

## Before We Dive In, a Word on Coping

When there's so much going on that you don't have time to work through a series of worksheets, there's coping. Our definition of "coping" is: making this moment tolerable.

Coping strategies are an important part of preventing and recovering from burnout. If we think of burnout as a wound, it's easy to understand why we need to stop the bleeding, protect the injury, and ease the pain to allow healing. Pain causes stress, and stress causes pain, so let's just cut out that self-fulfilling situation and allow ourselves to ease the pain from time to time.

Yes, the goal of this workbook is to create long-term, overall healing, but sometimes you just need the moment to be more comfortable. You probably already know what your default coping strategies are. Let's look at the balance between the good consequences and the not-so-good consequences of some coping strategies, so you can make informed decisions about what will work for you. (For an in-depth example, see "How to Eat Your Feelings" in chapter 5.)

## Coping Strategies

Here's a chart with some examples of coping strategies, their potential outcomes, and space to write your own.

**In the blank space, identify one thing you notice yourself doing to cope with stress. Next, think of the good things it leads to, then of the not-so-good things it could also lead to. Reflect on what this means. (10 min)**

Coping Strategy	Good Outcomes	Not-So-Good Outcomes	Reflections
<b>Drinking alcohol</b>	<p>Temporarily numbing.</p> <p>Can be a connecting activity when shared in a community.</p> <p>Can be done at home.</p> <p>Very easy, basically zero effort.</p>	<p>Can interfere with judgment, which can lead to relationship conflicts or dangerous behaviors like driving.</p> <p>Can't be done while parenting.</p> <p>Interferes with sleep.</p> <p>Damages liver.</p> <p>Can dangerously interact with medications and supplements.</p> <p>Expensive.</p>	<p>An occasional drink or two, especially with a friend, can loosen a tight knot of stress, but this strategy is to be used with extreme caution and explicit limitations.</p>
<b>Binge-watching comfort TV</b>	<p>Temporarily numbing.</p> <p>Can enable cathartic laughter or crying.</p> <p>Can be done with friends or family.</p> <p>Can be done at home.</p> <p>Very easy, zero effort.</p> <p>Inexpensive or even free.</p>	<p>Time-consuming.</p> <p>Can isolate you from friends or family.</p> <p>Can't be done while kids need attention.</p>	<p>This strategy is useful when there is time, or when it can be shared with others.</p>

Coping Strategy	Good Outcomes	Not-So-Good Outcomes	Reflections
<b>Going for a run</b>	<p>Cathartic, completes the stress response cycle.</p> <p>Good for the heart, digestion, and mood.</p> <p>Can be done with others or alone.</p>	<p>Time-consuming.</p> <p>Must be done outside the house and requires tolerable weather. Otherwise, requires expensive indoor equipment or gym membership.</p> <p>Can't be done while parenting, except in limited circumstances.</p> <p>Hard on the body (exacerbates arthritis or aggravates old injuries).</p> <p>High effort.</p>	<p>This is a good strategy, but it requires a lot of resources.</p>

**Reflect on your go-to strategies that you wrote. Is this something you'll continue doing or do you want to balance your relationship to it?**

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