



# **Coping and Caring**

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# Main Topics

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- Coping Skills
- Social Support
- Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

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# Coping Skills



# Coping Skills

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- Identify your coping skills
    - Everyone already has some coping skills
  - Be intentional about using your coping skills
    - It's not enough to *have* coping skills—you need to *use* them
  - Consider whether you need to develop additional coping skills
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# Coping Skills

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- If you want to develop additional coping skills
    - Start exploring
    - Keep an open mind
    - Think about new coping skills as an “experiment”
  - Coping skills are not one-size-fits-all
    - What coping skills work well for you?
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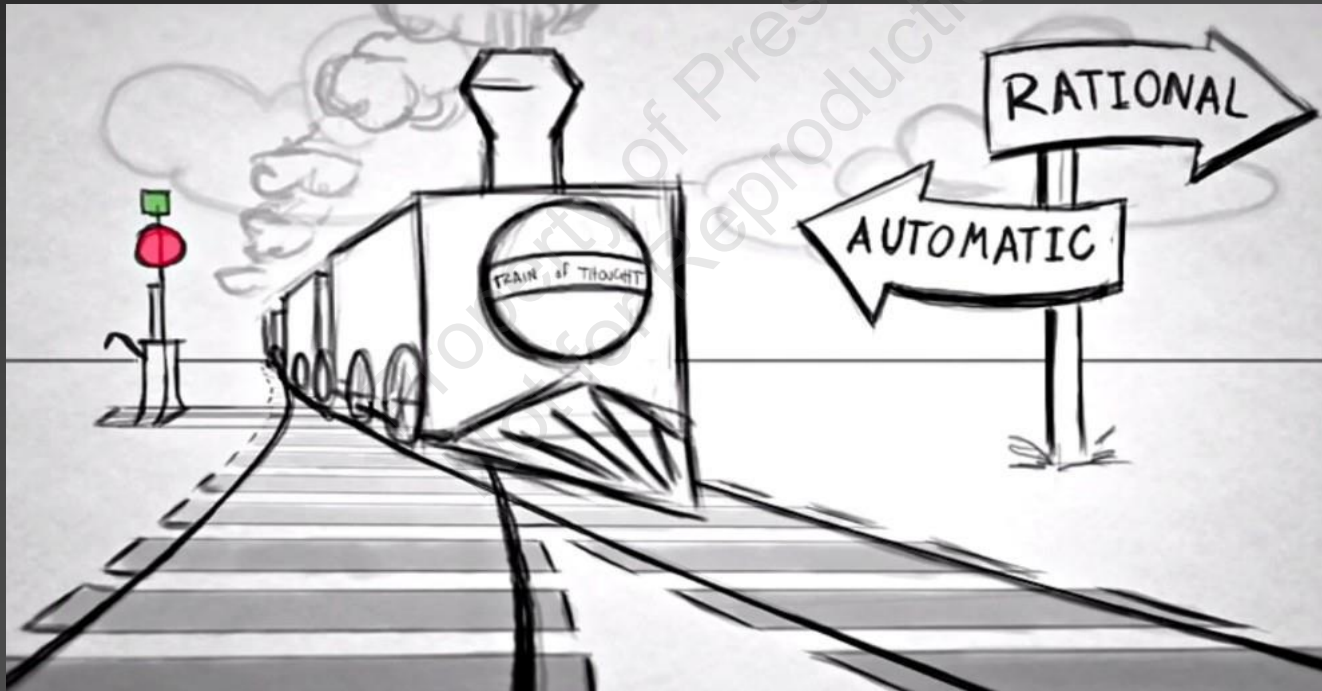
# Coping Skills

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- Coping skills include:
    - Activities that you do
    - Ways of thinking about stressful situations
      - Having a sense of humor *is* a coping skill
      - Focusing on the present
        - Making concrete plans for the future is helpful
        - General worrying about the future is not helpful
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# Coping Skills

- Be aware of your automatic thoughts



# Illness-Specific Coping Skills

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- When you have a chronic illness, you may have a limited ability to use some of your existing coping skills
    - For example: fatigue gets in the way of being as physically active as you used to be
  - It is okay to mourn the losses
  - Be flexible—develop new coping skills as needed, so that you have a broad range of coping skills
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# Illness-Specific Coping Skills

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- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
    - Developed by Jon Kabat Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in the 1970s
    - Described in *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat Zinn
    - Formal programs available in-person and online
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# Illness-Specific Coping Skills

- Can you lighten your load/simplify your life?



# Illness-Specific Coping Skills

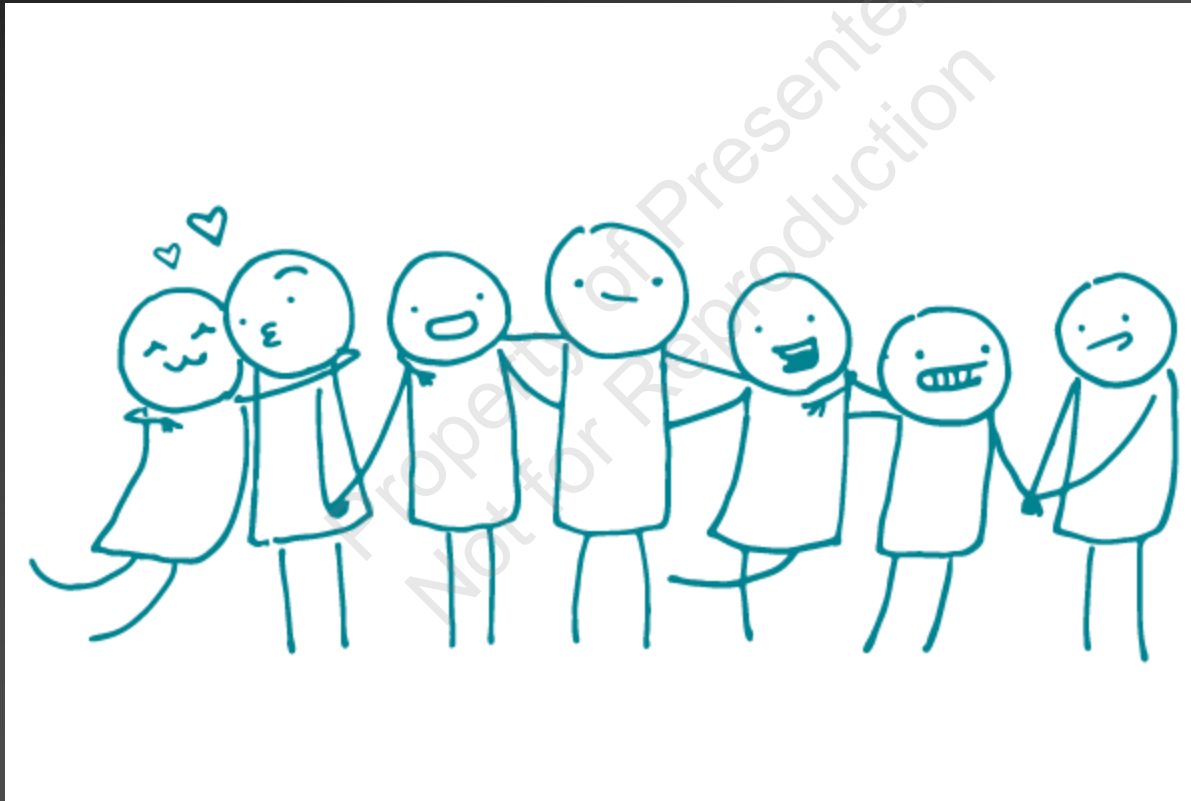
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- Whenever possible, focus on controllable rather than uncontrollable aspects of the situation
  - Coping strategies for controllable situations
    - Seek information
    - Set goals
    - Make plans/decisions
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# Illness-Specific Coping Skills

- What to do about uncontrollable aspects of the situation?
  - Really, the goal here is to manage the challenging emotions that are evoked by the situation
  - Look for ways to:
    - Accept/Make peace with the situation
    - Distract yourself with activities that make you feel better
    - Allow yourself to worry ON A LIMITED BASIS
      - You can go there, just don't park there
    - Talk with other people

# Social Support



# Social Support

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- Do you have enough people in your life?
    - Do you have people to have fun with?
    - Do you have people to be sad with?
  - Do you allow other people to support you?
  - Do you feel isolated? Or do you feel connected?
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# Social Support

- Being diagnosed with a chronic illness is like being sent to live in a foreign country



# Social Support

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- Who do you invite to visit you?
  - You will have to “educate” visitors
    - This can take some energy, but it is worth spending the energy
  - You are in control
    - You get to decide how much information about your health condition you want to share
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# Depression and Anxiety



# Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

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- Sometimes—even with excellent coping skills and great social support—you will probably feel upset or worried
  - How can you distinguish normal fluctuations in mood from diagnosable depression or anxiety?
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# Symptoms of Depression

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- Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day
  - Decreased interest or pleasure in activities
  - Fatigue or energy loss
  - Decreased ability to think or concentrate
  - Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
  - Appetite loss/gain or weight loss/gain
  - Sleep changes (sleeping too little or too much)
  - Increase or reduction in physical movements due to inner restlessness or tension
  - Recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying)
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# Symptoms of Anxiety

- Excessive anxiety and worry about a variety of events and situations, more days than not, for at least 6 months
- Difficulty controlling the anxiety
- Additional symptoms
  - Wound-up, tense, restless
  - Easily fatigued or worn out
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Irritability
  - Muscle tension
  - Difficulty with sleep

# Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

- These symptoms do not “count” if you are experiencing them due to:
  - Your medical condition
  - The medications you are taking to treat your medical condition

# Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety: “Normal” vs “Clinical Problem”

- Being sad or worried is normal
  - You can go there, just don't park there



# Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety: “Normal” vs “Clinical Problem”

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- How do you know when symptoms are beyond what is normal?
    - Do symptoms interfere with work, activities, relationships, or sleep?
    - Do you feel stuck?
  - When in doubt, seek evaluation/treatment
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# Treatment is Always an Option





# Treatment Resources

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- Talk with your physician
    - Primary care
    - Pulmonologist
    - Psychiatrist
  - Contact your health insurance company
    - Ask for behavioral health or mental health providers
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# Treatment Resources

- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
  - [www.abct.org](http://www.abct.org)
  - 212-647-1890
- American Psychological Association
  - [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)
  - 800-964-2000
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
  - [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org)
  - 703-838-9808
- American Psychiatric Association
  - [www.psychiatry.org/](http://www.psychiatry.org/)
  - 703-907-7300

# Some Final Thoughts

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- Coping skills
    - Make the most of your existing coping skills
    - When developing additional coping skills, experiment and keep an open mind
  - Social support
    - It may take energy to “educate” people about your experience with NTM, but it is worth it
    - The goal is to feel connected rather than isolated
  - Symptoms of depression and anxiety
    - Medications are useful and talk therapy is useful
      - Start with what you are most comfortable with
    - Talk therapy can also address coping skills and social support
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# Questions, Comments?

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