
- Avoidance/minimizing the situation

Coping skills are needed when we face circumstances that cause us to be angry, stressed, overwhelmed, or sad. The good news is we can develop our coping skills at any time. So, the next time a stressful situation occurs, think first how you could return to an internal state of order. When you are seeking that restoring of balance, try out a healthy coping skill, until you find one that helps you best reduce your stress when you are going through life's hardest moments.