

Module 5: Recovery and peer support



Healthy coping mechanisms

LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY

Objective n° 2

FINDING APPROPRIATE COPING MECHANISMS

Explore additional coping strategies (e.g., mindfulness, exercise, social activities)

Objective n° 1

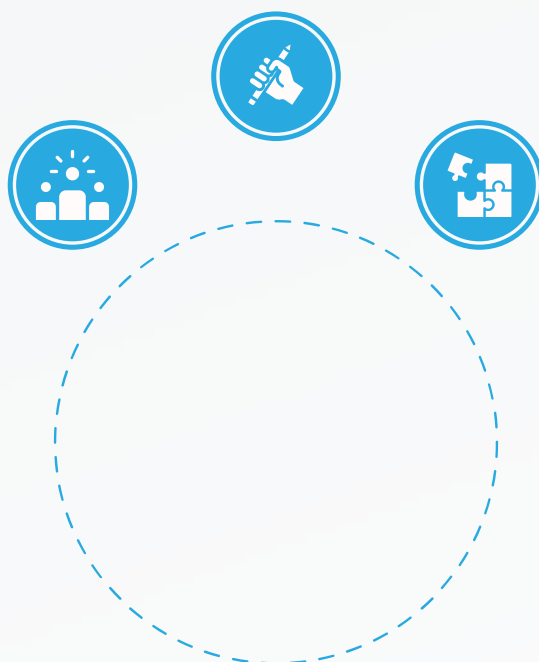
KNOWLEDGE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ADOPTING AND PRACTISING HEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

highlighting the importance of healthy coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness, stress management techniques, and positive self-care habits

Objective n° 3

EQUIP INDIVIDUALS WITH VALUABLE TOOLS FOR MANAGING STRESSORS IN THEIR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES

By finding healthy coping mechanisms that suit them personally, participants get new tools for dealing with stressful situations.



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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION AND MATERIALS

Activity description

1. Target group – adult educators, mentors
2. Time – 1– 1,5 hour.

1. Pen and Paper
2. Comfortable space for group discussions

Materials

METHODOLOGY USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY



INFORMATION

A short introduction to the topic of Coping mechanisms, Differentiation between healthy and unhelpful coping strategies, suggestions for beneficial, healthy ways of coping



SELF-REFLECTION

Reflective writing to encourage participants to think deeply about their own ways of coping and their origin. After self-reflection, participants engage in group discussions to reflect on their experiences, share their feelings, and discuss what they learned.



GROUP DISCUSSION

To consolidate and discuss what has been learned, the group comes together and talks about the self-reflection phase.



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ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1. Introduction

The session begins with an informative introductory lecture: all people use coping strategies to deal with stressful situations. A distinction can be made between problem-centered and emotion-centered strategies:

- Problem-centered: Direct actions and problem-solving activities, approaches that focus on actively addressing and resolving the source of the stress rather than just managing emotions (e.g. Creating schedules or prioritizing tasks to handle workload stress, consulting experts, making necessary changes, communicating openly, setting boundaries)
- Emotion-centered: Changing the emotional state without dealing with the problem that triggered it (e.g. distraction, relaxation exercises, drugs, therapy)

The more different strategies are available, the greater the likelihood that one of them will fit the perceived requirements and that the stressful situation can be mastered.

2. Self-reflection

As a first step, participants reflect on their own coping mechanisms they use in everyday life. The trainer or the group can help by giving more examples. For the second step, the trainer suggests a list with possible healthy coping mechanisms (see last pages). You can also use some of the mindfulness exercises from the other modules as examples. Participants choose some strategies from the list or make up new, healthy ways of coping themselves. They write down a few strategies they would like to try and/ or keep using.

3. Discussion and Sharing

Conclude the session by inviting participants to share their personal reflections on the activity. Discuss the importance of reflecting on one's coping strategies in addressing substance use disorders. Encourage participants to consider how they can apply what they have learned to their own lives and interactions with others.

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LIST OF HEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS AS AN INSPIRATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Problem-Focused Coping

1. **ACTIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING** – IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM AND DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS.
2. **TIME MANAGEMENT** – PRIORITIZING TASKS AND CREATING REALISTIC SCHEDULES.
3. **SEEKING HELP** – REACHING OUT TO FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR PROFESSIONALS FOR SUPPORT.
4. **GOAL SETTING** – SETTING CONCRETE, ACHIEVABLE GOALS AND WORKING TOWARDS THEM STEP BY STEP.
5. **SETTING BOUNDARIES** – PROTECTING YOURSELF BY SAYING "NO" AND AVOIDING BURNOUT.
6. **LEARNING NEW SKILLS** – GAINING NEW KNOWLEDGE OR TRAINING TO HANDLE CHALLENGES BETTER.

Emotion-Focused Coping

1. **JOURNALING** – WRITING DOWN THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS TO GAIN CLARITY.
2. **MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION** – PRACTICING RELAXATION THROUGH BREATHING EXERCISES, MEDITATION, OR YOGA.
3. **PRACTICING GRATITUDE** – FOCUSING ON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF LIFE.
4. **POSITIVE SELF-TALK** – CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND ENCOURAGING YOURSELF.
5. **CREATIVE EXPRESSION** – ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES LIKE PAINTING, MUSIC, OR WRITING.
6. **USING HUMOR** – LAUGHING AS A NATURAL WAY TO REDUCE STRESS.



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Physical Coping Strategies

1. REGULAR EXERCISE – USING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LIKE SPORTS OR WALKS TO RELIEVE STRESS.
2. HEALTHY NUTRITION – MAINTAINING A BALANCED DIET TO SUPPORT EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.
3. GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP – PRACTICING GOOD SLEEP HYGIENE FOR REST AND RECOVERY.
4. PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION – USING TECHNIQUES LIKE PMR OR AUTOGENIC TRAINING.
5. TAKING MEANINGFUL BREAKS – INCORPORATING REGULAR MOMENTS OF RELAXATION INTO DAILY LIFE.

Social Coping Strategies

1. SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT – TALKING WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.
2. ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES – PARTICIPATING IN GROUPS OR CLUBS.
3. ACCEPTING HELP – ALLOWING YOURSELF TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM OTHERS.
4. HELPING OTHERS – VOLUNTEERING OR SUPPORTING OTHERS TO FIND A SENSE OF PURPOSE.



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