

Alternative Coping Strategies

A number of young people report that they find alternative coping strategies and techniques useful. However it is extremely important to recognise the need for individual techniques otherwise this approach will not work. Some of the most useful alternative coping strategies used by a range of young people include:

Distraction Techniques	Comforting Techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning• Tidying• Washing clothes• Playing games – cards/board games/ computer• Sports exercise• Walking/running/dance• Gardening/plants• Visiting a friend• Telephoning a friend• Painting or drawing pictures/posters/cards• Writing letters• Puzzles• Watching TV/DVD• Listening to music/walkman• Cinema• Shopping• Hobbies – sewing, knitting, collecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold a safe object• Sit in a safe place• Listen to soothing music• Sing favourite songs• Use perfume/hand cream• Spray room with fragrance• Use potpourri• Buy fresh flowers• Eat a favourite food• Have a soothing drink• Have a bubble bath• Soak your feet• Change the sheets on your bed• Stroke your pet• Wear comfortable clothes• Hug someone• Put lights on (to sleep)• Prayer

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Positive Emotional Techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read old letters• Look through old photos• Listen to emotional music• Watch funny/heart-warming film• Read joke book• Say positive statements to self• Make an emergency bundle• Read your list of assets or strengths• Self-voice tape	Emotional Focusing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• List emotional triggers• Write poetry/prose regarding feelings• Paint/draw emotions• Write a diary• Discuss feelings with another person• Rainy Day letter
Relaxation Techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided fantasy dreamtime• Focus solely on breathing/breath deeply• Count your breaths• Focus on the position of your body• Relax each muscle individually• Listen to relaxation music• Listen to guided relaxation on tape• Meditation• Yoga• Massage hands, feet, head etc.	Alternative 'Safer' Forms of Self-Harm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold ice in hand• Squeeze rubber ball• Listen to very loud music• Rubber band on wrist• Throw things/scream, punch cushions• Body paint• Stand under very hot/cold shower• Break sticks