Active vs. Passive Coping Strategies
Subtitle: Identify active and passive coping strategies.

Not all coping strategies are effective. Passive coping strategies usually involve avoiding problems and are unlikely to help you very much in the long run. Active coping strategies, on the other hand, are geared towards finding a way to improve the situation.

This activity will ask you to identify active and passive coping strategies.

Instructions: Carefully read each coping strategy and answer whether it is active or passive.

Coping Strategy #1:
Watching a fifth hour of Netflix to relax before a big test...even though you haven’t studied.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

Feedback: This is passive coping: when you watch Netflix instead of studying, you avoid the problem.

Coping Strategy #2:
Setting up an appointment with a peer tutor.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

Feedback: This is active coping: setting up an appointment with a peer tutor is an action to improve the situation..
Coping Strategy #3:
Pretending that you have other plans in order to avoid a party where you don’t know anyone.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is passive coping: pretending that you have other plans is an example of avoiding a situation.

Coping Strategy #4:
Introducing yourself to someone at a party where you don’t know anyone.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is active coping: when you introduce yourself, you actively work on the problem of not knowing anyone at the party.

Coping Strategy #5:
Using drugs or alcohol to relax when you’re anxious

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is passive coping: when you use drugs or alcohol to relax, you avoid confronting your problems, and may even make them worse.
Coping Strategy #6:
Talking to a family member, friend, or therapist when you’re anxious.

Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.

Feedback: This is active coping: when you reach out to someone you trust, they can help you.

Coping Strategy #7:
Avoiding the gym because you find it intimidating.

Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.

Feedback: This is passive coping: you’re avoiding the gym rather than finding ways to conquer your fear.

Coping Strategy #8:
Finding a gym buddy.

Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.

Feedback: This is active coping: by finding a gym buddy, you’re working towards feeling more comfortable at the gym.
Coping Strategy #9:
Assuming that you will eat better when you have more time.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is passive coping: you’re avoiding the situation by putting it off.

Coping Strategy #10:
Pre-planning or pre-cooking meals for times you know you’ll be busy.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is active coping: by pre-planning your meals, you take actions toward eating healthy, even when you’re busy.

Coping Strategy #11:
Not looking at your bank account because you feel like you’re probably broke.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is passive coping: when you choose not to look at your bank account, you’re avoiding the problem.
Coping Strategy #12:

Listing your weekly expenses and coming up with a budget.

*Take a moment to think about whether this is an active or passive coping strategy.*

**Feedback:** This is active coping: by coming up with a budget, you are in better control of your finances.

**Congratulations!** You have completed the activity.

For more help with active coping strategies, set up an appointment with a counsellor, or check out the rest of this module.