



## Developing Positive Coping Skills for Parents and Youth

Positive coping skills help us achieve balance in our lives. Today we're going to discuss ideas for how to develop these skills in each area of balance.

### Physical Balance:

**Nutrition**—Try to eat healthy foods whenever possible. A treat now and again is fine, but our brain and body thrive on good nutrition. Hydrate with non-caffeinated drinks whenever possible.

**Movement**-- Our bodies were meant to move! Take movement breaks each hour throughout the day to get the blood pumping and remove any stress chemicals from our bodies.

**Sleep**-- Aim for 8 hours of quality sleep a night. Sleep is a restorative activity that is essential for our bodies. Try relaxation exercises, calming music and/or meditation if you have sleep challenges.

### Emotional Balance:

**Acknowledge and label feeling**—Try to identify when you're having a feeling, what the feeling is and why you're having the feeling. Putting a word with the feeling that is present in your body is the first step in dealing with a strong feeling.

**How do we get strong feelings out in a healthy way?** Everyone has feelings. Feelings are okay. It's what we do with these feelings that may or may not be okay. Find positive ways to express feelings such as physical activity, music, breathing, counting to ten, etc.

### Mental Balance:

**Combat irrational thinking (stinking thinking)**—When we are stressed, we sometimes have irrational thoughts and behaviors—things we wouldn't normally think, say or do. Common examples of irrational thoughts include all or nothing thinking (perfectionism), jumping to conclusions, and "shoulds." Way to change these thoughts include accepting that things aren't perfect, checking the facts/getting the information and having realistic expectations.

**Coping self-talk**—Saying or thinking positive things when we're stressed is a great way to calm down. Statements like "Relax" "I can handle this" "This isn't that big a deal" and others can be written down to repeat or think when things get stressful.

**Social Balance:**

**Be bold in asking for what you need socially**—Do not assume that everyone is going to want to socialize the way that you do. Do you need regular phone calls, texts, emails, video chats to stay connected? Ask for them. Allow others to be at their best by telling them what you need. Learn new ways to connect with others if necessary.

**Spiritual Balance:**

**What gives you purpose?** Find times during the day to do the things that are most important to you and give you a sense of belonging to community and the world.

**How can you give back?** We can create a sense of calm in ourselves by giving back to others. Think about the ways to support others in your family and community. Is it by inspiring others? Doing tasks for someone who can't do them for themselves? Showing you care through cards, pictures, etc.? Donating to a valued cause? Giving back ultimately gives something to ourselves.