WORKSHEET 138 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

My coping toolbox

What I already do in the face of stress, and what it costs me

AIM

Take an inventory of the person's usual ways of coping (solving, calming the emotion, seeking support, finding meaning, avoiding), of their short- and long-term effects, and broaden the repertoire.

WHO IT IS FOR

Chronic stress, avoidance, using substances to "keep going", people who always use the same strategy.

DURATION

20 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Introduce the five main families, without judging: each can be useful depending on the situation.
2. The person notes what they already do in each family.
3. For each way of acting: short- and long-term effect.
4. Choose a strategy to try from a little-used family.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Avoidance and some emotion-focused strategies (blaming oneself, wishing it would go away) are associated with poorer health (Penley et al., 2002); address them without blaming, looking for what they provide.

REFERENCES

Penley, J. A., Tomaka, J. & Wiebe, J. S. (2002). The association of coping to physical and psychological health outcomes: A meta-analytic review. Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 25(6), 551-603.

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Folkman, S., Lazarus, R. S., Dunkel-Schetter, C., DeLongis, A. & Gruen, R. J. (1986). Dynamics of a stressful encounter: Cognitive appraisal, coping, and encounter outcomes. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50(5), 992-1003.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 138 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

My coping toolbox

Everyone has their own ways of coping with stress. Some help in the moment and in the long run; others bring relief today but cost you tomorrow. Taking an inventory helps you keep what works and add tools.

1. For each family in the table, note what you already do.
2. Write the effect in the moment.
3. Write the effect a few days or weeks later.
4. Choose a tool to try from a family you use little.

Family	What I already do	Effect in the moment	Long-term effect

The tool I am adding to my box this week:

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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