

Tips for COPE and other Mindfulness/ Relaxation/Meditation Exercises

As you go through some of the exercises in COPE and on your own, you may find the following helpful:

1. Even though you may have what feels like thousands of thoughts running through your mind and you don't feel as if you are relaxing, you will likely notice at least some level of relaxation when you finish. As you practice this skill, this relaxation will increase.
2. Sometimes old or hidden pain can arise during these exercises. If you find that you are suddenly angry, frightened, depressed, etc. and you feel safe, gently allow yourself to experience the sensation without forcing yourself to try to understand it. If you feel the need, talk to someone about your experience (i.e., friend, therapist, family member, etc.)
3. You may have heard about "perfect" conditions for these types of exercises (i.e., only in a quiet place, using certain body positions, only 2 hours after you've eaten, etc.). If you find that you can't find an absolutely quiet place or the only time you can practice these exercises is right after dinner, don't let it stop you. If you find whatever is distracting you particularly bothersome (i.e., rumbling stomach, noises outside), try to incorporate it into your exercise.
4. You may not always want to practice these skills. Be gentle with yourself and find creative ways to make your practice more comfortable.
5. A few ideas that may help you maintain your skills practice include:
 - Picking a regular time and honoring that appointment as you would a doctor's appointment or class time
 - Finding a local meditation group
 - Download an app that will help you remember