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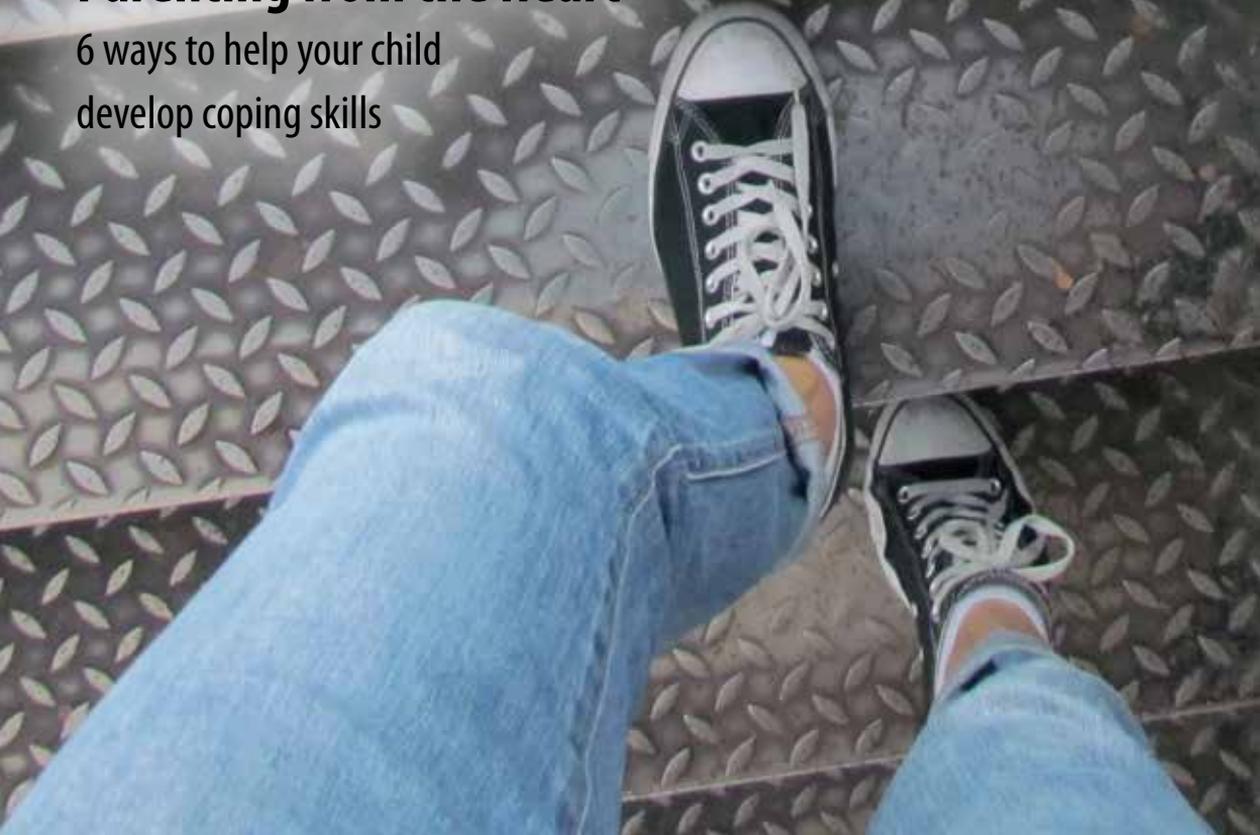
THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Coping with Job Stress

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6 ways to help your child
develop coping skills



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After spending most of my morning trying to figure out a new computer program, I found myself frustrated and frazzled. I wasn't coping too well in keeping up with all the new technology. I needed a break, so I made myself a cup of tea, and called a friend.

After listening for a while to my rants about my seemingly wasted morning, she wisely said, "Why don't you ask for help, so you can focus on what you do best?"

That simple bit of advice reminded me that even though it's not easy to keep up with all the changes that happen around me, there are things I can do to help me keep my cool and avoid getting stressed.

When I sat down later that day and looked for some basic coping skills to help me stay on top of my game, I was amazed at all the great and helpful articles I found.

Of course, adjusting to ever-evolving technology is not the only stressor in our lives. We can also face job stress, family issues, parenting challenges, financial problems, and disability or illness at different times. Even coping with the ever-present noise all around us can be a challenge.

Learning to cope and use appropriate coping skills is more important than ever in our evolving and complex world. This issue of *Motivated* includes a variety of great articles with practical tips that helped me cope with and face some of these issues head-on—and come out on top! I hope they'll do the same for you!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*



One Day at a Time

By Richie Jewell, adapted

My name is Richie Jewell. I'm 20 years old, and I have had autism since birth. I encountered some rocky roadblocks during my life. It was very challenging to endure and live through times of teasing, on and off depression, struggling to adapt in school, helplessly observe my parents' divorce, and the struggles with my disability, which included problems with speech and language, screaming and crying out of frustration when I was young, communication, and awkwardness in social situations.

Despite all of these obstacles that tried to keep me down, I overcame them by using my own set of coping skills: Getting through one day at a time, and knowing that happiness and smiles triumph.

When I had no friends due to my disability, I pretended that my stuffed animals were my friends, and practiced my social skills for later on. Whenever I was in a negative situation, I dreamed myself in a happy place with beautiful nature and happiness all around me. I also reminded myself that everything happens for a reason in life.

I always told myself, "Why do we fall? So, we can learn to pick ourselves up," and most of all, with the help and comfort from family and friends I engaged in hobbies, which included taking care of animals, wrestling,

watching movies, and writing poetry from the heart. This was my inspiration.

Those things I just mentioned are the huge puzzle pieces of my life.

Curious to know what I currently do for a living? I work at a local library in Beacon, NY. Outside the job, I'm a writer, motivational speaker, and world/autism advocate to reach out to people and raise their spirits. I'm also writing a book, titled, *This is Me: Life with Autism*. It talks about my struggles and triumphs with disability throughout my life. I speak at public places, such as schools and libraries, to raise awareness of autism, world problems, the struggles with my disability, and most of all to inspire people to feel good about themselves.

Why did I choose this profession? I'm doing this for the people who have been laughed at, ridiculed, looked at the wrong way, have been told they can't do anything and won't go far in life, or who have been bullied—including myself. I want to show support to people who are in a struggle like I was. I want to be the symbol that anything is possible.

I'm just an average person trying to make a big change in the world's society so we can live in a healthy, peaceful, and beautiful environment, and our home called earth.

This is who I am and always will be:
I am Richie Jewell. ■



Coping with Job Stress

Web Reprint, adapted

Jobs and careers are an important part of our lives. Along with providing a source of income, they help us fulfill our personal aims, build social networks, and serve our communities. They are also a major source of emotional stress.

Stress at work

Even “dream jobs” have stressful deadlines, performance expectations, and other responsibilities. For some, stress is the motivator that ensures things get done. However, workplace stress can easily overwhelm your life. You may continually worry about a particular project, feel unfairly treated by

a supervisor or co-workers, or knowingly accept more than you can handle in hopes of earning a promotion. Putting your job ahead of everything else can also affect your personal relationships, compounding the work-related pressures.

Layoffs, restructuring, or management changes can heighten anxiety about your job security. In fact, a Norwegian study showed that the mere rumor of a factory’s closure caused rapid increases in workers’ pulse and blood pressure. Research has found that workplace injuries and accidents tend to increase in organizations that are being downsized.

The body reacts to stress

Along with its emotional toll, prolonged job-related stress can drastically affect your physical health. Constant preoccupation with job responsibilities often leads to erratic eating habits and not enough exercise, resulting in weight problems, high blood pressure, and elevated cholesterol levels.

Common job stressors such as perceived low rewards, a hostile work environment, and long hours can also accelerate the onset of heart disease, including the likelihood of heart attacks.

This is particularly true for blue-collar and manual workers. Studies suggest that because these employees tend to have little control over their work environments, they are more likely to develop cardiovascular disease than those in traditional “white collar” jobs.

Your age is also a factor. One study found that as stressed workers get older, their blood pressure increases above normal levels. Interestingly, many of the study’s over-60 workers reported that they did not feel upset or unduly pressured by their jobs, even though their blood pressure levels were significantly higher. High blood pressure is sometimes referred to as the “silent killer.” Even though we might not feel any stress symptoms, we should check if we have any stress in our lives, and work to relieve it to avoid any side effects.

Job stress also frequently causes burnout, a condition marked by emotional exhaustion, and negative or cynical attitudes toward others and yourself.

Burnout can lead to depression, which, in turn, has been linked to a variety of other health concerns. Chronic depression also

reduces your immunity to other types of illnesses.

What you can do to combat job stress

Fortunately, there are many ways to help manage job-related stress. Some programs blend relaxation techniques—such as yoga and breathing techniques—with nutrition and exercise. Others focus on specific issues such as time management, assertiveness training, and improving social skills.

A qualified psychologist or other mental health professional can also help you pinpoint the causes of your stress, and develop appropriate coping strategies.

Here are some other tips for dealing with stress on the job:

Make the most of workday breaks.

Even 10 minutes of “personal time” will refresh your mental outlook. Take a brief walk, chat with a co-worker about a non-job topic, or simply sit quietly with your eyes closed and breathe.

If you feel angry, walk away.

Mentally regroup by counting to 10, then look at the situation again. Walking and other physical activities will also help you work off steam.

Set reasonable standards for yourself and others. Don’t expect perfection.

Talk to your employer about your job description. Your responsibilities and performance criteria may not accurately reflect what you are doing.

Working together to make needed changes will not only benefit your emotional and physical health, but also improve overall productivity. ■

Keeping Up with Technology in a Constantly Evolving World



How are you doing?

Web Reprint, adapted

Technology advances at a pace we can hardly keep up with. The old sci-fi movie scenario where you could control everything around you by pressing a button, typing a few keystrokes, or swiping a touchpad is no longer the realm of fiction—it's a reality.

For many people, the demands required to cope with new technological advances is a cause of stress. The complexity of learning to use and make the most out of new technologies often makes people anxious and reluctant to

integrate them in their professional and personal lives.

The inevitable question is this: how do we keep up with a constantly evolving world that's becoming more and more tech-driven?

The answer is simple: we have to keep evolving, too.

As technology makes giant strides to improve our lives, we should try to follow its lead, and build the skills necessary to take advantage of technology. Here are some tips that might help:

Build your tech vocabulary

New technologies generally mean new words to learn. You need to understand the words, and how to use them, in order to be relevant and efficient in communicating with others. Building your vocabulary could help you understand more of the tech-based discourse you'll find in most fields these days, even those that are not directly based in IT support and development.

Build your typing skills

Keyboard-based devices are becoming more widespread. They already reign over the workplace, and are moving into more areas of the home.

People work on desktop computers, watch movies on their tablets while commuting back home, and engage on social media through their smartphones while having dinner. Even if their typing skills are fairly weak, they will still be able to perform all these activities, but they end up doing them in a counterintuitive, time-consuming manner.

Learning to touch type more efficiently is one skill that will help you cope better with technologies at home and at work. You will be able to work productively on any keyboard-based device, and do so in less time. This will give you a sense of confidence and sovereignty over your technology. In other words, you'll rule the device, instead of giving it power over you.

Read more, read often

Simply improving your typing skills and related vocabulary won't suffice, however. There's still a lot you can do in

order to not just cope with technology, but actively leverage it to improve your life.

Start reading a lot of articles, blogs, and books on how new technologies work. Learn what the future could look like if scientists figure out ways to implement affordable technologies in our lives. Be one of the people who are "in the know" when it comes to new developments and new tech trends.

Technology has great potential, and there will always be new ways that it helps businesses grow and flourish. On a personal level, technology can enable people to capitalize on their skills and competencies in order to improve their lives.

Technology makes it possible for us to have responsive organizations: companies that are willing and able to adapt, revisit, and respond to a world that never stops changing and surprising us.

Don't let technology intimidate you. Embrace its elegant beauty and stunning potential.

Yes, uncertainty and mistakes are part and parcel of using new technologies, but so is exhilaration and efficiency. Instead of running away from technology, try learning to use it. Experience the whole new world it makes available to you and you will soon wonder why on earth you avoided it before.

Technology will first change how we work, and then the way we live. Just make sure you're a competent and willing learner of technology, and it will be good to you! ■



6 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP COPING SKILLS

By *The Understood Team*, adapted Web Reprint

“Unpredictable.” “Random.”

“Explosive.” That’s how some parents would describe how their child reacts to everyday struggles.

You can help your child feel more in control of her emotions and reactions by using these six stress-relief strategies to help her develop coping skills:

1. Give words to feelings.

Strong emotions can be scary for kids, and they can fuel strong reactions. But when children are able to talk about how they’re feeling and what may be causing it, their emotions can feel more manageable.

When she’s upset, gently ask your child:

- “How are you feeling right now?” Offer her the words to use: mad, sad, frustrated, anxious, worried, embarrassed, etc.
- “Where are you feeling it in your body?” She may say her belly feels tight, her heart is racing, her head feels hot, etc.
- “What do you think caused it?” Help her think through what happened right before she started to get upset. You might be able to help her see a different perspective, or better understand what occurred.
- Kids with language processing issues may find it difficult to talk about feelings. You might use a “How am I feeling?” visual chart to help her identify her emotions.

2. Find your child's triggers.

Think about which situations are toughest for your child. Then consider how you can change your own behavior to help her cope with them. For example:

- Does she yell when you tell her to turn off the TV? Offer five-minute warnings before shutting it off.
- Does her stress level skyrocket when you ask her to get dressed each morning? A picture schedule might help her anticipate what's expected.
- Are transitions between activities disastrous? Arrange plenty of downtime between each club, sport, and meeting.

3. Encourage healthy ways of coping.

What does your child already do to feel good? Maybe she rides her bike, reads a comic book, or texts with a friend. Next time you see her getting upset:

- Ask if she wants to take a break with one of these calming activities.
- Point out that she already has ways to calm herself down.

Over time, she may turn to these coping mechanisms on her own.

4. Brainstorm specific coping strategies.

If your child doesn't already have particular activities that calm her down, help her come up with some. For example:

- Grade-schoolers: "When I'm angry at my brother, I can jump on the trampoline in the basement."
- Middle-schoolers: "If I'm stuck on a math problem, I'll listen to two songs and then try it again."
- High-schoolers: "When I'm feeling anxious about college applications, I'll go for a run."

5. Be present and understanding.

When your child feels emotional, give her your full attention. If she sees you're distracted, she may feel even further out of control. What does being present look like?

- Focus on her. Check email and phone messages later.
- Model active listening. After she's done speaking, restate what she's just said in her own words, not yours. You might say: "It sounds like you felt Mr. Knight was being disrespectful." This helps her feel heard and understood.
- Ask related questions. Help her work through positive next steps. "Is there anything you think you could tell him tomorrow?"

6. Seek help when needed.

When you rely on the help of others, you show your child that there are many components to a healthy coping strategy. For example:

- If your child struggles in math, a tutor can teach new long division strategies.
- If you argue every time you take her driving, ask a relative to help her get her permit.
- If your child feels depressed, schedule an appointment with a counselor.
- Connect with other parents—they may provide some useful tips and support.

With outside resources at hand, you and your child can feel more confident about your coping skills. ■

The Understood Team

The Understood Team is composed of passionate writers, editors, and community moderators, many of whom have children with learning and attention issues. Read more at www.understood.org/en/about/our-team

How to Cope with Loss

By Nancy F. Smith, adapted excerpts

My sister and I had considered ourselves best friends since we were children. We were inseparable. So it was shattering when, about 15 years ago, our friendship suddenly dissolved. It was as deep a sadness as I had ever felt, made all the more difficult because I had no idea what had caused the breach. Family ties held—brief conversations at family gatherings—but the intimacy of friendship, the shared secrets and holidays, slipped away.

Attempts to repair the estrangement only seemed to make it worse. It took years to give a name to the emotional response I felt over the loss. I recognized it when my mother died some years later: grief. Just as I grieved the loss of my mother, I had grieved the loss of my sister's friendship.

Loss is as much a part of human existence as breathing. It is an everyday event: a lost wallet, earring, investment opportunity. In most cases, we ponder what might have happened, get a little agitated, then quickly move on. But then there are losses that can't just be shrugged off—voids that trigger a powerful kind of emotional response, like the one I had over my sister. Chances are, you've felt like this, too, if your home was somehow destroyed, you lost a job, or your marriage ended in divorce. Maybe your health was devastated by an illness, or you lost a loved one.

How do we find reason in having something or someone we love taken away? The first impulse is to confront

that most basic of human questions: Why me? Why did I lose my job while my colleague in the next office did not? Why was my house consumed in the fire, but not my neighbor's? But nailing down answers isn't the only way to make sense of what you're going through.

Talking about your experience can help you determine your path forward. When you experience a loss, it changes your life story. Characters or possessions are added or gone. Relationships shift. Daily routines are undone. Long-held roles are altered. By speaking about your loss, you can reshape the narrative, and overcome any bitterness, or potential resentment, which, if left to grow, could become an obstacle.

Loss can even be a catalyst for positive growth. The important thing to remember is that coping with loss is not about closure. It is meant to be a transformative life experience, not a rush to a resolution.

I recently came across a photograph of my sister and me. We're just kids, two towheaded, knobby-kneed tomboys side by side under a tree on a bright summer afternoon. I found myself smiling, drawn back into all the adventures shared by those two best friends. That's when I knew grief had run its course. ■



QUIET, PLEASE

By Karen Bannan

Noise is everywhere in today's world. And it's nearly inescapable. We leave the chatter in our open-plan office for a relaxing coffee shop and encounter another cacophony of sounds—milk steaming, coffee grinding, espresso pulls banging against metal surfaces.

There's construction on the street, the sound of drills and grinders competing with music from car speakers. When we get home, a teenager is playing a video game at full volume while the neighbor's dog barks. The cell phone beeps, the food processor whines, the dishwasher rumbles. We fall asleep to the squawk of the TV and the hum of the refrigerator.

Somehow, we never quite feel rested.

Chronic noise is hard on our peace of mind, and it can be damaging to our overall health.

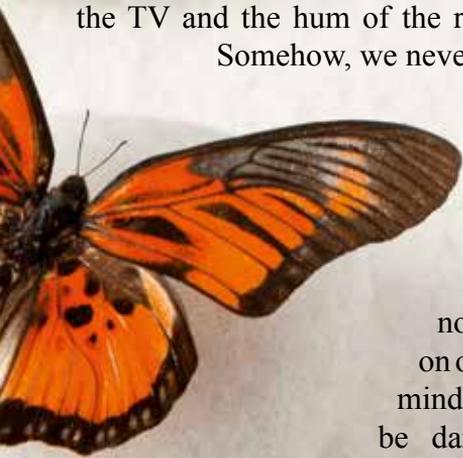
Traffic-related noise alone produces a substantial negative health impact. And traffic noise is only part of the soundscape. With packed restaurants and devices we carry that buzz, beep, and sing, the world is getting louder. Movies today can get as loud as 130 decibels (dB), the equivalent of a jackhammer.

If you're among the many who

struggle to find peace and quiet during these deafening times, take note: There are things you can do to reduce your exposure to noise—and soften the effects of exposure that's unavoidable.

While there are benefits to taking longer meditation breaks and vacations that focus on silence and renewal, finding daily doses of silence is your best bet. Here are some ideas for how to keep your noise-related stress in check:

- Know where the quiet spots are in your workplace, even if they're supply closets or bathrooms, and take "noise breaks" there. If there are no such spaces, wear earplugs for short periods to block out sounds completely.
- If you work from home, and it's noisy there, find quiet places that don't have music playing in the background, and visit them regularly. Just the simple act of removing yourself from sound can lower your heart rate and reduce blood pressure.
- Take small, frequent breaks rather than saving it all up for an hour-long meditation at the end of the day. Spending 10 hours in an office in an excited state is hard on the body, but taking routine breaks helps by bringing down your heart rate, blood pressure, and stress-hormone levels on a regular basis.
- Do all you can to ensure that your sleep environment is soundless enough to allow for uninterrupted sleep. These silent hours allow the body to recover from the onslaught of stimulation in an average day. ■



Coping

Life is not what it's supposed to be. It's what it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference.—**Virginia Satir**

I believe the only thing that we really have control over is our attitude. If we focus on the positive things in our lives and learn how to cope with all the surprises, we will be happier people.—**Brandon Jenner**

Inner Strength is not only how you handle the adversity to come out unscratched, it is also about how you handle the situation after the storm has passed.

—**Dr. Anil Kumar Sinha**

Humor can help you cope with the unbearable so that you can stay on the bright side of things until the bright side actually comes along.—**Allen Klein**

Every human being must find his own way to cope with severe loss. The only job of a true friend is to facilitate whatever method he chooses.—**Caleb Carr**

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life. It goes on.

—**Robert Frost**

If a problem has no solution, it may not be a problem, but a fact, not to be solved, but to be coped with over time.

—**Author Unknown**

One of life's best coping mechanisms is to know the difference between an inconvenience and a problem. If you break your neck, if you have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire, then you've got a problem. Everything else is an inconvenience. Life is inconvenient. Life is lumpy. A lump in the oatmeal, a lump in the throat, and a lump in the breast are not the same kind of lump. One needs to learn the difference.—**Robert Fulghum**

We can keep our morale and spirits high by using both coping and hoping humor. Coping humor laughs at the hopelessness in our situation. It gives us the courage to hang in there, but it does not bring hope. The uniqueness of hoping humor lies in its acceptance of life.... It celebrates the hope in human life. From one comes courage, from the other comes inspiration.—**Cy Eberhart**

