



My coping skills plan

Rate how you feel, tick skills from six groups, choose a top few and write an if-then plan. For hard days, not a diagnosis. If you are struggling most days, see a GP.

01 Before I start

This sheet is for hard days. If any of these is true, set the sheet aside and get help first.

Get help first if:

- ☐ I have chest pain, trouble breathing or fainting (call 999 (UK) or 911 (US); use NHS 111 if you are unsure)
- ☐ I am having thoughts of harming myself or ending my life (Samaritans 116 123 in the UK and Ireland, 988 in the US, findahelpline.com)
- ☐ Someone I live with or depend on scares me or controls me (National Domestic Abuse Helpline in England 0808 2000 247, Scotland 0800 027 1234, Wales 0808 80 10 800, Northern Ireland 0808 802 1414, US 1-800-799-7233; see selfgrowth.org/help)
- ☐ I am struggling most days, or a low mood or worry is not lifting (book a GP appointment)

The person or line I will turn to first if I need to:

02 How am I doing right now?

A quick, honest check. There is no right number.

How hard does this feel right now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Fine

As hard as it gets

What is making today hard, in a few words?

Keep it to yourself and your own situation. Leave out other people's names and details.

What do I feel in my body, and what do I feel like doing?

03 Calm down, distract and connect

Three groups for when you need relief now. Calm skills settle your body. Distraction gives your mind a break. Connection puts someone alongside you.

Calm down. Tick the ones I have used or want to try:

- ☐ Slow breathing: out for longer than I breathe in
- ☐ A warm shower or a warm drink
- ☐ Dropping my shoulders and unclenching my jaw and hands
- ☐ Sitting somewhere quiet, or somewhere with soft light
- ☐ Holding something with a texture I like

Distract. Tick the ones I have used or want to try:

- ☐ A show, film or podcast
- ☐ Music I know well
- ☐ A puzzle, a game or a crossword
- ☐ Tidying one small space
- ☐ Cooking, drawing, or something I can do with my hands

Connect. Tick the ones I have used or want to try:

- ☐ Texting or calling someone I trust
- ☐ Sitting near someone, even without talking
- ☐ Going somewhere with other people in it, like a cafe or a library
- ☐ Telling someone I am having a hard day
- ☐ Spending time with a pet

Skill from these groups I tried, and what happened:

04 Move and look after the basics

Two groups that make the next hour or two easier. Pick movement that suits your body today, and skip anything your doctor has told you to avoid.

Move. Tick the ones I have used or want to try:

- ☐ A short walk outside
- ☐ Stretching
- ☐ Dancing in the kitchen
- ☐ Any gentle movement I can manage

Look after the basics. Tick the ones I have used or want to try:

- ☐ A drink of water
- ☐ Something to eat
- ☐ Going to bed a bit earlier, or resting
- ☐ Fresh air or daylight
- ☐ Taking my usual medication as prescribed

Skill from these groups I tried, and what happened:

05 Make it better

Some hard days come with a problem you can do something about. This group is for working on the problem, not only getting through it.

Is there part of this I can act on? What is it?

Tick the ones I could try:

- ☐ Break it into a smaller first step
- ☐ Write down two or three options, then pick one
- ☐ Ask someone for practical help or advice
- ☐ Choose a time to do the step, rather than leaving it open
- ☐ Decide that part of this is outside my control, and leave it for now

My next step, and when I will do it:

A thought that feels heavy, or a fear that keeps coming back:

If it is about harming yourself or ending your life, thoughts like these are serious: call Samaritans on 116 123 (UK and Ireland), 988 (US), or find a line at findahelpline.com.

06 How do I feel now?

Re-rate. It does not need to reach the bottom. Lower is a real result, and so is no change: it tells you that skill is not for you today.

How hard does this feel now?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fine					As hard as it gets				

What helped most, and what did nothing?

07 My top skills and my plan

Pick the skills that helped most, ideally from more than one group, then decide now what you will do next time.

My top coping skills

A few is plenty. Try to include one for calming down and one for making things better.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

If-then plan

If I notice...

A sign, a place or a time of day

Then I will...

One skill from my top list

08 When I used a skill

A short log shows you what works for you. Rate before and after, 1 to 10.

When Day, and what was happening	Before 1 to 10	Skill I tried	After 1 to 10
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- Which group of skills helped you most today: calm down, distract, connect, move, basics or make it better?
- Do you tend to reach for the same skill every time? Which group could you add?
- Is there a problem under today that you could act on, even in a small way?
- Who could you tell about a hard day, and what would you want from them?
- If hard days are coming thick and fast, who could you talk to about it?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life. Fill it in online and it saves as you go: selfgrowth.org/worksheets/coping-skills-worksheet



If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at findahelpline.com. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.