



PENNY HOLBURN COACHING

It's about You and Results

6 Coping methods for when it all gets too much

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No matter how much people may try and make every day great, every day is not a good day. You can utilise every tool you know for positive thinking and problem solving, but some days will just suck. Being competent to life means learning how to get through those days. And that means knowing what you can do to make it a bit easier to survive those down times.

Below are six coping methods. Some will ring true for you, and some won't. Some you will read and think to yourself, "There is no way I could ever do that". In which case you won't do it. Others you will read and think to yourself, "That is something I could do". Find something that works. Find a combination of things that work. The techniques below are to help you find your own way out of difficult situations, and there is tons of research to show that these methods really do help. Learning these skills can make the rough times a bit better. And who wouldn't want that?



1. **Distraction**. Distraction is a way of focusing on something else to take your mind off what is worrying you. Some methods could be: Finding someone to talk to; listening to the radio or watching TV or a movie; reading a book; playing a game; doing a crossword puzzle; making lists; cleaning; gardening; participating in a hobby. The advantage of

distraction is it gives your mind a break from whatever is on your mind. It is good for short term relief in a crisis. What it doesn't do though is solve the problem, so use distraction as a short term measure to calm down and regroup, and when you feel better you can go back to addressing the real issue.

2. **Grounding.** Grounding is a way of getting out of your head when thoughts and fears get out of control. Grounding literally brings you back to your senses and the physical world around you. Take time to notice in detail the colours around you. Smell the air. Feel the sun on your skin. Walk around the lawn barefoot and take in the texture of the earth. Play with sand or clay. Touch and feel objects. Grounding is very good for when you are feeling floaty or numb (dissociated) and can help with panic and traumatic states.

3. **Emotional Release.** Without causing any harm to yourself or others, or to anyone's property, just let your emotions out. Yell, scream, cry, laugh, sob, laugh or shout. Go for a fast walk or run. Punch the pillows. Dig a hole in the garden. Jump up and down. Do something that allows your emotions to come out. If you use this method be aware that it is not appropriate in every situation. Preferably do this when you are alone.

4. **Thought challenging.** Whatever you are feeling, you are thinking thoughts that make you feel that way. If you feel anxious or depressed then write down all the thoughts going through your mind. Read through this list and identify which of your thoughts are negative and disempowering. Then challenge them. If you are thinking, "My life is such a mess", recognise that is not true. Your day might be horrible. Your morning might have gone badly. There are some things in your life that may not be working. But, your whole life cannot be a mess. That is a general all or nothing thought that makes you more unhappy than you need to be. Come up with more rational and empowering thoughts. Cognitive reframing as this is sometimes called is a great skill to have. You are doing your own cognitive therapy.

5. **Care for yourself.** Do something nice just for you. You could have a massage, buy and read a great book, relax in a hot bath, have your hair done, eat a favourite meal, go to a special restaurant. Bad times can sometimes serve as a reminder to us to take care of ourselves. If you struggle with feelings of shame this can be hard to do. You might feel silly engaging in self-care. But it's not silly. Taking care of yourself sends a message to you (and others) that you are worth being cared for and therefore a valuable and worthy human being.

6. **Take care of others.** Helping others does make us feel better most of the time. Volunteer for good causes, buy and distribute food to a poor family, smile at others, compliment someone, perform random acts of kindness. Doing good things for others can help us feel good and take our focus away from our own troubles. But beware of overdoing it. Some people naturally gravitate to a rescuer role and get so involved with helping others they completely neglect their own needs.