

Safe Coping Skills

1. **Ask for help** – Reach out to someone safe.
2. **Inspire yourself** – Carry something positive (e.g., a poem, photograph of a loved one, etc.)
3. **Leave a bad scene** – When things go wrong, get out. Avoid stress when possible.
4. **Persist** – Never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never give up.
5. **Honesty** – Secrets and lying are at the core of PTSD and substance abuse; honesty heals them.
6. **Cry** – Let yourself cry; the tears will not last forever.
7. **Take good care of your body** – Eat right, exercise, sleep, etc.
8. **Choose self-respect** – Choose whatever will make you like yourself tomorrow.
9. **List your options** – In any situation, you have choices.
10. **Create meaning** – Remind yourself what you are living for (e.g., your children, Love, Truth, Justice, God, etc.)
11. **Do the best with what you have** – Make the most of available opportunities.
12. **Set a boundary** – Say “no” to protect yourself.
13. **Compassion** – Listen to yourself with respect and care.
14. **When in doubt, do what’s hardest** – The most difficult path is invariably the right one.
15. **Talk yourself through it** – Self-talk helps in difficult times.
16. **Imagine** – Create a mental picture that helps you feel different (e.g., remember a safe place.)
17. **Notice a choice point** – In slow motion, notice the exact moment when you chose a behavior that will make things worse (e.g., drinking, drugging, cutting, overdosing, etc.)
18. **Pace yourself** – If overwhelmed, go slower; if stagnant, go faster.

36. **Notice the cost** – What is the price of substance abuse, cutting, overdosing, impulsive spending, etc. in your life?
37. **Structure your day** – A productive schedule keeps you on track and connected to the world.
38. **Set an action plan** – Be specific, set a deadline, and let supportive others know about it.
39. **Protect yourself** – Put up a shield against destructive people, bad environments, and habits that “make the situation worse”.
40. **Soothing talk** – Talk to yourself very gently (as if to a friend or a small child.)
41. **Think of the consequences** – Really see the impact of your actions for tomorrow, next week, next year.
42. **Trust the process** – Just keep moving forward; the only way out is through.
43. **Work the material** – The more you practice and participate, the quicker the healing.
44. **Expect growth to feel uncomfortable** – If it feels awkward or difficult, you are doing it right.
45. **Replace destructive activities with healthy ones** – Exercise instead of getting high; help others instead of hurt yourself.
46. **Pretend you like yourself** – See how different this shift in attitude will make you day feel.
47. **Focus on now** – Do what you can to make today better; don’t get overwhelmed by the past or future.
48. **Praise yourself** – Notice what you did right; this is the most powerful method of growth.
49. **Observe repeating patterns** – Try to notice and understand your re-enactments.
50. **Self-nurture** – Do something that you enjoy (e.g., take a walk, see a movie, etc.)
51. **Practice Delay** – If you can’t totally prevent a self-destructive act, at least delay it as long as possible.

- 72. Fight the trigger** – Take an active approach to protect yourself.
- 73. Notice the source** – Before you accept criticism or advice, notice who is telling it to you.
- 74. Make a decision** – If you are stuck, try choosing the best solution you can right now; don't wait.
- 75. Do the right thing** – Do what you know will help you, even if you don't feel like it.