

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

# WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

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**Safety plans include what you would do and who may be able to help support you during a mental health crisis, or if you are having thoughts of suicide. In order to be prepared, it is best to make a safety plan BEFORE you reach a crisis point.**

Before we get into how to actually make your safety plan, there are a few things we wanted to mention:

- It is okay to ask someone to help you write your plan. You don't have to do it alone, and you deserve support.
- Even if someone is helping, you get to decide what goes into your plan and what you think would work best for you.
- It may help to share your plan with family members, friends, your therapist, or anyone else who helps support you. Sharing your plan with others can help them know how to help you during your time of crisis.



On your safety plan, you should include your **warning signs** which are signs that let you know you're not feeling safe.

A warning sign may be that you are crying a lot more than usual. Another example of a warning sign could be that you are having thoughts of wanting to hurt yourself.

After you list out your warning signs, many people make a list of their **coping skills**. Coping skills are things that you can do to improve your mood and distract yourself. On your plan, you can include coping skills that you do by yourself, or even ones that include other people.

A few examples of coping skills are

- coloring,
- listening to music,
- going on a walk,
- or even talking on the phone with a friend.

If your coping skills are not helping you feel safer, it is good to know **who to reach out to for support**. Your list should include the people you trust and feel safe to talk to about how you are feeling.

Sometimes, you may need to reach out for professional support in order to stay safe. It is okay to need help. A few examples of professional support include calling 988, reaching out to a therapist or doctor, calling 911, or going to the hospital.



Finally, you want your safety plan to include **your reasons to stay alive**. When you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, it is important to have a reminder of why you want to stay alive.

