

October Issue: Week Two

What will you learn?

"The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself." - Thales

This week, we're continuing our introductory theme on coping with a simple self-reflection exercise.

Coping skills help you tolerate, minimize, and deal with stressful situations in life. Managing your stress well can help you feel better — physically and psychologically. It can also elevate your ability to perform at your best.

Have you ever spent time thinking about how you cope? Maybe you have been working on strengthening your coping skills for some time, or maybe you haven't really unpacked the concept at all.

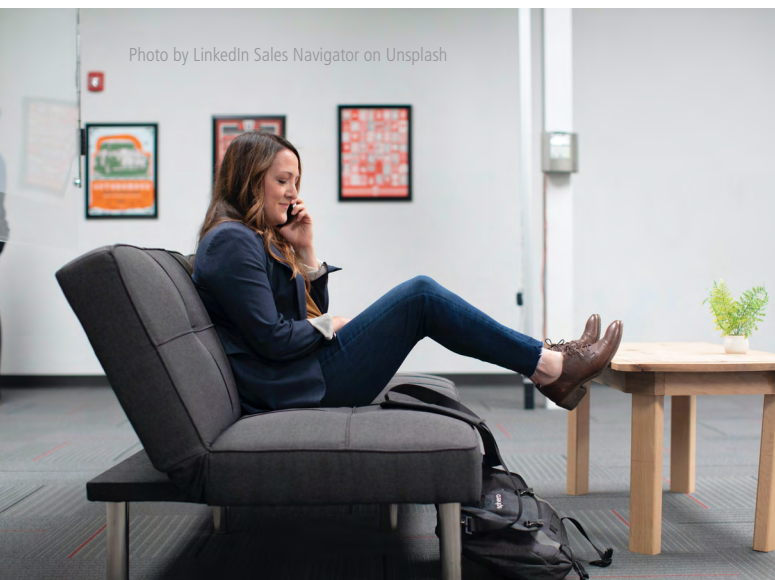


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Monthly Breakdown

Week 1

The 'Where': Lead-o-meter

Week 2

The 'What': Self-Assessment Exercise

Week 3

The 'Why': Research, Science and Information

Week 4

The 'How': Building up your skill

There are two types of coping strategies — problem-focused and emotion-focused.²

One of the main factors for distinguishing these two types of coping strategies is the focus or issue that requires you to cope in the first place.

Problem-Focused Strategy

A problem-focused coping strategy focuses on the problem itself — attempting to tackle the root cause of distress.

Someone who uses problem-focused coping may:

- Analyze the situation;
- Try to problem solve or control the situation;
- Work harder;
- Apply what they've already learned in their daily life; or
- Talk to someone who has a direct impact on the situation, or who may have experience and advice.

Problem-based coping is helpful for when you need to change your situation —

perhaps by removing a stressful thing from your life. For example, if you're feeling anxious and sad from being in an unhealthy relationship, your anxiety and sadness might be best resolved by ending the relationship — as opposed to soothing your emotions.

Emotion-Focused Strategy

Those who use an emotion-focused coping strategy focus their energy on dealing with their feelings, rather than the problem itself.

Someone who uses emotion-focused coping may:

- Distract themselves;
- Pray for guidance and strength;
- Seek social support and talk about their emotions with a counsellor;
- Meditate (e.g. practice mindfulness);
- Eat more;
- Drink alcohol or use drugs;
- Journal (e.g. write in a gratitude diary);
- Suppress, stop, or inhibit negative thoughts or emotions; or
- Avoid dealing with the problem (e.g. blaming something or someone else).

Emotion-based coping is helpful for taking control of your feelings when you either do not want to change your situation, or when circumstances are out of your control. For example, if you are grieving the loss of a loved one, it would be important to take care of your feelings in a healthy way since you can't change the circumstance.

There isn't always one best way to proceed. Sometimes, you need to decide which coping strategy will work best in your particular circumstance. Often times, people will employ multiple strategies that are both problem-focused and emotion-focused.



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Some coping techniques can be harmful.

For example, trying to problem solve or change something that you have no power to change can be very taxing. Blaming can lead to relationship issues. Denial is a coping mechanism that gives individuals time to adjust to distressing situations. However, staying in denial interferes with one's motivation to seek help, the effectiveness of treatment, and their ability to tackle challenges.



Self-Reflection Exercise

Regardless of whether you've taken a deep dive into understanding how you cope, or you are still on dry land, take this [quick quiz](#) to 'check-in' on how you cope.

Next week: *Why does it matter?*

"Any fool can know. The point is to understand." – Albert Einstein

Have you completed the lead-o-meter survey from last week?

Please take 30 seconds to complete it and we will share the anonymous results in the Week 4 Issue!



Follow the link or scan this QR code by opening your phone camera and pointing at the code.



**Complete this month's
Lead-o-meter!**

Never miss a week! All ReCharge issues are archived here: bcpvpa.bc.ca/recharge

Sources:

¹ Positive Psychology, positivepsychology.com/coping

² Very Well Mind, verywellmind.com/forty-healthing-coping-skills-4586742



Curious about a certain topic?

We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Please let us know!



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