

Coping Skills & Techniques

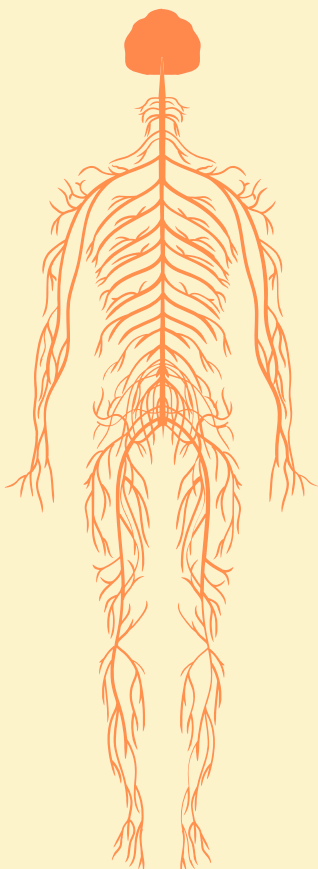
FOR NEURODIVERGENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Existing as a neurodivergent professional is tough, no matter what profession you're in. While workplace accommodations can give you some stability, it's important to have strategies in place for when you inevitably face situations that trigger anxiety and overwhelm.

That's where coping skills come in. Use these techniques to help maintain your composure and self-soothe. Regular practice will help strengthen your body's resilience during difficult times at work.



Intro to Nervous System Regulation



The nervous system plays a leading role in how you feel in your body because it tells you if you're feeling relaxed, stressed, safe, unsafe, etc. Our experience of stress depends on how our body delegates between the two branches of the autonomic nervous system

Parasympathetic nervous system.

This is the default mode for your nervous system. It is responsible for digestion, muscle recovery, healing injuries – all the things our bodies need to function.

Sympathetic nervous system.

This activates when our bodies perceive a threat to our safety. This looks like increased blood flow to muscles, increased heart rate, heightened vigilance, etc.

What is a dysregulated nervous system?

If you struggle to manage stress, you may have a dysregulated nervous system. This means the sympathetic nervous system is staying activated for too long or too frequently.

Your body may begin to perceive normal occurrences, like getting an important email or having a one-on-one meeting with your manager, as threats to your safety and well-being.

Excessive time spent in sympathetic nervous system control limits our body's capabilities to stay healthy. Without the parasympathetic nervous system, we struggle with proper energy storage, immune function, digestive function, muscle recovery, and overall feelings of wellbeing.



Proactive vs. Reactive Coping Skills:



Proactive coping skills are practices that you can employ on a regular (daily) basis to help stabilize your mood.

Reactive coping skills are techniques you can use during moments of overwhelm or anxiety so you can regain control sooner.

You can find examples of both types of coping skills on the next page!

TIP: If you struggle to identify, understand, process, regulate, and communicate your emotions, the [Animi app](#) can help you discover them and manage them as well!

Examples of Coping Skills

SKILLS	PROACTIVE	REACTIVE
Touch & Self Soothing	Use PMR (<u>Progressive Muscle Relaxation</u>) technique, or “squeeze” the muscles in your body to ground yourself.	Pet or touch your yourself for self-soothing, signaling to the brain that the body is safe.
Emotion Naming	Practice naming your emotions during low stress periods so you can get used to pairing feelings with words.	Verbally acknowledge your feelings. For example, say "I am overwhelmed," to regain prefrontal cortex control
Emotional Mapping	Create a map associating physical sensations with emotional states, aiding in early identification and response.	Refer to your map to see if there’s any physical need you can meet to ease your emotional state.
Mindfulness Practices	Incorporate mindfulness meditation, breathwork, or movement practices into daily routines.	Take deep breaths and use grounding techniques to anchor yourself to reality,
Basic Needs Care	Prioritize eating, hydration, regular bathroom breaks, and quality sleep for overall well-being.	Eat a healthy snack; drink water, take a nap - assess what basic needs are not being met in the moment.
Physical Movement	Exercise regularly to ensure you are meeting your movement needs,	Engage in a whole-body shake or other physical movements to release tension and refocus.
Tapping Techniques	Practice a full <u>EFT tapping sequence</u> as part of your regular self care.	Utilize tapping, such as tapping collarbones or above the eyebrow, as a reactive self-regulation method.

The Importance of Awareness

Many neurodivergent individuals struggle with interoception—the ability to sense what's happening in their body. Mindfulness increases interoception, helping individuals become more aware of bodily sensations, so they can avoid reaching critical points during high-stress situations. Awareness of what's happening in your body is key, as it will help guide you to adopt appropriate coping skills and strategies.

Movement Meditation:

Incorporate movement into meditation, like walking or standing practices, for a dynamic approach.

Still Meditation:

Practice still meditation, including body scans and breath awareness, for focused self-awareness.

Non-Judgmental Awareness:

Emphasize that the goal is not perfection but awareness without judgment, fostering a sense of self-acceptance.

Don't Forget...



There are no “magic fixes”

Acknowledge that these coping mechanisms are practices and forms of self-care, emphasizing that they may not offer immediate solutions but contribute to overall well-being.



Be aware of how you judge yourself.

Recognize and challenge self-judgments with balanced statements rooted in fact. Neurodivergent people experience emotions more strongly than other people, and that's not a bad thing!



Make it fun!

Introduce tools or equipment that make coping mechanisms enjoyable, like fidget toys or a yoga ball. Remember there is no one correct way to self-soothe!

Meet the Experts

NEURODIVERGENT COACHES TO SUPPORT YOUR GOALS



atypical
careers

Veronica Yao, Career Coach
(she/her)

Helping neurodivergent professionals go from burnout to balance.

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FREE TRAINING:
How to Build a Sustainable Career
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Rachel Lovitt (she/her)

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