# COPING SKILLS TOOLBOX

Coping skills are strategies you use to manage or minimize stress and overcome challenges in your everyday life. These coping skills can be either healthy or unhealthy; positive or negative. **Healthy coping skills** tend to contribute positively to your mental or physical health in the long-term, but they may not provide immediate gratification. On the other hand, **unhealthy coping skills** often feel helpful and good in the moment but affect your mental or physical health negatively in the long-term.

Building a coping toolbox is a great way to make it easier to choose positive coping strategies when you're in difficult situations. A **coping toolbox** is an actual physical container, which contains items to help you calm down and manage stressful or challenging situations in a healthier manner. This toolbox may include items such as fidget toys or a stress ball, your favourite book, pictures of happy moments in your life, a colouring book with pencil crayons, a journal and writing supplies, or inspirational quotes. For coping strategies that are not associated with a physical object, like breathing exercises or visualizations, create index cards that provide a visual cue or instructions for the strategy.
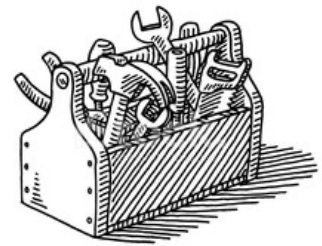
Your Task...

Is to build a coping toolbox with 5-8 meaningful items that you can use to positively cope with stressful situations or uncomfortable feelings. For each item, write 2-3 sentences explaining when or how you should use it and why it's helpful.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Silly putty or other fidget toys
- Journal and writing supplies
- Mindfulness colouring books and colouring supplies
- Favourite book
- A note with the names and phone numbers of family and friends
- Scented lotion, candles, or essential oils
- A bucket list of future goals and tangible reminders of those goals
- A scrapbook or just pictures of happy moments from your life
- Inspirational quotes
- Headphones to listen to music

Remember that these are just a couple of ideas to get you started. Try to include items that are personal, meaningful and effective for you.