



CHAPTER 18

Additional Coping Techniques

One cannot collect all the beautiful shells on the beach. One can collect only a few...

—Anne Morrow Lindbergh

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon reading this chapter, the reader will be able to:

1. Define and explain the term social orchestration.
2. Explain the importance of strong support groups as a positive coping skill.
3. Explain why hobbies are thought to be an effective coping skill.
4. Explain why forgiveness is thought to be an effective coping skill.
5. Explain why dream therapy is thought to be an effective coping skill.
6. Explain why prayer and faith are thought to be effective coping skills.
7. Explain why body tapping (EFT) is thought to be an effective coping skill.

According to several psychologists, just as there are many shells on the beach, there are hundreds of coping techniques. Some fall nicely into well-defined categories; others do not but are every bit as important in their function and outcome. Much like acquiring a personal collection of seashells, chances are you will choose a handful of coping strategies for your own stress management program and leave the rest behind. And just as a return to the beach may inspire you to pick up a new shell, which at another time seemed unattractive or banal, a new encounter with stress may entice you to select a new method of coping. This chapter outlines a number of coping techniques that are often used to deal with stress effectively. Although

they may not serve as your first line of defense in every case, at some point in your life you may find them helpful (**Fig. 18.1**).

Information Seeking

Fear of the unknown accompanies many formidable stressors, from job interviews to cancer diagnoses. Several circumstances we encounter are perceived as threats because of our lack of information about the event. Lack of information allows the mind to fill in missing pieces with hypothetical facts or worst-case scenarios, which often perpetuates the stress response. To conquer fear of the unknown, gathering



Figure 18.1 Never underestimate the power of support groups.

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information about a specific circumstance becomes one of the best defenses against stressors. **Information seeking** involves collecting and processing facts about a stressful event or situation, which can then be used to help solve the problem and regain emotional stability. As suggested by psychologist Shelly Taylor (2020), the gathering and processing of information also allows mastery of control because knowledge can become a powerful tool with which to confront and dismantle a stressor.

Information seeking has been found to be an essential skill following diagnosis of terminal illness, in the recovery process of substance abusers, during pregnancy, and for any other stressor that brings an unpredictable change into one's life, however big or small. When encountering stress, people pose many questions in an attempt to gain a handle on the unknown. When an individual contracts a disease such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, or atherosclerosis, all attention becomes focused on gathering answers to a host of questions: What is the nature of this disease? How did I contract it? What is the best method to manage it? Similarly, when your car breaks down, a set of questions runs through your mind: What's wrong with the engine or transmission? How long will it take to fix? How much will it cost? Can I afford this? Or academic stressors: How many exams are there in this course? What types of questions are on the exams? How much is the term paper worth toward the final grade? Like a large jigsaw puzzle, small pieces of information become crucial to

Information seeking A common coping technique that involves searching for detailed information to increase awareness about a situation that has become a perceived threat.

the ability to cope with the cause of the stress so as to assemble a wider perspective on the whole problem as well as potential solutions.

In times of distress, questions need answers, and many resources are typically accessed to provide these answers. The three most common sources are the Internet; people; and books, magazines, and journals. Perhaps because the Internet is so easily accessible, it rather than direct contact with people has become the first avenue for information seeking. In a short amount of time, the Internet has become the world's library of information. But beware: surfing the Internet for answers is like drinking water from a fire hose. Ironically, although vast amounts of information are available, many people never surf past the first 10 links. Moreover, not all the information in the world is posted on the Internet! Ask any investigative reporter, and they will tell you to validate your sources. Although surfing topics on any search engine is a good place to start to seek insights on various issues, your search shouldn't end there.

A lot of valuable information in the form of firsthand knowledge (wisdom) can be found only by talking directly to people who are "in the know." For this reason, conversing with others who have experienced a similar situation (or stressor) is highly recommended in the information-seeking skill set. Sometimes, however, when information is disseminated through people, facts can be intertwined with emotional perceptions. As a result, the objectivity of this information must be assessed very carefully.

Finally, don't abandon the use of books, journals, and magazines as important sources of information. The use of these references to cope with stress even has its own name: bibliotherapy. Note that information seeking is not a linear process, but rather it is a circuitous route until answers are found and a sense of resolution is reached (Foster, 2005).

Like other coping techniques, though, information seeking can be a liability as well as an asset. Too much information can be as detrimental as too little because it can feed the imagination to create worst-case scenarios, which are then adopted as reality. Nevertheless, when you are confronted with a stressor that promotes fear of the unknown, information seeking can be your best strategy to begin to cope with this problem.

Social Orchestration

Perhaps the most common response to events or circumstances that elicit the stress response is avoidance—the most ineffective coping mechanism. Whereas

avoidance of life-threatening events such as fire is wise, avoidance of mental, emotional, and spiritual threats is not a viable option. Avoidance is a defense mechanism deeply rooted in the ancient flight response. It is popularly believed that if we avoid situations that cause fear or frustration, our lives will become simple and stress free. But what may seem like a quick fix offers no permanent resolution, only further problems down the road. Avoidance is a negative coping style, especially when the stressors involve relationships and human confrontation.

Can you make educated choices about how to minimize stressful situations? Yes! The answer is **social orchestration** (formerly called social engineering, a term that has now been adopted by political and technological fields to mean “mass societal influence” or “obtaining confidential information by manipulating people”). Social orchestration is a positive coping style designed to help minimize stress by following a path of least resistance, but not avoidance. Social orchestration involves analyzing a problem, creating a series of viable options, and then choosing the best option to resolve feelings and perceptions of stress. It is also described as a reorganization process wherein individuals manipulate factors and elements (not people) in their environment to their best advantage.

There are two approaches to the social orchestration process. The first is to change factors in your environment that can cause stress. If this is not a viable option, your health status is at risk, or attempts at cognitive reappraisal prove fruitless, then the second approach is to change your environment. Changing factors in your environment might include driving a different route to work or blocking out periods throughout the day during which you do not answer the phone so as to get a major task completed. In situations where you can change specific factors, you attempt to manipulate or control your environment so that your encounters with potential stressors are minimal. To change your environment means relocating from unhealthy or intolerable living conditions to a new setting that is conducive to better health status. Because changing one’s environment is both costly and time consuming, this approach is often used as a last resort. Keep in mind that if you choose to change your environment so as to avoid people or run away, then this coping technique is being used improperly, and no resolution is guaranteed. It is well known that relocating to a new environment can be a stressful experience in itself; in fact, it has a name: **relocation stress syndrome** (Desai, 2022).

On a larger scale, social orchestration can be seen in many political grassroots efforts, lobbying Congress to pass legislation favoring particular issues and concerns, for example. In fact, social orchestration is the coping skill of choice at both local and national governmental levels for issues such as landfills and recycling. On a smaller scale, social orchestration is a strategy we employ regularly with personal chores and responsibilities, but it is an effective one in the management of major life stressors.

Prime examples of social orchestration, where factors in the environment were significantly altered for all Americans (and almost everyone on the planet), were the dramatic changes due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic: changing from weekly grocery shopping trips and errands (when other stores finally opened) to making online reservations for haircuts, pickup orders for restaurant take-out, and countless other daily activities that needed specific attention. Parents with school-aged children learned the trials of home schooling, while college students learned the challenges of online classes. Many people who were forced to work from home via computer and Zoom video conferencing found they preferred this style of work and didn’t miss time spent commuting. Whether it’s reorchestrating your life because of a change in the family (e.g., new baby or aging parents) or some new headline-grabbing world event that landed on your doorstep, social orchestration offers a way to gain an upper hand in the situation.

Although social orchestration is often the coping skill of choice for large-scale issues like earthquakes and human-made disasters, the ability to change factors in the environment can be done at a personal level as well. Many coping skills are used at the same time to deal with a stressor; there is strength in numbers. Thus, social orchestration may incorporate the use of other coping skills, including assertiveness, cognitive restructuring, creative problem-solving, and time

Social orchestration A coping technique that involves either (1) changing stress-producing factors in the environment or (2) changing the entire stress-producing environment. This technique is considered the path of least resistance (as distinguished from avoidance).

Relocation stress syndrome A term originally created to explain the stress elderly people experience when transferred to assisted living, but now is also used for anyone who is forced to relocate to a new environment due to climate change or other circumstances beyond their control.

management. Cognitive restructuring is essential to create a new frame of mind in which to manipulate factors in the environment. The following is a step-by-step process for social orchestration:

1. Define your stressors. Write down what is bothering you by trying to describe what the stressor really is (e.g., an obnoxious roommate, a bad marriage, car repair problems).
2. Identify your initial response. Do you feel angry, frustrated, afraid, impatient, or resentful? Does this stressor cause you to worry or feel guilty? What emotions are running through your mind? Write these down. Next, describe what your first reaction or course of action to this stressor is (or was). Do you feel the urge to avoid a certain person? Do the words retaliation or avoidance come to mind? How would you describe your first course of action?
3. Generate alternatives. This is the creative stage, where you write down any and all possible solutions. Say, for example, that the route you drive to work is under construction, and now it takes you an extra 25 minutes to get there. You find yourself feeling pretty irritated with the traffic and the fact that you are wasting so much time. What are some viable alternatives? Possible alternatives may include carpooling, taking a bus or subway, leaving for work 20 minutes earlier, finding a new route to work, working at home on a computer with high-speed Internet access, or walking.
4. Choose the best alternative. Once you have a handful of ideas that are plausible, pick the one that seems most suited to your circumstances and do it. Regarding the preceding example, assume that the walk is too far and that there is no mass transit or potential carpool members readily available. Working at home with high-speed Internet access sounds attractive, and you decide to go with this plan of action. To your surprise, your plan is approved by your boss for 3 out of 5 work days until the road construction is done. So, you work at home, while miles away road construction takes place.
5. Evaluate the outcome. In this last step, you take a moment to analyze the option you have chosen to measure its effectiveness. If the option is a good one, you keep it. If not, you pick a new option and give it a try. In the case of the road construction problem, it turns out that working at home seems to require much more discipline than you realized. It actually takes more time to get your work done because of distractions from the

refrigerator and the television. After evaluating this option, you decide to return to your office, leaving 30 minutes earlier than before, and this second option works fine.

The key to social orchestration is to provide yourself with many viable options from which to choose. Options are like cushions that soften the blow when a stressor disrupts your center of gravity, causing you to fall. People with only one option—or worse, no options—begin to feel that a stressor is beyond control and that they are victims of their environment. By creating and choosing one of several options, you strengthen your internal locus of control and get an early start on resolving the issues at hand.

Friends in Need: Social-Support Groups

Every Friday at 7:30 a.m., about 6 to 12 men gather at the Butterhorn Bakery in Frisco, Colorado, for breakfast. They're called the Buzzards' Club, and they congregate at a table under a framed hat owned by Tom Randolph, the founder of the club, who died a few years ago. In between stacks of pancakes, omelets, scrambled eggs, and unlimited cups of coffee, the men (mostly retired) discuss politics, sports, and, during the winter months, snow conditions. The club started years ago as a means to see old friends regularly and stay in touch—male bonding. The wives of these guys had a book club, so why couldn't the men have their own social meeting? Meanwhile, on Summerland Key, Florida, a similar group of men meet up every Friday morning at the Galley Grill for breakfast and conversation. They come to discuss politics, fishing, and the weather, but mostly just to reconnect with each other. Truth be told, weekly breakfast groups like this meet up all over the country. And while they may not call themselves support groups, that is exactly what they are—friends who come together regularly to support each other.

Being handed a tough situation that acts as a chronic stressor (e.g., cancer, chronic Lyme disease, or caring for parents with Alzheimer's) is stressful enough, but what compounds the stress is feeling alone. Despite all you may be going through, rest assured you are not alone! Many (perhaps too many) people are going through a similar, if not identical, situation, several of whom willingly offer a shoulder to cry on or simply offer a compassionate hug. What began nearly 100 years ago as a means to find support to quit drinking, Alcoholics Anonymous has become the template for other addictive process support groups, from gambling addictions to overeating. Al-Anon, a support group

for family members of alcoholics, has also become a lifesaver for those coping with this stressor. Because of its tremendous success helping millions of people cope with the problems of alcohol addiction, the philosophy, format, traditions, and 12-step recovery process have been borrowed or adapted by nearly every support group for all substance and process addictions. The success of these types of support groups has lent inspiration to form other support groups for nonaddictive life stressors such as breast cancer, Lyme disease, and even raising children with autism.

Today, there is a support group for practically every life stressor on the planet. Formal support groups of all kinds offer not only acceptance, but also anonymity and a nonjudgmental space. A quick Google search will reveal an abundance of support groups for an assortment of life situations in your area. And if you don't feel like you fit in with one group, try another. There is no obligation to speak; you can just listen if you wish. Some groups are solution based; others are not. Some may be faith based; others are not. It is always best to find a group that meets you where you are and helps to elevate you to where you wish to be. In an age where isolation and alienation are all too common, support groups are taking on a new level of relevance in our stressed and fragmented society.

Simply stated: You can never have enough friends—really good, supportive friends (not just in your Facebook directory)—especially in times of stress. Talking to, hanging out with, or confiding in a close friend or two dissipates emotional tension, which is why building strong social support in each phase of our lives is considered paramount to one's health. The word “friend” has taken on a new aspect with the popularity of Facebook. Virtual friends are nice, yet in terms of social support, real friends who drop whatever they are doing and come over to be there for you are the only ones you can really count on. This is what is meant by strong social support groups—friends who have shared a meaningful experience and who are there for you in times of personal need.

There is an old proverb suggesting that misery loves company. This does not mean that we wish our troubles on others, nor does it mean that we are happy to see others encounter the same problems we face ourselves. Rather, it means that when two or more people experience a problem of daunting magnitude, the emotional burden seems to be shared, is more bearable, and is consequently not as heavy a load as a solo attempt at working against the odds. This is the premise that has given rise to the recommendation of regular social contact and the plethora of support groups across America.



Figure 18.2 More and more evidence points to the idea that strong social support from friends may act to buffer against the ill effects of stress and add to both the quality and quantity of life.

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Research has shown that feelings of connectedness, belongingness, and bonding arising from social contact contribute to one's health (Ornish, 1998; Pelletier, 2000; **Fig. 18.2**). This is the social well-being aspect of spiritual well-being. The desire to belong is considered a basic human need, as was first suggested by Maslow many decades ago. Since then, several theories have been proposed as to why **social support** is an aid in the coping process. The **buffer theory**, first proposed by Cassel in 1976 and revisited by Alloway and Bebbinton in 2009, suggests that social support acts as a buffer against stress in that social ties tend to filter out the deleterious effects of both ordinary hassles and devastating life events. This theory is shared by several researchers in the field of health psychology, but the exact dynamics of this buffering action are still uncertain. Connell and D'Augelli (1990) hypothesized that when individuals express fondness for others and make themselves available to both receive help (succor) and give help (nurturance), perceptions of stress are significantly decreased. In the **compensation theory**, social support is thought to act as a

Social support A coping technique whereby the company of friends, family members, and others acts to buffer against and dissipate the negative effects of stress.

Buffer theory A theory that suggests that people in support groups buffer the participants from stress, lessening its impact.

Compensation theory A theory suggesting that support groups compensate for various emotional losses one experiences during stress.

compensation for those who are at an emotional loss because of life's stressors. Perhaps the landmark study of the power of support groups was one designed by Spiegel and colleagues (1989). This study showed that metastatic breast cancer patients who were involved with a support group lived longer than those who did not belong to such a group. Spiegel called this coping technique **supportive-expressive group therapy**. In a review of the benefits of cancer support group since that time, Jablonschkin and colleagues (2022) reviewed more than 900 studies and found that indeed, all studies indicated that participation in a peer-led group resulted in multiple perceived benefits. Connectedness, through the loving support of friends, family, and colleagues, appears to be an essential factor for optimal health (Cherry, 2022). Another theory, the **direct-effect theory**, suggests that social contact provides only positive exposure to the individual, and that these positive stimuli are pleasing to the ego. Finally, the **cognitive-dissonance theory** states that when individuals are engaged in social contact where values and attitudes are similar, the collective energy far exceeds the negative feelings experienced by any one person individually. With so many people relying on this coping skill in times of stress, in-person social support groups had to pivot quickly when the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown occurred. But as a result of moving thousands of these groups online, it opened the door to a great many more people who might have never attended an in-person meeting (Aarons, 2020; Hasslinger, 2021).

Research investigating the role of social support as an effective coping skill has found that having a small group of individuals whom you can relate to, bond with, trust, and confide in not only improves one's quality of life, but most likely extends the duration of one's life. This has been proven true across a range of populations, including breast cancer patients, alcoholics, teen anorexics, war veterans, low-income pregnant women, people with Lyme disease, and other

Supportive-expressive group therapy A term coined by Dr. David Spiegel for women with breast cancer who share their experiences, grief, and healing with others going through the same experience.

Direct-effect theory A theory suggesting that social contact serves to uplift the individual, thus providing pleasure to the ego.

Cognitive-dissonance theory A theory suggesting that the collective energy of one's support group supersedes any individual's negative experience of stress.

demographic groups (Byrd-Craven & Massey, 2013). From these and other studies, it seems that companionship is truly a basic human need. When this need is filled through the demonstration of caring, love, and moral support, the intensity of stress is alleviated.

It should be mentioned that since the advent of Facebook, social researchers have noted that the number of close friends people actually confide in has decreased (**Box 18.1**). The reason suggested appears not to be related to social networking per se, but rather the time constraints preventing people from fostering and nurturing quality friendships (Cohen, 2011). Interestingly enough, many online dating sites are now offering to match people up with friends and social connections, trying to serve what is perceived as a social need not being met in our rapidly changing world.

Hobbies

Is there such a thing as a therapeutic escape? Perhaps. Whereas psychologists and stress management counselors caution against the hazards of avoidance, the practice of diversions has often been advocated as a bona fide coping strategy. Healthy diversions are any activities that offer a temporary escape from the sensory overload that can produce or perpetuate the stress response. Diversions offer the conscious mind a "change of venue" to promote clear thinking.

Box 18.1 Virtual Friends in Need?

The term *social support group* has taken on a whole new meaning because of new arenas of social networking, including Facebook, texting, Twitter, and other forums not yet created. In an age where the world is at your fingertips (through a keypad), friends are as close as the farthest corner of the globe. But what constitutes a real friend? Is it merely interfacing with a name and photo on a website, or is it receiving several emails or texts a day from acquaintances? Nothing can replace the empathy of eye-to-eye contact and a familiar human voice, yet emails, texts, and the newest virtual contacts can serve as a powerful supplement to the human connection and evaporate feelings of loneliness. How strong is your support group? Is there a balance between your real and virtual worlds? Ironically, with more platforms for social media, feelings of isolation and loneliness are on the rise (Regis College, 2021).

Data from Regis College. (2021, October 28). Does social media create isolation? <https://online.regiscollege.edu/blog/does-social-media-create-isolation/>

Taking your mind off a problem, removing an issue from conscious attention for a designated period, or diverting attention to an unrelated subject focuses the mind and enables it to deal better with these issues upon return. As with most strategies, diversions have either positive or negative repercussions. Positive diversions are those in which the individual takes an active role in the escape process, in contrast with a passive escape, such as watching television or sleeping. Active escapes are those that contribute to one's identity, character, and self-esteem. With this in mind, the best temporary active escape is said to be a **hobby** (Fig. 18.3), the pursuit of a leisure interest that provides pleasure (Galdamez, 2016). Most hobbies, such as needlepoint, photography, and many others, involve some degree of creativity as well as the ability to make order out of chaos on a very small and manageable scale. Even bird watching is among the activities proven to provide mental clarity (Wachter,



Figure 18.3 Involvement in hobbies allows people to make order out of chaos on a small scale, which often transfers to larger-scale problems. Any activity that boosts self-esteem is thought to be worthwhile.

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2017). Establishing control in a small setting has a transfer effect, giving one a sense of control over one's own life, which, in turn, augments self-esteem. And high self-esteem transfers from outside interests to areas of one's life where factors contribute to personal stress. Moreover, the ability to bring order to a small-scale operation, like haute cuisine cooking or bonsai gardening, also has a carryover effect in dealing with larger problems. In fact, many people find that their time spent in the pursuit of hobbies transfers to solutions for major life problems.

However, not all experts agree that hobbies are stress relieving. Relaxation therapist Edmond Jacobson, in his book *You Must Relax* (1991), warned of drawbacks of hobbies, indicating that they can produce tension and frustration when expectations are not met. Jacobson believed that for relaxation to be most effective, the individual has to be doing absolutely nothing. In his opinion, leisure activities—and hobbies in particular—actually compound the accumulation of stress. His point is valid when people focus on perfectionism rather than leisure. When pleasure is absent from leisure activities, it is definitely time to stop and do something else.

One reason why hobbies are advocated as self-esteem builders is that they allow you to invest yourself in several areas. If you have a bad day at the office or school, hobbies can neutralize the negative feelings and bolster self-esteem. In essence, self-esteem remains intact when all the eggs are not placed in one basket.

Forgiveness

Every stressor generated by anger that results in feelings of victimization is a prime candidate for **forgiveness**. Forgiveness is a cognitive process, and although it might seem to fall in the domain of cognitive restructuring, its significance as a process merits separate recognition. In his book *Forgive* (2022), author Tim Keller describes acts of pardon as an essential step in the resolution of major life stressors. When many people hear the word forgiveness, they associate the process with condonement, absolution,

Hobby A pleasurable pursuit or interest outside one's daily work responsibilities through which one begins to make order out of chaos (e.g., gardening).

Forgiveness A coping technique for anger-related stressors for which a shift in attitude is adopted toward those against whom a grudge was previously held.

and self-sacrifice, which, in the opinion of some, perpetuates feelings of victimization. Consequently, because of the emotional pain involved, forgiveness is not initially looked upon as a viable option to reduce personal stress. Strange as it may seem, holding a grudge or feelings of resentment appears to be a form of control over the person or circumstance involved. But these feelings are an illusion of control. The toxicity of these thoughts sours one's outlook on life and eventually seeps into other aspects of one's personality, causing defensiveness and even more vulnerability to stressors, perpetuating the cycle of self-victimization.

Keller paints a different picture of forgiveness as a coping style. He describes it as an internal healing process where self-esteem is restored through devictimization, where toxic thoughts and emotions are diluted and released and one can begin to move on with one's life, not by just forgetting the past, but by coming to terms with stressful issues to find peace. As directors of several workshops for adults who were sexually abused, adult children of alcoholics, and people who experienced divorce, Simon and Simon teach that forgiveness is not an easy process. Based on their research, they propose six emotional steps to work through in the process from victim to survivor. These steps are very similar to those outlined in the grieving process by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (see Chapter 5 for more information): the denial stage, or refusal to admit you have been wronged or taken advantage of; the self-blame stage, or directing hurt inward and accepting other people's responsibility as your own; the victimization stage, or realization that you have indeed been violated; the indignation stage, or anger toward those you feel have violated your personal rights; the survivor stage, or reassessing your self-worth and beginning to feel whole again; and finally, the integration stage, or forgiving and getting on with your life. The major hurdle to getting to the last stage is the ability to demonstrate unconditional love toward yourself and others.

Some of the original research on the topic of forgiveness comes from the work of Fred Luskin (2016), the director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Project. Luskin's work, based on subjects from war-torn Northern Ireland, has become the hallmark of forgiveness therapy, and his HEAL method is now being used by survivors in other war-torn countries. Current trends in the science of forgiveness parallel similar research in mindfulness meditation where acts of forgiveness are central to achieving inner peace (Menahem & Love, 2013). A new focus on forgiveness is the concept of gratitude for the lessons learned through the healing process (Seaward, 2021).

Ho'oponopono: Forgiveness Hawaiian Style

The practice of forgiveness is a part of every culture on the planet, yet a style known as ho'oponopono, derived from Polynesian culture and practiced in Hawaii, has gained popularity in various regions of the United States. Because a strong family structure is essential for group cohesion, violations of this cohesion tear the fabric of society, affecting everyone. This principle can be applied to family members, the worksite, local communities, and the world at large. The underlying concept behind ho'oponopono is that when a violation has occurred toward another person, it affects everyone, and there needs to be resolution. Metaphorically speaking, a violation is a tear in the tapestry of the group (e.g., family, work environment). The resolution process (repairing the tapestry) begins with a group meeting, where the offender seeks forgiveness. A Hawaiian healer named Mornah Simeona adapted this Hawaiian practice from a societal ritual to a soul-searching practice of self-forgiveness, via a stronger connection to the divine (whatever one perceives that to be). The premise is that by looking inward the offender can arrive at a deeper level of peace and resolution. The offender does this by repeating four sentences aloud: "I am sorry. Please forgive me. I love you. Thank you." With the understanding that we all have done or said something to disturb others, it becomes necessary to consciously "rewrite" our past history and make peace within ourselves and the universe. Other people serve as a mirror for us to correct our own faults and misgivings. This is what ho'oponopono does (Berger, 2020).

Box 18.2 Self-Care Immediate Stress Relief Toolbox

Reach Out to a Friend. One cure for isolation is to reach out to a friend and strengthen your bond of humanity. Support groups are essential. Bond with a friend over a cup of coffee or tea where you can unload your troubles, cry on a metaphorical shoulder, or seek validation where necessary. Text, Zoom, email, or call, but reach out. Remember, in a highly virtual world in which we live, in-person contact is the best. If friends are in short supply, family members work too (so do pets). Support groups are an asset as well. And the benefits of reaching out are two-fold. You benefit, but so does the person to whom you reached out. Often, they need the social contact as much, if not more than you. Reach out now!

Dream Therapy

Since ancient times, dreams have been espoused as a vehicle of divine communication. They have also been valued as a tool to unravel the complexities of life in the waking state. Although for centuries dreams have been regarded as an intriguing aspect of human nature, their importance to mental and emotional stability has been neglected for quite some time. It was not until the work of Freud (2008) that these nocturnal images produced by the unconscious mind were considered worthy of scientific investigation. Like Hippocrates in ancient Greece, Freud discovered that dreams were closely related to the physical symptoms experienced by many of his patients. It was this insight that led Freud to the study of dreams and dream analysis.

Calling dreams “the royal road to the unconscious,” Freud became convinced that they act to disguise sexual desires and thoughts. It was his exploration in the field of dreams that paved the way to a greater scientific understanding of the unconscious mind. But whereas Freud viewed dreams as a means to conceal conscious thoughts, his protégé, Jung, regarded dreams as a means to reveal a whole new language to understand human consciousness and restore psychic balance. The work of these two men gave birth to the modern practice of **dream therapy**. Today, this work continues with dream therapists Leslie Ellis (2019) and Evelyn Schneider-Mark (2021).

The popularity of dream interpretation with the American public waxed and waned throughout the twentieth century in tandem with that expressed in clinical research. But from research in this area, it has become clear that dream analysis and the therapeutic effects of dreams are powerful means to increase awareness of personal issues as well as viable tools to help resolve them (Fig. 18.4). The following is a



Figure 18.4 Dream therapy experts believe that the more we try to remember our dreams, the better we are able to deal with problems in our waking state.

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collection of observations about the dream process reported by several experts in the field:

- Everyone dreams, although not everyone remembers their dreams.
- For the average person, the dreams that stand out are those that are perceived as utterly bizarre, terrifying, or triggered by something in the course of a day.
- The majority of dreams consist of information received in the waking state during the previous day or two.
- Recurring dreams represent significant unresolved issues.
- Dreams were once thought to occur only during periods of rapid eye movement (REM) but are now thought to occur during several other times in the course of a night's sleep.
- Opinions vary on the issue of categorical dream symbols (e.g., water signifying the spirit of life), but virtually all experts agree that interpretation ultimately resides with the person who created the dream.

Dream therapy is a cognitive process that includes dream interpretation, dream incubation, and lucid dreaming. The purpose of dream therapy, which can be done either with the assistance of a therapist who specializes in dream therapy or by yourself, is to access a greater share of consciousness through dream images and symbols to clarify and resolve personal issues (Ellis, 2019; Dreyer, 2023).

Dream interpretation involves three phases. After writing down the actual dream images, the first step is to find any possible associations between these images and those that take place during the waking state. The best method is to write down brief descriptions of a dream and then list as many associations with the symbolic images that come to mind. For example, viewing a plane crash from a farmer's field could be associated with one's career, a relationship, driving a car, or a new diet. The more associations that can be made, the greater the chance for a solid connection.

Schneider-Mark, in her book *Interpreting Dreams* (2021), suggests that one should draw parallels with these associations by asking yourself a series of questions: What do I have in common with that image? Have I seen this image in my waking state?

Dream therapy A coping technique in which dreams, including recurring dreams, are explored and deciphered to help understand acute or chronic stressors.

What behavior(s) do I have that is like that portrayed in this image? What emotional response does this dream image elicit, and what circumstances in everyday life elicit this same emotional response?

The third phase of the interpretation process is to select the interpretation that seems to be most relevant to your life at that moment. The best choice can also be made by asking questions such as the following: What is the central message of the dream? Did the dream have any advice or moral to it? When choosing a dream interpretation, consider each possibility a viable one because the ego-controlled conscious mind tends to protect itself from what is unflattering or potentially harmful to itself. Schneider-Mark advises looking at the dream from someone else's perspective to allow a greater expansion of possibilities to choose from. Then, make a selection with your heart, not solely with your analytical mind.

Dream interpretation is an art form, not a science, and the true interpretation rests solely with the dreamer. However, Laz's advice to get the best results is, first, to consider as an interpretation something you don't already know; second, to avoid interpretations that inflate the ego; and third, to disregard dream interpretations that pass blame from you to someone or something else. Also, be careful to consider only the obvious because dream symbols look different from various perspectives. Finally, Laz says that dream interpretation is useless if it is not acted upon. Each dream, no matter how obvious its relevance, is a message—and messages that are ignored may prolong the stress associated with them. It is up to the dreamer to grasp the message and resolve the issue that inspired it.

Just as dreams reveal messages to the conscious mind, they can also be used as drills to tap the wealth of knowledge hidden beneath consciousness for advice when dealing with problems, a practice dating back to ancient Greece. This process, called **dream incubation**, has been explored by researcher Gayle Delaney (1988, 1998). To incubate a dream, a person ponders a specific concern or issue by asking a question and perhaps even writing it down before going to sleep. Upon awaking, they write down whatever images come to mind, and then follow the process of dream analysis to determine what information the unconscious mind has

Dream incubation A process in which an idea to be used as dream material is consciously seeded to prompt the unconscious mind during sleep; a technique effective to help resolve stressors.

suggested. From her research, Delaney has found this technique to be very effective in the resolution of stressful issues. It can be combined with journal writing to augment the awareness process.

Lucid dreaming is the ability to enter the dream state while still conscious. As in the practice of Jung's active imagination or creative visualization, in lucid dreaming you consciously choose the direction of your dream while in the waking state. In essence, you direct the script of your dream. Lucid dreaming is often practiced to finish dream fragments or to provide an ending to a recurring dream.

When utilized effectively, dreams offer a wealth of knowledge that begs to be addressed during the hours of conscious thought. To ignore the advice, to waste this resource, to leave inaccessible the knowledge of the unconscious mind only perpetuates the perceptions, emotions, and behaviors associated with stress. The importance of dreams cannot be overstated; they have proved many times over to provide a means of mental stability. Or, as Jung stated in his book *Man and His Symbols* (1964a), "One cannot afford to be naive about dreams."

Prayer and Faith

Prayer, the greatest wireless network in the universe, is one of the oldest and most commonly used coping mechanisms known to humankind (**Fig. 18.5**). In its simplest form, prayer is thought: a desire of the heart and often a call for help in what can best be described as a plea for divine intervention. According to the most recent Pew Research poll on this topic, 55 percent of Americans say they pray every day (Lipka, 2016). Although prayer is not synonymous



Figure 18.5 Prayer (from any denomination of faith) is viewed as a tremendous coping technique, particularly for fear and anxiety.

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Stress with a Human Face

The first signs of stress began with Matt Pfenninger telling his father Jack, a physician, that he woke up with double vision. The last thing anyone suspected was a brain tumor. But in 1994, Matt, a high school sophomore, was diagnosed with exactly that. Actually, the diagnosis wasn't immediate. In fact, Matt spent a fair amount of time in and out of hospitals. If you were to ask him, he would tell you that he has seen more than his share of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines. Matt's mother has a standing joke: "The only specialists we didn't consult were those in obstetrics." Eventually the diagnosis did reveal a brain tumor, a pineal germinoma—a rare form of brain cancer. It also revealed cancer cells isolated in the fluid of Matt's brain and spinal cord.

Matt began to receive the typical treatment: surgery followed by radiation. At first, things looked great. Ten months later, however, a follow-up MRI showed three golf-ball-sized metastases in the brain and one in the spine. This time Matt was given a round of chemotherapy. Although often effective, chemotherapy is not infallible. It not only kills cancer cells but can also destroy healthy cells. And it doesn't always work. In Matt's case, the overall situation simply worsened.

Both Jack and his wife Kay have a strong faith in God, and they believe in the power of prayer. One day the couple had an idea. They invited members of their local community in Midland, Michigan, to come to a healing prayer service for Matt at the hospital. Jack was delighted to see about 60 of his fellow physicians attend and participate. What happened next can only be described as a miracle.

"Ten days later there were no tumors," Jack said. "I went to the neuroradiologist and asked him if he could recheck the films to be sure that they were, indeed, Matt's. The shunt tube was there. The dye had been injected. They were Matthew's films. The tumors were gone! I asked him how this could happen, since even an abscess would not be totally resolved in just 10 days. He said he could not explain it."

In sharing the good news, Jack sent a letter to all the physicians and the medical staff, thanking them for their help. This is how he explained the healing power of prayer to his colleagues: "For those who do believe in prayer, no explanation is necessary. For those who don't believe in prayer, no explanation will do."

In Matt's words: "I think I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I can walk. I can talk. I can see. I have good friends. I'm playing my four musical instruments. I'm taking electrical engineering courses and I'm doing well. I have my family to take care of me and a lot of people said, if my dad wasn't a doctor, I would have died."

In Jack's words: "I don't wear my religion on my shirt sleeve, and I still do not pray with my patients. However, I am being forced, not only from my own experiences, but from the science of prayer, to encourage more patients to pray. I am a fan of Larry Dossey's work on prayer. Did I tell you that in 2004, Matt graduated with a master's in electrical engineering from the University of Michigan just before Christmas and took a job with General Electric in Cincinnati? Not bad for a kid with 10 major operations who was told five times he wouldn't make it through the night, spent 1.5 years out of 3 in the hospital, and had a tracheostomy for 3 years and a feeding tube in his stomach for 1.5 years! Truly, a miracle.

"My advice to your students: Attitudes, beliefs, friends, and strangers (all unknowingly) play a role in survival and recovery. Be positive. Do not dwell on the negative. Ask for and focus on recovery. It will be given to you. Life can change in a mere instant. Don't look forward and don't look back. Enjoy what you have and be thankful for everything. See the sunrise. Smell a rose. Experience a hug, and ask God for help when you need it."



Courtesy of Matt Pfenninger.

with meditation, these two processes share many similarities in that they both initiate a process of centering, increased concentration, and connectedness. They differ in that as a coping technique, prayer specifically elicits the element of divine intervention. Prayer is a request, whereas meditation can encompass many modes of thinking and is not specifically limited to divine thought. A 2020 *Wall Street Journal* article stated that many people are looking to a higher power for comfort these days. Quoting Dr. Rosmarin,

who was featured in the article, "Research that has been done on prayer shows it may have similar benefits to meditation. It can calm your nervous system, shutting down your fight or flight response. It can make you less reactive to negative emotions and less angry." One study by Chamsi-Pasha (2021), noting that people who pray have better health outcomes, found that prayer can be recommended in the practice of health care for the well-being of individuals who may benefit from it.

Although there are many definitions of stress, one that comes to mind with regard to spiritual well-being is this: stress is a “perceived” disconnection or separation from one’s divine source. The operative word is perceived, for in the words of sages and wisdom-keepers the world over, we are never disconnected from our divine source. It is unresolved fear and anger that create the illusion of separation. The premise of prayer as a coping technique rests on **faith**: the belief that each person is connected to a divine source (however this is named or perceived). Faith in a higher power, the ultimate source, can certainly be tested in times of stress.

Types of Prayer

When it comes to prayer, the styles are countless. Perhaps most common to many people is a recited prayer (much like a poem) that draws our attention from the self to the higher self. Native Americans dance their prayers so as to reinforce their connection to the earth. South Africans have an expression: “When you sing, you pray twice.” There are prayers of gratitude and prayers of forgiveness. The type of prayer most commonly associated with stress is called **intercessory prayer** (Dossey, 1995). Basically, such a prayer is a call for help in which one seeks divine guidance or, more likely, divine intervention. Intercessory prayer is most common in two situations. The first is when you need help yourself; the second is when you offer a prayer for the assistance of others. Those who study the nuances of prayer describe it as a form of energetic consciousness. In simple truth, all thoughts are prayers.

Of Prayer and Meditation

There is a joke by comedian Lily Tomlin that goes like this: “How come when we talk to God it’s called praying, but when God talks to us, it’s called schizophrenia?” To some, prayer and meditation may be the same activity, but in the strictest sense they are not. Meditation is a clearing of the mind to gain insight and wisdom. Praying, specifically intercessory prayer, is more of a soliloquy. As the expression goes, praying is when we talk to God; meditation is when God

talks to us. Indeed, there are times when prayer and meditation may seem the same; however, to those who study the art and science of meditation, there are significant differences, and the two should never be considered to be the same.

Research on Prayer and Faith

With regard to scientific inquiry, there is no lack of studies on the healing power of prayer, particularly in the past two decades. The most famous study on prayer was conducted by Randolph Byrd (1988) involving prayers for cardiac patients. Shying away from the word pray, researchers have coined the more scientific term *intercessory distant healing*. To date, Byrd’s study has been replicated several times (Harris et al., 1999; Sicher & Targ, 1998), showing statistical significance beyond pure chance.

Some scientists remark that if divine intervention is scientifically valid some of the time, why not all of the time? Perhaps the answer is found in the standard joke: “When you pray to God and your prayer isn’t answered, it isn’t that God didn’t hear you. It’s just that the answer was ‘No!’”

Are people who pray healthier? As usual with research studies, there is proof that lines up on both sides of the argument. A 2008 study conducted by Gonnerman and colleagues at the University of Northern Iowa found that people who attended church services were more likely to be healthy (e.g., not suffering from loneliness, depression, or insomnia) compared to those who did not. Is habitual attendance at church, synagogue, or temple a factor that promotes health? Stark (2018) reports findings observed in several studies that suggest those who attend regularly have the following: better sleep, less depression, lower blood pressure, more stability, and satisfying marriages. Although these findings suggest that a strong relationship with the divine is certainly healthy, skeptics argue that religious behavior (attendance) itself and not belief per se, as well as the support of friends in church and marital status, are the true health factors. Moreover, not everyone who prays participates in organized religion. Religious practices are easy to measure, but spirituality is not. There are those who are spiritual but not religious, and there are those who are religious but not spiritual.

Prayers for Agnostics and Atheists

Are people who are unsure about a higher power, or who don’t believe in a divine source, divinely disadvantaged in times of stress? Perhaps not (**Fig. 18.6**).

Faith An optimistic attitude adopted to cope with stress for which one perceives a connection to something bigger than oneself (e.g., a divine source).

Intercessory prayer A style of prayer whereby the individual seeks assistance from a higher (divine) source to intervene or assist with their problems.

B.C.

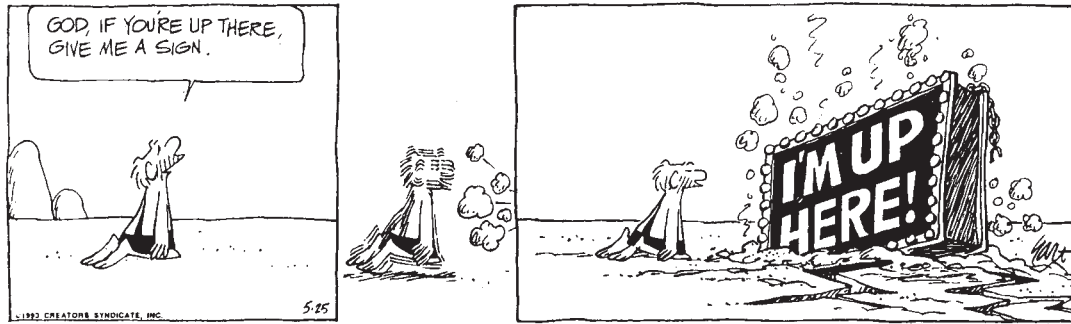


Figure 18.6 Signs come in all kinds of ways. We just have to look for them.

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Research has not addressed whether **agnostics** (those who don't know whether there is a higher source) and **atheists** (those who don't believe in a higher source) have negative health outcomes. Those who consider themselves agnostics or atheists may engage in mental activity similar to nonscripted prayer also used by those who believe in a higher power. Just as no religion has a monopoly on the style of prayer that gets the best results, people of strong faith are not necessarily at an advantage. Remember that coping with stress involves changing perceptions that are threatening. Prayer (in whatever form) is a way in which to allay the fear involved. Similarly, for those who believe in a higher power, faith is trust in the unknown, whereas for agnostics and atheists, faith may be viewed as an internal locus of control. Like prayer, faith is subjective, meaning that it comes from a personal experience, not something learned in a book. Intention is paramount.

Ways to Pray

Is there a right way to pray? Perhaps! You may ponder this very question should you feel at times that your prayers have not been answered. Sophie Burnham, author of *The Path of Prayer* (2002), states that the style of communication is very important in the process of prayer. Burnham hypothesizes that people are rarely taught to pray correctly, and she offers the following guidelines to practice this coping skill most effectively so that these thoughts may be received as intended:

Agnostics Individuals who do not know if there is a higher source.

Atheists Individuals who do not believe in a higher source.

1. Clear transmission of prayer thoughts is crucial to delivery of the message. A mind cluttered with several thoughts is analogous to a radio tuned to static. Clearing your mind of all thoughts save that which necessitates attention is imperative to the prayer process. There is no sacred place to pray. It may help to find a quiet spot, but temples, churches, and mosques are no better a conduit for this form of communication than your bedroom, shower, or car.
2. Prayers, Burnham explains, must be expressed in the present tense. With divine energy, as expressed by Jung as the collective unconscious, by Einstein as the cosmos, or by whatever term you wish to use, time does not exist. Time is a human-made concept, a fabrication of the human mind. Therefore, past tense and future tense are not understood. Prayers as thought forms must be expressed in the present moment.
3. Burnham writes that prayers must be phrased in a positive context and not a negative one. The universe, she states, does not understand the words not, can't, and don't. When a prayer such as "Don't let me do badly on this exam" is expressed in negative terms, it is interpreted as "let me do badly on this exam." Similarly, the unconscious mind does not recognize negative words. Stress therapist Joan Borysenko tells a story of an Australian friend who lost a leg to bone cancer and who was subsequently given a few months to live. Twenty years later this gentleman is enjoying life to the fullest. She explained that his coping mechanism focused on positive rather than on negative thoughts; instead of thinking, "I can't die," he thought, "I must live." Like Burnham, Borysenko insists that the unconscious mind does not recognize negative verbs.

Box 18.3 Self-Care Immediate Stress Relief Toolbox

Give Thanks! Take a moment and give thanks for all that is going right for you. Practicing an attitude of gratitude is one of the best ways to reset the mind and cancel the victim attitude that becomes so prevalent when things are not going as planned. It also helps put things in perspective. Do you have a roof over your head? Give thanks. Do you have a pair of shoes? Give thanks. Can you breathe without a respirator? Give thanks. There are countless things to give thanks for, most commonly the things we take for granted until we don't have them anymore. So take a moment to give thanks.

Burnham adds to this list that special attention be made to notice the response. She says that in many cases people ignore or deny the response because the prayer or the timing of it was not answered to one's liking.

One's style of prayer may be a function of one's personality type. Research by the Spindrift Organization in Salem, Oregon, suggests that introverts and extroverts tend to organize their prayer thoughts in different ways (Sweet, 2007). The prayer style of extroverts tends to be more goal oriented, whereas introverts are noted as being more general (e.g., "Thy will be done" or "go with the flow"), with both styles showing effectiveness.

There are those who hesitate to include prayer as a viable coping strategy because they believe that it nurtures false (negative) hope and perhaps even encourages an external locus of control, both of which are thought to negate the premise of positive coping techniques. However, it is held by those who do believe in prayer as a viable coping strategy that it can draw upon those inner resources that contribute to dealing with stress successfully. In the words of Jackson H. Brown (2000), "Do not pray for things, but rather pray for wisdom and courage." When prayer is used as a means to strengthen faith and provide hope, it can be an effective coping mechanism; in the words of John F. Kennedy, "God's work must truly be our own."

Body Tapping: An Emotional Freedom Technique

What do you get when you combine neural linguistic programming (NLP), a type of cognitive reframing,

with a form of modified acupressure? The simple answer is a coping technique called the emotional freedom technique (EFT), more commonly known as body tapping.

In 1995, Gary Craig took a course in thought field therapy (TFT), developed by American psychologist Roger Callahan. TFT combines cognitive behavioral phrasing (e.g., "I release my trauma") with a type of energy medicine called body tapping, which consists of repeated light finger taps to specific acupressure points on the face, hands, and torso. Craig, an engineer, was impressed by the technique's dramatic ability to reduce anxiety, and in some cases chronic pain, yet he became dismayed at both the complexity of the protocol and the lack of accessibility to people in dire need of anxiety relief.

In an effort to simplify the modality of the technique (a positive affirmation combined with light finger taps to various acupuncture meridian points), Craig simplified the process and called it the emotional freedom technique (EFT). He first made this technique available to everyone, but then began to focus his efforts on people with PTSD. Over the past several decades Craig has teamed up with the founders of the energy psychology movement (David Feinstein and Donna Eden) to promote EFT on an international scale, with great success. Although detractors call EFT nothing more than a placebo effect, therapists from many backgrounds now include EFT as an additional tool in their therapy toolbox.

The main emphasis of EFT is to focus on a specific issue (stressor) while tapping on various end-points of the body's meridian system. By repeatedly combining cognitive restructuring, or reframing, with light finger tapping to various locations on the body in line with the meridians, some people claim to have not only emotional relief, but also a sense of physical comfort (pain reduction) (Stapleton, 2019).

Five-Step Protocol

EFT was designed as an easy-to-learn technique that can be done anywhere in an easy do-it-yourself style. The following is the recommended protocol, which once learned can be practiced anywhere, at any time:

1. Identify the issue. Note the stressor, being as specific as possible.
2. Rate the initial intensity on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low and 10 high.
3. Create the setup statement. First, state the situation, then create a positive affirmation statement that you will repeat while tapping on each site. For example: "Even though I am stressed with

_____, I am returning to a sense of peace and acceptance with myself on this issue” or “Even though I was involved with a serious car accident, I deeply and completely accept myself.”

4. Conduct the EFT tapping sequence. With the fingertips on each hand, lightly tap each of the following eight points five to seven times while repeating the phrase aloud that you crafted in step 3. Remember that each side of the body needs to be tapped (often simultaneously) for balance.

- Top of head
- Eyebrows
- Outer side of the eyes
- Under the eyes
- Under the nose
- Chin
- Collarbone
- Spleen (bottom of the rib cage)

5. Rate the final intensity on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low and 10 high. Repeat, as necessary, for desired relief.

EFT has proved to be an effective coping technique for a great many people suffering from chronic stress and trauma. Body tapping is considered to be a supplemental coping strategy that accesses and utilizes the mind–body connection to help resolve stress and release the emotional energy often stored in the body from chronic stress and trauma. Like other

mind–body techniques, it offers a simple strategy for developing neuroplasticity for optimal health. It is often used in therapy and counseling sessions and is sometimes used in conjunction with or in place of eye movement desensitization reprogramming. If this is something you think you would like to learn more about, specialists and therapists are available who can enhance your training experience with this modality. Demonstration videos are available on YouTube as well.

Best Application of Additional Effective Coping Skills

There are countless effective ways to cope with stress (just as there are many ineffective ways). There is neither a magic formula nor a top 10 list that works for everyone equally. The best application is to become aware of these and other effective skills, try them out, see what works for you, and have them available in your personal toolbox for stress management. (Even ones that may seem silly now may come in handy months or years later.) Remember, the complexity of your stressors may suggest the number and duration of coping skills used in an effort to resolve and come to peace with the cause(s) of personal stress. Be open-minded. Be persistent. Be strong.

WRAP-UP

Summary

- No one strategy works for all people in all situations to cope effectively with the causes of stress. In many cases, several coping techniques should be used together.
- For a coping technique to be effective, it must do one or all of the following: increase awareness of the cause of stress, help process information about the stressor, and adjust attitude and possibly behavior to work toward a peaceful resolution.
- Information seeking is a coping technique that helps to increase awareness of facts regarding the problem at hand.
- Social orchestration is the path of least resistance. The purpose of this technique is to favorably alter specific factors in your environment to minimize stress or to change the environment completely if current conditions are deleterious to your health.
- When people bond together in friendship in times of trouble, they are better able to cope with the problems at hand. There is mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual strength in numbers. Social-support groups provide coping skills that individuals cannot generate themselves.
- Avoidance is considered a negative coping technique; however, to step outside your problems for a short while to gain a better perspective on them is thought to be quite healthy. Hobbies can be used as positive diversion tactics that allow for a healthy release from daily stressors. When approached in this way, hobbies can contribute

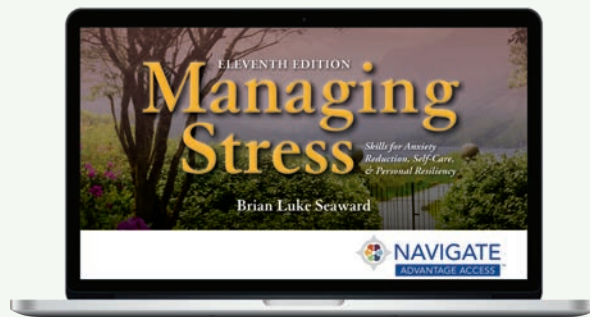
to self-esteem, which then transfers to other areas of one's life.

- Stress can induce a sense of personal violation. Harboring feelings of resentment and anger is a means of maintaining control over someone we feel has unjustly attacked us. But when feelings of anger are not released correctly, they become toxic. Forgiveness allows these feelings to be released so that a peaceful resolution is the final outcome.
- Dream therapy—the practice of dream seeding and dream interpretation to find answers to problems and decode the meaning of dream symbols and images, respectively—is a cognitive technique that has been employed since ancient times. The use of dreams to resolve problems with the help of the unconscious mind continues to be used and explored in the field of psychology as a means to deal with stress.
- Prayer is one of the oldest coping techniques known to humankind.
- Although there are many different ways to pray, intercessory prayer is the most common type in times of crisis.
- Prayer and meditation are not the same thing.
- Several research studies on the topic of prayer reveal a statistical significance with intention, particularly relative to aspects of health and healing.
- Although there is no one way to pray, suggestions for intercessory prayer are similar, if not identical, to mental imagery.
- The relationship between stress and spirituality is gaining more and more attention in the allied health fields. Prayer is defined as a thought form directed toward divine consciousness. In more subtle terms, prayer is a request to nurture our self-reliance.
- Body tapping (also known as the emotional freedom technique, or EFT) combines reframing and affirmations with unblocking energy pathways (meridians) to release emotional blocks.

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Study Guide Questions

1. How does information seeking both reduce and promote stress?
2. Why are support groups thought to enhance coping skills?
3. How do hobbies help one to reduce stress?
4. Why is forgiveness considered an effective coping skill?
5. How can dream therapy help one reduce stress?
6. Why is prayer considered an effective coping technique?
7. Briefly describe body tapping (EFT).

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