

Coping Skills for Anger, Anxiety, Depression and More...

1. **Hot to Cool Thoughts:** Identify the thought that leads you to feel or behave in an unhealthy way. Then change the thought to thoughts that will help you feel/ behave healthier. For example, "I hate my mom" can be changed to "I may not agree, but she just wants the best for me."
2. **Positive Self Talk:** Give yourself a pep talk. What would you say to your best friend in the same situation? Now say it to yourself. For example, "I'll be ok" or "I can get through this."
3. **Mantra:** Choose a word or phrase that you repeat in your head to help you feel better/ calmer. For example, "relax" or "stay calm."
4. **Thought Stopping:** Think of a stop light. Red means stop, so repeatedly tell yourself, "STOP!" Stop what you are thinking and doing. Yellow means slow down or caution, so slow down your thoughts and behaviors and decide on new, healthier thoughts and behaviors. Ask yourself what you could think and do that would be helpful. Green means go, so go with your new plan.
5. **Time Out:** First make a plan with your family when everything is calm. It should include a signal or word to tell the other person when you need a time out. Each person should choose an area or room within the house to go and relax. Make a time limit—no more than 20 minutes. Discuss what each person will do during this time to calm down. Finally, after the allotted time, everyone should meet in a common area of the house to discuss the issue calmly.
6. **Visualization:** Think of a calm, relaxing place. Now tell yourself a story about it. Make sure you include what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Some examples of your happy place are the beach, looking up at the starry sky, sailing on the open ocean, climbing to the top of a mountain. Another way to visualize is to think about yourself in a situation that you generally feel angry, anxious, depressed, etc., and imagine yourself using your coping skills and managing the situation well.
7. **Muscle Relaxation:** Start with your toes. Tense them up and hold for 15-20 seconds, then relax. Next tense up your calves and hold for 15-20 seconds, then relax. Continue to move up through each muscle group up to your head tensing, holding and relaxing the muscles. You might have to work your way down. Your muscles will feel tired and relaxed when you are done.
8. **Deep Breathing:** Breathe in slowly and rhythmically through your nose. Make sure you use your diaphragm. Fill your lungs from bottom to top. Then slowly breathe out through your mouth. Do this at least 10 times.
9. **Color Breathing:** Same as deep breathing, but now imagine breathing in a calming color that fills you up with relaxation, calmness, peace and tranquility. Then, breathe out a color that represents your stress, anger, anxiety, depression, etc., which is leaving and going away from your body.
10. **Respiratory Controlled Breathing:** Breathe in and out through your nose using your diaphragm. Count 1, 2, 3 as you breathe in, pause your breathing and say "relax" to yourself. Then count 1, 2, 3 as you breathe out, pause your breathing and say "relax" to yourself. Be sure to do this for several minutes, if possible.
11. **Scanning:** Start at the top of your head and mentally scan down your body looking for any tension, discomfort, etc. When you find some, stop and tell yourself to "relax" and deep breathe until the tension/discomfort is gone.
12. **Grounding:** Sit comfortably with your feet on the floor and your arms in your lap or on the arms of the chair—or lie down flat. Now, using one or more of your senses, describe what you see, hear, smell, taste, or feel. Focus on this until you feel calmer.