



# AADE7 Self-Care Behaviors<sup>®</sup> HEALTHY COPING

*Healthy coping means having a positive attitude toward your diabetes or prediabetes management, as well as positive relationships with others.*

Prediabetes and diabetes can affect both your body and your emotions. It is common to have mixed feelings about your condition and experience emotional highs and lows. These emotions can affect your ability to manage your daily life and condition. It is not uncommon to feel distressed or depressed due to the emotional burden, the daily demands and the fears of long-term problems.

To cope is to deal with or overcome a problem. There are lots of ways to cope with upsets in your life, and not all of them are good for your health. However, there are healthy coping methods that you can use to get through tough times.

## FOCUS ON HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES

How you handled your feelings in the past can be a guide for coping with your condition. There are many ways to cope with life stresses and the challenges of having prediabetes or diabetes. Here are a few examples of healthier alternatives:

UNHEALTHY COPING	HEALTHY COPING
Smoking	Participating in faith-based activities
Overeating	Being physically active
Not finding time for activity	Meditating
Avoiding people and social situations	Finding a hobby
Drinking alcohol	Joining a support group
Taking drugs	Writing in a journal



### Find Support Networks

Having a support network is key to healthy coping. You can attend a diabetes prevention program, diabetes self-management and support classes, or a peer support group. Take the time to build healthy bonds that work for you and support you in your journey. Remember that you are not alone! Your diabetes care and education specialist is there to help you develop health coping strategies and support your efforts. Learn more about peer support, visit [DiabetesEducator.org/PeerSupport](http://DiabetesEducator.org/PeerSupport).

## START A CONVERSATION

When you are ready to have a conversation with your care team, here are the areas that are most helpful to share:

1. Tell them what is causing you the most concern about caring for yourself right now (e.g. your medicines, emotions, meal planning, stress).
2. Tell them what you find hard or frustrating about those concerns above.
3. Describe your thoughts or feelings about your concerns (e.g. confused, angry, curious, worried, frustrated, depressed, hopeful).

Healthy coping is important because diabetes-related distress can hinder your self-care and prevent you from reaching your health goals. You can live well with prediabetes and diabetes and have the quality of life you deserve with the right guidance, support and coping skills.

A diabetes care and education specialist can help you figure out where your stresses are affecting your self-care. Together you can develop healthy coping strategies that work best for you and fit with your lifestyle. Ask your provider to refer you. You deserve it!

## Get Help When You Need It

Do you find prediabetes or diabetes too hard to handle? Do you often feel overwhelmed or sad? Or do your moods change often, and even little things bother you?

If you are experiencing any of these, your diabetes care and education specialist or mental health expert can help. Tell them about your feelings, especially if you:

- Struggle to manage your self-care
- Have negative thoughts
- Avoid seeing your healthcare providers
- Have little interest or don't find pleasure in your activities
- Sleep most of the day or are not able to sleep
- See little value in taking care of yourself
- Feel like you can't take care of yourself
- Have lost your appetite or are overeating
- Feel others in your family don't care



To learn how a diabetes care and education specialist can help you, visit [DiabetesEducator.org/LivingWithDiabetes](https://DiabetesEducator.org/LivingWithDiabetes).

For more on this and other behaviors for better diabetes management, visit [DiabetesEducator.org/AADE7](https://DiabetesEducator.org/AADE7).