



Strategies for Coping with Uncomfortable Emotions

As adults, it is imperative that we model constructive coping strategies when we experience uncomfortable emotions such as anger, frustration, disappointment, anxiety, or sadness. The following strategies are a few ways to manage our emotions—we recommend experimenting with these to find which strategies work best for you. Remember to be patient with yourself; new habits take time to build!

- Name and welcome the uncomfortable emotion—all emotions are okay and are a natural part of life.
- Take a quick walk. Exercise increases the production of your brain’s feel-good neurotransmitters, called endorphins.
- Practice mindfulness breathing or meditation, even if for one minute—phone apps like Headspace can be a great way to get into this habit.
- Take a water break.
- Before reacting, count to ten and back down to one.
- Assess what is in your control and what is beyond your control. Then, make a plan.
- Give yourself permission to step away from the stressor, even if you feel like you don’t have time. You will come back calmer and in a better state to handle the issue.
- Try aromatherapy! Lavender, sage, and jasmine are just a few scents that increase calm.
- Visualize your “happy place” and imagine yourself there.
- Journal about your emotions.
- Have a go-to mantra of positive self-talk, such as “I can do this,” “All will be okay,” or “I am enough.”
- Have a daily “me time” routine so that when stressors come up, you know you can look forward to this time.
- Think of, read, or watch something that makes you smile or laugh.
- Reach out to someone who is a good listener and whom you trust to validate your feelings. Ask them for advice, or simply ask them to listen.
- Try progressive muscle relaxation, a technique where you tense a muscle group, then release it, leaving you feeling more relaxed.
- Practice empathy and forgiveness—if someone is bothering you, try to understand what is leading them to act this way and to see that they are not out to get you.
- To be proactive, practice self-care, including getting enough sleep, exercising, and eating well.