

Unhealthy Coping Skills

- **Drinking alcohol or using drugs:** Substances may temporarily numb your pain, but they create more problems than they solve such as addiction, financial and legal problems, and relational conflict.
- **Overeating:** Food is a common coping mechanism. Overeating can bring a sense of comfort or restricting your eating can bring a sense of control, but these both produce an unhealthy relationship with food along with potential health or weight issues.
- **Sleeping too much:** Many people sleep to avoid their problems. It can bring a temporary escape but when you awake your problems will still be there and you may then also have feelings of guilt or shame from avoiding them.
- **Venting to others:** Talking about your problems with others can make you feel understood and supported. However, if you're only expressing how bad the situation is or how awful you feel, venting can leave you stuck there.
- **Overspending:** "Retail therapy" is another common coping strategy people use, which makes you feel good from buying something. This, too, can create an unhealthy relationship with money and possessions, as well as causing financial destruction.
- **Avoidance:** Any behavior, even if it is healthy, that you use to escape your problems and never return to them to resolve them can become unhealthy. It's okay to take a break from them for a time, but avoidance only prolongs your facing them and can even make them worse.



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