

WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS

COPING STYLES

- ◉ Identify three most difficult situations that you have encountered in the last three months. Write them down on a piece of paper. After recording the stressful situations, also write down the way you coped with each of the stressful event.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS YOU ADOPTED IN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION?

- ◉ I stood my ground. I made the person(s) concerned change his/her/their mind. Argued the other person out.
- ◉ Controlled my emotions. Thought rationally. Identified the source of the problem and followed a specific action plan to solve it. Planned several alternative approaches to the solution of the problem.
- ◉ Talked to someone close to me to release my emotions. Sought the help of someone such as a friend, brother, sister, teacher, aunt or neighbour for advice or requested for direct help such as talking to the concerned person(s), helping me with loan etc.
- ◉ Blamed myself for the situation. Thought that I brought it on to myself

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS YOU ADOPTED IN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION?

- ◉ Did not give much thought to the problem. I brushed it aside and carried on as if nothing happened. Waited for the problem to get resolved on its own.
- ◉ Felt hurt/disturbed/annoyed, but never expressed my feelings. I felt that it is, after all, my problem and only I must handle it.
- ◉ Handled myself by taking to heavy smoking/drinking. Spent more time sleeping or eating.
- ◉ Thought, whatever happened was for my own good. It's all God's plan for my own benefit.
- ◉ Put the whole burden on God and prayed. Attended religious places. Indulged in rituals like fasting, offerings in places of worship etc.

- There are different methods of classifying coping.
- **Lazarus and Folkman** (1984) have classified coping on the basis of the approach taken up by the individual.
- According to them, coping is classified into **eight types**.

COPING STYLES

- ◉ Confrontive coping
- ◉ Planful problem solving
- ◉ Seeking social support
- ◉ Accepting responsibility
- ◉ Positive reappraisal
- ◉ Distancing
- ◉ Self-Control
- ◉ Escape-Avoidance
- ◉ Shifting the burden on supernatural element.

Confrontive coping

- ❖ Confrontive coping can be best explained as **‘taking the bull by horns’**.
- ❖ It can be identified when one explains his/her behaviour in the following ways:
 - ‘I stood my ground’,**
 - ‘I discussed/ argued till the other person changed his/her mind’**
 - ‘I persisted until the other person conceded to my point’.**



Planful problem solving



- ◉ Planful problem solving is marked by objectivity.
- ◉ It is conspicuous by an absence of emotions, and a significant pursuit of a solution in the most logical way.
- ◉ This is a coping technique where the person encountering stress chalks out a definite plan of action and follows it.
- ◉ Planful problem solving refers to cognitive appraisal involving objective assessment and logical thinking.

- ◉ The behavior of the person following this coping suggests the following tone:

‘I know what has gone wrong. I also know what has to be done to rectify it. I have more than one way of handling it. If one approach fails, I have a contingency plan.’



Seeking social support

- ◉ Coping through seeking social support refers to a situation explained by expressions and statements like,
 - ‘I sought help’,
 - ‘I cried on his shoulders’,
 - ‘I shared my feelings with him and received good moral support’

Copes with a stress situation by tapping resources from one's interpersonal relationship is called coping through seeking social support.



- A stress situation typically creates ripples at two levels—a concrete external problem out there and the subsequent emotional disturbance within.
- So coping through seeking social support can be a **request for a concrete support** in solving the problem, or **finding an emotional anchorage** in others to absorb the shock or **share and lighten one's feelings**.
- Both are considered important functions in reducing the stress and restoring equilibrium. This depends upon one's social support network.

- Coping through seeking social support has one of the three possible consequences—

positive support



failure to receive
positive support

negative support

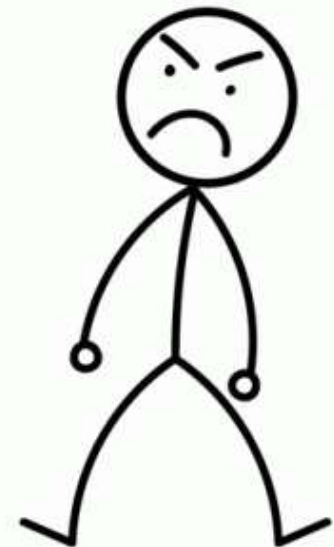


Failure to receive positive support is any time tolerable than receiving negative support. This is because negative support, instead of reducing the stress level, contributes to the existing stress level.



Accepting responsibility

- ◎ Coping through accepting responsibility refers to the kind of behaviour where one blames himself/herself for the state of affairs. **Self-criticism**, **self-sermonising**, and **lecturing** to oneself are examples of this type of coping.



Positive reappraisal

- ◉ Coping through positive reappraisal evolves as an aftermath stage in the process of coping, along the stress and coping spiral. This is a situation where an individual thinks,

‘Well, it is all for my own good’,

‘God’s wish was done’,

‘I never knew it would bring-in such positive results’.

‘Why did I not accept it at the very beginning?’

‘why didn’t I think of it earlier?’



Distancing

- ◉ Distancing refers to that strategy of coping where one tries to make light of the situation. Some of the typical examples are—**refusing to get too serious about it; carrying-on as if nothing had happened; or refusing to think too much about it.**
- ◉ Such reactions automatically lead to a refusal or avoidance of talking about it. This strategy is adopted when the stakes involved are already lost and not retrievable.



- For example, one of the reactions after an estranged marriage resulting in divorce may be, '**Well, I would rather not talk about it**';
- Or, one may even say playfully, '**Oh! That was just a child's play and we are now grown ups**'.
- In case of an interpersonal conflict coping through Distancing may have a better pay-off because it would be easy to rebuild the relationship with the person with whom one had a conflict.
- However, if one resorts to Distancing in situations where action is called for to resolve a concrete problem, the result will be undesirable.

Self-Control

- ◉ When an individual experiences severe stress in a problem situation but keeps everything close to his/her heart, s/he is coping through 'Self-Control'. Typical expressions of self-control are—
 - 'I kept my feelings to myself',
 - 'I kept others from knowing how bad things are'
- ◉ Self-Control produces desirable effects only when the person under stress has a high internal locus of control and the situational complexity is such that only the person concerned appreciates the reality of it.



Escape–Avoidance

- ◉ Coping through Escape–Avoidance refers to a situation when the individual runs away from a situation by turning to fantasy or other similar means. The common explanations are—
 - ‘I tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, taking drugs’.**
- ◉ Here the focus is shifted away from the original problem and is fixed elsewhere.
- ◉ This in turn does not resolve the problem, but the person finds a temporary escape from the pressures of managing the emotions.



DENIAL

- ◉ Denial is when someone refuses to accept a difficult truth or situation. Freud, S. (1923).
- ◉ It serves as a way to cope with distressing emotions or situations, allowing the person to avoid facing the anxiety or pain associated with those realities.
- ◉ For example, a person who has been diagnosed with a serious illness might say, “I feel fine; there’s nothing wrong with me, It’s just a phase; it’ll pass.” even when their doctor has explained the situation. By denying their illness, they avoid dealing with fear or sadness.
- ◉ While denial can help in the short term, it can prevent people from getting the help they need or facing important issues.

MENTAL DISENGAGEMENT

- ◉ To disengage is to move away from something or to detach oneself.
- ◉ Mental disengagement is a coping strategy characterized by the psychological withdrawal from stressors or emotional distress. This can involve avoidance behaviors, distraction, emotional numbing Aldao, A., Nolen-Hoeksema, S., & Schweizer, S. (2010).

Expressions

"I'll deal with this later."

"I just need a distraction right now."

"I'll just forget about it."

"Why worry? It's not worth it."

Shifting the burden on supernatural element

- ⦿ Coping through turning to God or religion is a typical strategy when the stressful event is irreparable in nature, or the loss one faces is irretrievable.
- ⦿ Shifting the burden to God or religion pays off in managing acute emotions.
- ⦿ This strategy is also adopted in other situations where the person's locus of control is external.

Common expressions of this strategy of coping are,

'I prayed to God',
'I vowed to fast',
'I joined the "Guru"',

