

Cope Ahead

Do you find yourself worrying about what's coming? In DBT, there is an emotional regulation skill called **Cope Ahead**. This skill walks you through the process of anticipating emotionally triggering or stressful situations and lets you rehearse how you will handle it. This skill helps you work through the response of your **Emotion Mind** and tap into your **Wise Mind**.

Remember, it's important to be honest when you're working through the Cope Ahead process. If you can get real with yourself about situations that are hard for you, Cope Ahead can help you plan how you're going to get through it.

COPE AHEAD INVOLVES 5 STEPS

The first step is to **describe** the situation you're dealing with. State the facts of how this situation usually goes for you. Be really specific about the situation, including any emotions that are likely to come up and interfere with your response.

Once you've described the situation, you can **decide** which problem-solving skills you want to use to deal with it. Again, it's important to be specific here. Write down exactly how you will cope.

Next, you will **imagine** the situation. Run through the entire thing in your head from start to finish. Remember to imagine yourself in the situation, not as a bystander.

As you imagine the situation, **rehearse** your coping skills. Practice what you're going to say and what you're going to do, and how you're going to say + do them. Practice what you will do in the worst case scenario. Practice how you will deal with any new problems that arise during the situation.

Finally, once you've rehearsed every possible scenario you can imagine, practice **relaxation**. Actively practicing relaxation helps you to remember that you can survive the situation, and it can help relieve the mental stress of running through this scenario in your mind.