

# Coping with Positive and Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia

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# Coping with Positive and Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia

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## Abstract:

**Objective:** Although coping with positive symptoms of schizophrenia has been studied widely, few studies have examined coping with negative symptoms. This study compares the appraisal of stressfulness and coping patterns in response to positive and negative symptoms experienced by clients with schizophrenia attending a community mental health center. **Methods:** Clients were interviewed to assess symptom severity, appraisal of symptom stressfulness, and coping strategies used for selected symptoms rated as severe and reported as stressful. Open-ended responses from clients regarding coping strategies were coded according to an a priori coding scheme. **Results:** Clients reported negative symptoms as less stressful, and they used fewer coping strategies in response than they did for positive symptoms. Clients used some types of coping more than others: behavioral more than cognitive, nonsocial more than social, emotion-focused more than problem-focused, and avoidant more than nonavoidant. **Conclusions:** Clients more often report positive symptoms as stressful compared with negative symptoms, though negative symptoms are still reported as stressful to a certain degree,

indicating a need to improve our ability to help clients cope with negative symptoms. Clients are less likely to use coping strategies to counteract negative symptoms compared with positive symptoms. Implications are discussed for developing interventions tailored to promoting awareness of and ways of coping with negative symptoms.

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