

Ways to Manage Distressing Emotions

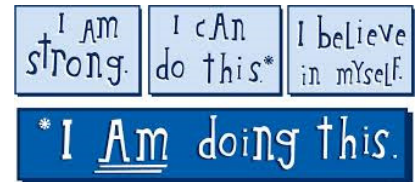


Self-Soothe: Take a bath, wrap up in a blanket, drink a beverage focusing on the sensations of taste, smell and temperature, listen to soothing music, light a scented candle, spend time in the garden, look at pictures that bring positive memories or peaceful feelings, etc.

Practice deep breathing: Place one hand on your belly, inhale slowly counting to 5, feeling your belly expand. Pause. Exhale slowly, counting to 5, feeling your belly deflate. Practice this deep breathing 10 times.



Self-encouragement: Think of what you might say to someone in a similar situation as you. Give yourself the same encouragement and support. Tell yourself things like “I can get through this” or “This won’t last forever.”



Pray/Meditate: Pray either to a higher power, your own wise mind, or just open yourself up to peace and serenity. Open your hands, uncross your arms and legs, slow your breathing and focus on acceptance. Ask for strength to bear the pain in this moment. Breathe in and out while telling yourself something like “I breathe in peace and breathe out distress.”

Use imagery: Imagine a wall between yourself and the situation. Or imagine a peaceful, happy, secure place. It can be someplace you have been or someplace that you create in your mind. Imagine in detail what your place looks like, any soothing smells, if there are any comforting people or animals with you, what it feels like where you are sitting or laying, what sounds you can hear...



Movement/Exercise: Go for a walk, shoot hoops, dance, mow the lawn, work out, shovel the driveway, work in the garden, go for a bike ride, jump on a trampoline, use the stairs, practice Yoga, Tai Chi, or Qi Gong, etc.

Mindfulness: Fully engage with an activity by being present in the moment, whether you are washing dishes, driving in your car, making your bed, etc. Notice the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of what you are doing.

Pause

What do you notice?

Ways to Manage Distressing Thoughts and Emotions



Journal: Write down your thoughts and feelings. Start a gratitude journal. Keep track of successes. Write down inspirational quotes.

Distract Yourself: Pick up a magazine and focus your attention on the pictures or an interesting article, read a book, count backwards from 100 - if you lose track, start over again, describe the furniture in the room or other objects in front of you, absorb yourself in a hobby or activity.



Use Progressive Muscle Relation:

Tense and relax various muscle groups one at a time from head to toe. Hold the tension in each muscle for a few seconds before releasing the tension. Notice the sensations.

Creative Arts: Draw, paint, sculpt, make jewellery, colour, play an instrument, write a poem, do a craft, knit, make a collage, take pictures, sing, create a vision board etc.



Connect with Others: Call a friend, Skype, volunteer, talk to someone in line at the grocery store, ask the sales staff how their shift is going, go for a walk and say hi to the people you meet, visit a family member, attend a community group, join a team, etc.

Challenge Unhelpful Thinking: Ask yourself: Am I 100% sure this thought is true? Would others see the situation in the same way? Is this thought a fact or a fear? What other explanations might there be for this situation? Is this thought helpful or useful to me? If I continue thinking this way, will I act in accordance with my personal values?

