

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## COPING WITH EMOTIONS (SM-41)



Sometimes emotions become too much to handle. Often people use coping strategies (defense mechanisms) consciously or unconsciously.

Sometimes coping strategies can protect you from painful events, but even if overused they can stunt emotional growth. If you depend on these strategies too much, you may not learn to express your true feelings.

**DIRECTIONS:** Below are common coping strategies and their definitions. After studying these, take the "I Hope I Can Cope" quiz (see SM-42).

1. **DENIAL**—refusing an emotion or problem.  
Ex. Your boyfriend/girlfriend breaks up with you, but you act as though nothing is wrong. When people ask if you are okay, you laugh and say you're not upset at all.
2. **IDENTIFICATION**—assuming the qualities of someone that you admire.  
Ex. You admire your older cousin so much that you begin to dress, talk, and act like him.
3. **COMPENSATION**—making up for weakness in one area by excelling in another area.  
Ex. You got cut from a sports team at school so you make up for it by becoming the captain of the debate team.
4. **RATIONALIZATION**—making excuses for actions or feelings.  
Ex. You copy the answers to a test from a classmate. You figure it's no big deal because it wasn't a major test.
5. **PROJECTION**—putting your own faults onto another person.  
Ex. You get benched during a hockey game because you are not playing well. You blame the coach, saying she didn't teach you the right things.
6. **DAYDREAMING**—fantasizing to escape unpleasant reality.  
Ex. You wish you were a good musician. You imagine being the lead singer in your own rock band.
7. **DISPLACEMENT**—transferring emotions from the original source to another.  
Ex. You are arguing with your parents so you slam your bedroom door.
8. **REACTION FORMATION**—behaving in a manner opposite to the way you are feeling.  
Ex. You feel guilty about drinking. To hide your feelings you brag to your friends about how much you drank.
9. **REGRESSION**—reverting to immature behavior to express emotions.  
Ex. You are mad at your sister for wearing your clothes. You scream and cry to your parents and run into your room.
10. **SUBLIMATION**—directing your energy into a useful rather than an unacceptable goal.  
Ex. You are a naturally aggressive person. You join the wrestling team.