

Skill Set for Difficult Times

These skills are designed to help you manage and cope when life gets tough.

Coping Strategies

- **Breathing Focus:** Pay attention to your breathing. Count each breath and experiment with different breathing rhythms.
- **Body Tension Release:** Tense one muscle group at a time for 10 seconds, then relax it. Move to another area (e.g., fists, face).
- **Sensory Awareness:** Focus on your senses. Identify and describe one thing you experience with each sense (e.g., smell, hearing).
- **Reach Out:** Call a friend or a support line for connection.
- **10-Minute Rule:** Delay any harmful action by 10 minutes. When time is up, commit to another 10 minutes.
- **Creative Thinking:** Pick an object and think of 30 different ways it could be used.
- **Object Description:** Select an object and describe its attributes like shape, weight, and colour.
- **Word Challenge:** Think of as many words as you can that start with the same letter.
- **Self-Talk:** Speak to yourself calmly and encouragingly.
- **Alphabet Challenge:** Try reciting the alphabet backwards.
- **Music Therapy:** Listen to music that soothes or uplifts you.
- **Distraction Techniques:** Play a game on your phone or another device.
- **Explore:** Think of a person or object, and look up more information online.
- **Entertainment:** Watch a movie or TV series you enjoy.
- **Organise:** Sort items at home by size, colour, or type.
- **Clean Up:** Tidy up your space to help clear your mind.
- **Cold Water Therapy:** Take a cold shower or splash cold water on your face.
- **Balance Exercise:** Stand on something unstable and focus on keeping your balance.
- **Bead Sorting:** Mix different coloured beads in a jar, then sort them.
- **Reading:** Dive into a book, newspaper, or comic.
- **Self-Care:** Paint your nails, apply a face mask, or take a relaxing bath.
- **Detailed Drawing:** Focus on drawing something with intricate detail.

Expressing Strong Emotions

- **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings to gain clarity.
- **Unsent Letters:** Write a letter to someone who has upset you, whether or not you plan to send it.
- **Alternative Coping:** Apply a bandage to an area where you might otherwise harm yourself.
- **Body Art:** Paint on your body as a form of creative expression.
- **Paper Shredding:** Tear paper into tiny pieces to release frustration.
- **Pillow Scream:** Scream into or punch a pillow to let out pent-up energy.
- **Dance it Out:** Dance to your favourite music to release emotions.
- **Balloon Popping:** Inflate and burst balloons as a symbolic release.

Managing Negative Emotions

- **Do the Opposite:** When the urge to harm arises, choose a comforting or pleasurable activity instead.
- **Positive Reflection:** Look in the mirror and list the body parts or personal qualities you appreciate most.
- **Animal Interaction:** Spend time playing or cuddling with pets.
- **Pause and Reflect:** Before you act on self-harm urges, ask yourself:
 - What am I feeling right now?
 - Why do I feel this way?
 - Why do I want to harm myself?
 - Have I faced this situation before? What worked, and what didn't?
 - How would I feel immediately after harming myself? How about later?
 - Is there something else I can try before resorting to self-harm?
 - Do I truly want or need to harm myself?