

GUIDING YOUR CHILD THROUGH HEALTHY COPING

We can cope with our emotions in positive and negative ways. Here are some examples:

POSITIVE WAYS TO COPE

- ♥ Listening to music
- ♥ Talking to a trusted adult or friend
- ♥ Journaling
- ♥ Playing outside, bike riding, walking the dog
- ♥ Breathing exercise
- ♥ Eating a snack

NEGATIVE WAYS TO COPE

- ♥ Not talking about your feelings
- ♥ Throwing things
- ♥ Hitting someone
- ♥ Slamming doors
- ♥ Losing your temper
- ♥ Ignoring your stress

SHARE THESE WITH YOUR CHILD AND ASK WHAT ELSE THEY MIGHT ADD TO THE LIST!

Band-Aid Approaches

Any coping strategy, negative or positive, is only a short-term solution, and can be labeled as a Band-Aid approach.

As adults, we may cope with a glass of wine or binge-watch our favorite show – but we wouldn't want these activities to turn into long-term unhealthy habits.

The same is true for kids. Playing video games, eating ice cream, or hiding in their room may be an appropriate coping strategy every now and then – **but we don't want it to become a pattern.**

Help guide your child toward positive coping strategies to help them feel better now, in the short-term but also discuss solutions for eliminating the stressor which will relieve the stress long-term.

The Key to Coping is Moderation

If they choose a coping strategy which we might consider negative or unhealthy, don't shame them for that choice. If needed, talk to them about how unhealthy coping strategies may make things worse and affect us long-term.

With the right guidance, you can help the child in your life develop strong communication and problem solving skills.

