

COPING SKILL 1:

DEAL WITH YOUR FEELINGS

Feelings are very important. When we pay attention to them, they can help us understand what we want or need. If you don't know what you need, then you won't know how to take care of yourself. If you know what you need, you can figure out the best way to get it.

There are four steps to dealing with your feelings:

- 1) Name them. Label what you are feeling.
- 2) Accept them. Remember that it's OK to feel this way.
- 3) Express them. Let your feelings out in a safe way.
- 4) Decide what you need to feel better. Use what you know about how you feel to tell you what you need.

I. NAME YOUR FEELINGS.

Objective: To help children differentiate between and learn the names of different feelings.

Can you tell which feeling is being expressed on these faces? Write your answers in the spaces below.





DEAL WITH YOUR FEELINGS

6. Let out your excitement by jumping into the swimming pool yourself.

Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____

7. Let out your sadness by packing a suitcase and running away from home.

Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____

8. Let out your sadness by cuddling with your teddy bear.

Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____

4. decide what you need to feel better.

Once you know what you are feeling, have accepted the feeling, and have let it out, you may still need some care to help yourself get over the problem. Sometimes you may be able to give yourself this care, and sometimes you may need to ask someone else to care for you.

Dealing with your feelings and expressing them in a safe way is a coping skill. It is a way to take care of yourself when you have a problem. It is a way of taking care of yourself on the inside.

On the next pages, you will find a number of stories about kids who need help with dealing with feelings. You can help these children by: 1) Labeling their feelings; 2) Telling them it's OK to feel them; 3) Suggesting safe ways to express their feelings; and 4) Deciding what kind of care they need.

After you finish these stories, you will be asked to think about your own experiences dealing with feelings. As you answer the questions, you can use what you know about dealing with feelings to help yourself.

DEAL WITH YOUR FEELINGS

2. Accept your feelings.

all

It is always OK to have or to feel a feeling. Feeling different feelings is normal. Experiencing feelings is your right. It is a part of being human. Sometimes other people will try to tell you not to feel a certain way. Someone might say, "Don't be sad," or "You shouldn't be angry." Usually when this happens, it means that the other person is uncomfortable with your feeling. Even if he or she is uncomfortable, you still have a right to what you are feeling.

3. express your feelings.

Objective: To help children differentiate between safe and unsafe ways of expressing feelings.

Just as you have a right to have your feelings, you also have a right to express them or let them out. Keeping feelings stuffed inside can make you uncomfortable or feel as if you're going to burst. Letting feelings out helps you to feel better.

When you let feelings out, it is very important to make sure you do it in a safe way. A safe way is one which doesn't hurt you and doesn't hurt anyone else either.

Following is a list of ways to let out feelings. Think about what might happen if you let out your feelings in each of these ways. Decide if each suggestion is a safe way or an unsafe way. To help you decide, ask yourself if it would hurt you or if it would hurt anyone else.

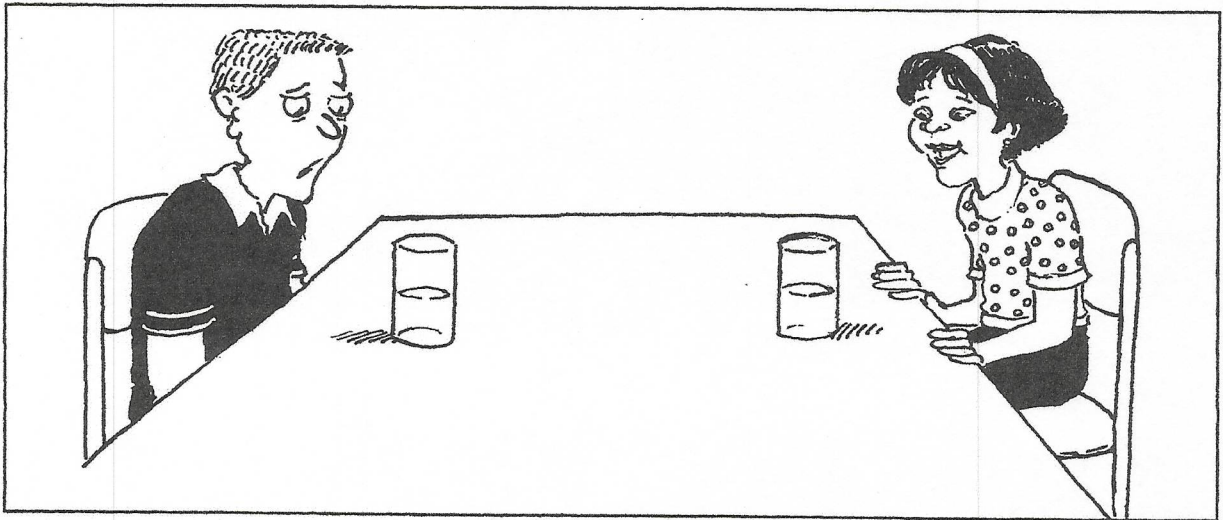
1. Let out your anger by swinging a baseball bat around in your room.
Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____
2. Let out your anger by playing baseball at the park.
Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____
3. Let out your love by giving your newborn pet kitten a tight squeeze.
Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____
4. Let out your love by giving your newborn pet kitten a gentle caress.
Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____
5. Let out your excitement by pushing your friend into the pool.
Safe? _____ Unsafe? _____

COPING SKILL 2:

ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

Coping Skill #1 involved working with your feelings. Coping Skill #2 involves working with your brain. Our brains are what we use to think, and the way that we think affects the way we feel.

There is an old story about two people and a glass of water. This story helps us to understand how what we think affects what we feel. ~~The story goes something like this:~~



One day two friends went for a walk. It was a hot day, the sun was shining, and the friends walked for quite a while. When they were almost home, they were feeling very thirsty. They were looking forward to having something to drink.

When they got home, they found that all there was to drink was a half glass of water for each of them. When the first friend saw her half glass of water, a big smile appeared on her face, and she said, "Oh, good! My glass of water is half full!" When the second friend saw his half glass of water, he frowned and said, "Oh, no! My glass of water is half empty!"

Tell
the
story

ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

But when we understand the story of the glass of water, we realize that no situation or person can make us feel anything. Our feelings do not come from outside of us. They come from inside of us, and they are directly determined by what we think. That means that if we change the way we think, our feelings will change, too.

Objective: To give children practice in changing negative thoughts to positive thoughts.

Think about the glass of water. How could the sad friend change his thinking in order to change his feelings about how much water he had? What could he say to himself? Write your answer below:

Now you can see that our feelings come from our thoughts. The sad friend could take care of himself and make himself feel better by changing what he was thinking. He could use his brain to help himself feel happy instead of sad.

Adjusting your attitude and deciding the best way to think about something is a coping skill. It is a way of taking care of yourself when you have a problem. It is a way of taking care of yourself on the inside.

On the next pages, you will find a number of stories about kids who need to adjust their attitudes and think in the way that will help them the most. You can help each child by: 1) Identifying what they are probably thinking; and 2) Suggesting different ways they can think about their situation.

After you finish these stories, you will be asked to think about your own experiences with adjusting your attitude. As you answer the questions, you can use what you know about adjusting your attitude to help yourself.

COPING SKILL 3:

DISCOVER YOUR CHOICES

Sometimes when we are stuck in a problem situation, it seems that no matter how hard we try, we can't change things in any way. If we look harder, however, we will find that we always have some kind of choice in making things better for ourselves.

In every problem situation, there are always things we can't change and things we can change. As we learned with Coping Skill #2 (Adjusting Your Attitude), if nothing else, we can always change the way we think about something.

Coping Skill #3 is about seeing our choices and putting our energy toward changing the things that can be changed.

It involves three steps:

1. Look carefully at your problem.
2. Discover the things you can't change and the things you can change.
3. Choose something you can change and work on making it better.

1. Look carefully at your problem.

Sometimes it is hard to see the things that we can change right away. But a problem can be like a puzzle—the longer and harder you look, the more answers you will find.

DISCOVER YOUR CHOICES

3. Choose something that you can change and work on making it better.

Taking action is the final step. Even if you know what you can change, if you don't work on doing it, nothing will be any different.

Many people are good at knowing what is wrong with a situation, but they don't use their energy to do anything about it. That doesn't make things any better for them.

Discovering what you can change and then doing something to make it better is a coping skill. It is a way of taking care of yourself when you have a problem. It is a way of taking care of yourself on the inside.

On the next pages, you will find stories about kids who need to discover their choices about what they can change and then take action to do it. You can help each child by: 1) Looking carefully at their problem; 2) Discovering the things that they can and cannot change; and 3) Suggesting what they can do to work on making things better.

After you finish these stories, you will be asked to think about your own experiences with things you can and cannot change. As you answer the questions, you can use what you know about discovering your choices to help yourself.

COPING SKILL 4:

ACCEPT IMPERFECTION

Did you know that there is one thing that is the same about every person you meet?

No matter who they are, no matter what their age is, no matter where they live, or what their family is like, or where they go to school, or what their job is, they are all the same in one way: They all make mistakes.

Even if they are very smart and try very hard, every single person in the world makes a mistake at one time or another. That is because we are human beings, and human beings are imperfect. We use the word "perfect" to mean something that is very, very good, but really, there is no one or nothing that is completely without a flaw.

Think of three people you know. Can you think of a mistake they have each made at some time? Write their names and mistakes below:

Objective: To help children understand that everyone makes mistakes.

1) Name: _____

Mistake: _____

2) Name: _____

Mistake: _____

3) Name: _____

Mistake: _____

ACCEPT IMPERFECTION

When that happens, instead of getting too upset, you can accept imperfection by:

- 1) Reminding yourself that no one and nothing is perfect.
- 2) Thinking of a way to adjust your attitude or discover your choices to make things better.

Just as people aren't perfect, situations aren't perfect either. Remembering this keeps us from being too disappointed or upset when things don't go exactly the way we would like.

Objective: To help children relate to the concept of imperfect situations.

Can you think of a time when you were disappointed because something didn't happen the way you wanted it to?

Write about it here: _____

When things don't go the way you'd planned, it's OK to feel disappointed. But instead of letting it ruin everything else for you, you can take care of yourself by accepting it, and then use some other coping skills to adjust your attitude or discover your choices and change what you can.

Accepting imperfection can help to keep you from feeling disappointed or being angry with yourself or other people when things go wrong. This is a Coping Skill. It is a way of taking care of yourself when you have a problem. It is a way of taking care of yourself on the inside.

On the next pages, you will find a number of stories about kids who need to accept imperfection. You can help them by: 1) Reminding them that no one and nothing is perfect; 2) Suggesting a way to adjust their attitude or discover their choices to make things better.

After you finish these stories, you will be asked to think about your own experiences with accepting imperfection. As you answer the questions, you can use what you know about changing your thinking or discovering your choices to help yourself.

COPING SKILL 5:

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

Anthing that you do in life uses your energy. Riding your bike uses energy, doing your homework uses energy, playing with your friends uses energy, reading this book uses energy.

Objective: To help children understand the concept of using up energy.

Can you think of some other activities that use your energy? Write them here:

Energy isn't limitless. At some point we run out of it, just like a car runs out of gas. When a car runs out of gas, it's time to stop and refuel. When we run out of physical energy, it's time to stop and refuel ourselves by sleeping or eating. When we run out of emotional or mental energy, it's time to stop and take a break.

Refueling our physical bodies is a way of taking care of ourselves on the outside. We use up physical energy by moving around. When our bodies run out of energy, we may notice it by feeling tired or hungry. Then we take care of ourselves by sleeping or eating.

COPING SKILL 6:

TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME

People who have many things to do or a lot of things to think about at one time can start to feel overwhelmed. Being overwhelmed means feeling pressured and maybe a little frightened that we can't handle everything. We might feel like we have to rush or do two or three things at once. Our time may feel "crowded," or our brain may feel "stretched."

Being overwhelmed can be so uncomfortable that we may have a hard time thinking about or doing even one thing. We may wish we could just "shut down" or run away.

When we start to feel this way, we can take care of ourselves by using Coping Skill #6: Taking Things One Step at a Time. This means that we stop trying to do everything at once, or think about everything at once, and we focus on only one activity or thought. This helps us to relax and concentrate, to feel less jumbled, and to focus on each thing clearly.

In the lines below, a number of words have all run together. Can you rewrite them, one at a time, so that the jumble is gone and each word can be seen clearly?

Objective: To give children practice in separating a whole into its parts.

catbirdbedmomringhouseflowerdogdadmilkball

PLAN AHEAD

When we know about things ahead of time, we can prepare for them, or plan ahead. This is a way of taking care of ourselves. Just like Coping Skill #6 (Taking Things One Step at a Time), Coping Skill #8, Planning Ahead, is a way to keep ourselves from feeling overwhelmed. When we plan something ahead of time, we feel more prepared to handle it.

Objective: To scale down the exercise into workable parts.

Pick one thing from your list that you know about before it happens. Write it again here:

Objective: To give children practice in thinking about what it means to plan ahead.

Now think about what you can plan to do ahead of time to prepare for this. Write your answer here:

Planning ahead can assure that we will:

- 1) Have enough time.
- 2) Have enough energy.
- 3) Have the tools to accomplish our task.

Planning ahead can help to keep you from becoming overwhelmed. This is a Coping Skill. It is a way of taking care of yourself when you have a problem. It is a way to take care of yourself on the inside.

On the next pages, you will find a number of stories about kids who need to plan ahead. You can help them by: 1) Suggesting things they can do to be sure they will have enough time and energy; and 2) Suggesting how they can be sure to have the tools they will need to accomplish their task.

After you finish these stories, you will be asked to think about your own experiences with planning ahead. As you answer the questions, you can use what you know about making sure you have enough time and energy and the tools you will need to help yourself.

COPING SKILL 9:

ASK FOR HELP

The last Coping Skill that you will learn about has to do with recognizing when a problem situation is too big for you to take care of completely by yourself. When that happens, it's time for Coping Skill #9: Ask For Help.

No matter how good we become at handling things by ourselves, there will always be times when we need to ask someone else to help us. Sometimes people think they should be able to do everything by themselves, or that asking for help means that they've failed, or that they're not as strong or as smart as they should be.

The truth is, even the strongest and smartest people can't do everything by themselves. Earlier in this book, we learned that because we are all human beings, no one is perfect (Coping Skill #4: Accept Imperfection). In the same way, we all need help from others at one time or another.

Objective: To help children apply set forth ideas to their own lives.

Can you think of something you did recently where you needed to ask for help? Write it here:
