

My Coping Tool: How I Deal With Stress

Sometimes you can feel very stressed, angry, or upset. You may feel so out of control that you don't know what to do to feel calm again. Some people call this "feeling in crisis". It is important to have a plan for when this happens. "My Coping Tool" helps you and other people know what to do when you don't feel like your usual self.

How to use this tool

Who will fill out this form?

- You can fill this out by yourself, with your family doctor, or with someone who knows you well.

What should I do with this form when it is finished?

- Share a copy of the filled-in form with people who can help you when you do not feel like your usual self, such as family, friends, support workers, and your doctor.
- You or people around you can look at your filled-in *My Coping Tool* as soon as you start feeling very stressed, angry or upset. Everyone then knows what to do when this happens.

When should I fill in this form?

- Fill in *My Coping Tool* when you are not in crisis and feeling calm and like your usual self.
- Did you go to the hospital because you were feeling in crisis? Always talk to your doctor about your *My Coping Tool* after you come home from the hospital.

How to fill in this form?

When filling in this form, talk to people who know you well, such as family, support workers or doctor.*

The form has three parts:

- PART 1:** When you feel calm and like your usual self. You can list things you like to do, people you like to see or places you like to go. Also list the things that make you stressed, angry or upset.
- PART 2:** What happens when you start feeling very stressed, angry, upset or in crisis. List the things you and people around you can do when this happens.
- PART 3:** What you need after feeling in crisis. For example, some people need some time to be by themselves, they may be very tired. Some people feel calm quickly, and you would not know they were just very upset. List what works best for you.

Talk and write about what things are like for you when you are feeling calm or feeling in crisis, for example:

- What I think:** When you are feeling good, you might think: "I am a good person" or "I can take care of myself". When you are feel like you are in crisis, you might think "things will never get better" or "I don't want to listen to anyone".

- What I feel:** When you are feeling good, you might feel calm and laugh. When you are feeling in crisis, you might feel your heart beating quickly. You might feel very anxious or very angry with other people. Your body might feel hot or cold or tense.
- How I look:** When you are feeling good, you might like to move around, and you might smile. When you are feeling in crisis, you might stand very still and be quiet or you might yell or walk around in circles.
- What I say:** When you are feeling good, you might talk about things that you like to do. For example, you might say you love certain people. When you are feeling in crisis, you might swear or say you want to die or you want to hurt someone or hurt yourself.

You don't have to write something in every space in the form. Everyone will fill out their form differently. Some people already know what to do when they are starting to feel very stressed, angry or upset. Other people can go very fast from feeling like their usual self to feeling in crisis. For others this changes more slowly and they may not even notice this happening. Put in the form what it is like for you.

Other helpful tools

It is good to have the [My Hospital Form](#) filled out in case you have to go to the hospital when you are feeling in crisis. This form lets people in the hospital know about you and your health and how they can help you. You can fill it out with someone who knows you well when you feel calm and so it is ready in case you need to use it.

*** To caregivers:** Some people may not be able to answer these questions themselves and they may never look at this tool. Information written in a first-person voice is a respectful way of talking about someone, even if they can't read or understand what is written about them. Everyone expresses their emotional and mental state in their own specific way. Thus, the visuals used in this tool may not represent how the person would describe how they feel. Always take time to engage and encourage the person to express or describe their emotional and mental state in a way that makes sense to them.

My Coping Tool: How I Deal With Stress

Name:

Date:



Part 1: About me when I am feeling good, like my usual self

Do this at home with someone who knows you well. Bring PART 1 to your doctor's office when you do PART 2 and 3.

You can attach pictures, draw or write your answers.

Things I like doing

People I like seeing

Places I like going

Things I say or do

Things that make me feel stressed, angry or upset



Part 2a: When I start to feel more stress

Do this part with your doctor or the people that help you. You can attach pictures, draw or write your answers.

This is how I look, what I do, what I say
or what I feel in my body

What I can say or do to help myself

What others can say or do to help me

Part 2b: When I start to feel out of control or “in crisis”

Do this part with your doctor or the people that help you. You can attach pictures, draw or write your answers.

This is how I look, what I do, what I say
or what I feel in my body

What I can say or do to help myself

What others can say or do to help me

People I can call:

Name:

Phone number:

Places I can go:



Part 3: When I start to feel calmer or back in control again

Do this part with your doctor or the people that help you. You can attach pictures, draw or write your answers.

This is how I look, what I do, what I say or what I feel in my body

What I can say or do to help myself

What others can say or do to help me

People who have a copy of this tool:

Name:

Contact:

Name:

Contact:

In case of an emergency I will/you can call:

Name:

Contact:

Name:

Contact:

Supporting materials

My Hospital Form for Patients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Lunsky Y. & Niel U., with the Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Program of Surrey Place, Toronto, 2023 <https://ddprimarycare.surreyplace.ca/tools-2/mental-health/hospital-form/>

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