The Coping Skills Toolbox

What exactly is a Coping Skills Toolbox?
It is a collection of your various favorite and healthy items that you can use when you are feeling anxious, panicky, or distressed.

It has sometimes been recommended that students create a coping skills toolbox for those times when they need something to help them get through an anxiety attack, panic attack, or any kind of distressed situation.

Because there are nearly an infinite number of ways to cope, it is not necessarily important whether you cope like everyone else. All that matters is that you find effective coping methods that will help you to build resilience and to thrive.

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# A Coping Skills Toolbox

## Let’s make a Coping Skills Toolbox!

### What Is It?
A Coping Skills Toolbox is a place for you to keep things that calm you down in periods of distress. If you have everything gathered in one place, it’s easier to remember to use your coping skills rather than using negative behaviors.

### Self-Soothing
(Comforting yourself through your five senses)
1. Something to touch. (Ex: stuffed animal, stress ball)
2. Something to hear. (Ex: music, meditation guides)
3. Something to see. (Ex: snow globe, happy pictures)
4. Something to taste. (Ex: mints, tea, sour candy)
5. Something to smell. (Ex: lotion, candles, perfume)

### Distraction
(Taking your mind off the problem for a while)

**Examples:**
- Puzzles, books, artwork, crafts, knitting, crocheting, sewing, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, positive websites, music, movies, etc.

### Opposite Action
(Doing something the opposite of your impulse that’s consistent with a more positive emotion)

1. Affirmations and Inspirations (Ex: looking at or drawing motivational statements or images)
2. Something funny or cheering (Ex: funny movies/TV/books)

### Emotional Awareness
(Tools for identifying and expressing your feelings)

**Examples:**
- A list or chart of emotions, a journal, writing supplies, drawing & art supplies

### Mindfulness
(Tools for centering and grounding yourself in the present moment)

**Examples:**
- Meditation or relaxation recordings, grounding objects (like a rock or paperweight), yoga mat, breathing exercises

### Crisis Plan
(Contact info of supports and resources when coping skills aren’t enough)

- Family/Friends
- Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Hotline
- Crisis Team/ER
- 911

### Put it all together!
Once you’ve gathered all of your items, put them together in a box or other container, decorate it to your heart’s content, and put it in a place where you’ll remember it. Then USE IT!!
50 Ways to Take a Break

- Take a Bath
- Listen to Music
- Take a Nap
- Go to a body of water
- Watch the clouds
- Light a candle
- REST your legs up on a wall
- Let out a sigh
- Fly a kite
- Write a letter
- Read a book
- REST your body
- Call a friend
- Sit in NATURE
- MEANDER around town
- Notice your Body
- Find a relaxing scent
- Take deep belly breaths
- Get a furry creature
- Buy some flowers
- Examine an everyday object with fresh eyes
- Go for a run
- Go to a park
- Go to a Farmer’s Market
- Create your own coffee break
- Turn off all electronics
- Drive somewhere NEW
- Go to a bike ride
- Create your own ART
- Eat a meal
- Write in a journal
- Walk outside
- View some ART
- Engage in small acts of KINDNESS
- Color with crayons
- Make some MUSIC
- Climb a tree
- Let go of something
- Paint on a surface other than paper
- Write a quick poem
- Read a poem
- Put on some music and DANCE
- Do some gentle stretches
- Give Thanks
- Eat a meal
- SILENCE
99 Coping Skills

1. Exercise (running, walking, etc.).
2. Put on fake tattoos.
3. Write (poetry, stories, journal).
4. Scribble/doodle on paper.
5. Be with other people.
6. Watch a favorite TV show.
7. Post on web boards, and answer others' posts.
8. Go see a movie.
9. Do a wordsearch or crossword.
10. Do schoolwork.
11. Play a musical instrument.
12. Paint your nails, do your make-up or hair.
13. Sing.
14. Study the sky.
15. Punch a punching bag.
16. Cover yourself with Band-Aids where you want to cut.
17. Let yourself cry.
18. Take a nap (only if you are tired).
19. Take a hot shower or relaxing bath.
20. Play with a pet.
22. Clean something.
23. Knit or sew.
25. Listen to music.
26. Try some aromatherapy (candle, lotion, room spray).
27. Meditate.
28. Go somewhere very public.
29. Bake cookies.
30. Alphabetize your CDs/DVDs/books.
31. Paint or draw.
32. Rip paper into itty-bitty pieces.
33. Shoot hoops, kick a ball.
34. Write a letter or send an email.
35. Plan your dream room (colors/furniture).
36. Hug a pillow or stuffed animal.
37. Hyperfocus on something like a rock, hand, etc.
38. Dance.
39. Make hot chocolate, milkshake or smoothie.
40. Play with modeling clay or Play-Dough.
41. Build a pillow fort.
42. Go for a nice, long drive.
43. Complete something you’ve been putting off.
44. Draw on yourself with a marker.
45. Take up a new hobby.
46. Look up recipes, cook a meal.
47. Look at pretty things, like flowers or art.
48. Create or build something.
49. Pray.
50. Make a list of blessings in your life.
51. Read the Bible.
52. Go to a friend's house.
53. Jump on a trampoline.
54. Watch an old, happy movie.
55. Contact a hotline/your therapist.
56. Talk to someone close to you.
57. Ride a bicycle.
58. Feed the ducks, birds, or squirrels.
59. Color with Crayons.
60. Memorize a poem, play, or song.
61. Stretch.
63. “Shop” on-line (without buying anything).
64. Color-coordinate your wardrobe.
65. Watch fish.
66. Make a CD/playlist of your favorite songs.
67. Play the “15 minute game.” (Avoid something for 15 minutes, when time is up start again.)
68. Plan your wedding/prom/other event.
69. Plant some seeds.
70. Hunt for your perfect home or car on-line.
71. Try to make as many words out of your full name as possible.
72. Sort through your photographs.
73. Play with a balloon.
74. Give yourself a facial.
75. Find yourself some toys and play.
76. Start collecting something.
77. Play video/computer games.
78. Clean up trash at your local park.
79. Perform a random act of kindness for someone.
80. Text or call an old friend.
81. Write yourself an “I love you because…” letter.
82. Look up new words and use them.
83. Rearrange furniture.
84. Write a letter to someone that you may never send.
85. Smile at least five people.
86. Play with little kids.
87. Go for a walk (with or without a friend).
88. Put a puzzle together.
89. Clean your room/closet.
90. Try to do handstands, cartwheels, or backbends.
91. Yoga.
92. Teach your pet a new trick.
93. Learn a new language.
94. Move EVERYTHING in your room to a new spot.
95. Get together with friends and play Frisbee, soccer or basketball.
96. Hug a friend or family member.
97. Search on-line for new songs/artists.
98. Make a list of goals for the week/month/year/5 years.
99. Face paint.

www.yourlifeyourvoice.org