



A Self-Led Therapeutic Program for Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Assault

What is *Coping Inside*?

Coping Inside is a self-directed, correspondence program offered by the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault's (TAASA) Incarcerated Survivor Advocacy Program (ISAP). It provides therapeutic resources and educational materials to incarcerated survivors of sexual assault. The goal of the Coping Inside program is to provide people who are incarcerated with the tools and supportive resources needed to help them cope with the harmful effects of trauma.

TAASA is the statewide organization committed to ending sexual violence in Texas through education, prevention and advocacy. The ISAP was created in October 2016 to address the needs of incarcerated survivors and offer support, advocacy, and resources to incarcerated survivors, service providers, and correctional staff.

How does *Coping Inside* work?

Each month, *Coping Inside* participants will receive a packet of therapeutic learning materials, including lessons and skills-based modules that help incarcerated survivors cope with a traumatic experience. From these modules, participants can incorporate each lesson into their everyday life to help them succeed in meeting their emotional and social health needs. The lessons will provide understanding on how to cope with different emotions like anger, stress, anxiety, and depression. Helpful information on improving communication, relationships, reducing unhelpful thought patterns and increasing mindfulness is also included. By gaining perspective and providing these tools, participants will be better equipped with skills and strategies to combat the negative effects of trauma.

Why is it needed?

Incarcerated survivors face many hardships while in the prison system that are often exacerbated in the aftermath of an assault or abuse. This program serves to be a source of relief, understanding, and aide to a population that may feel as though they do not have the resources needed to cope with the repercussions of surviving a sexual assault. This program is meant to help create unique solutions by building on the limitations of being incarcerated and to help the individual learn ways to cope with their experiences.



Coping Inside:
*A 12-month
correspondence
program for
incarcerated
survivors of
sexual assault*

Program Outline

Table of Contents

Module #1 - Self-Care, Mindfulness & Self-esteem

Module #1 begins the course by validating emotions and experiences of a survivor and to clarify that there is no one way to cope with trauma. It will set the stage for the next few modules and will provide suggestions on how to cope, in order for you to find what works best for you. It will define self-care and other terms, and emphasize the importance of self-care in the process of coping and healing from a sexual assault.

Module #2 - Mixed Emotions

This module defines and examines the emotions that are commonly felt during the healing process. Experiencing mixed emotions is common in the aftermath of an assault. Emotions like anger, anxiety, sadness, negative thinking, fear, and confusion are common. This module will explore how these different emotions might be experienced, why they are important, and how to cope with them in a healthy way.

Module #3 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This module will examine PTSD and how incarcerated survivors might experience PTSD after an assault. It will also examine PTSD in a correctional context by providing tools, skills, and exercises that will help survivors effectively cope with their trauma.

Module #4 - Beliefs and Mindset

This module will focus on how to pinpoint beliefs and mindset about trauma, and examine your own experience through the coping process. By being able to examine your emotions, and identify what beliefs and thoughts are unhealthy, you can work to alter your mindset in order to heal and grow in a positive way.

Module #5 - Stress and Relaxation

This module will examine the different ways we experience stress and cover effective ways to cope with stress even in a correctional setting. Coping with stress is an essential skill needed in order to overcome trauma.

Module #6 - Anxiety and Depression

This module will cover anxiety and depression as a potential consequences of trauma and will examine what anxiety and depression looks like and how it feels.

Module #7 - Anger

This module will examine the emotion of anger and how it is experienced in the aftermath of a sexual trauma. We will cover how to identify the sources of anger and how to deal with it in a healthy way. This emotion, unlike the others, has its own module because it is one of the most common emotions and can cause the most consequences within a correctional setting. Anger, when stemming from trauma, can lead to outbursts that put your future freedom and mental health at risk.

Module #8 - Support

This module will look at the importance of finding support and connecting with others in the aftermath of a sexual trauma, and how to maintain that support in the future. This module will also consider how you can become a supportive ally for someone else going through a similar experience.

Module #9 - Trust and Intimacy

This module will look at how to use existing support networks to build trust and intimacy with important people in your life, and with yourself. The goal of the module is to develop the skills needed to experience close relationships and intimacy with others.

Module #10 - Safety

This module will focus on being aware of your sense of safety by creating a plan on how to think and in a specific unsafe situation, and to be able to find a sense of safety within the limitations of incarceration. This module will also look at the idea of safety within yourself to be able to trust yourself in times of distress and uncertainty.

Module #11 - Control & Acceptance

This module will help build understanding, control, and acceptance in your life in the aftermath of a sexual trauma and beyond.

Module #12 - Healthy Relationships

This module will examine healthy relationships and what they look and feel like. Healthy relationships are crucial to maintaining a strong network of support and feelings of belonging. We will emphasize what a healthy relationship looks like and how to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships over the long-term.