

KEYS TO COPING!

One of life's best coping mechanisms is to know the difference between an inconvenience and a problem. If you break your neck, if you have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire, then you've got a problem. Everything else is an inconvenience...Robert Fulghum

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Coping is defined as the process of managing stressful situations, solving personal problems, and reducing stress and conflict
- ❖ Coping mechanisms are strategies people use to cope with stressful situations
- ❖ These strategies often deal with the symptoms and not the deeper underlying problem
- ❖ Coping strategies can be adaptive or maladaptive
- ❖ Adaptive coping strategies involve confronting problems directly, appraising them, and then making choices to change the unhealthy emotional reactions
- ❖ Maladaptive coping involves denial of problems, using alcohol and drugs or other addictive behaviors to escape, and engaging in acting out behaviors
- ❖ Cognitive coping strategies involve people changing the way they perceive and think about the stressful or problem situations
- ❖ Problem-focused coping strategies involve finding out information and then learning new skills to solve the problem
- ❖ Emotional coping strategies include relaxation, meditation, distracting oneself, managing angry feelings, and venting stored up emotions
- ❖ Coping strategies can be improved through having:
 - a. Social Support which tends to lessen the effects of stress by getting caring and helpful advice from others
 - b. Optimism or the expectation of positive results by appraising events in less threatening ways, and using problem solving strategies
 - c. A Sense of Perceived Control where a person believes they have some control over events in their lives
- ❖ Popular coping strategies involve relaxation, writing about emotions, exercising, using humor, seeking spirituality, helping others, socializing, comparing oneself to others
- ❖ Negative coping strategies include whining/complaining, using denial, blaming others, being aggressive, indulging oneself through drugs, alcohol, eating, gambling, etc.

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Keep a good realistic perspective and do not set unrealistic goals
- ❖ Take care of yourself by eating and sleeping well and not engaging in self destructive behaviors such as smoking, drinking excessively, and abusing drugs
- ❖ Have a weekly exercise program and engage in a quieting activity
- ❖ Identify your stress triggers which are those events that cause stress in one's life; these can include minor events that add up over time
- ❖ Keep a weekly stress journal identifying those people and situations that cause negative emotions and what your specific reactions were
- ❖ Review your stress inventory and identify one specific situation that can be reframed as a problem to be solved
- ❖ Identify potential solutions to the problem and decide which is the best to employ
- ❖ Implement the solution and monitor whether stress decreases; employ other solutions
- ❖ Seek professional help if none of these improves your coping abilities and you feel stressed and burned out

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at **DrKimmel@aol.com**.

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