Coping Index

If you feel upset or distressed **how frequently do you use the following strategies to feel better?**

	Not at all	Sometimes	Often	Almost always
1. take a few slow breaths to calm down	0	1	2	3
2. eat	0	1	2	3
3. think about yourself positively	0	1	2	3
4. yell or argue with others	0	1	2	3
5. meditate	0	1	2	3
6. stay focused on what is happening in the present moment	0	1	2	3
7. spend a lot of time on your own	0	1	2	3
8. do something to distract yourself briefly	0	1	2	3
9. think about suicide	0	1	2	3
10. do relaxing activities	0	1	2	3
11. do things that physically hurt you	0	1	2	3
12. do something enjoyable with family or friends	0	1	2	3
13. drink alcohol	0	1	2	3
14. use drugs	0	1	2	3
15. talk things over with family or friends	0	1	2	3
16. stop doing activities that you usually enjoy	0	1	2	3
17. talk to a health professional or counsellor	0	1	2	3
18. ruminate or dwell on things	0	1	2	3
19. pray	0	1	2	3
20. think about yourself negatively	0	1	2	3

Instrument reference

Stallman HM. *Coping Index.* Adelaide: University of South Australia; 2017

Purpose

Coping is the response to unpleasant emotions. According to the Health Theory of Coping, coping behaviours can be healthy or unhealthy[1]. Unhealthy coping strategies are used when healthy coping strategies are exceeded, not in the absence of personal coping strategies (i.e., self-soothing, relaxation/distraction)[2]. Quality professional support is a healthy coping strategy that can buffer against the need to use unhealthy coping strategies if accessible[3].

The ***Coping Index*** [4] is a 20-item measure of coping strategies across the four healthy (self-soothing, relaxation/distraction, social, and professional support) and the four unhealthy coping domains (negative self-talk, harmful activities, social withdrawal, suicidality). The Coping Index provides a comprehensive and holistic assessment of a person's coping. Unhealthy coping is an index of how overwhelmed a person is.

Scoring

Healthy coping = sum of 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19 divided by 10

Unhealthy coping = sum of 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20 divided by 10

The range for both subscales is 0–3. Higher scores equal higher use of those types of strategies.

Total coping = Healthy – Unhealthy. Scores range from -3 to 3.

Validation references

1. Stallman HM. Health Theory of Coping. *Australian Psychologist.* 2020;55(4):295-306.
2. Stallman HM, Beaudequin D, Hermens DF, Eisenberg D. Modelling the relationship between healthy and unhealthy coping strategies to understand overwhelming distress: A Bayesian network approach. *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports.* 2021;3:100054.
3. Stallman HM. Suicide following hospitalisation: systemic treatment failure needs to be the focus rather than risk factors. *The Lancet Psychiatry.* 2020;7(4):303.
4. Stallman HM. *Coping Index.* Adelaide: University of South Australia; 2017.
5. Stallman HM, Lipson SK, Zhou S, Eisenberg D. How do university students cope? An exploration of the health theory of coping in a US sample. *J Am Coll Health.* 2022;70(4):1179-1185.
6. Stallman HM, Dodd N, Warren-James M, Chiera B. Workplace sense of belonging and paramedic wellbeing using network analysis: A cross-sectional study. *Australasian Emergency Care.* 2023.
7. Dodd N, Warren-James M, Stallman HM. How do paramedics and student paramedics cope? A cross-sectional study. *Australasian Emergency Care.* 2022;25(4):321-326.