



5: The Magic of Coping

*A PK-6 Lesson on Handling Hard Moments, Managing Emotions,
and Moving Forward with Strengths*



Introduction for the Facilitator

This lesson helps PK-6 students build the professional skill of **coping**, which simply means responding to strong emotions and difficult situations in healthy, helpful ways. Coping doesn't mean ignoring our feelings. It means **acknowledging how we feel and taking small steps to stay safe, calm, and focused** when things get hard.

Coping is one of the most important tools for personal growth. When students practice coping strategies, they develop the ability to stay steady under pressure, handle setbacks, and support others, too. This becomes part of their personal competitive advantage, helping them succeed not only in school, but also live the kind of **lifestyle** they want: peaceful, fun, productive, connected, or anything in between.

This lesson teaches students that coping is not about being perfect. It's about being prepared—knowing what works, practicing it often, and choosing healthy ways to handle stress, disappointment, frustration, sadness, and more.

This lesson includes:

- A relatable Social Story
- 8 Group Discussion Questions with follow-up questions
- 8 Journal Prompts (draw or write)
- 10 PK-6-friendly classroom Activities
- A printable Worksheet to help students reflect on and build their coping toolbox

Let's show our students how strong it is to feel, to pause, and to move forward with care.



Social Story: *Jasmine's Quiet Corner*

Jasmine loved school...most days. But sometimes, big feelings showed up. Like when she forgot her homework. Or when her best friend played with someone else. Or when a loud noise startled her in the cafeteria.

On those days, Jasmine's heart would race, her face would get hot, and tears would fill her eyes. "I don't know what to do," she'd whisper.



One day, Ms. King, the school counselor, showed Jasmine a new space in the classroom with pillows, calming jars, and headphones. "This is now our Coping Corner," she said. "When things feel too big, this is a place to breathe, think, and choose a next step."

Jasmine wasn't sure at first. But the next time she felt overwhelmed, she asked, "Can I go to the Coping Corner?"

She sat down. Took three deep breaths. Squeezed a stress ball. And slowly, she felt more like herself. After a few minutes, she went back to class. She had coped.

Over the next few weeks, Jasmine tried different coping tools: drawing, talking to a friend, counting backwards, asking for help. She learned that no one copes the same way. What mattered was **finding what worked**—and remembering to use it.

Now, Jasmine had something special: **a plan to face hard moments with confidence**. That was a big piece of her **personal competitive advantage**: the superpower to feel big emotions and keep moving forward toward the life she wanted.



Group Discussion Questions

- 1. What are some feelings that are hard to handle?**
Follow-up: How do those feelings show up in your body or actions?
- 2. What does it mean to "cope" with something?**
Follow-up: Can you think of a time when you coped well?
- 3. What helps you feel better when you're sad, mad, or stressed?**
Follow-up: Who helps you feel safe or supported?
- 4. Why is it helpful to have a coping plan?**
Follow-up: How does it help you feel more in control?
- 5. What's one small step you can take when your emotions feel too big?**
Follow-up: Why do small steps matter during hard moments?
- 6. How is coping a superpower?**
Follow-up: What would your coping superpower look like in action?
- 7. What is a personal competitive advantage?**
Follow-up: How does coping help build yours?
- 8. What kind of lifestyle do you want?**
Follow-up: How do strong coping skills help you live that kind of life?



Journal Prompts

(Students can write or draw their answers based on age and ability.)

1. **Draw or write about something that helps you feel better when you're upset.**
2. **What does it feel like in your body when you have a big feeling?**
3. **Describe or draw a time when you coped with something hard. What helped?**
4. **What would a "Coping Toolbox" look like for you? What would be inside?**
5. **If you could teach someone else a coping strategy, what would it be? Why would you pick that strategy?**
6. **What kind of life do you want to build? How can coping help you live it?**
7. **Draw yourself as a "Coping Hero." What are your powers or tools?**
8. **How does learning to cope give you a personal competitive advantage?**



Activities

1. **Coping Toolbox Craft**
Students decorate a paper box or envelope with drawings of their favorite coping strategies.
2. **Feelings and Fix-Its Game**
Match emotion cards with coping cards (e.g., "nervous" + "deep breaths") in pairs or small groups.
3. **Classroom Calm Chart**
Build a visual list of class-approved coping strategies that students can use throughout the day.
4. **Coping Scenario Skits**
Act out simple situations where big feelings could happen (e.g., losing a game, forgetting a book) and demonstrate positive coping strategies.
5. **Mindful Minute**
Practice one minute of deep breathing, listening to calming sounds, or guided stretching daily.
6. **Emotion Thermometer**
Students color in levels of emotion (1 to 5) and write/draw a coping skill for each level.
7. **Coping Strategy Dice**
Create large dice with one strategy on each side (e.g., count to 10, draw, squeeze something). Roll and act it out!
8. **My Safe Space Drawing**
Students illustrate or describe a place (real or imagined) where they feel calm and safe.
9. **Coping Buddies**
Pair students up as support partners who remind each other of helpful strategies when needed.
10. **Breathe Like... Game**
Take turns leading the group in silly breathing styles: "Breathe like a dragon... a balloon... a sleepy cat..."



My Coping Toolbox

Name: _____

Helpful Words:

- **Coping** = things I do to handle hard feelings and situations
- **Lifestyle Goal** = the kind of life I want to live
- **Personal Competitive Advantage** = my special strengths and habits that help me grow

Directions:

Write or draw your answers below.
Your coping skills are your tools for strength!

Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. One big feeling I sometimes have is:

2. When I feel this way, it helps to:

3. A person I can talk to is:

4. My favorite coping strategy is:

5. A coping superpower I want to build is:

6. This is how coping helps me grow my personal competitive advantage:

7. Coping can help me live the lifestyle I want by: