

Coping with Emotional Stress

- Listening to music
- Keeping physically active and healthy
- Keeping occupied e.g. cooking, house chores
- Distraction e.g. reading, and computer games
- Religion/spirituality/prayer/meditation
- Sex/intimacy/affection
- Chanting or singing
- Money/saving
- Massage/acupuncture
- Taking medication
- Avoiding street drugs
- Alone time/setting limits with others
- Humor
- Sleeping
- Ignoring emotional distress
- Having good support around me (family, friends, providers)
- Having a positive attitude/keeping hope
- Talking with others
- Keeping a diary about emotions and symptoms
- Identifying when I am most likely to experience symptoms
- Going to support groups
- Focusing, accepting, and understanding symptoms

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DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

- Cleaning, tidying, washing
- Playing games/cards/computer/puzzles
- Sports, exercise – walking/running/dance
- Hobbies (sewing, collecting, painting)
- Visiting or a telephoning a friend
- Writing letters
- Watch TV or movies
- Listening to music
- Going shopping

EMOTIONAL FOCUSING

- List emotional triggers
- Write about your feelings (letter, poem)
- Paint / draw emotions
- Write a diary
- Talk about feelings with another person

COMFORTING TECHNIQUES

- Hold a safe object
- Sit in a safe place
- Listen to soothing music
- Sing favorite songs
- Use perfume / hand cream
- Buy / pick fresh flowers
- Eat a favorite food
- Have a bath
- Soak your feet
- Change the sheets on your bed
- Stroke / brush a pet or soft item
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Prayer / meditation / visualization

POSITIVE EMOTIONAL TECHNIQUES

- Read books, letters, or poems
- Look at photo albums
- Listen to emotional music
- Watch films – comedy or inspirational

- Read joke books / emails
- Say positive statements to self
- Make and read list of strengths
- Make and read list of things achieved
- Think about good things others have said
- Go for a picnic

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

- Focus solely on breathing / breath deeply
- Count your breaths
- Focus on the position of your body
- Relax each muscle individually
- Listen to relaxing music
- Listen to guided relaxation on tape
- Meditation/Yoga
- Massage hands, feet, head, etc
- Swimming / floating

SELF-CARE TECHNIQUES

- Thinking about how I am feeling
- Be realistic about what I can achieve
- Planning my day, ensuring I do not have long periods of time with nothing to do
- Do something for me each day
- Take medication as prescribed
- Keep regular appointments with support network even if I am feeling OK
- Eat a healthy diet

WHAT USUALLY DOES NOT HELP

- Being over-medicated
- Being under-medicated
- Lack of sleep
- Not having information
- Other people denying the existence of emotional stress
- Being told not to talk about my emotions
- Thinking negatively