3.8: III Glossary

Adaptive coping strategies: Coping strategies, including problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping.

Adverse childhood experiences: Potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, parental loss, or parental separation before the child is 18 years old.

Coping: Cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts.[1]

Coping strategies: An action, series of actions, or a thought process used in meeting a stressful or unpleasant situation or in modifying one’s reaction to such a situation.[2]

Crisis: The inability to cope or adapt to a stressor.

Defense mechanisms: Unconscious reaction patterns used by individuals to protect themselves from anxiety that arises from stress and conflict.[3]

Emotion-focused coping: Adaptive coping strategies such as practicing mindfulness, meditation, and yoga; using humor and jokes; seeking spiritual or religious pursuits; engaging in physical activity or breathing exercises; and seeking social support.

Maladaptive coping responses: Ineffective responses to stressors such as avoidance of the stressful condition, withdrawal from a stressful environment, disengagement from stressful relationships, and misuse of drugs and/or alcohol.
**Problem-focused coping:** Adaptive coping strategies that typically focus on seeking treatment such as counseling or cognitive behavioral therapy.

**Stress response:** The body’s physiological response to a real or perceived stressor. For example, the respiratory, cardiovascular, and musculoskeletal systems are activated to breathe rapidly, stimulate the heart to pump more blood, dilate the blood vessels, and increase blood pressure to deliver more oxygenated blood to the muscles.

**Stressors:** Any internal or external event, force, or condition that results in physical or emotional stress.