



COPE

88 picture cards for Trauma and Healing
sharing communication and creating community

Instructions & and guidelines

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Marina Lukyanova, 2006

Coping is a skill. Situations arise every day that require us to exercise it. Some such challenges are easily resolved by making use of already acquired responses. Other challenges are new, more serious or even traumatic: threats for which we find ourselves unprepared. Within such crises lies as well a potential for healing and growth.

The COPE Cards came into being as a result of a meeting between a Russian painter, an Israeli psychologist and a German publisher - representatives of three nations that share the fact of recent histories filled with traumatizing events. They decided to co-create a tool for working toward a world with less suffering.

COPE's extensive collection of images was painted by *Marina Lukyanova* under the guidance of the internationally renowned trauma therapist, *Dr. Ofra Ayalon*, and of publisher, *Moritz Egetmeyer*. The COPE Card images reflect Marina's background as a wandering water-colourist, Ofra's long and effective history as a helper in healing trauma and Moritz' expertise with cards for association. A tabloid representation of terror, violence or disaster for these cards was rejected by COPE's creators, the assumption being that persons who come to use them as a tool already have such images stored in their minds. They chose rather to represent traumatic events and the emotional responses that they trigger in a symbolic and metaphoric manner.

Why use cards for trauma-healing work? OH-Publishing has an established history of producing, in card-form, tools that facilitate authentic expression in a competition and judgment-free context. These card decks have been widely accepted by teaching and social professionals as well as by lay people in many countries and of many cultures. In a world in which conflict - whether private, domestic or international - is erupting constantly the experience of trauma seems pervasive. Destruction is all too easily achieved while rebuilding remains a difficult process. We need every tool we can dream of to help build a better future. To achieve such a goal the past has to be looked in the eye and dealt with. These cards are an ingenious tool for doing

just that: they facilitate the accessing both of inner feelings and creative imagination and thereby support the building - and rebuilding - of community through communication.

All trauma therapies aim to disentangle people from the constricting influence of an event. The COPE Cards are not meant to replace other therapeutic approaches but to complement them. Their explicit goal is to protect, to connect and to validate, whether used alone or in conjunction with other methods or with other cards in this series. The COPE Cards can enhance the process of uncovering and giving expression to each person's outlook on life and to each one's unique strategies for dealing with its pains and grief.

In this booklet you will find numerous ideas and suggestions for use, as well as background information about working with crisis and trauma. All users of the COPE Cards are encouraged as well to discover their own applications. In therapeutic and non-therapeutic settings alike, please keep in mind the importance of protecting participants' vulnerability.

Bearing witness to pain, whether it be your own or that of another, can bring insight and lighten the load. The creators and publishers of the COPE Cards invite all who use this tool to join them in confirming the time-tested proverb: *"Shared pain is half-pain and shared joy is double joy."*

SOME GUIDELINES

The COPE Cards are a multi-use tool. They belong to a series of card decks already in use by a wide range of professionals dealing especially with people: teachers, counselors, psychotherapists, personnel trainers etc. They can be used alone, in combination with other methods, or in combination with other decks of this series. They can be specially selected from the deck, or drawn blind. Common to all these approaches is this: when we take a card and begin to respond to it, it is ourselves we find in the card and our own inner story that emerges.

A possible next step in the process might be to communicate this personal, subjective interpretation to others, or to listen actively to someone else doing the same. Actively listening means being attentive plus refraining from interpreting another person's cards while they speak.

It is always a participant's personal and subjective truth which interests us when using the COPE Cards. The concepts of "correct" and "incorrect" do not apply to a card-response.

Personal associations are the most interesting, revealing and moving. Generalizing, philosophizing and stating of ideologies are best left for other forums.

Competition is counter-productive in COPE Card exchanges.

These guidelines apply whether we use the cards on our own or together with others. When we use them with others, it serves the best interests of all concerned to follow some simple rules. As with any tool, proper use is important to ensure safety and avoid injury. We therefore recommend the following 5-point etiquette to facilitate and protect trust and openness:

1. **In COPE we honor each other's privacy.**

I may choose to pass, to NOT play the cards drawn. I can do this with or without explanation, revealing my cards or not. You may not challenge or question my right to pass.

2. **In COPE, we honor each other's time.**

I will not interrupt you.

3. **In COPE, we honor each other's intelligence and imagination.**

I do not re-interpret (or interpret) your cards, even in the secrecy of my mind. We keep in mind that THERE ARE NO "CORRECT" INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CARDS.

4. **In COPE, we honor each other's integrity.**

I do not contradict you or argue about your interpretations. But I will express my curiosity about something you said, or ask you to clarify something so that I can know you better. And I will support your imaginative leaps as best I can.

5. **In COPE, we honor each other's individuality.**

When I play my COPE Cards I do not assume that you see what I see, read what I read.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE COPE CARDS

1. NORMALIZATION

COPE Card work begins with the assumption that trauma, a response to a devastating event, can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. ALL trauma responses are considered normal ways of dealing with adversity. Each person's pattern of response is as singular as a fingerprint and deserving of appreciation and respect. Focusing on the skills of coping rather than on pathology allows COPE Card work to proceed without undue emphasis on negative after-effects of trauma. To ameliorate painful consequences of trauma, COPE Card work helps to mobilize "existing skills" and enhance new coping opportunities. It allows every individual to find a unique pathway to recovery after traumatic stress.

2. GAINING MASTERY

Exposure to natural disaster, human cruelty, feelings of dehumanization and the experience of powerlessness create a diminished sense of self. The healing relationship between trainer and trainee must be collaborative: the work is a shared journey whose course will be set and re-set as pitfalls are met and unanticipated paths are discovered. The healing relationship must foster a sense of security, trust, support and empowerment.

3. EXPRESSING AND SHARING

Working through grief, expressing fear, dealing with traumatic imagery through metaphoric story-telling, social interaction, spirituality and humor: All of these contribute to the healing of the whole person. The COPE Cards trainer, in promoting these aspects of healing, serves as a guide and a coach, offering concepts that might be new to the client and shaping abilities that may be latent.

4. DEVELOPING A PERSONAL HEALING THEORY

A personal story told through using the COPE Cards creates a metaphorical forum for coming to terms with what happened in the past and, consequently, for cultivating optimism and confidence for the future.

BACKGROUND THEORY OF THE COPE CARDS

An elderly sage reputed to be a mind-reader came to town to preach. The townspeople anticipated his visit with respect, even awe. All, that is, but one: the local mischief maker, a boy of thirteen. He had a brilliant idea for challenging the sage's reputation. He would run out to the fields and catch a butterfly. Then, concealing it in his hands, he would face the old man and ask, "Sage, what is it I hold in my hands?" The sage would no doubt answer, "It is a butterfly." Then the boy would ask, "And is it alive or dead?" If the sage said "Alive" the boy would squeeze it between his hands and reveal before everyone the butterfly, dead. But if the sage said that the butterfly was dead he would open his hands and let it fly.

And so it came to be that when the crowd assembled to hear the sermon, the boy approached the sage and posed his question: "Sage, what is it I hold in my hands?" The old man looked at him a moment and answered slowly, "A butterfly, my son. It is a butterfly." With a glint in his eyes the boy continued: "And is it dead or alive?" The old man closed his eyes as he pondered, opened them again, and said in a soft voice, "It is in your hands, my son, it is all in your hands."

We humans tend to regard difficulty, disaster or trauma (i.e. events beyond our control) as dealings from the hand of fate. But it is important to remember that, no matter where or how such events originate, the way we deal with them is in fact in our hands. This is what coping is all about. To cope means to face and to contend with difficulty, disaster or trauma - and with a measure of success. Each of us is naturally endowed with certain coping resources, others we develop with experience. ALL coping methods can be enhanced through training or specifically oriented therapies. In this card deck six cards with images of HANDS represent the following categories of coping resources, or coping styles:

- **(B)** Belief may be faith in god or a supernatural power, trust in other human beings or trust in oneself. When we seek reinforcement through our belief system to cope with difficulty, our hands may rise in prayer and in this way seek nurturing for confidence and hope.
- **(A)** Affect is the inward disposition, or the feeling aspect of consciousness. The heart is the treasure chest of the emotions: love and hate, fear and courage, grief and joy, jealousy and compassion, and so on. This mode of coping involves first and foremost the ability to recognize feelings and to name them. Then comes the expressing of feelings we have identified, by verbalizing (telling, writing, dramatizing) or through non-verbal modes, such as free play or dance, painting, sculpting or making music.
- **(S)** Social coping skills seek interaction with others. Such interactions include supporting and being supported, both with those close to us (family members and friends) and with professional helpers, taking on a role of responsibility and the developing of leadership. Social interactions which begin within an intimate circle also have the potential for spreading into broader circles that include strangers or the larger community.
- **(I)** Imagination is the core of creativity. It allows us to dream, to intuit, to be flexible, to change, to seek solutions in fantasy, to find new ways for dealing with distressing situations, to alter undesired circumstances.
- **(C)** Cognitive coping relies on the ability to think logically and

rationally, to assess risks, to learn, to plan ahead, to seek new strategies, to analyze and problem-solve.

- **(Ph)** Physical coping involves the senses: what we hear, see, smell, taste, etc. It may be characterized by body sensations, such as constriction in our throat or belly, heart beats, changes of body temperature or tension, and also in movements, such as making an effort, using power, being active, doing, performing physical chores, overcoming physical difficulties, dealing with reality, interacting with nature.

These six coping channels are acronymed for easy reference as "the BASIC Ph". In actual traumatic situations people usually employ a combination of coping styles to survive. The following story illustrates this well:

"Rorik, a boy who survived shipwreck, spent many hours fighting the waves of a rough sea until he was washed up onshore. In reviewing his ordeal he said, "I used all I ever learned about swimming and breathing (C). My body obeyed my orders not to panic (C, Ph), just to swim with the current. I prayed to Poseidon, the god of the sea, to take care of me (B). And when I was exhausted I just floated on my back, letting the waves carry me (Ph). During the long hours when I felt hungry and cold, I had vivid fantasies and memories (I) of our warm dining room at home (Ph) and could actually smell the food (Ph) that my loving mother (A,S) placed on the table. All of these helped me to survive."

ELEMENTS OF TRAUMATIC STRESS

LIVING IN DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENTS

Crisis, extreme stress and disaster are part and parcel of life today for vast numbers of people of all ages and persuasions both in the Western civilizations and in the so-called "third world". Exposure to dangerous environments occurs through war and terrorism, ecological, natural or technological disasters and urban violence. Also poverty, child slavery, racial persecution and physical or sexual abuse cause suffering and trauma, as do domestic and individual crises such as loss and death of dear ones, destruction and loss of home, abandonment and betrayal. Survivors of such disasters can be left with feelings of helplessness or depression, may feel chronically plagued with guilt or anger, or suffer from the debilitating effects of post-traumatic symptoms.

STRESSFUL CHANGES AND DISRUPTION OF CONTINUITY

Some changes we love to embrace, like those that give us a break from everyday routine - a surprise party or taking a holiday. Other changes, however, come unwanted, taking us out of control and throwing us off balance. Loss of work or social position, immigration to a new country, getting divorced or being widowed, being involved in a traffic accident or caught in a house on fire: these are just a few examples. Such unpleasant and imposed changes upset our familiar environment, interrupt old habits and render invalid our ordinary ways of solving problems. When the perceived continuity of our existence is disrupted, we are faced on every step of our way with more demands than our existing coping skills can deal with. Our past no longer predicts the future. We may then experience extreme stress and a sense of confusion, vulnerability and personal failure, which in turn may trigger old fears and failures from the past and render us helpless, anxious or paralyzed.

TRAUMATIC STRESS

Any event that contains a threat to our vital concerns can trigger a traumatic response, whether it be abrupt and powerful, prolonged or recurring. The five major traumatic threats are:

- **threat of** death, exposure to gruesome death, bodily injury, or dead or maimed bodies
- **threat of** loss of or harm done to family and friends, loss of communication with or support from close relations
- **threat of** pain, injury or impairment, extreme environmental destruction or human violence, extreme fatigue, weather exposure, hunger, sleep deprivation
- **threat of** losing home, possessions, neighborhood or community
- **threat to** self-worth, religious faith, trust in other human beings, value system and integrity

RESPONSES TO TRAUMA

Traumatic stress activates involuntary defense reactions, triggered by the organic arousal of the autonomic system - hormones, nerves and muscles. These reactions are known as the three Fs: Fight, Flight or Freeze.

- **Fight:** a surge of anger or frustration triggering aggression and/or destruction
- **Flight:** an overwhelming fear leading to regression and dependency, may bring on haunting nightmares, frightening fantasies, passivity and illness.
- **Freeze:** a shock response typified by mental and/or physical paralysis, accompanied by feelings of helplessness.

WHAT ARE NORMAL STRESS REACTIONS IN THE WAKE OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES?

Most disaster survivors (children and adults as well as disaster rescue or relief workers) experience normal stress reactions after a traumatic event. These reactions may last for several days or even a few weeks and may include:

- **emotional reactions:** shock; fear; grief; anger; guilt; shame; feeling helpless or hopeless; feeling numb; feeling empty; diminished ability to feel interest, pleasure, or love
- **cognitive reactions:** confusion, disorientation, indecisiveness, worry, shortened attention span, difficulty concentrating, memory loss, unwanted memories, self-blame
- **physical reactions:** tension, fatigue, edginess, insomnia, bodily aches or pain, startling easily, racing heartbeat, nausea, change in appetite, change in sex drive
- **interpersonal reactions:** distrust, conflict, withdrawal, work problems, school problems, irritability, loss of intimacy, being over-controlling, feeling rejected or abandoned.

SEVERE REACTIONS TO TRAUMA

Studies show that as many as one in three disaster survivors have severe stress symptoms that put them at risk for lasting Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Symptoms may include:

- **Dissociation**
(depersonalization, derealization, fugue, amnesia)
- **Intrusive-experiencing**
(terrifying memories, nightmares or flashbacks)
- **Extreme emotional numbing**
(total inability to feel emotion, as if empty)
- **Extreme attempts to avoid disturbing memories**
(such as through substance use)
- **Hyper-arousal**
(panic attacks, rage, extreme irritability, intense agitation)
- **Severe anxiety**
(debilitating worry, extreme helplessness, compulsions or obsessions)
- **Severe depression**
(loss of the ability to feel hope, pleasure, or interest; feeling worthless)

When the trauma is not treated, a full blown PTSD can develop, either within a short time, or with its onset delayed for even years after the event and then triggered by a new loss or crisis. PTSD may include any

of the following symptoms: prolonged anxiety, intrusive memories and flashbacks, sleep and eating disturbances, loss of memory, difficulties in concentration and learning. Relationship with other people can be impaired as a result of inability to trust others. Survivors may suffer from emotional block - as if they cannot feel anything at all (it is often called "emotional numbing"). They may lose interest in intimate and sexual relations. In other cases they may burst out with unexpected violence, elicited by behaviors that trigger traumatic memories. Many suffer from "survivor guilt", blaming themselves for being alive when others perished in the disaster.

CIRCLES OF VULNERABILITY: WHO NEEDS HELP?

To explain who needs help we may use the metaphor of a pond full of frogs. When a stone is thrown into the pond, it kills the frogs that are directly hit. But then, what happens to all the other frogs? They are caught in the ripples and suffer from shock. This is the ripple effect of fear and anxiety. When a trauma hits and kills victims, the eyewitnesses are also traumatized. Families who lost their dear ones, friends, peers, are all victimized. And so are the rescue workers and media workers who come in close contact with the horrors of death and injury. These "circles of vulnerability" include also the medical staff, social workers, teachers and psychologists who are exposed vicariously to the trauma of their students and clients. A lot of them are hidden victims who carry hidden scars. Often they themselves don't realize how wounded they are. They are often neglected by post trauma health services as well.

THE NEED TO BEAR WITNESS

The cost of trauma in human suffering and distress is very high both to victims and to those around them. Shock, anxiety, pain, rage, guilt and despair continue to hurt like thorns in the spirit. The traumatic experiences need to be acknowledged, expressed, listened to, witnessed by caring others, tolerated, contained, treated and healed. Major obstacles may block the need of victims and survivors to voice their emotional turmoil and be heard by others, such as:

- The traumatic experiences are often so horrendous, that words are insufficient to describe them, to express the severity of the mental pain, the sights, the sounds, the haunting memories.
- Family and friends may be unwilling or unable to listen and witness, to help absorb and contain the shock.
- There may be no support available. Trauma also occurs in the lives of people who lack a supporting human environment. It also pushes people towards seclusion and isolation if others around regard victims and survivors as pariahs.

A HELPING HAND

Since people are generally expected to recover from a bad experience within a few weeks, sufferers may find that support and sympathy begin to disappear when they need them most. Fear of reawakening painful memories, fear of appearing weak and out of control, and disbelief that there is an available treatment for unseen mental scars are some of the reasons for reluctance to seek help. These are the times when we need some special help from the outside. We need a helping hand to guide us to discover our hidden coping resources and develop new coping skills to regain control over our life.

WHAT PEOPLE NEED IN THE WAKE OF TRAUMA

- People need to process the experience of trauma at their own individual pace. It is important that helpers support and honour this.
- People need encouragement to use natural support systems (family, circle of friends), meaning: to talk with intimates and co-workers when they are ready. They should follow their natural inclinations with regard to how much and with whom they talk.
- Most people in distress do not seek professional therapy to deal with the emotional impact of traumatic events. If someone consults a professional in the immediate aftermath period, that professional should listen actively and supportively but not probe for details and emotional responses. Let the person say what they feel comfortable saying without pushing for more. Validate a normal, natural recovery.
- People need to enhance their "BASICPh" coping resources.

ABOUT CHILDREN AND TRAUMA

The fact of being a child offers no protection against loss, grief and other emotional traumas. Even the most loving of parents cannot necessarily save their children from illness, accident or death. Disturbing events in their own families, in the lives of their friends or in the world beyond may leave children feeling confused, uncertain, and frightened. Self-esteem may suffer damage as a result of traumatic experience, and relief and re-assurance may be sought in drugs. Under severe circumstances children may try to escape the turmoil of their lives by running away or, even more tragically, in suicide. Children with immature coping styles and those dependant on adults for an understanding of the events around them are especially vulnerable. The loss of family, friends and care givers may shatter their world and put them in grave risk. Children tend to regress, suffer from sleeping and eating disorders, lose trust in others, have impaired concentration, fall behind in their schoolwork. Some become aggressive and violent. Small children may repeatedly re-enact the trauma in their play and/or experience recurring nightmares. And, it is possible for children to be victims of trauma many times over before they reach adulthood. Early traumatic life-experiences set the stage for re-victimization on the one hand and for the danger of becoming perpetrators on the other. Recent studies have indicated that at least 80% of those in prison have been traumatized in early life. Parents, teachers and mental-health helpers can potentially prevent years of suffering and help stop the cycle of violence itself by being sensitively aware of signs of distress in children and by using gentle and innovative tools in trauma therapy with them.

USING THE COPE CARDS WITH CHILDREN

When small children experience trauma special methods are called for to help them defuse that experience. The main considerations of working with children are these:

- A child has a limited ability to verbalize and process information cognitively.
- A child's attention span is short.
- A child is endowed with spontaneous imagination.

- Play is the natural language of children and functions as a spontaneous "autotherapy".

COPE Cards debriefing with children can be conducted in three steps:

1. **The child is offered a choice of one card and introduces himself or herself to the helper or the group via this card.**
(The group must not include more than 5 children).
2. **The card is given "a voice" to tell the story.**
The child tells how the figure in the card felt during the event, and then tells how it feels in the present.
3. **There is an exchange of suggestions of how to "cope" with the figure's story**
(For example how to sleep better, how to push away fears & bad dreams, express anger etc.). The discussion stays within the metaphor.

This method was used by a teacher after a traumatic event. She encouraged the group of children to pick one card each. Next, she described the rules of the new game: each child tells the story of his or her card, talking only when their turn comes. The teacher's card was a bird. The teacher's bird modeled the process for the children.

Bird said: "Good morning. I am a bird and my name is Bulbul. I live in this village on a high tree from which I can see the whole place. Last night I was on my tree and I heard loud noises. I went straight into my nest and peeped outside to see what was going on. I could felt my heart beating and my wings pressed tightly against my body. Did any of you hear that noise?"

Then the children told the story of what had happened through their cards. Bulbul expressed her feelings and fear, and the others also used their cards to tell their reactions and feelings. Then Boolbul chose a new card to show what helped. Each card-holder added a new card - the card that helped - and then shared "what helped" with the rest of the group. At the end each child put the "fear" card on the floor, and covered it with

the "help" card. The fear was not denied nor made "all better" but was balanced by the images of coping.

USING THE COPE CARDS

CRISIS = DANGER + OPPORTUNITY

Traumatic stress may cause a crisis for an individual or group. Yet, paradoxically, it may also stimulate growth and development and trigger previously untapped coping resources. The most effective way of dealing with the crisis is to work through the experience itself. Regaining a sense of mastery and developing new insight are potential gains of this work.

RESILIENCE AND COPING

Resilience is the ability to recover, either on one's own or with the help of others, despite setbacks, problems and inabilities. Searching for resilience implies a change in perspective from trying to understand how people "fail" to trying to understand how people survive and thrive. It's a fact that human beings are survivors by nature and that most of us have at our disposal a range of "emergency equipment" to help us survive crisis and stress. However, in order to not only survive traumatic stress, but also to thrive in its wake, both physically and mentally, we also need to update our behavior patterns, learn new social roles and re-order expectations. To enhance our range of coping resources means to employ the Belief (spiritual), Affective, Social, Imaginative, Cognitive and Physical Channels. Some pre-designed tools can help in this intricate process, whether it occurs as self-help or at the hand of a professional helper, therapist, counselor, guide, trainer or coach. Among the most effective of such tools are those that help gain access to the traumatic experience frozen in the brain and un-freeze it, enabling both identification of the trauma and expressing it, as well as discovery

and application of appropriate coping skills. This is one of the major functions of the COPE Cards. We can call them *"facilitating triggers for enhancing resilience and coping"*.

TELLING THE TRAUMA STORY AND FINDING COPING RESOURCES

Any COPE card (or combination of several cards) can function as a trigger for the narration of the event and responses to it. Using the COPE Cards provides opportunity for telling personal recollections of traumatization within a safe environment. Persons who suffer traumatic after-effects may feel "trapped in the trauma" and unable to recall the past without fear of overpowering emotions. Or they may be flooded by memories, and at a time when they are least prepared to remember. The purpose of baring the details of the trauma story is to revisit the scene and, in so doing, release its grip of terror and horror.

Metaphoric stories triggered by the visual images on the cards are one step removed from anguished reality. This "creative distance" facilitates recall and the working through of trauma experience. The use of image and imagination serves as a protective screen against being overwhelmed by intense emotions. When the memories become too much to bear, one can always return to the imagined story, or look for other cards that may serve as anchors for a sense of thriving, surviving and healing.

THE COPE CARDS AS AN AGENT OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

Spiritual growth is a type of healing from which most any of us can benefit, most of the time. A victim's sense of spirit, however, may be acutely dimmed for some period of time following the victimization. The act of working with the COPE Cards can re-stimulate the experience of spirituality, in the sense of feeling fully alive again and open to the moment, of belonging and having a place in the universe, of deep appreciation for the natural world, of openness to surprise, serenity and joy. Over time, as a victim heals on all levels, his or her potential for spiritual growth may increase becoming not only greater than it was before the trauma, but maybe also greater than it is for those who have not been forced through outside circumstances to face experientially the inevitability of mortality.

GOALS IN COPE CARDS WORK

The goals of using the COPE Cards as a tool in the wake of traumatic experience are:

- **to PROTECT:** *to help preserve participants' safety, privacy, and self-esteem*
- **to CONNECT:** *to help participants communicate supportively, either one-to-one or in small groups with family or peers*
- **to VALIDATE:** *to present through informal card work opportunities for affirming the worth and normalcy and of each individual's reactions, concerns, ways of coping, goals for the future.*

GETTING STARTED

The COPE Cards belong to an extensive family of associative cards (the OH Card series) that present an attractive and feasible forum for examining our lives in a creative and original manner. These cards enable their users, whether playfully or therapeutically (or both!), to access flexibility and imagination, to move up to a higher level of thought, to touch deeper feelings. Using the COPE Cards people can learn to identify their own particular ways of coping with crisis, stress and trauma.

The COPE Cards can help us reach our inner pain and discover our inner strength. Many applications are possible. In trying out various methods, exercises or games a sort of virtual training takes place in dealing with challenging situations, in surfing beyond time and space, in experimenting with possible solutions to problematic issues - all within the safe, exuberant world of image and metaphor. The experience of randomly selecting cards and dealing with the associations they evoke can lead us into the richness of new ideas and possibilities instead of into familiar anxieties about failure or success. We can actually learn through using these cards to be less hesitant about the future and more confident in our ability to face the unknown and to incorporate chance elements into our lives.

The greatest contribution of these unique cards lies in their function as springboards into communication without competition and criticism. The stories that emerge from the cards are unique, personal and original, reflecting as they do the innermost ideas and feelings of the people who tell them.

These cards are amenable for use both in small groups and individually. All examples and suggestions provided in this manual can be used together with a facilitator, with a friend or alone, bearing in mind that these images speak to our emotions and that their purpose is to heal. Respecting personal integrity is always of foremost importance throughout this process.

Please keep in mind: these examples and suggestions are not to be seen as official or exclusive. The number of cards you decide to use, the way you develop an exploration : such aspects are simply the procedure of use. We encourage you to feel free in choosing your mechanics. Use all 88 cards, or a limited selection. Get a process going with the help of the cards and then move on without them. Use them alone or in combination with other therapeutic tools. Like a box of paints, the cards exist to be used for your own creative purpose. Experiment and invent methods of use that work best for your unique circumstances, but always keep in mind the “etiquette“ outlined at the beginning of this booklet.

In implementing the following suggestions for use, you may want to divide the cards into the four categories which were considered in the composition of the COPE deck. Since sorting requires interpretation, it may well be that various people's sorting produces various stacks: this is okay! The categories are:

1. ***the event***
2. ***the traumatic response***
3. ***the coping skill***
4. ***the healing***

Cards can then be drawn intentionally from a stack denoting a particular category of experience.

EXAMPLES OF USE

#1 THE HERO'S JOURNEY

Background:

This activity is inspired by the Jungian analysis of myth, fairy-tale and folk-tale, as outlined by M.L. von Franz. All such tales, whatever culture they emerge from, share a structure composed of these six steps:

1. **hero is introduced**
2. **hero leaves home on a mission, a challenge, a task**
3. **hero meets helpers**
4. **hero encounters obstacles**
5. **hero copes with obstacles**
6. **the story ends!**

By making up a story based on these universal elements, we may be able to see the way that the "self" meets the world and copes with hardships.

Process:

A story will be told without words. Divide a page of paper into 6 spaces and place it in front of you. 6 cards will be selected to fill them.

1. *Select a card to represent the heroine or hero of the story.*
2. *What is your hero/ine's mission? The second card will represent the task.*
3. *The third picture shows who or what will help the hero on this journey,*
4. *The fourth image represents the obstacles or hardships that confront the hero.*
5. *The fifth picture: how will s/he cope with this obstacle?*
6. *The sixth picture : "and so the story ends."*

Tell your story to another participant or write it down.

Together try to figure out the context of the story, its themes or its message. Try to discover what are the dominant coping modes revealed in the story (*refer back to "BASIC Ph"*).

Comment:

Each picture gives us information on the emerging coping modes. If, for example, the hero is a fairy, that hints at the use of imagination. The goal of the journey might be connected with values and beliefs. The help might be practical or imaginary, or may well be an inner belief. The obstacle could be social, imaginary, or realistic and solution-focused.

As we learn from the "BASIC Ph", coping can occur in different modes. The conclusion of the story can be emotional, intellectual, social or imaginary. Therefore it is important to pay attention to modes that may appear frequently in a story, as well as to those which don't appear at all. Those coping modes frequently mentioned are the ones most used in reality.

#2 IDENTIFYING YOUR COPING CHANNELS WITH THE "BASIC PH" MODEL

Background:

This activity aims to discover what our own coping channels are, the ones we use to deal with daily hassles and stress, and in situations of crisis. In this game participants will also identify those coping channels that are blocked in times of crisis. What resources would be required to open them up and make them, too, available in times of need?

Process:

1. Spread the 6 coping hand cards face up on the table and describe each of them according to the BASIC Ph model (*belief, affect, social, imaginative, cognitive, physical*).
2. Select blind 6 cards from the COPE Cards deck and place them randomly and face down on top of to the hand cards.

3. Turn each card up in turn, making connections between it and the hand card you placed it on. Describe with the help of this card how you tend to use the relevant coping channel in your life, in a positive or a negative way. For example: My "imaginative" coping mode helps me detach myself from my worries (positive), and my "social" coping channel makes me over-dependant on others (negative).
4. Now think of a time in your life when you experienced severe stress or crisis, or remember an event that was traumatic for you. Scan the rest of the open COPE Cards deck, and choose 3 cards that describe this experience.
5. Looking at the hand cards try to identify which of the coping channels you used to deal with that crisis. Use the cards to tell the story of your coping.
6. Try also to identify those channels that you did not use - and turn their representative cards face down. These cards represent those coping channels that were blocked in the traumatic event.
7. Find cards that will help you re-activate those blocked channels.
8. Reflect on the whole process of identifying your existing resources for coping with crisis and activating additional resources. Share your reflections. Tell a new story of coping with crisis, using all 6 channels.

#3 REVOLVING DOORS - HELPS AND HINDRANCES IN PROBLEM-SOLVING

Background:

This activity focuses on the mental and social elements that either enhance or hinder our efforts to solve our problems.

Process:

Imagine yourself groping for some solution to a distressing problem in your life. Now spread the COPE Cards on the table, face up. Choose (at least) 6 cards accordingly:

- A card (or cards) representing what hindered or disturbed you in finding solutions to your problem
- A card (or cards) representing what helped you to find solutions to your problem
- A card (or cards) representing who interfered with your attempts to find solutions to your problem
- A card (or cards) representing who helped you on the way of finding solutions to your problem
- A card (or cards) representing the solution

Tell the whole story and reflect on what you would like to change.

#4 GROWING FROM A BLOW

Background:

Stress, crisis & trauma cause a great deal of physical and mental pain. They disrupt both the physical order of the world and psychological balance within. But, at the same time, they also open up opportunities for change & growth. This activity aims to bring to light the process of "growing from a blow".

Process:

1. *Shuffle the cards and divide the whole deck into 4 piles, all cards face down.*
2. *Think of a time in your life which was distressful to you. It may have been a crisis or a traumatic experience. From each of the 4 piles of cards*

take one card and place it in front of you. Turn each card up and relate to it according to the following suggestions:

- *First Card - What did you lose in this crisis?*
- *Second Card - What did you learn to give up?*
- *Third Card - What did you gain from this event?*
- *Fourth Card - What do you wish to gain in the wake of this event?*

Important: If one card is not sufficient or does not contribute to the story, you may take more cards from the same pile.

Variation:

Use the 4 cards to make up a story about growing from a blow.

#5 STORY MAKING - FROM THE PERSONAL STORY TO THE GROUP STORY

Background:

A person dealing with a traumatic crisis may feel isolated from the surrounding social group. The feeling is that "nobody knows the trouble I've seen, nobody knows my sorrow." This activity aims to enable participants to break the invisible wall of isolation and loneliness and to look at painful issues from a new perspective, within the support system of a participating group. This activity is recommended for working with a complete family group.

Process:

1. *Each participant selects blind 2 COPE Cards. The first person then turns the 2 cards face up for all to see. S/he then tells a short story based on the images.*
2. *Other participants tell their stories in turn.*
3. *All participants put their cards face up in the center of the table. Together they now create a new story, based on the entire group of cards. This story may incorporate parts of the stories previously told by the individual members, or may be a totally new one.*

4. *Each participant looks at his or her 2 original cards in the group array and reflects upon the question: Have these 2 cards taken on a new meaning for me as a result of this process?*

#6 THE INNER SHADOW

Background:

Traumatic stress may throw people into an existential struggle between conflicting inner forces: those that destroy and those that free us and lead us towards a meaningful life. This activity aims to help us identify such conflicting forces and may assist in transforming inner struggle into a flow of growth.

Process:

1. *Choose 2 COPE Cards from the deck, which for this activity is spread out face UP.*
2. *Choose 1 card to represent your "inner shadow": unresolved, troubling or painful issues from the past that cast a shadow on your present life.*
3. *Choose a card that best describes your "wishful thinking": a dream you wish to fulfill, an issue you want to solve, hope for some special thing in your life.*
4. *Put the shadow card on your left side and the wish card on your right, face up. Select blind 3 more cards. Turn them face up in the space between your first 2 cards. They now create a bridge between your first 2 cards (the shadow and the wish). Tell a story about how to cross this bridge from the shadow card over to the wish card.*

Reflect:

What could facilitate this transition? Share your thoughts with the group.

#7 AT THE CROSSROADS

Background:

When crisis situations erupt in our lives they make us stop and look. We must examine the past, discover resources, recognize wishes and aspirations and find new energy for problem-solving. This COPE activity exercises the re-ordering of priorities in times of crisis and finding a way through.

Process:

1. Spread the COPE Cards out, face down.
2. Holding in mind a stressful situation relevant to your present life select 5 cards, blind. Turn them face up and use them to tell a story following this format:
 - first card represents the crisis
 - second card reveals the root of the crisis in the past
 - third card depicts a wish you have in this situation
 - fourth card represents the coping resources you can employ in this situation fifth card shows a solution to the crisis
3. All your choices are laid out in front of you. Now you have to decide what step to take to proceed in your journey. Pick up one card from the deck, and decide: where do you want to place it in order to know in which direction to follow and what you need to do in order to achieve your goal.
4. Put the card face up at the chosen spot on your "crossroad". Tell the story.

8 GIVING AND RECEIVING

Background:

This COPE activity is about learning to receive without humiliation and learning to give without overprotecting.

Process:

1. Place in front of you two random piles of COPE Cards, face down. The one on your right contains all that you could possibly wish to RECEIVE

from the universe. The one on your left contains all that you might wish to GIVE the universe.

2. *Take the top card from each pile and turn it face up in front of you.*
3. *Let the associations evoked by these 2 cards guide you in answering the following questions:*
 - *Looking back on stressful or traumatic situations in your life that you dealt with successfully, what did you learn to receive?*
 - *Looking back on stressful or traumatic situations in your life that you dealt with successfully, what did you learn to give?*

Variations:

This process may be continued by taking successive pairs of cards and following the same procedure. You may wish to write down your "getting" and "giving" stories in two parallel columns.

9 THE FEELING WHEEL (USES COPE IMAGE CARDS AND OH WORD CARDS)

Background:

In working through a traumatic experience we may be flooded by a great number of different and even contradictory feelings. Sometimes we need to take time out to observe these feelings and identify those which hold us back and those which contribute to our growth. This COPE activity enables us to monitor these differing feelings. It can be used in individual work, with a group or in the family.

Process:

1. *Each participant picks blind one OH word card.*
2. *These cards are then placed on the table, forming a circle or "wheel" and face up.*
3. *Participants then select COPE cards to represent the main theme of issues with which they are currently struggling.*

4. The COPE cards are to be placed on the OH word card that best describes this theme. If 2 or more participants use the same word the images should be placed beside one another so that all cards remain visible.
5. Participants in turn share their stories with the group.

Let the group take time to look at the "wheel". Observe the atmosphere and reflect together on how each individual story has been affected by the other stories in the wheel.

Note:

It is often the case that the COPE Cards are greatly enhanced when used in combination with the OH Cards. We recommend that you refer to the instructions accompanying the OH Cards for more ideas for use.

10 ROLE-PLAY

Background:

In using COPE for role-play in groups the cards may be used face up and visible to all members.

Process:

1. Participants select cards to represent current state of feelings.
2. New cards may be taken to represent former feeling or feelings aspired to and the differences may be compared.
3. Express a feeling nonverbally to other members of the group if words are too difficult. Other participants can take on different roles in this expression, and they may be directed as in a theatre play. 4. Keep the process focused in case the verbal exchange should run away and become unclear.

ABOUT THE GENRE

COPE is a member of a family of cards which form their own genre. Although they consist of cards like games, there are no strategies or points, no winning or losing. Nor are they oracular like Tarot - the cards have no official meanings and each user alone determines the significance of his or her cards.

These sets of cards are like unbound books which invite us to complete them by applying our skills of association and fantasy. Although each card-deck is both artistically and thematically unique, it can also be used in combination with any or all of the others, opening new possibilities for play.

This family of cards has found its way into various professions in which play can also be playful work. Each colourful card serves as a springboard into the depths of fantasy. The ideas and associations of the player become part of the equipment, the play part of the work.

The genre makes its home between game and book and, like a paintbox, enables its users to become artists. All rules are variable and serve chiefly as guidelines for developing a desirable context for accessing the wealth of human creativity.

The following card decks and books are now available:

- The OH-Cards, by Ely Raman
- COPE, Marina Lukyanova (with Ofra Ayalon)
- SAGA, by Ely Raman
- MYTHOS, by Ely Raman
- 1001, artwork Andrée Pouliot
- SHEN HUA, artwork Han Wei
- ECCO, artwork John David Ellis
- HABITAT, artwork Christian Gronau
- PERSONA, by Ely Raman
- PERSONITA, artwork Ely Raman & Marina Lukyanova
- MORENÁ, artwork WaldeMar de Andrade e Silva
- QUISINE, artwork Anke Siebert.
- ORCA, by Alexandra Morton.
- RACCOON, by A. Douglas / Ch. Gronau.
- CLARO

Limited Edition Cards

- BOSCH, by Hieronymus Bosch
- BEAUREGARD, artwork Joan Beaugard
- LYDIA JACOB STORY, artwork Raymond Waydelich
- TAHITI, Excerpts from the South Sea paintings of Paul Gauguin



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