

COPING STRATEGIES

Try these tips for successfully using coping strategies:

Not every coping strategy works for every person; if a strategy doesn't work for you, try a different one.

Practice right-now strategies when you aren't feeling stressed.

Long-term strategies help you the most if they become habits, so commit to including them in your routine.

Schedule reminders to practice a strategy at least three times to see if it's right for you.

Right-now strategies help you when you're struggling with overwhelming feelings related to your attraction to younger children.

Don't be alone with children

If you need an excuse, say something like, "I'm not feeling well, so I really can't babysit."

Change it up

Change what you're thinking and doing. Try making a mental list of things you need to do today or your favorite songs.

Use positive self-talk

Encourage yourself with statements like, "I've been here before and gotten through this; these feelings will go away," "I'm not going to touch a kid. I'm better than that," or "I've got this."

Exercise

For at least 15-20 minutes, go for a brisk walk or a run, do jumping jacks, or do your favorite type of exercise.

Take some deep breaths

Breathe in slowly and deeply through your mouth or nose so that you fill your lungs with air. Slowly exhale, letting the air out again. Repeat these breaths a few times, until you start to feel more relaxed and in control.

Ask someone for support

Ask for their support in person, on the phone, or online. You could say, "I'm feeling upset about some things right now but I don't want to talk about it. I just need you to hang out with me for a while."

Long-term strategies build your resilience and overall quality of life, and they support your commitment to not offend.

Make healthy choices

Make good choices for your body and mind: eat well; exercise; get enough sleep; don't abuse tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs.

Build strong relationships

Having close relationships with family members and friends and pursuing age-appropriate relationships can help you avoid behaviors that are risky for you.

Seek out emotional and mental health support

It's important to seek out support for depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns so you can improve your quality of life. You might speak with a doctor about medication support to manage your attraction if other strategies aren't effective for you.

Use relaxation skills

Relaxation skills help you build your resilience and deal with stress. There are lots of skills to try: mindfulness, deep breathing, muscle relaxation, visualization, yoga, meditation.

Expand your interests

You are more than your attraction. Try new things to gain new skills and meet people who share your interests: listen to music, join a team, explore a hobby, take a course.