

COPE (complete version)

The COPE Inventory was developed to assess a broad range of coping responses, several of which had an explicit basis in theory. The inventory includes some responses that are expected to be dysfunctional, as well as some that are expected to be functional. It also includes at least 2 pairs of polar-opposite tendencies. These were included because each scale is unipolar (the absence of this response does not imply the presence of its opposite), and because we think people engage in a wide range of coping during a given period, including both of each pair of opposites.

The items have been used in at least 3 formats. One is a "dispositional" or trait-like version in which respondents report the extent to which they usually do the things listed, when they are stressed. A second is a time-limited version in which respondents indicate the degree to which they actually did have each response during a particular period in the past. The third is a time-limited version in which respondents indicate the degree to which they have been having each response during a period up to the present. The formats differ in their verb forms: the dispositional format is present tense, the situational-past format is past tense, the third format is present tense progressive (I am ...) or present perfect (I have been ...).

You are welcome to use all scales of the COPE, or to choose selected scales for use (see below regarding scoring). Feel free as well to adapt the language for whatever time scale you are interested in. Be sure to adapt the instructions for completion, as well as the items themselves.

An **abbreviated version** of the COPE has also been created, if you have time constraints or high response burden.

If you are interested in assessing in Spanish, the abbreviated version was translated into (western hemisphere) Spanish by our research group, and can be found [here](#). The full COPE has been translated (independently) into Spanish by Dr. Esther Calvete, of the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain. It can be found [here](#). I believe that the COPE has been translated by at least one team into French. Contact Dr. Lise Fillion at the University Laval in Quebec: Lise.Fillion@fsi.ulaval.ca

Citation to the full COPE: Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., & Weintraub, J. K. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56, 267-283. For a copy of the article, [click here](#).

The items below are the "dispositional" version of the COPE Inventory, as we have administered it. The items are followed by instructions regarding which items are summed for each scale.

COPE

We are interested in how people respond when they confront difficult or stressful events in their lives. There are lots of ways to try to deal with stress. This questionnaire asks you to indicate what you generally do and feel, when you experience stressful events. Obviously, different events bring out somewhat different responses, but think about what you usually do when you are under a lot of stress.

Then respond to each of the following items by blackening one number on your answer sheet for each, using the response choices listed just below. Please try to respond to each item separately in your mind from each other item. Choose your answers thoughtfully, and make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can. Please answer every item. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers, so choose the most accurate answer for YOU--not what you think "most people" would say or do. Indicate what YOU usually do when YOU experience a stressful event.

- 1 = I usually don't do this at all
- 2 = I usually do this a little bit
- 3 = I usually do this a medium amount
- 4 = I usually do this a lot

1. I try to grow as a person as a result of the experience.
2. I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind off things.
3. I get upset and let my emotions out.
4. I try to get advice from someone about what to do.
5. I concentrate my efforts on doing something about it.
6. I say to myself "this isn't real."
7. I put my trust in God.
8. I laugh about the situation.
9. I admit to myself that I can't deal with it, and quit trying.
10. I restrain myself from doing anything too quickly.

11. I discuss my feelings with someone.
12. I use alcohol or drugs to make myself feel better.
13. I get used to the idea that it happened.
14. I talk to someone to find out more about the situation.
15. I keep myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.
16. I daydream about things other than this.
17. I get upset, and am really aware of it.
18. I seek God's help.
19. I make a plan of action.
20. I make jokes about it.

21. I accept that this has happened and that it can't be changed.
22. I hold off doing anything about it until the situation permits.
23. I try to get emotional support from friends or relatives.
24. I just give up trying to reach my goal.
25. I take additional action to try to get rid of the problem.
26. I try to lose myself for a while by drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
27. I refuse to believe that it has happened.
28. I let my feelings out.
29. I try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.
30. I talk to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.

31. I sleep more than usual.
32. I try to come up with a strategy about what to do.
33. I focus on dealing with this problem, and if necessary let other things slide a little.
34. I get sympathy and understanding from someone.
35. I drink alcohol or take drugs, in order to think about it less.
36. I kid around about it.
37. I give up the attempt to get what I want.
38. I look for something good in what is happening.
39. I think about how I might best handle the problem.
40. I pretend that it hasn't really happened.

41. I make sure not to make matters worse by acting too soon.
42. I try hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.
43. I go to movies or watch TV, to think about it less.
44. I accept the reality of the fact that it happened.
45. I ask people who have had similar experiences what they did.
46. I feel a lot of emotional distress and I find myself expressing those feelings a lot.
47. I take direct action to get around the problem.
48. I try to find comfort in my religion.
49. I force myself to wait for the right time to do something.
50. I make fun of the situation.

51. I reduce the amount of effort I'm putting into solving the problem.
52. I talk to someone about how I feel.
53. I use alcohol or drugs to help me get through it.
54. I learn to live with it.
55. I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.
56. I think hard about what steps to take.
57. I act as though it hasn't even happened.
58. I do what has to be done, one step at a time.
59. I learn something from the experience.
60. I pray more than usual.

Scales (sum items listed, with no reversals of coding):

Positive reinterpretation and growth: 1, 29, 38, 59
Mental disengagement: 2, 16, 31, 43
Focus on and venting of emotions: 3, 17, 28, 46
Use of instrumental social support: 4, 14, 30, 45
Active coping: 5, 25, 47, 58
Denial: 6, 27, 40, 57
Religious coping: 7, 18, 48, 60
Humor: 8, 20, 36, 50
Behavioral disengagement: 9, 24, 37, 51
Restraint: 10, 22, 41, 49
Use of emotional social support: 11, 23, 34, 52
Substance use: 12, 26, 35, 53
Acceptance: 13, 21, 44, 54
Suppression of competing activities: 15, 33, 42, 55
Planning: 19, 32, 39, 56

I have had many questions about combining scales into "problem focused" and "emotion focused" aggregates, or into an "overall" coping index. I have never done that in my own use of the scales. There is no such thing as an "overall" score on this measure, and I recommend no particular way of generating a dominant coping style for a give person. Please do NOT write to me asking for instructions to for "adaptive" and "maladaptive" composites, because I do not have any such instructions. I generally look at each scale separately to see what its relation is to other variables. An alternative is to create second-order factors from among the scales (see the 1989 article) and using the factors as predictors. If you decide to do that, I recommend that you use your own data to determine the composition of the higher-order factors. Different samples exhibit different patterns of relations.

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