

7 Tips for How to Cope When Things Feel Out of Control

When life feels chaotic or overwhelming, it can be easy to get stuck in a cycle of stress and worry. But there are things you can do to cope with the chaos and find some calm. Here are some tips.



Be aware of your feelings. Try to note what you're feeling when you're feeling it, without judging it as "good" or "bad." It might help to write down how you're feeling and why.



Notice your mindset. The way you think about things really does affect the way you feel. If you tell yourself something is too hard or too stressful, it's going to feel that way. But if you tell yourself you can handle something hard, you're more likely to be able to.



Focus on what you can control. Try not to focus on what you can't. Make a list of the things that cause you stress. Then decide which things on the list you can take action on and which you can't. This can remind you what's in your control and what isn't.



Spend time doing things that are meaningful to you. For example, you could do projects with your kids, foster an animal, write postcards to friends, or do random acts of kindness for your neighbors. Do things that make you feel good or bring you joy.



Look for sources of stress you can limit. Then take steps to limit them. That might mean turning off the news, staying away from social media, or even having less contact with certain people.



Distract yourself. Spend time on a hobby or project. Call a friend. Start watching a new TV series. Whatever you decide, make sure it makes you happy and feels worth your time.



Be sure your coping strategies are helpful. Find things to do that help calm and relax you. Reading for fun, taking a bath, or spending some time being mindful are the types of things that are more likely to reduce stress than add to it. But things like staying too busy might exhaust you or add stress. A glass of wine or a beer in the evening may not be a bad thing for some people, but alcohol can make stress and anxiety worse. Just make sure that the things you're doing to cope are helping rather than hurting. And if you need more help finding helpful coping strategies, think about talking to a counselor.

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