



**BC Cancer Agency**

CARE + RESEARCH

*An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority*

# Good coping & mindfulness



## **Workbook For Coping Skills Workshop**

*You Do Not Need To Learn Everything Today, Or Even Remember  
What You Heard! This Workbook Is Designed To Be Your Memory...  
Refer To It Often.*

***We can't control the world, but we can control how we cope with it.***

The major goal of the seminar is to help you strengthen and develop **your sense of personal control**. This goal is accomplished by learning about **good coping**, and by practicing the skills that lead to good coping. We define good coping as active problem solving that is optimistic, resourceful, practical and flexible.

*Good coping implies personal control that lets you achieve what is important to you. Good coping also means recognizing your own strengths, and giving yourself a pat on the back.*

Practicing the tools for coping in this workshop will help you make changes in your coping. Confucius, a great philosopher and teacher explained why practice is so important:

*I hear, I forget,  
I see, I remember,  
I do, I understand,  
I practice, I master.*

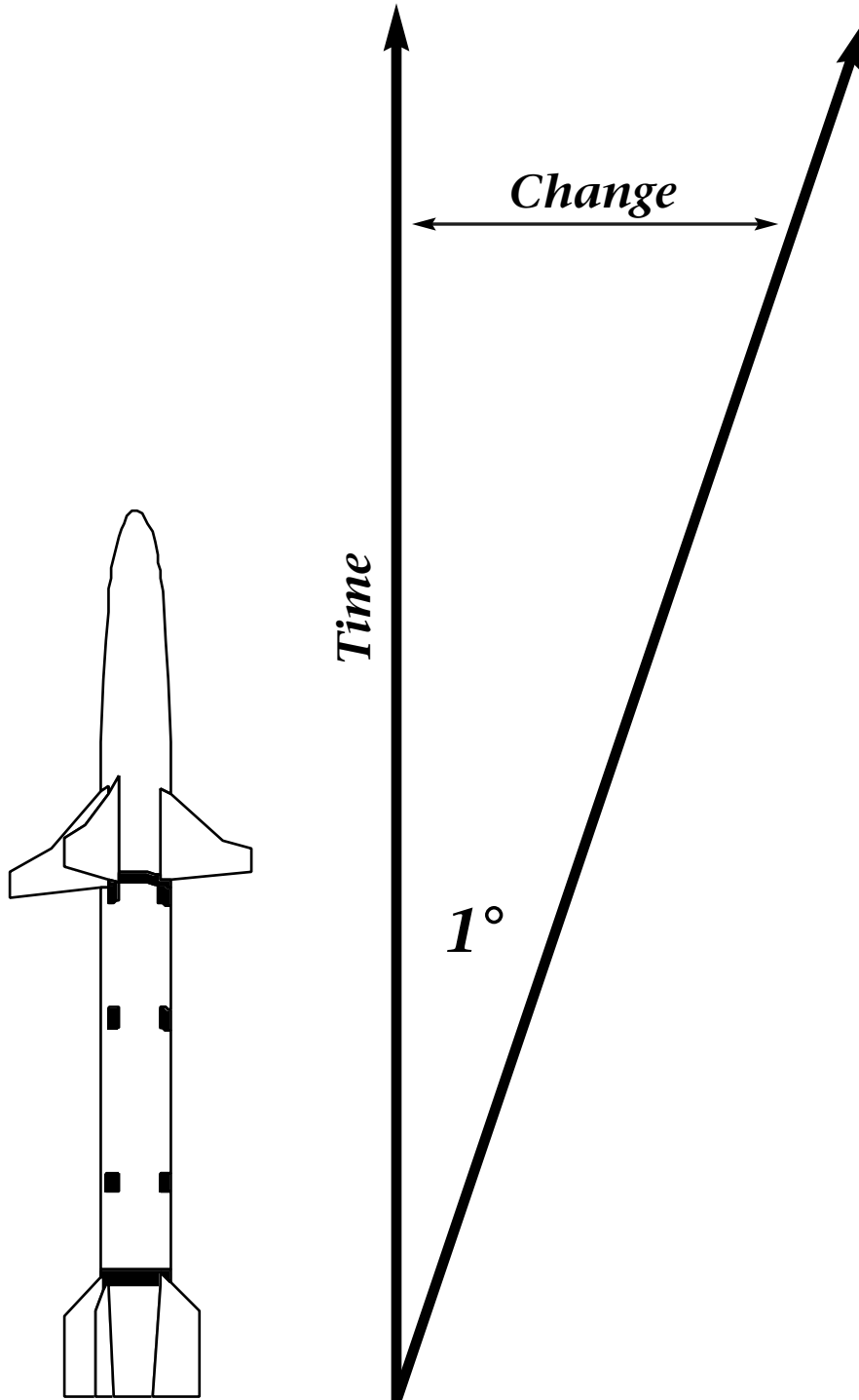
One way to practice the skills you will learn in this workbook is to repeat ideas you like out loud. Remember, "where the attention goes, the energy flows." It takes from 30-60 times to practice a new skill before it's second nature to us! The good news is that only a small amount of change is needed to make a difference — only one degree!

**How many times do we need to practice these new skills?**

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ times.

**How much change is needed? Just \_\_\_\_\_ degree of change.**

# 1 Degree of Change



*Good coping is active problem solving that has:*

**OPTIMISM** or an expectation that positive change is possible,

**PRACTICALITY** about the kinds of solutions that are feasible,

**FLEXIBILITY** in approach to any problem,

**RESOURCEFULNESS** in finding support or additional information that helps.

*Weisman and Worden Project Omega 1980*

*Thus, with good coping, you do not feel helpless or hopeless.*

# Mindfulness

## What is it?

### Mindfulness is:

simply the state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present moment,

putting your mind to what you are doing, but not reacting to it.

a kind of meditation in daily life.

a way of celebrating in small ways the passage through the day.

### Why is it important?

Mindfulness is now linked to many well-being outcomes. It is important in stopping automatic thoughts, habits and unhealthy behaviors, and gaining new energy and a sense of joyful well being.

### How do I do it?

Like every other skill, you practice! Here is an easy exercise, called "The raisin exercise," to practice:

Hold one raisin in the palm of your hand. Look carefully at it – feel and smell it. Then put it in your mouth and pay attention to the taste and texture of it. Keep your mind on how it feels in your mouth as you chew it. Then, swallow it – still paying close attention to how that feels.

You may notice that by paying attention, you become more awake and aware. When we are mindful of the present, we discover relaxation, calmness, energy and insight into ourselves.

Try paying close attention to some of the usual things you tend to do automatically – like drinking a cup of tea or coffee, or watching how the sun filters through a window, or how clothes smell fresh from the dryer ... Each moment can be an opportunity to practice mindfulness.

Remember that the present is the only time that any of us ever has.

*"Awareness in itself is healing" — Fritz Pearls*

Through mastering the skills presented in this seminar, you will be able to cope effectively with both the changes brought about by illness and the daily stresses in your life. Mindfulness can also help master the other coping skills.

We function on three levels at the same time in relation to the world around us. Our health status is dependent on the interaction of all three. These three levels are:

- the biological (**physical/medical**),
- the psychosocial (**emotional**), and
- the sociological (**in relation to the world around us**).

Good coping is helpful to all the three levels.

We use a variety of coping methods; some more often than others, some different times than others. Some are better than others in dealing with stress. Coping methods can be divided into 2 major categories:

- 1) Behavioural methods are those actual things we do.
- 2) Emotional methods are the ways we think about a situation.

Following is a list of ways of coping we tend to use in ordinary daily life and in those times of great stress. Some are very useful, some are not. Some help in the short term only; some help in the long term too. Which ones do you tend to use? Which ones would you like to use more?

### Seeking Social Support

<i>Skills I Use Now</i>		<i>Skills I would Like To Try</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Talk to someone who could do something.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Ask a friend or relative for advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Talk to someone about how I am feeling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Talk to someone to find out more.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Let my feelings out somehow.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Look for empathy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Get professional help.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. _____.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. _____.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Positive Problem Solving

*Skills I  
Use Now*

*Skills I would  
Like To Try*

- 
- |                          |   |                          |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Look for a silver lining.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Change or grow as a person in a good way.      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Treat the illness as a challenge.              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Rediscover what is important in life.          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Change something.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Know what has to be done.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Try to find out as much as I can.              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Make a plan of action and follow it.           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Be inspired to be creative.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Come up with different solutions.             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Change something about myself.                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Live one day at a time.                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Remind myself how much worse things could be. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Try not to act too hastily.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. _____.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. _____.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
-

## Statement Of Coping Principles

1. Recognize that no thought or feeling is wrong in itself, it is what we do with it that really counts.
2. Become aware of the way your body feels as tension begins to build up— remind yourself to calm down.
3. Recognize that you don't have to go through this alone. Don't hesitate to seek information or counselling if questions or concerns arise. Help is available from a wide range of sources.
4. Work to improve communication with your family, friends and physician.
5. If you are experiencing fatigue or feeling overwhelmed, consider redistributing or reducing your responsibilities for a period of time.
6. Recognize that family and friends have to deal with their feelings too. They may be helpful or unhelpful to you. They are, however, probably doing the best they know how.
7. Your physician is your partner. Your part of the partnership is to accept responsibility for reporting honestly how you are feeling, inquiring about the concerns you have, and doing your best to deal with the adjustments you must make.
8. Do things each day that are nurturing to you. These may include fun activities, relaxation, time alone, and exercise.
9. You can work to solve some of the problems that are causing you stress.
10. Accept that guilt and worry about things you CAN'T change are useless and energy-draining.
11. Give yourself credit for whatever level of coping you are achieving. Remember, there is no "instant fix" for stress.
12. Develop a love and respect for yourself — because each of us is, with our strengths, a special and worthwhile person.

*Adapted from Managing The Stress of Cancer:  
A Handbook for Patients and their Families by Dr. Ronna Jevne, 1984.*

# S U M M A R Y

## **Skill # 1      *Good Coping***

*Good coping is \_\_\_\_\_ problem-solving that has:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_.

2. \_\_\_\_\_.

3. \_\_\_\_\_.

4. \_\_\_\_\_.

How many times do we have to practice these skills before we “have them?”

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ times.

How much change is needed? Just \_\_\_\_\_ degree of change.

*My notes:*