Coping through Controllability

For aspects of a stressor that are uncontrollable, choose an **Emotion-Oriented** Coping strategy.

- Expressing emotion
- Engaging in any enjoyable or self-soothing activity
- Reducing physical stress with relaxation, deep breathing, or massage
- Cognitive reframing and adaptive thinking (session 3)

For parts of a stressor that are controllable, choose an **Action-Oriented** Coping strategy.

- Making a decision
- Resolving a conflict
- Seeking information or advice
- Setting a goal
- Engaging in problem-solving
- Requesting help

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**Maladaptive Illness-Related Worry:**
(e.g., "I'm worried that if I tell the person I am caring for about my fears and concerns it will make them upset")

- **Unrealistic worry**
  - Cognitive reframing and adaptive thinking (e.g. find a more accurate thought)

- **Realistic worry**
  - Is what I am worrying about controllable? Is there any action that can be taken to resolve the worry?

- **Unclear if worry is realistic**
  - Collect more information (e.g., obtain feedback from oncologist)

**YES (controllable)**
- **Action-Oriented Coping**
  - (e.g., use communication skills to talk with the person, explore realities of your concerns with the

**NO (uncontrollable)**
- **Emotion-Oriented Coping**
  - (e.g., practice mindfulness or relaxation, engage in a self-soothing or pleasurable activity)

Adapted from Springer Nature *Resolving Treatment Complications Associated with Comorbid Medical Conditions* by Joseph Greer, Jessica Graham, Steven Safren 2010