**I’m Doing Fine Six**

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Cameron Lindsay: hello, and welcome back to the i'm doing fine podcast my name is Cameron Lindsay and I'm here with Carly James to discuss coping mechanisms and stick around.

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Cameron Lindsay: later on in the episode, for a very special guest. So, when we're discussing coping mechanisms there's a lot of things that go into that.

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Cameron Lindsay: And one of the key factors to remember is that coping mechanisms are what help us manage our mental health, it is any efforts that we put towards stress management.

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Cameron Lindsay: And one of the key factors into that as well is noticing if it is you know, a positive or a negative version of that. We've talked a lot on the podcast about how to manage stress and how to deal with.

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Cameron Lindsay: different things that come up in our lives and so today we're going to try to address more of those sort of strategies and how we use.

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Cameron Lindsay: when we're stressed, anxious, even depressed or when we're feeling sad and how these coping mechanisms can help us manage our day to day lives and influence us on a very daily personal basis, so diving more into coping mechanisms Carly, so why are coping mechanisms so important.

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Carly James: yeah so now that we've talked about what coping mechanisms are, it is really important to think about why they're important and how we should.

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Carly James: really implement them on our day to day basis.

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Carly James: So, like Cameron talked about earlier, it's really important we learn how to cope and manage with stress. Stress is just you know, an everyday reality that we're going to have throughout our lives so.

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Carly James: Having strategies to really be able to tackle that stress and be able to sit with it is really useful for us.

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Carly James: Coping mechanisms, help us to make sure we're maintaining our emotional well being so making sure we are at our best.

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Carly James: As much as we need to be, and we can check in with ourselves and kind of think about what it might be that we're needing and how we can get those needs met.

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Carly James: coping mechanisms also help us to make sure we're reaching our equilibrium on a day to day basis and make sure that we are like I said earlier, checking in when we need to be checked in, and when we need some needs to be met.

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Carly James: Coping mechanisms also can help us adjust and adapt so if stress comes up whether it's big or small.

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Carly James: Most of the time we have to adjust to that and recognize that hey i'm feeling really stressed, right now, even maybe anxious, how can I help myself out in this moment.

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Carly James: For example, maybe a change to our routine comes up and we don't really know how to face that right away, or we feel a little thrown off by it.

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Carly James: Coping mechanisms can be something that we lean on in that moment, to help us identify that change and come up with how we want to move forward with it.

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Carly James: They can also help us to problem solve. They can help us to ask for help, and they can help us maintain healthy relationships.

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Carly James: So, with that in mind, what coping mechanisms are and how they're important it's also important that we have healthy coping mechanisms.

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Carly James: So today we are joined by the Latrece, who is a clinician at the University Counseling Center.

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Carly James: she's also the Assistant Director of the Alcohol and other Drugs services program, also known as a AOD, and she is an adjunct professor in the school of Social Work program as well.

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Carly James: And she is going to be talking to us today a little bit more in depth about coping mechanisms and how we can develop them.

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Cameron Lindsay: So, Latrece what constitutes a good coping mechanism, and if you could name some of those characteristics.

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Latrece McDaniel: I think one of the things to definitely consider as far as what constitutes a good coping mechanism is.

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Latrece McDaniel: To have a coping mechanism that is true, to oneself I think when we think about coping mechanisms in a general sense, people are like Oh, let me do a face mask let me go for a jog, all of that.

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Latrece McDaniel: And I think a lot of times, people are cookie cuttering their coping mechanisms, because of what they've heard, but it really needs to be individualized.

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Latrece McDaniel: It really needs to be something that's easily accessible so think about when you're stressed out, do you really want to do something that is hard to do or hard to reach absolutely not, so easily accessible.

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Latrece McDaniel: and easy to do, and in some ways pleasurable for you and so thinking about things like sometimes people will do baths or they'll do.

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Latrece McDaniel: Eat a enjoyable food or put on some clothes that they like, those are typically within someone's reach.

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Latrece McDaniel: And I think a lot of the challenges are is that people are trying to think about coping mechanisms when they're stressed.

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Latrece McDaniel: and your brain is just not really clear when you're stressed out and so to learn and practice and kind of test drive, if you will, coping mechanisms before you're feeling really stressed, is really important.

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Latrece McDaniel: I think a final thing in regards to coping mechanisms is this idea of finding something that leaves you feeling or has your cup feeling more full.

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Latrece McDaniel: Because I think sometimes people think oh i'm going to go to the gym for some people that leaves people, like, feeling much better and has them feeling more full for other people it's really draining and so thinking about what will allow someone’s cups to be full.

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Cameron Lindsay: yeah I 100% understand what you're saying, because I think it's also really important.

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Cameron Lindsay: You know, thinking about what your end goal is with doing your coping mechanism, and I think that's like one of the main points.

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Cameron Lindsay: That you had there was like, really just taking in mind like Do I need to feel relaxed Do I need to feel energized and just kind of like gearing your coping mechanisms towards that, which is really amazing.

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Carly James: yeah and I think too in a lot of ways, Latrece, it's clear how coping mechanisms are another form of self care and another form of.

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Carly James: Another way that we can really develop that strong self care routine.

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Carly James: Especially when we think about how it really can just be a basic strategy that we lean on or a basic moment that we give ourselves to just really dial in.

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Carly James: On what we need, and like you said, I do think it's really important for us to think about these things.

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Carly James: beforehand, so when we're in moments of stress or in moments of high anxiety, we already have things we know we can lean on we don't have to spend time thinking about it.

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Carly James: which I think leads into our next question pretty well, what do you think or from your experience hinders people from finding good coping mechanisms or finding in pursuing them in a certain way.

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Latrece McDaniel: Well, Carly, that is like, I wouldn't say a loaded question, but a very full long list of things and I think you know, like off the bat I could say things like you know finances and that type of thing like sometimes people are.

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Latrece McDaniel: are aspiring for coping strategies or just outside of their their price point or it's going to affect them financially and other ways.

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Latrece McDaniel: I think one of the major things is time, I think most of us feel like I don't have enough time in the day if we spend time doing this thing it takes away from work or school or something else and it's really.

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Latrece McDaniel: it's really a falsehood because you know, from what I know for myself and what I know from the folks I work with.

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Latrece McDaniel: When they take time to cope, and to actively engage in good coping skills they actually feel like they're more able to do.

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Latrece McDaniel: The things they desire to do with the time that they have, and so I think that that's a really big and major thing.

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Latrece McDaniel: And I think the other thing is that people don't always think outside the box right, I mean we're in the age of social media, and so you see people like laying on a beach and they're like out their sunglasses and there's some hats.

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Latrece McDaniel: Or they are like going to the spa and getting my mani-pedi or whatever it might be, and so a lot of times we have some really extreme ideas of what a coping mechanism is and it's really about kind of thinking outside of the box.

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Carly James: yeah and I think that also ties back to like those form of like pop self care that basic stuff that you see everywhere, you know the very stable hey this is you.

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Carly James: doing whatever it is, in terms of how self care has been popularized and I think we can lose sight of how important it is to keep it personal and to really stay true to our own needs for sure.

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Cameron Lindsay: Yes, and especially as college students, you know time is one of those valuable things and I often talk to a lot of my friends, where it's like we feel like we have all the time in the world, and no time at all.

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Cameron Lindsay: yeah and and being able to prioritize yourself, is one of the most effective work that you can do.

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Cameron Lindsay: and being able to prioritize the things that you need, and that is just really, really important because i've noticed when i'm just like oh I just got to finish, I just got to finish up this paper real quick I just got to do this and I tried to just grind through it.

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Cameron Lindsay: i'm not doing as good of work and so being able to break for myself release some of that tension and stress and find some healthy coping mechanisms can ultimately be doing better work which is then also better, for me, so I think it's wonderful and beautiful cyclical pattern and.

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Cameron Lindsay: So another sort of like questions that we have for you is talking about AOD and some of the other resources that are available on campus through you.

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Latrece McDaniel: Absolutely so AOD stands for the alcohol or drug services office and so what it is.

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Latrece McDaniel: Is an office that focuses on what we call safe, smart, and responsible use so a lot of times either students don't know that we exist or when they learn that we exist we're like.

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Latrece McDaniel: Oh no I don't want to talk to those people who are going to tell me not to drink or smoke, or whatever.

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Latrece McDaniel: And that's that's not at all what we do so, really, our focus is is to spread education and awareness to students, so they understand what they're doing, and this is true for anything like.

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Latrece McDaniel: You think about what we eat or, like any of the disclaimers we have before we exercise like having that initial awareness and education allows you to make better decisions, and so we really.

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Latrece McDaniel: Do a large gamut of things with students, we do programming that’s substance free which allows for like connecting with people and engaging in a positive peer group, but we also do things that are more fun like.

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Latrece McDaniel: We do Mario kart with drunk goggles or marijuana goggles which probably sounds crazy, but we really want people to understand.

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Latrece McDaniel: In a sober mindset what things are doing, because anytime you introduce a substance you don't really have full awareness of how it's affecting you.

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Latrece McDaniel: Think the other thing you know in regards to we do prevention education, we also do recovery work, and so, for those.

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Latrece McDaniel: Who are either in recovery themselves seeking recovery or have family members who are in recovery we provide that support and programming to students to help them navigate that.

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Latrece McDaniel: And just anywhere from you know I've been vaping to cope with stress, I see that it's not good for my health, I want to have a better coping strategy.

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Latrece McDaniel: We talked with students about that, they want to quit, they want to cut back, whatever it might be, and we really appreciate having candid conversations with students, we do it individually, we do it in a group setting.

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Latrece McDaniel: Where it's like non committal, because we just want them to be aware, and we want them to have the opportunity to ask the questions that they want to ask, so that they can make the choices they need to when they're out with their friends or wherever they are.

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Carly James: Perfect. So, I guess, all in all it's very important that we pay attention to how we are taking care of ourselves when moments of stress come up for us and.

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Carly James: When we really do need to check in overall with our needs and making sure, things are being set, and hopefully today we gave a little bit more insight how we can start thinking about coping mechanisms and integrating them into our routines more, specifically our self care routine.

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Carly James: So we really appreciate that opportunity to look a little deeper into our mental health and the way we can take care of ourselves, I think, also with AOD, while you were talking Latrece.

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Carly James: about the different resources, you have there's another availability, I think, in a podcast as well that the AOD Peer Eds are putting together.

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Latrece McDaniel: Absolutely, so if you visit our website there's a number of things in and highlight the podcast and one other, so we have.

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Latrece McDaniel: A podcast called in the mix with AOD and it goes through a number of different topics from a number of.

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Latrece McDaniel: Individuals who work in our office and it goes over substances and sex and what does that look like and kind of some of the questions students might have.

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Latrece McDaniel: or the use of study drugs or the the impacts of vaping so in short snippets that gives some education but from a student perspective.

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Latrece McDaniel: And we also have on our website virtual escape rooms and so you have to use your substance knowledge or your substances knowledge to be able to unlock the two rooms, to get out and so that's also available on our website.

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Carly James: Awesome, perfect. Thank you so much for letting us know about other resources that we have available, we appreciate you coming in today and talking to us a little bit more about.

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Carly James: Coping mechanisms and how we can implement them and, hopefully, our listeners will take everything in note and see how they can implement it in their own lives.

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Carly James: But other than that, I think that is all set for today, so thank you so much for listening to everyone, and we hope to see you next month for our next podcast.

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Cameron Lindsay: Yeah, thank you, bye.