**Positive Coping Mechanisms**

Coping mechanisms are any conscious or nonconscious adjustment or adaptation someone takes to decrease psychological stress (e.g., tension and anxiety) in any type of stressful situation.

*Everyone responds differently - certain positive coping mechanisms will work better than others & their effectiveness may change over time. Try different ones to see which work best for you.*

**Using Humor** - Pointing out any amusing aspects of the problem, or "positive reframing," can help deal with small failures and stressors.

**Seeking Support** - Asking for help, or finding emotional support from trusted people can be an effective way of maintaining emotional health during a stressful period.

**Physical Recreation** - Regular exercise is a good way to handle situational stress. Aerobic and weight-training are both helpful exercise forms.

**Problem-Solving** - Especially useful at work, this instrumental coping mechanism aims to locate the source of the problem and find appropriate solutions.

**Adjusting Expectations** - Anticipating various outcomes to scenarios in life may assist in preparing for stress associated with any change or event.

**Relaxation** - Engaging in relaxing activities, or practicing calming techniques, can help manage stress and improve overall coping. Yoga, meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation are especially helpful.

Learn more at: seattleanxiety.com/coping-mechanisms
Maladaptive Coping Mechanisms

Not all coping mechanisms are positive. Maladaptive (negative) coping mechanisms may feel good in the short-term, but they are only temporary distractions. Over time, these strategies can wear someone down and often make their stress worse.

- Denial
- Excessive Venting
- Avoiding Others
- Avoiding Trauma Reminders
- Risky/Dangerous Behavior
- Self-Blame
- Drug/Alcohol Use
- Staying on Guard
- Anger/Violence
- Working Too Much

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Self-Help Techniques

WHEN ENCOUNTERING SIGNIFICANT STRESS DUE TO POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE LIFE CHANGES, THERE ARE SEVERAL TYPES OF STRESS-REDUCING ACTIVITIES THAT PEOPLE CAN DO TO HELP COPE IN A HEALTHY MANNER.

- Getting enough, good quality, sleep.
- Eating a well-balanced diet.
- Exercising on a regular basis.
- Taking brief rest periods during the day to relax.
- Taking vacations away from home and work.
- Engaging in pleasurable or fun activities every day.
- Practicing relaxation exercises (yoga, prayer, meditation or progressive muscle relaxation.)
- Avoiding the use of caffeine and alcohol.

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