

Coping Strategy for Kids & Parents



1. Belly Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)

- **What It Means:** Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or upset.
- **How to Use:**
 - Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
 - Take a deep breath in through your nose, feeling your belly rise.
 - Slowly exhale through your mouth, feeling your belly fall.
 - Repeat 3-5 times. (DBT Skill: Distress Tolerance – Self-Soothe, Mindfulness)

2. The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

- **When to Use:** Feeling anxious, panicked, or disconnected from the present moment.
- **How to Use:**
 - Name 5 things you can see.
 - Name 4 things you can touch.
 - Name 3 things you can hear.
 - Name 2 things you can smell.
 - Name 1 thing you can taste. (CBT Skill: Reframing & Grounding, DBT Skill: Mindfulness)

3. STOP Skill

- **When to Use:** When feeling reactive, frustrated, or about to act impulsively.
- **How to Use:**
 - **S**top what you're doing.
 - **T**ake a step back and breathe.
 - **O**bserve how you're feeling and what's happening.
 - **P**roceed mindfully with a choice that aligns with your values. (DBT Skill: Emotion Regulation, Distress Tolerance)

4. Opposite Action

- **When to Use:** When feeling stuck in a negative emotion that isn't serving you.
- **How to Use:**
 - Identify the emotion and how it's influencing your behavior.
 - Choose to do the opposite (e.g., feeling sad? Engage in an activity that brings joy).
 - Challenge negative thoughts and engage in positive actions. (DBT Skill: Emotion Regulation)

5. Thought Distinction

- **When to Use:** When experiencing intrusive thoughts or negative self-talk.
- **How to Use:**
 - Imagine putting your thoughts on a cloud and watching them float away.
 - Label the thought as just a thought, not a fact.
 - Ask yourself: "Is this thought helpful or accurate?" (CBT Skill: Cognitive Restructuring, DBT Skill: Mindfulness)

6. TIPP Skill (Temperature, Intense Exercise, Paced Breathing, Paired Muscle Relaxation)

- **When to Use:** In moments of high distress or emotional escalation.
- **How to Use:**
 - **Temperature:** Hold ice or splash cold water on your face.
 - **Intense Exercise:** Do jumping jacks or run in place for a minute.
 - **Paced Breathing:** Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, out for 6.
 - **Paired Muscle Relaxation:** Tense and relax muscle groups. (DBT Skill: Distress Tolerance)

7. Wise Mind Exercise

- **When to Use:** When making a difficult decision or feeling torn between logic and emotion.
- **How to Use:**
 - Identify your **Emotional Mind** (feelings-based).
 - Identify your **Rational Mind** (facts-based).
 - Find the middle ground: Your **Wise Mind** (balanced decision-making). (DBT Skill: Wise Mind, Emotion Regulation)

8. Self-Compassion Break

- **When to Use:** When feeling self-critical, guilty, or frustrated.
- **How to Use:**
 - Acknowledge the difficulty: "This is a tough moment."
 - Remind yourself: "I am not alone in this; others struggle too."
 - Offer kindness: "What do I need to hear to support myself right now?" (CBT Skill: Self-Talk Reframing, DBT Skill: Radical Acceptance), (DBT Skill: Wise Mind, Emotion Regulation)

9. Sensory Box for Calming

- **When to Use:** When needing grounding, emotional regulation, or a soothing activity.
- **How to Use:**
 - Create a small box with different textures, scents, and fidgets.
 - Include calming items like putty, soft fabric, essential oils, or smooth stones.
 - Use when feeling overwhelmed or needing a break. (DBT Skill: Self-Soothe, Distress Tolerance)

10. Visualization Exercise

- **When to Use:** Before bed, before a test, or in moments of high anxiety..
- **How to Use:**
 - Close your eyes and imagine your "happy place."
 - Engage your senses: What do you see, hear, and feel?
 - Stay in the moment for a few minutes, then open your eyes slowly. (DBT Skill: Mindfulness, CBT Skill: Guided Imagery)