

**Negative and Positive Coping Skills Checklist**

Do you have the coping skills to handle the after-effects of prison?

When a person is released from prison, they face many challenges, from finding a job, to finding a place to live, to learning how to survive life's daily struggles. Add to that the stresses associated with intimate relationships. Depending on the response to the different situations, relationships can either become weaker or stronger.

Due to the lack of rehabilitation within the prison system, poor behaviors are usually caused by negative emotions. If a person is unable to handle emotions in a positive way, their behavior will likely be poor.

Prison is a place where your emotions are on guard 24 hours a day, every day of the week. In prison, a person must learn how to survive in order to stay alive. Unfortunately, most of those survival skills are poor behaviors that have the potential to become normal coping skills.

Negative emotions which causes poor behavior must first be recognized before they can be managed. For change to take place, a person must learn to become aware of their emotions, acknowledging what is happening within themselves and learning to think and plan before they act.

**Different Responses to Situations: (Percentage is based on responses)**

<b>Mental Responses</b>	Aggressive Thoughts "I can't do this", I'm worthless"
<b>Emotional Responses</b>	Fear, Anger, Sadness, Depression, Emotional Numbing, Irritability, Anxiety
<b>Physical Responses</b>	Accelerated heartbeat, Stomach Pain, Headaches
<b>Behavioral Responses</b>	Drinking, Substance Abuse, Overeating, Isolation, Self-Harm, Violence

On a day to day basis, we use a variety of coping mechanisms. If a person become aware of the negative coping skills they use, they can begin to learn and explore more positive ways to manage their lives. Using the Negative and Positive Coping Skills Checklist, you can gauge what best describes your coping skills.

**Instructions:** Check the appropriate response for each of the “**Negative Coping Skills**”, that best describe you. The goal is to help you identify the negative coping skills and the magnitude of your coping behavior.

Response	Pre-Incarceration	Incarceration	Post-Incarceration
Violence/Abuse (Physically, Mentally, Emotionally)			
Acting Out (Misbehaving on purpose)			
Passive Aggressiveness			
Minimizing (“Things are not that bad”)			
Addictions (Alcohol, Drugs Medication, Gambling)			
Rationalizing (“I did not know better”)			
Denial (“There is no problem”)			
Repression (Suppressing thoughts)			
Developing a “false self” (Behaving like someone who you are not)			
Disassociation (Detaching yourself from associating with others)			
Controlling Behavior			
Work-a-holic (Staying busy to avoid feelings)			
Compulsive (Indulging in too much of anything – eating, drinking, gambling)			
Isolation (Withdrawal from people and places)			
Lying / Cheating			
Manipulating			
Limited Communication			
Depression			
Low Expectations (Self and others)			
Creating Crises			
Accusatory (Making Accusations)			
Keeps Score (Who did what)			
Gives Ultimatums			
Forces negative emotions onto your partner			
Jealousy			
Brings up past relationships			
Blames partner for their own emotions			
Suicidal tendencies			
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>COPING SKILLS PERCENTAGE</b>			

**SCORING:** 28 = 0%, 27 = 3.57%, 26 = 7.14%, 25 = 10.71%, 24 = 14.29%, 23 = 17.86%, 22 = 21.43%, 21 = 25%, 20 = 28.57%, 19 = 32.14%, 18 = 35.71%, 17 = 39.29%, 16 = 42.86%, 15 = 46.43%, 14 = 50%, 13 = 53.57%, 12 = 57.14%, 11 = 60.71%, 10 = 64.29%, 9 = 67.86%, 8 = 71.43%, 7 = 75%, 6 = 78.57%, 5 = 82.14%, 4 = 85.71%, 3 = 89.29%, 2 = 92.86%, 1 = 96.43%, 0 = 100%

**Instructions:** Check the appropriate response for each of the “Positive Coping Skills”, that best describe you. The goal is to help you identify the positive coping skills and the magnitude of your coping behavior.

Response	Pre-Incarceration	Incarceration	Post-Incarceration
Meditate / Pray			
Listen to music			
Exercise			
Travel			
Watch television			
Go to the movies			
Read			
Play games			
Go for a walk			
Go to a health club			
Relax in a steam room or sauna			
Spend time alone			
Go fishing or hunting			
Participate in a recreational activity			
Go golfing			
Do some work in the yard			
Socialize with friends			
Sit outside and relax			
Engage in a hobby			
Spirituality			
Write (Poetry, Stories, Journal)			
Dance			
<b>TOTAL</b>			
<b>COPING SKILLS PERCENTAGE</b>			

SCORING: 22 = 100%, 21 = 95.55%, 20 = 91%, 19 = 86.36%, 18 = 81.9%, 17 = 77.35%, 16 = 72.80%,

15 = 68.25%, 14 = 63.70%, 13 = 46.43%, 12 = 59.15%, 11 = 50%, 10 = 45.50%, 9 = 40.95%, 8 = 36.40%,

7 = 31.85%, 6 = 27.30%, 5 = 22.75%, 4 = 18.20%, 3 = 13.65%, 2 = 10.09%, 1 = 4.55%, 0 = 0%