

BEHIND HAPPY FACES

Alpha Phi - Key



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

These outcomes show what knowledge and skills participants should gain from the lesson. It is crucial you review the goals of the lesson with the members so they know what they will learn.



HANDOUT:

It is time to distribute a handout/materials to participants. These can be found at the end of each lesson if it includes a handout. Make copies in advance!



WRITE ON FLIP CHART:

The main points are included in PowerPoint presentations. In the event you do not have access to a computer/projector, write examples and instructions on flip chart paper in the front of the room.



GROUP DISCUSSION:

It is time to prompt participants with questions or dialogue for group discussion.



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY:

It is time for an activity, like scenarios or a game. These activities help participants feel more connected to the information.



INSTRUCTIONS:

Read information or directions aloud to the groups.



WATCH THE VIDEO:

Each lesson includes videos to help introduce the topic and engage viewers to take part in the lessons. It is important to make sure you test them in advance to make sure the video and audio work on your technology.

Lesson 3: Changing Ineffective Coping

This lesson explains the differences between effective and ineffective coping and allows members to further examine how they are addressing issues in their lives. Changing coping mechanisms can be a long process that requires awareness and effort. The process of changing coping requires one to build new pathways in the brain to break old behaviors/habits. Changing coping can help a person gain positive emotional growth.

FACILITATOR:

To facilitate this lesson effectively, it is helpful to have experience or training as a facilitator in other areas of chapter operations or campus life. If a sister is or has been a resident assistant, student organization leader, peer advocate, or is studying to be a teacher, they could be an excellent facilitator for this program.

TIME NEEDED:

25 minutes



OBJECTIVES:

- State a definition of coping.
- Differentiate between effective and ineffective coping.

SETTING:

- Choose a room that offers a lot of open space for small groups to be able to spread out and not be distracted by others. Members will need to be able to either sit and gather on the floor or move chairs around into small groups.
- You will show a PowerPoint presentation and play a video during the lesson, so you will need a computer connected to a projector and screen.
- *If facilitating virtually, you should practice the presentation on your video conference platform to ensure the PowerPoint, video, microphone and sound are all working accordingly. You should read the Purpose of Lesson below and review the facilitation guide to be aware of exercises that will need to be adjusted to the virtual experience.*

GROUP SIZE:

- Members will be working in pairs or groups of three for this lesson.
- *If facilitating virtually, use the video conference platform breakout room feature to create groups of two or three.*



MATERIALS NEEDED:

- For each person: One copy of the Changing Ineffective Coping handout and a pen
- *If facilitating virtually, Changing Ineffective Coping handout will need to be downloaded and shared with participants.*
- Projector and screen
- “Changing Ineffective Coping” PowerPoint
- “Changing Ineffective Coping” video

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS LESSON

PURPOSE OF LESSON:

The purpose of the third lesson is to help members explore their coping mechanisms. They will do three exercises to help them understand the causes of stress. This includes, identifying feelings of stress, how they cope with stress and distinguishing the difference between effective and ineffective coping. The last exercise explores self-compassion.

The first exercise offers members the opportunity to write down three causes of stress, three feelings from those causes and three coping mechanisms they use for those feelings or causes. The goal of this exercise is to help members begin to identify what impacts their lives and how they deal with it. You will find that some members are more familiar with one category over the others. Give them an opportunity to write down answers for each category. The main reason you are having them separate causes, feelings and coping mechanisms is because members are often coping with a feeling from stress while confusing it for the cause. For example, a cause of stress for one sister may be their family. They cope with that cause of stress by avoiding their family or disagreeing with them. However, they may not just be coping with the stress from their family. They may feel frustrated, angry, sad, overwhelmed, annoyed or any other emotion when they talk to their family. If they can become more aware of those emotions and how they can cope with the emotions, then they may be able to develop a deeper relationship with their family. There are many members who benefit from identifying how their emotions impact their coping mechanisms.

The second exercise has members look at their list of coping mechanisms and determine which of them are effective and which are ineffective. The definitions for effective and ineffective are in the lesson. The short definitions are that effective coping builds an individual, their mental health, their physical health and their relationships, while ineffective coping takes away from those elements. After members identify their ineffective coping skills, they should write down how those coping skills could become more effective. For example, if someone's ineffective coping skill is eating jars of Nutella, that could be more effective if they put Nutella on fruit. Your role in facilitating this exercise is not to argue or judge coping skills; it's to guide members to become more familiar with developing this skill.

After discussing the differences between effective and ineffective coping, members will learn the steps to change ineffective coping. It's important to focus on the neuroscience of habit formation when talking about how to change coping skills. The longer we use neural pathways, the more automatic our behaviors become. If someone starts hiding their emotions in middle school, then it can be difficult to know how to talk openly when they get to high school or college. It

can take months or years to develop new coping skills. There are many setbacks along the way. Having a supportive team of people that allows a person to fail and celebrates their small victories is critical to their success.

The third exercise is about self-compassion. Many people are familiar with the term self-esteem, which can often be a judgment or determined to be high or low. Self-compassion is how we treat ourselves. It's the internal voice we use inside our heads. We will talk to ourselves more than we will ever talk to another person. Our internal voice is often louder and more important than any external voice. The exercise the members do will have them write down a difficult event at the top of a page. On the left side they will write down what they said to themselves during the difficult event. On the right side, they will write down what they would say to a friend in the same situation. Many members will realize that they treat themselves harsher than they treat a friend. It's important to have a conversation with the members about why this happens and how they can change it.

This lesson helps members begin to see the coping skills they use and what they need to do to change them. If a sister has really low self-compassion, then their chance of changing their coping mechanisms is extremely low. It will take extra effort for them to change those coping mechanisms. Becoming aware of the importance of using all of these skills can help a sister learn how to cope more effectively.

FACILITATOR TIPS :

To facilitate this lesson effectively it is helpful to do the following:

1. Connect to members early about why mental health is important to you and why it should be important to them. If you have a personal story about why you care about mental health, then share it if you are comfortable doing so. Let members know they should take this seriously. The more that you can make yourself vulnerable and relatable, the more effective you will be as a facilitator.
2. Make yourself vulnerable with a boundary. If you are going to share part of your personal story, make sure you share something that you are comfortable with and have processed. For example, if you share that you care about this issue because you have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and it affected part of your life, then the members see you presenting from a place of strength. If you share something that you are still processing and become emotional, then the members may think they need to take care of you. It's helpful if you can be real about why you care and reinforce what you learned from your experiences.

3. Keep the exercises concise. If you give members too much time, they can devolve into so many other unnecessary conversations. Keep members focused.
4. Allow the exercises to be tools for members to identify how to work on mental health, but do not let lessons become therapy. There's a difference between members identifying what they can work on and voicing all of their experiences or pain. Stress that you want to start conversations but that they can do the work outside of the lessons. This is a public health approach to mental health and not a therapeutic approach.
5. Focus on connecting members to their emotions and each other. Have fun when you can. Be positive. Make it a team-building exercise that strengthens communication and connection.
6. It is important to let members know that lessons about mental health require everyone to be open, honest and non-judgmental. Members who share their stories need to feel safe and that the values of your organization are being upheld. Reinforce that the main goal is to start conversations about mental health in a way that can bring everyone together.
7. If a member is sharing their story extensively and continues to provide more details about their life than the lesson is asking for, it is OK to let them know that you hear their story and also want to hear from other members. Remind all members that these lessons are a start to this topic and provide ways to open conversations that can be continued after the lessons are over.
8. The recommended time for each lesson is 20-25 minutes. This gives you enough time to do each exercise; however, you might find that the group you are teaching wants to spend more time on certain exercises. It is OK to do this when you feel that the group is having a discussion that will help everyone address mental health in a meaningful manner.
9. Show the slide that sets the ground rules for the conversation at the beginning of the lesson and make sure everyone agrees the ground rules.

FACILITATOR NOTES:

As members enter the room, give each member the Changing Ineffective Coping handout.

- *If facilitating this lesson virtually, share the Changing Ineffective Coping handout with the participants.*



COPING VIDEO (2 MINUTES)

This video features an introduction about coping mechanisms and what you will learn in this lesson.

Play “Changing Ineffective Coping” video for the larger group.

CHANGE PPT SLIDE

FACILITATOR NOTES:

This part of the lesson is vital to helping members understand the purpose of the activities they will be doing. Stress the introductory points to help everyone understand the goals of the workshop.

EXERCISE 1 (10 MINUTES)



INTRODUCTION:

- We’re going to go through a lesson about mental health. This is a serious topic that affects all of us and can be really sensitive for members. If at any time you are triggered by the content in this lesson, you can choose to not participate in the activities or leave the room to talk to someone who can help you.
- Being honest, open and non-judgmental of each other during these exercises will help us learn more about mental health and each other. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- Coping is one of the most important elements of exploring mental health. The goal of this lesson is to help us determine what our coping mechanisms are and how to change ineffective ones.
- Think about it this way: A lot of us exercise to strengthen our bodies. Learning about effective coping mechanisms is a way to strengthen our minds. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- If you want to change your ineffective coping mechanisms, you need to become aware of the behavior you are using, then practice effective behaviors.
- Each person needs a different amount of time to change coping mechanisms. Mental health disorders can also complicate this process.
- When trying to adapt or change a coping mechanism, stay patient and don’t give up. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

INSTRUCTIONS:

Coping is the way we deal with stress from adversity, disadvantage and other problems in our lives. Some examples of coping mechanisms are drinking alcohol, self-harming, flipping out or talking about your feelings with a friend. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

- For the next exercise, you are going to be working in pairs, so once I finish giving the instructions, choose a partner. If there is an uneven number, it is OK to work in groups of three. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- In a survey of 500 college students, the most common causes of stress were school, dating, thinking about the future and finances.
- The survey asked the question, “How do you cope with stress?” Respondents shared the top three coping mechanisms were eating, drinking alcohol and exercising. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- You and your partner(s) will have 5 minutes to write down three causes of stress, three feelings from those causes and three ways you cope with those causes/feelings on the handout.
- For example, someone gets stressed out when they think about the future. It makes them feel nervous. They copes with that by talking about the future with their friends, and sometimes they cope by drinking alcohol.
- Give them 5 minutes to write down the three causes, feelings and coping mechanisms. Then come back together as a large group to discuss. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- *If facilitating virtually, use the breakout room feature of the video conference platform to create groups of two or three. Send participants the handout. These exercises will require moving between breakout groups and large group for discussion.*



SHARE:

- I want to hear from several groups about how the causes of stress make them feel and how they cope with those causes and feelings. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- *Have at least three groups share their answers for each category.*

SUMMARIZE:

- It's important to separate the causes from the feelings, because sometimes you are coping with how a cause of stress makes you feel. For example, school may be a huge cause of stress, but it could be the feeling of being overwhelmed or afraid that leads you to cope a certain way.
- We need to be able to identify what a coping mechanism is in order for us to be able to change it.

- We don't need to change all of our coping mechanisms. The next exercise will help us determine which ones we may want to work on making more effective. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

EXERCISE 2 (5 MINUTES)

Effective coping reduces stress, lessens the intensity of your triggers, allows you to face more challenges, helps you become more productive and allows you to be more engaged with the people in your life.

Ineffective coping reduces your ability to address stress, prevents you from developing your mental health and can be harmful to your overall physical/mental health. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

FACILITATOR NOTES:

This exercise is meant for members to identify their own coping mechanisms as a guide for themselves. You do not need to engage with members to help them see that a coping mechanism they feel is effective may be ineffective. The goal is for them to begin to identify these differences on their own.



INSTRUCTIONS:

- This exercise is meant to help you identify a coping mechanism that you might want to change.
- You now have 3 minutes to separate your list into the categories of effective or ineffective coping.
- Discuss with your partner(s): Could any of the ineffective coping mechanisms be made more effective?
- For example, if someone over-eats as a way to cope, they could learn to eat more appropriate amounts or eat healthy foods. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- *Give the partner(s) 3 (or so) minutes to separate their lists and discuss.*



SHARE:

- I want to hear from several groups about how an ineffective coping mechanism could be more effective.
- How can you commit to making those changes? **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

SUMMARIZE:

- The longer we use a coping mechanism, the harder it can be to change it.
- Our brains create pathways for our actions. The longer we repeat actions, the more automatic they become. There are a lot of actions we've been doing for so long, like tying a shoe or driving, we don't even think about them anymore. We just do them. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- The steps to changing a coping mechanism are important:
 1. You have to want to change your coping mechanisms. No one can do it for you.
 2. You have to be able to identify when you're using an ineffective coping mechanism.
 3. You have to replace the ineffective coping mechanism with an effective one.
 4. You have to practice the effective coping mechanism until that skill becomes more natural.
 5. You have to create a supportive environment with sisters, friends and family that allows you to maintain the new coping mechanism. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

EXERCISE 3 (8 MINUTES)

HOW WE TREAT OURSELVES (2 MINUTES)

As we discuss ineffective coping mechanisms, it's good to think about how we treat ourselves. All of us have an inner voice that can play a large role in our confidence, understanding and what we think of ourselves. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

- Self-compassion is the way a person treats oneself, while self-esteem can be a judgment that is high or low. Self-compassion is about the way you talk to yourself or how you manage emotions during difficult circumstances.
- All of us have an inner voice that can play a large role in our confidence, understanding and what we think of ourselves.
- We use that inner voice to talk to ourselves more than we talk to anyone else in our lives. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- When that inner voice is positive it can motivate us and support us to be our best. When that inner voice is negative we can beat ourselves up and that can really harm our ability to work on our coping mechanisms.
- In this next exercise, we will learn more about how our inner voice impacts how we treat ourselves. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

FACILITATOR NOTES:

This exercise can cause some members to realize how they talk to and treat themselves for the first time. It may lead to them having a lot of emotions. It's important to keep this exercise focused on the positives that can come from understanding self-compassion. If you feel your chapter needs to do this exercise anonymously with notecards, please feel free to do so.



INSTRUCTIONS:

- Think about a time you faced rejection or loss. It could be a break-up, parents' divorce, loss of a friend or death of a pet or someone close to you. It could also be a time when you were mistreated for the way you look or something else that isn't your fault. Write the experience you had at the top of the second page of your handout.
- You will see a line down the middle of the page. On the left side write down all of the things you said to yourself as you went through this situation.
- On the right side write down all of the things you would say to a friend who was going through the same situation. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**



SHARE:

- Let's have a few people share some of their answers.
- Please remember to be respectful of others during this exercise. Some of us may be coming to a realization for the first time, and that will lead to sensitivity. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- Let's have a few people share why they think they might treat a friend differently than they treat themselves. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

SUMMARIZE:

- We did this exercise to help show you that the way you treat yourself is sometimes harsher than the way you treat a friend.
- This is extremely common and you shouldn't feel bad if you are doing this to yourself.
- The purpose of this exercise was to show you how you can improve the way you talk to yourself. Changing the way you talk to yourself will help you tremendously in being able to change ineffective coping mechanisms. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**
- The longer we use a coping mechanism, the harder it can be to change it.

- Our brains create pathways for our behaviors. The longer we use them, the more automatic they become.
- There are a lot of behaviors we've been doing for so long we don't even think about them anymore. We just do them. **CHANGE PPT SLIDE**

WRAP-UP:

- Knowing how you cope and how your friends cope is a great way to be able to support each other.
- Some of your friends may have triggers or have had difficulties in their past that lead them to ineffective coping mechanisms. Try to be supportive to help them change. A healthy environment can truly make a difference in someone's life.

Please remind members that they should take the survey at the link provided. Show the QPR code on the screen and ask for confirmation that members took the post-test.

https://corexmstcmk6ytnfrbb6.sjc1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_50CU0PA1vbCPvV3



Lesson 3 Handout

EXERCISE 1

DIFFERENCES IN STRESS

LIST 3 CAUSES OF STRESS	LIST 3 FEELINGS FROM THOSE CAUSES	LIST 3 COPING MECHANISMS
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

EXERCISE 2

EFFECTIVE VS. INEFFECTIVE COPING

Look at your list of three coping mechanisms. Separate the list into two categories: effective or ineffective coping mechanisms.

Effective coping reduces stress, lessens the intensity of your triggers, allows you to face more challenges, helps you become more productive and allows you to be more engaged with the people in your life. Ineffective coping reduces your ability to address stress, prevents you from developing your mental health and can be harmful to your overall physical/mental health.

EXERCISE 3

SELF-COMPASSION

On the back of this page, you will see a line down the middle of the page. At the top of the page, write down a difficult event you experiences like a bad grade, parents' divorce, death or some kind of rejection. On the left side, write down five things you said to yourself when you went through this. On the right side, write down five things you would say to a friend in the same situation.

