

# Coping Mechanisms: A Guide

This guide provides an overview of the many possible strategies that are available to help you handle stress, anxiety and manage painful or difficult emotions.

## Self Soothing

Is how we calm our bodies when we are overwhelmed by stress or difficult emotions.

To practice – take a deep breath and try to name:

- Five things you see around you
- Four things you can touch or feel
- Three things you hear
- Two things you can smell
- One thing you can taste



## Distraction

Is anything we can do to take our mind off the problem. This can be anything you enjoy. For example:

- Physical exercise
- Spending time with family or calling a friend
- Working on a hobby



## Emotional Awareness

Is when we release emotion by expressing how we feel. You can do this by:

- Journaling
- Creating an emotions chart
- Painting or drawing your feelings
- Crying – Seriously. Crying is a great way to release emotions!



## Opposite Action

Is acting in the opposite way to how our emotions are making us feel. This is definitely not easy, but it can be helpful in turning negative emotions into positive actions such as:

- Walking away from a situation when we are angry
- Apologizing or repairing the harm when we are feeling shame
- Reaching out to others when we are feeling sad
- Approaching the thing that is making us afraid and confronting our fears



## Have A Crisis Plan in Place

Sometimes things happen that are outside our our ability to cope. When this happens it's ok to ask for help:

- Talk to your friends or family
- Distress Line
  - 780-482-4357
- Kids Help Phone
  - 1-800-668-6868
- FCSS Support Line
  - 780-992-6281



## Mindfulness

Is a tool that can help ground you in the present moment, release stress and reduce anxiety:

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Deep breathing techniques

