

Coping with the stress and strains of another person's substance use

The capacity to 'cope' with (them) much as one would attempt to cope with any difficult and complex 'task' in life. This incorporates the idea of being active in the face of adversity, of effective problem solving, of being an agent in one's own destiny, of *not* being powerless.

Engaged coping:

Engaging in trying to change a relative's substance use in a variety of ways that may be emotional, assertive, controlling or supportive

- Made it quite clear to him/her that their drinking/use of drugs was causing you upset and that it had got to change
- Tried to limit his/her drinking/use of drugs by making some rule about it, for example forbidding drinking/use of drugs in the house
- Stopping him/her bringing drinking/drug-using friends home
- Made clear to him/her your expectations of what he/she should do to contribute to the family
- Made it clear that you won't accept his/her reasons for drinking/using drugs, or cover up for them
- Started an argument with him/her about their drinking/use of drugs

Tolerant – inactive coping:

Putting up with a relative's substance use, accepting it, making sacrifices in the face of it or encouraging it

- When things have happened as a result of drinking/use of drugs, made excuses for him/her, covered up for them
- Taken the blame yourself
- Felt too frightened to do anything
- Got into a state where you didn't or couldn't make any decision
- Felt too hopeless to do anything
- Tried to keep things looking normal, pretended all was well when it wasn't
- Hidden the extent of his/her drinking/use of drugs?

Withdrawal coping:

Withdrawing from the relative or engaging in activities independently of the relative

- Got on with your own things
- Acted as if he/she wasn't there
- Sometimes put yourself first by looking after yourself or giving yourself treats
- When he/she was under the influence of drink/drugs, left him/her alone to look after themselves or kept out of their way
- Put the interests of other members of the family before him/her
- Pursued your own interests or looked for new interests or occupation for yourself, or got more involved in a political, church, sports or other organisation

Creative solutions to circumstances that are appraised as difficult to change

Coping mechanisms:

- Acting out: not coping – giving in to the pressure to misbehave.
- Adaption: The human ability to adapt.
- Aim Inhibition: lowering sights to what seems more achievable.
- Altruism: Helping others to help self.
- Attack: trying to beat down that which is threatening you.
- Avoidance: mentally or physically avoiding something that causes distress.
- Compartmentalisation: separating conflicting thoughts into separated compartments.
- Compensation: making up for a weakness in one area by gaining strength in another.
- Conversion: subconscious conversion of stress into physical symptoms.
- Crying: Tears of release and seeking comfort.
- Denial: refusing to acknowledge that an event has occurred.
- Displacement: shifting of intended action to a safer target.
- Dissociation: separating oneself from parts of your life.
- Emotionality: Outbursts and extreme emotion.
- Fantasy: escaping reality into a world of possibility.
- Help-Rejecting Complaining: Ask for help then reject it.
- Idealization: playing up the good points and ignoring limitations of things desired.
- Identification: copying others to take on their characteristics.
- Intellectualisation: avoiding emotion by focusing on facts and logic.
- Introjection: Bringing things from the outer world into the inner world.
- Passive Aggression: avoiding refusal by passive avoidance.

- Performing Rituals: Patterns that delay.
- Post Traumatic Growth: Using the energy of trauma for good.
- Projection: seeing your own unwanted feelings in other people.
- Provocation: Get others to act so you can retaliate.
- Rationalisation: creating logical reasons for bad behaviour.
- Reaction Formation: avoiding something by taking a polar opposite position.
- Repression: subconsciously hiding uncomfortable thoughts.
- Self-Harming: physically damaging the body.
- Somatization: psychological problems turned into physical symptoms.
- Sublimation: channelling psychic energy into acceptable activities.
- Substitution: Replacing one thing with another.
- Suppression: consciously holding back unwanted urges.
- Symbolisation: turning unwanted thoughts into metaphoric symbols.
- Trivialising: Making small what is really something big.
- Undoing: actions that psychologically 'undo' wrongdoings for the wrongdoer.