



# Coping Skills

Prepared by:  
Cheah Yeat Lum *K.B., P.A*  
Counsellor

Student Development and Counselling Department

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# Stress

Coping With Life's Stressors



## WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels threatened or anxious.

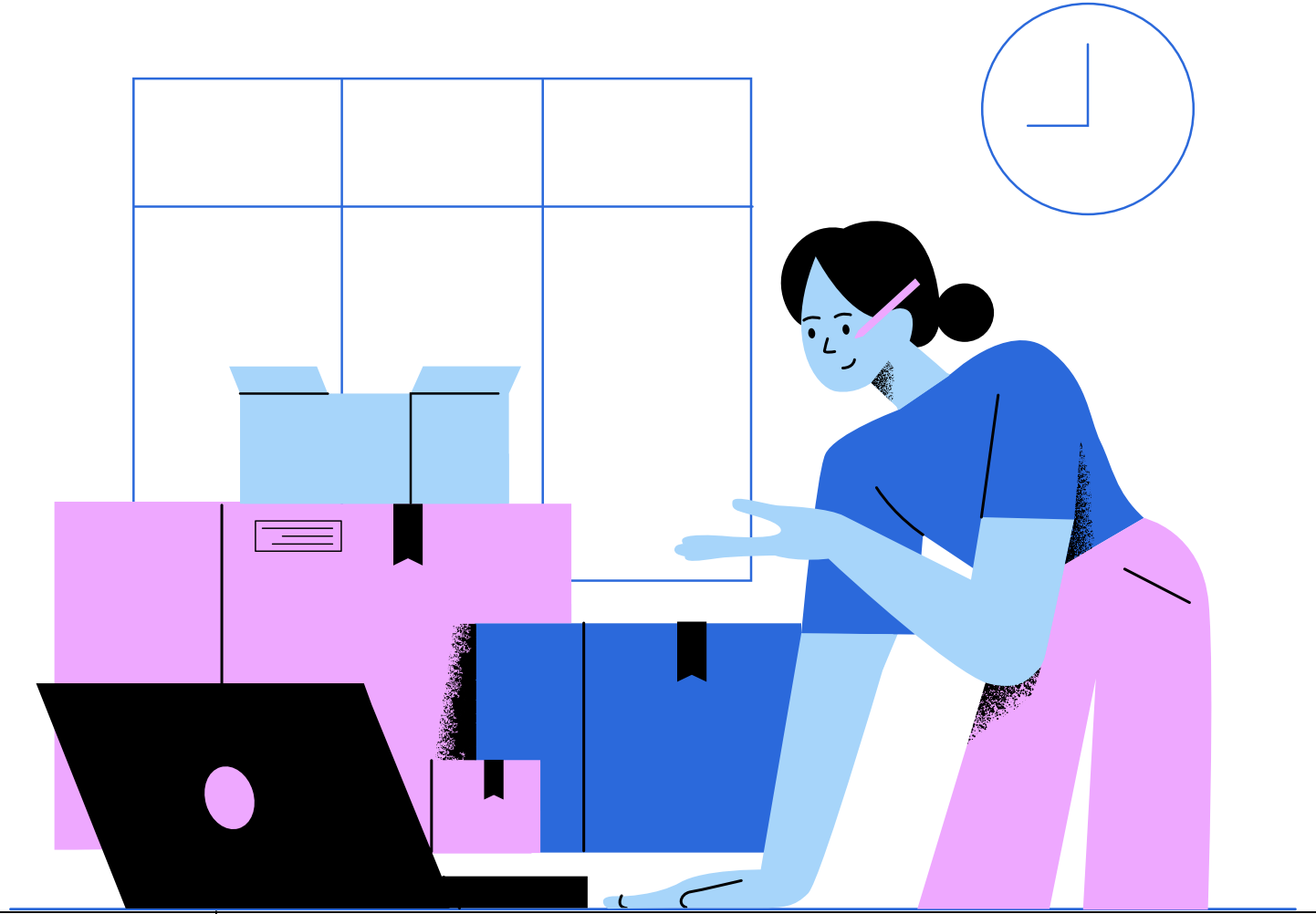
It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or nervous.

When stress lasts for a long time, it may be harmful to your health.

## WHAT MAKES US STRESSED?

Stress can be caused by a variety of factors, including bereavement, divorce, separation, work-related issues, job loss, uncertainties in life, financial difficulties, etc.

# What are the signs of stress?



## HOW YOU MIGHT FEEL

- Anxious
- Afraid
- Angry or aggressive
- Sad
- Irritable
- Frustrated
- Depressed

## HOW YOU MIGHT BEHAVE

- Withdrawing from people or snapping at them
- Being indecisive or inflexible
- Being emotional or tearful
- Having problems in falling or staying asleep
- Experiencing sexual problems
- Smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use more than usual

## HOW YOUR BODY MIGHT REACT

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Indigestion
- Shallow breathing or hyperventilating
- Sweating
- Heart palpitations
- Aches and pains

# Changes can be stressful sometimes



## **Changes are stressful....**

Stress is found to be linked to negative life changes, such as the loss of a job or a loved one.

All changes, however, required some level of adaption.

Even positive changes like getting married or having a child could be stressful.

# Coping With Stress



## **HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF?**

Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the right care and support can help to reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

## **WHAT ARE COPING SKILLS?**

The method a person uses to deal with stressful situations. Coping is a process rather than an event. In order to cope with a stressful incident, you can switch between numerous coping skills. Different people have different coping styles or prefer to use certain coping skills over the others.

## **WHY ARE COPING SKILLS IMPORTANT?**

Coping skills or strategies in a stressful life changes negative situations that will help you keep a positive self-image.

# Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

When you are under a lot of stress, it is necessary to look at your own lifestyle. Participate in stress-relieving activities to help you manage with stress in general. Hence, try to:



## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of sleep and give yourself a break if you feel stressed out.

## TALK TO OTHERS

Share your problems, how you are feeling and coping with parents, friends, counselor or doctor.

## AVOID DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

These may seem to help, but they can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.

## TAKE A BREAK

If news events are causing your stress, take a break from listening or watching the news.

## RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU NEED MORE HELP

If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker or professional counselor.



# Emotion-Focused Coping Skills VS Problem-Focused Coping Skills



## Problem-Focused Coping Skill

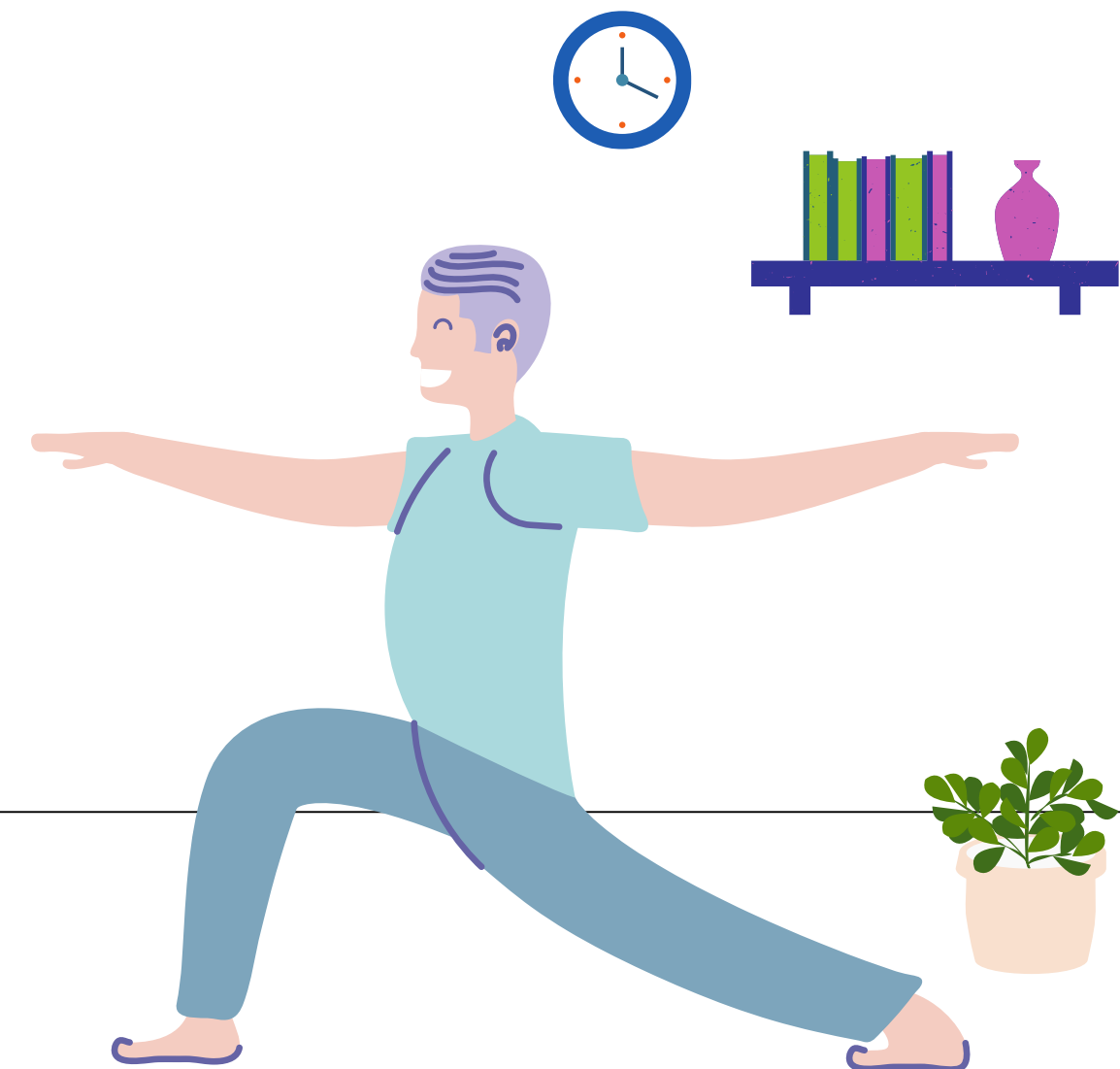
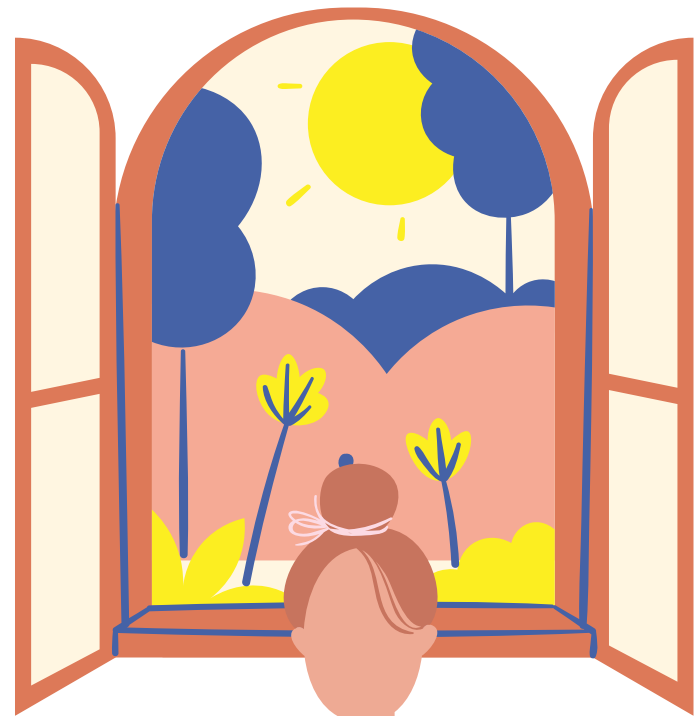
- When you need to change your situation, such as by removing a stressful element from your life, this is a great coping skill to have.
- If you are in an unhealthy relationship, for example, ending the relationship may be the greatest way to relieve your worry and despair (as opposed to soothing your emotions).

## Emotion-Focused Coping Skill

- When you need to take care of your feelings but don't want to change your situation or when things are beyond your control, this is a helpful coping skill.
- If you're grieving the loss of a loved one, for example, it's important to manage your emotions in a healthy way (since you can't change the situation).

# Example of Healthy Emotion-Focused Coping Skill

- Clean the house (or a closet, drawer, or area)
- Cook a meal
- Do yoga
- Draw
- Give yourself a pep talk
- Go for a walk
- Engage in a hobby
- Meditation





# Example of Healthy Problem-Focused Coping Skills

- Ask for support from a friend or professional
- Create a to-do list
- Engage in problem-solving
- Establish healthy boundaries (Say NO when needed)
- Walk away (leave a situation that causes you stress)
- Work on managing your time better (turn off the alerts on your phone, create a priority list, etc.)



# Unhealthy Coping Skills to Avoid



## **Alcohol consumption or drug use**

- Substances may temporarily relieve your pain, but they will not fix your problems and are likely to introduce new ones.

## **Over-eating**

- Trying to “stuff your feelings” with food can lead to an unhealthy relationship with food and weight issues.

## **Sleeping too much**

- Sleeping allows you to temporarily forget about your problems. However, the problem will still be there when you wake up.

# Unhealthy Coping Skills to Avoid



## Venting to others

- Venting to people about how bad your situation is or how terrible you feel is more likely to keep you stuck in a place of pain.

## Over-spending

- Owning too many possessions can add stress to your life. Also, spending more than you can afford will only backfire in the end and cause more stress.

## Avoiding things

- You will never resolve your issues by doing other coping skills to avoid the problem. You might feel relieve temporary but you are only masking the problem.

# How do I know which coping skills will work for me?

- Coping skills function differently for different people depending on the circumstances or conditions. Therefore, we must find what coping skills work for us.
- To figure out which coping skills work best for us, we would have to go through some trial and error.
- Try different coping skills to deal with different problems or situation. After several attempt, keeping the ones that work for you and discarding the ones that don't.



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