What is Coping?

- Coping is a conscious effort to resolve a stress or a difficulty of intrapersonal or interpersonal nature, in order to manage or minimise stress or conflict.
- When the effort to cope up is unconscious it could turn out to be a defence mechanism!
- Even conscious coping could be functional/adaptive or dysfunctional/maladaptive.

Basic Types of Coping Strategies

1. **Appraisal-focused**: Directed towards challenging one's own assumptions; it could be adaptive but cognitive-based (Eg. Denial or Reframing)
2. **Problem-focused**: Directed towards reducing or eliminating a stressor, could be adaptive but behavioral-based (eg. Prevention/moving away from the stressor; or learning new skills)
3. **Emotion-focused**: Directed towards changing one's own emotional reaction (eg. Distracting oneself, or systematically relaxing).
4. **Meaning-focused**: aimed at deriving meaning from stressful experience (eg. What can I learn from this)

Some Styles of Coping

Operationalising the Basic Strategies

- Cope Inventory (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989) has 15 conceptually distinct sub-scales/dimensions of coping based on Folkman and Lazarus (1984), which include:
  - active coping, planning, positive refraining, acceptance, humour, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, venting, substance use, behavioural disengagement, and self-blame.
- Obviously some styles are adaptive others maladaptive.
Pargament’s Religious Coping


Positive Methods of Religious Coping

As measured by RCope


Spiritual Connection: Seeking a sense of connectedness with transcendent forces
Seeking Spiritual Support: Searching for comfort and reassurance through God's love and care.
Religious Forgiving: Looking to religion for help in letting go of anger, hurt, and fear associated with an offence.
Collaborative Religious Coping: Seeking control through a partnership with God in problem solving.

Maladaptive Methods of Religious Coping as measured by RCope


Spiritual Discontent: Expression of confusion and dissatisfaction with God.
Punishing God Reappraisal: Redefining the stressor as a punishment from God for the individual's sins.
Interpersonal Religious Discontent: Expressions of confusion and dissatisfaction with clergy and members.
Demonic Reappraisal: Redefining the stressor as the act of the Devil.
Reappraisal of God's Powers: Redefining God's powers to influence the stressful situation.

Positive Methods of Religious Coping As measured by RCope


Benevolent Religious Reappraisal: Redefining the stressor through religion as benevolent and potentially beneficial.
Religious purification: Searching for spiritual cleansing through religious actions.
Religious Focus: Seeking relief from the stressor through a focus on religion.

Pargament’s Religious Coping

Summary Points:
- Seeking meaning (significance) is an important dimension of life, related to well-being. Events and situations that threaten meaning cause stress.
- Coping is a successful way of dealing with stress.
- This is achieved either through conservation of significance or transformation of it.
- Religion plays an important role in this.

- Prevention: Religious systems through its taboos prevent adverse situations;
- Support: Through God or community religion provides support from unpreventable adverse situations;
- Purification: Religious traditions provide mechanisms to purify themselves and re-establish well-being;
- Reframing: Providing another interpretation to sustain significance (e.g. May be God is preventing me from some greater disaster...)
- Rites of Passage: Religions prepare adherents to face crisis through rites of passage (e.g. Transitions, death);
- Conversion: Crisis situations may contribute to deeper conviction.