

## Finding balance

When we think about coping styles, we might consider this on a spectrum, where some people tend towards being “distraction focused copers” and others “Attention focused copers”. Most of us are able to swing from one end to the other with flexibility, however in times of high stress we tend to revert back to what feels most natural for us.

Distraction focused copers are those of us who, when faced with a stressful situation, tend to desire getting distance from it. We might distract away from the stressor by focusing on other things, throwing yourself into work, or other events in your life as a way of stepping away from the cause of your stress.

Attention focused copers are those of us who walk towards our stressors, focus on them, analyse them, research them, talk about and generally give them a lot of attention as a means of feeling a sense of control or trying to solve ‘the problem’ that caused the stress in the first place.

While both of these styles are healthy and reasonable, people will sometimes struggle when they are too far down one end of the spectrum or the other. For instance, if we always distract and never allow yourself to think about your stress – it tends to be a little like a pressure cooker, that bubbles up and sometimes bursts out when we are not prepared. Or if we always pay attention to our stressor, we never get any distance from it, which can lead to us feeling overwhelmed.

One helpful strategy is to consider how you might find a balance between the two styles. Consider some acts that allow you to distract from your Fertility distress when its feeling overwhelming, to allow yourself to recoup energy and move forward with other areas in your life. But also set aside some time, each day, or perhaps each week (you decide) when you can be present with your Fertility thinking, whether this be planning for an upcoming cycle, or managing a ‘waiting’ period.

Finding balance in our coping can allow us to feel a greater sense of control over our pathways. Remember that this is flexible. Check in with yourself and consider what you approach you might need at any given time.

Below are some examples of strategies that might fit into each Category.





### **Distraction:**

- Reading a book or watching a TV series
- Doing something creative that takes your attention – Cooking, art, gardening
- Exercise or yoga
- Relaxation exercises
- Catching up with friends and focusing on non-Fertility related or baby topics.

### **Attention:**

- Talking to others about how your feeling
- Journalling about your experience and your thoughts
- Making plans or researching – using reputable sources
- Taking time to arrange appointments or doing administration related to your fertility
- Problem solving aspects within your control