# Coping Strategies 2

### Active or direct coping

* directly focuses on resolving the problem *(active problem-focused coping)* or the emotional consequences of the problem *(active emotion focused coping)*. Active coping directly deals with aspects of the situation.

### Passive coping

* refers to behaviours used to avoid dealing directly with the situation. *Passive problem focused* strategies involve behavioural avoidance and cognitive avoidance.

**Behavioural avoidance** – action taken to avoid an uncomfortable person, place, or activity

**Cognitive avoidance** – distraction from or denial of the problem at hand, doing little to change the nature of the problem

Passive strategies often feel good in the short term and can be helpful. In the long run they are generally ineffective and in extreme cases may be harmful. Sometimes a passive strategy can be effective in managing an initial stress but needs to then be replaced by an active strategy which positively addresses the issue.



Exercise: Matching coping responses to a situation

* Identify a difficult current situation in your life and its related reactions
* Break the situations into problem-focused (controllable) and emotion-focused (uncontrollable) aspects (there may be several of each)
* Develop potential coping strategies for each aspect (make sure they are active strategies)
* Set goals and priorities for each aspect of the situation

Check through the following Reminder Sheet:



Active Coping Strategies Reminder Sheet

**Problem focused (for controllable aspects of stressors)**

* Seeking information
* Making decisions
* Resolving conflict
* Setting goals, prioritizing
* Requesting help (e.g. with activities)
* Using focused activities ( e.g. altering the situation when possible)

**Emotion focused (for uncontrollable aspects of stressors)**

* Reappraising thoughts
* Reframing thoughts
* Recognizing and accepting negative emotions
* Seeking emotional support
* Exercising, getting massages
* Using relaxation exercises and meditation

**Passive Coping Strategies**

Avoid these behaviours as they may have detrimental *long- term* consequences

* Ignoring the problem
* Procrastinating
* Denying the problem exists
* Giving up
* Eating, drinking, or smoking to numb feelings
* Over- or under- medicating
* Keeping feelings inside (not talking to others about what you feel or need)