Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**What is COPE?**
COPE is a 3-week workshop that focuses on **enhancing self-care and teaching skills for a more fulfilling life.** It was specifically designed to help people with their emotional concerns.

**Why does COPE use a 3-session model?**
Teaching COPE over the course of three sessions allows you sufficient time to understand the concepts with time to practice in between sessions. Keeping it to 3 weeks allows you to find time in your busy schedule to participate in COPE. If you find that you want more time to build the skills in the model, you may complete the COPE seminar again.

**Why do I have to do homework?**
The focus of this seminar is on building skills; in order to successfully build skills, regular practice is essential. The more you practice, the more you may find you get out of this seminar. You will not be required to provide your homework responses at any time during this seminar.

**What if I didn’t do my homework?**
We strongly recommend completing the homework. The students that report the most benefit from COPE are the ones that are able to practice between sessions and beyond. If you are unable to complete an assignment, we encourage you to come to your next scheduled COPE seminar anyway.

**What if I don’t feel comfortable in groups?**
This is a common concern. COPE is structured and curriculum-driven like a classroom. You may find that you feel comfortable enough to share some of your experiences in the seminars; this allows all the participants to learn and support one another. However, you are not required to speak if you do not feel comfortable doing so. You can still benefit from the information presented. The COPE facilitators respect each participant’s right to disclose or not and never require you to share sensitive or potentially embarrassing information about yourself.

**What if I have an urgent need to see a counselor during COPE?**
Simply let the COPE facilitator or the CCSD front desk staff know and they will help you get the help you need.

**What if I have a problem that’s hard to define?**
This is one of the ways COPE can be particularly helpful. Because it is designed to get you better in touch with your own experiences and goals, COPE may help you define what it is you are looking for.

**What if I have a mood disorder that is probably the result of a biochemical irregularity?**
Even with an identified mood disorder, such as Major Depression or Bipolar Disorder, change-oriented approaches can be very helpful. Improving our ability to recognize our experiences will enhance our ability to identify mood episodes. The earlier someone with a mood disorder is able to accurately determine when a mood episode is happening, the more efficiently that person can be at managing that mood episode. Plus, research suggests that various psychotherapies change the brain in positive ways, even when there is a biochemical irregularity (e.g., Beauregard, 2007; Kumari, 2006; Linden, 2006).
What if I am survivor of a traumatic event?
While no one can change events that have already happened, we can learn to become more aware of how these experience impact us today. **We can learn to listen to the stories we tell ourselves about what happened, the evaluations that we might apply to ourselves or others, the feelings and bodily sensations associated with what happened, and how our behaviors and actions have been affected.** By staying true to our experiences instead of trying to control our thoughts, feelings, and sensations, we can often achieve a more fulfilling life, even in the face of traumatic events.

What if I want to get to the origin or “root” of my problem?
Many people believe that if we only knew the root cause of our problems then we would have the solution to the problem. **Although it is true that our behaviors (including thoughts and feelings) are related to our experiences, it is not necessarily true that just identifying the root cause guarantees our current behaviors will change.** If you feel that getting to the origins of your concerns is essential for your change process, we can recommend a variety of alternative options, including referrals to mental health providers that specialize in this type of therapy.

About Psychological Pain

Everyone experiences psychological pain. This could be sadness, anger, anxiety, heartbreak, embarrassment, etc. Not only is pain normal, but it communicates important information about our experiences. Much like how the pain from a paper cut tells us that we have an injury, psychological pain serves a similar function.

Most of us take care to minimize how often we feel psychological pain, but some pain in life is inevitable. Some of us try to minimize our pain so much that we unintentionally cause other problems or more pain. For example, someone who experiences anxiety when meeting new people may choose to avoid these types of interactions. Although the person will be successful in avoiding the anxiety of meeting someone new, that person may create other experiences, such as loneliness or sadness from missing out on new experiences. Furthermore, some methods of minimizing or avoiding pain can have more significant consequences. For example, someone might choose to manage anxiety with alcohol or other drugs, learn to shut off or numb feelings completely, or stay continuously busy to the point of physically exhausting or otherwise negatively impacting their body.

By changing our relationship with our psychological pain, we create flexibility. We do not have to get stuck with one option: avoiding pain.

We can learn other strategies that will add a variety of tools to our psychological tool box. This is one of the goals of COPE.

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