

Frontline Wellness Program – The Coping Club

Topic: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Coping

Material:

The Stress Bucket - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KYC5SsJjx8>

what's the difference?

Healthy coping skills involve facing and processing difficult emotions, seeking resolutions to problems, and actively working towards personal growth. Unhealthy coping skills tend to avoid or suppress underlying issues, providing temporary relief without addressing the root causes.

Costs/Benefits

Unhealthy coping strategies tend to feel good in the moment, but have long-term negative consequences. Healthy coping strategies may not provide instant gratification, but they lead to long-lasting positive outcomes.

Factors influencing our coping choices

our personality, qualities, and characteristics (optimism, hardiness, locus of control, and self-efficacy)
cultural norms
past experiences
way we were raised
lack of awareness of healthier alternatives
environment/ what we have access to

Unhealthy: Substance use

May seem to give you immediate comfort, a temporary escape, numbs pain or difficult emotions
If you experience stress/anxiety, alcohol can give you a very short-lived feeling of relaxation – but this quickly disappears.

If you rely on alcohol to cover your stress/anxiety, you may soon find yourself drinking more and more to relax.

If using alcohol for sleep - may help you fall sleep, but leads to poor quality of sleep, waking up in night

Substance use can impact various areas of our life (eg. finances, relationships, physical health, mental health)

Healthier Alternatives to Substance Use

Exercise: Staying physically active can boost both emotional and physical health and manage stress, therefore helping to control cravings

Problem-solving: By identifying a problem as it arises, a person can better learn how to handle it and not be overwhelmed by the issue

Art, journaling, or creative expression: Creative outlets can provide a way to express oneself in a healthy manner

Communication and support: Talk it out, and don't be afraid to ask for help when needed.

Unhealthy: Avoidance/Denial

Avoidance doesn't address root causes of stress, and tends to increase stress and anxiety when overused.

Denial: where you ignore, minimize, or outright deny having a problem

By refusing to deal with or even admit that there is something wrong, you are trying to prevent facing stress, conflict, threats, fears, and anxieties

Normalizing a problem to reassure yourself or others. Overusing humor to make light of a problem can be another unhealthy form of avoidance coping

Healthier Alternatives to Avoidance/Denial

Directly confronting the problem or stressor

Using resources, skills, and supports

Using a problem-solving approach

Focusing on controllable aspects of the issue

Finding ways to improve the situation

Boosting confidence and self-efficacy

Working through difficult emotions

Unhealthy: Negative Self Talk

Self-talk is important because it has a big impact on how you feel and what you do.

When we make a mistake, fail in some way, or have shortcomings, our inner critic starts to judge and criticize us.

“Should” statements dismiss, invalidate, or reject our current feelings and experiences. We may beat ourselves up for any imperfection, instead of having any understanding or patience

Healthier Alternatives to Negative Self Talk

Taming our inner critic

3 C's of CBT

Ask yourself: Is my thinking: Kind? Helpful? Accurate? True?

Self-compassion

Ask yourself: If my best friend was in this situation, what would I tell them??

Unhealthy: Isolation

Isolation is a lack of social relationships or emotional support.

Loneliness is a craving for social contact. It is often linked to feelings of sadness and emptiness.

Isolation can lead to feelings of low self-worth, feelings of disconnected, hopelessness

Healthier Alternatives to Isolation

Get creative (eg. Zoom, FaceTime, group chats, letter writing)

Consider time spent on social media

manage health anxiety

telephone and virtual counselling

Find ways to participate in your community (clubs, volunteering)

Choose the right living situation

Find an activity that you enjoy, restart an old hobby, or take a class to learn something new.

Build family relationships. think of ways to increase connections

Rolemodeling healthy coping for kids

Children pick up behavior patterns from adults, so one of the best ways to teach your kids good coping skills is to practice them yourself.

- narrate your behavior to your kids as you model (“Okay, that phone call made me feel anxious, so I’m going to do take 3 deep breaths and walk around the block to help calm myself down”).
Leading by example is also usually more effective than trying to tell kids what to do.
- Modeling good communication that includes “I statements” and naming emotions
Let your child see you express and deal with difficult emotions

Contact Us:

Interested in 1:1 counselling? Self-refer at
https://www.waypointcentre.ca/programs_and_services/frontline_wellness_program
To connect with group facilitators email frontlinewellness@waypointcentre.ca

Resources: