

Coping Strategies

Unfortunately life is not always going to be smooth sailing. Everyone has ups and downs and, in order to survive these, you need to be aware of stress triggers and how you are currently coping. Only then can you make changes in your life so that these moments do not take control and pull you down with negative results. So how you respond to challenges and stressful moments is very important to your health and well being – both physically and emotionally.

ACTIVITY

What makes *you* feel like things are getting out of control? ✓

When all your school assignments seem to come at once	
When your family is fighting a lot and you don't know how to handle it	
When you are physically tired because not only do you come to school but you are also working long hours	
When you and your friends are fighting all the time	
When it seems like your parents are always on your case about one thing or another	

**So how do you cope
when things do seem to go a little haywire
and you feel like there is a lot of pressure on you,?**

Do you spend as much time away from the family home as possible?	
Do you pretend you are not feeling well so you don't have to go to school? Or do you wag?	
Do you find yourself really sensitive about what people say to you?	
Do you find that you are getting angry and upset over 'little' things?	
Do you muck up a lot more in class & don't care if you get into trouble?	
Do you eat a lot more junk food and have a chocolate and chip binge?	

Many of these coping strategies will only fix the problem short term. The problem will not go away – rather you need to put strategies in place that will actually cause changes to occur.

Keys to coping:

➤ **Looking after your self** is a number one priority. This *does not* mean always getting your own way. It is more about making sure that you look after yourself by getting enough sleep, enough exercise and eating lots of healthy foods. When you do this, your body is physically strong enough to cope with all the other things going on in your life.

➤ **Laugh more.** Scientists have proven that when we laugh it activates endorphins that make us feel good. It makes us feel better and it makes those around us feel better. By doing this one simple action, things can look brighter than they are and helps to put things into perspective. There is some truth in the old saying “*laughter is the best medicine*”.