



**BEHAVIORAL MENTAL HEALTH  
SAFETY PLANNING &  
LEARN TO CARE FOR THE CHALLENGING  
PATIENT AND THEIR MEMBERS**

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Children's Hospital



# OVERVIEW

Behavioral mental safety planning in an office setting is essential for promoting patient and staff safety, preventing aggressive or disruptive behaviors, fostering a positive work environment, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory standards. It contributes to improved patient experiences, staff well-being, and overall office efficiency, while also minimizing the potential for liability or litigation

# OBJECTIVES

- This presentation will cover strategies for dealing with difficult patients and families
- Importance of behavioral mental safety planning
- Elements of behavioral mental safety planning
- Identify potential risks and triggers
- De-escalation techniques
- Setting boundaries and establishing expectations
- Teamwork and Support
- Documentation and reporting
- Self care for staff

# ENVIRONMENT

## PATIENT SAFETY

Behavioral mental safety planning prioritizes the safety and well-being of patients. By identifying potential risks, triggers, and behaviors that may compromise patient safety, appropriate measures can be put in place to mitigate those risks and promote a secure environment.

## STAFF WELL-BEING

Dealing with challenging or difficult patients and families can be emotionally and physically demanding for health care professionals. A comprehensive behavioral mental safety plan provides staff with necessary training, resources, and support to effectively handle such situations. This, in turn, promotes staff well being, job satisfaction, and reduces the risk of burnout.

## STAFF SAFETY

Ensuring the safety of office staff is equally vital. Behavioral mental safety planning equips staff with the necessary training, protocols, and resources to effectively handle challenging or potentially volatile situations. This promotes their physical and emotional well-being, reduces the risk of workplace violence, and fosters a supportive work environment.

# SAFETY PLANNING

## Improved Staff Performance and Work Environment

A safe and secure office environment positively impacts staff morale, performance, and job satisfaction. When staff members feel supported and protected, they are better able to focus on their roles, engage in effective communication, and provide quality care to patients. This, in turn, enhances the overall work environment and contributes to a positive workplace culture.

## Prevention of Aggression and Disruptions

Implementing behavioral mental safety planning helps to prevent and manage aggressive or disruptive behaviors. By proactively addressing potential triggers, providing clear communication, setting expectations, and implementing de-escalation strategies, instances of aggression or disruptions can be minimized, creating a more harmonious and productive office environment.

## Creates Efficient Workflow


In a healthcare setting, disruptive behaviors or incidents can have a significant impact on workflow and patient care. By implementing behavioral mental safety planning, potential disruptions can be anticipated and mitigated, allowing for a smoother and more efficient operation of the office or facility.

## Increased Patient Trust and Satisfaction

When patients feel safe and supported in the office setting, it enhances their trust and satisfaction with the care they receive. Behavioral mental safety planning demonstrates a commitment to patient-centered care, cultivates a sense of trust, and contributes to positive patient experiences, which can lead to improved patient outcomes and increased patient loyalty.


# LEGAL & REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements is essential in healthcare. Behavioral mental safety planning ensures that the facility adheres to relevant laws, standards, and regulations related to patient safety, confidentiality, and the management of behavioral incidents. This helps minimize the risk of litigation and protects the reputation of the office or facility.



# PREVENTION OF LIABILITY AND LITIGATION

By implementing behavioral mental safety planning, offices can reduce the risk of liability and potential litigation resulting from incidents related to patient or staff safety. Being proactive in identifying and addressing potential risks and having protocols in place to manage challenging situations demonstrates a commitment to patient and staff safety, which can help mitigate legal and financial risks.



# SAFETY PLANNING

## Improved Patient Outcomes

A safe and secure office environment positively impacts staff morale, performance, and job satisfaction. When staff members feel supported and protected, they are better able to focus on their roles, engage in effective communication, and provide quality care to patients. This, in turn, enhances the overall work environment and contributes to a positive workplace culture.

## Patient Satisfaction

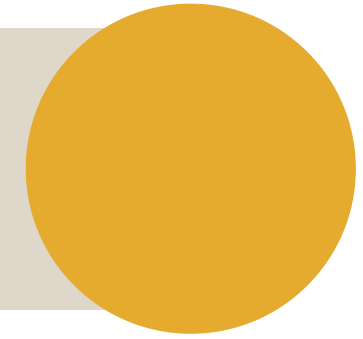
When patients feel safe, heard, and well-cared for, their satisfaction with the healthcare experience increases. A behavioral mental safety plan that addresses patient concerns, respects their rights, and fosters a positive atmosphere contributes to higher patient satisfaction ratings.

## Prevention of Escalation

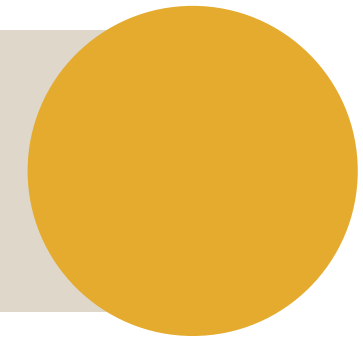
A proactive approach to behavioral mental safety planning helps identify signs of distress or agitation early on, allowing staff to intervene and de-escalate situations before they escalate further. Effective de-escalation techniques and strategies can help prevent physical or verbal aggression, reduce the need for restraints or seclusion, and maintain a calm environment.

# DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

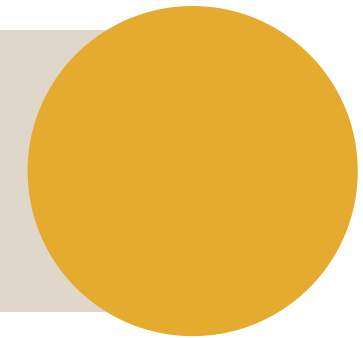
**ACTIVE LISTENING:** SHOW EMPATHY AND ACTIVELY LISTEN TO THE CONCERNS OF THE PATIENT OR FAMILY.



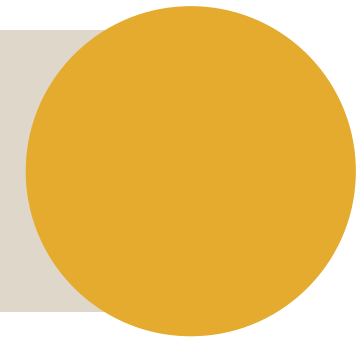
**VERBAL COMMUNICATION:** USE CALM, CLEAR, AND RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE TO DIFFUSE TENSION. VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS. EX: REPEAT CONCERNS, ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS, ACKNOWLEDGE THE PATIENTS POINT OF VIEW.



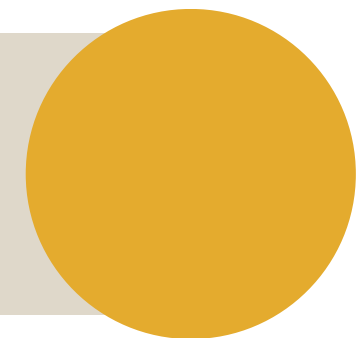
**NON-THREATENING BODY LANGUAGE:** MAINTAIN A NON-CONFRONTATIONAL POSTURE AND AVOID AGGRESSIVE GESTURES.



**TIME AND SPACE:** PROVIDE THE PATIENT OR FAMILY WITH PERSONAL SPACE AND TIME TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.



**OFFER PATIENT OPTIONS**



# IT'S WHAT YOU **DON'T SAY** THAT COUNTS!





# CASE STUDY 1: NON-COMPLIANT PATIENT

**A patient with a chronic condition consistently fails to adhere to their prescribed treatment plan, leading to frequent hospital readmissions.**

## **Challenge:**

The patient's non-compliance hinders their recovery and places a strain on healthcare resources.

## **Strategies:**

- Build rapport and trust with the patient through open and non-judgmental communication.
- Identify and address barriers to compliance, such as financial constraints, lack of understanding, or fear of side effects.
- Collaborate with the patient to develop a personalized care plan that accommodates their needs and preferences.
- Provide education and resources to enhance the patient's understanding of the importance of treatment adherence.



# CASE STUDY 2: AGITATED FAMILY MEMBER

**A family member becomes agitated and confrontational due to frustration with their loved one's care plan or concerns about the quality of care.**

## **Challenge:**

The agitated family member's behavior disrupts the care environment and affects the well-being of staff and other patients.

## **Strategies:**

- Remain calm and composed, ensuring personal safety and the safety of others.
- Acknowledge the family member's concerns and validate their emotions.
- Actively listen and empathize with their perspective, demonstrating understanding and a willingness to address their concerns.
- Involve a social worker, patient advocate, or other appropriate staff member to provide additional support and facilitate communication.



# CASE STUDY 3: DEMANDING PATIENT

**A patient with high expectations consistently makes demanding requests, expecting immediate attention and special treatment.**

## **Challenge:**

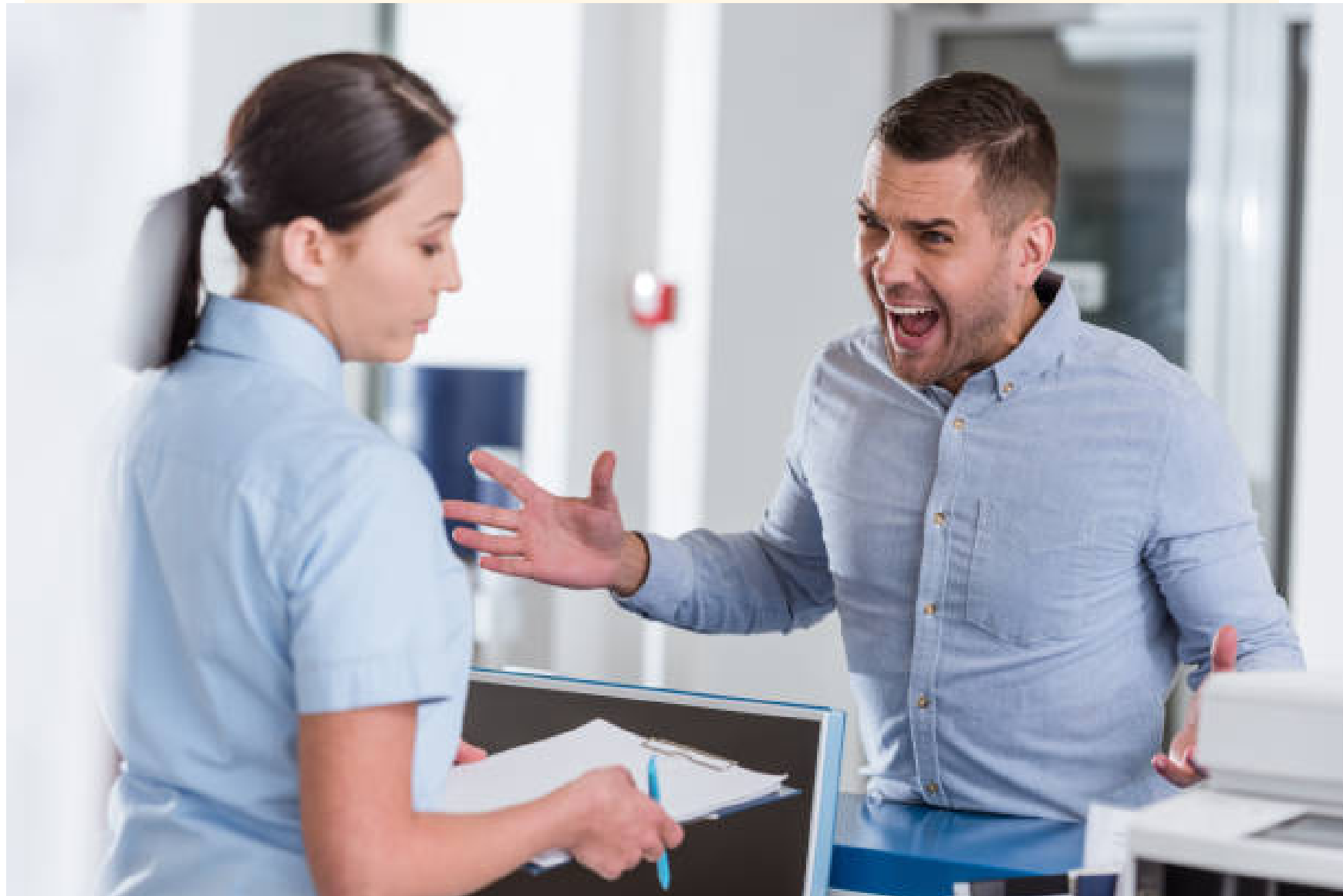
Meeting the patient's demands within the constraints of the healthcare setting and balancing their needs with those of other patients.

## **Strategies:**

- Set clear boundaries and manage expectations by explaining what is feasible and reasonable.
- Empathize with the patient's concerns but communicate the limitations and priorities of the healthcare setting.
- Collaborate with the patient to find alternative solutions or compromises that address their needs while considering other patients and resources.
- Involve the healthcare team to ensure a unified and consistent approach in managing the patient's requests.



# CASE STUDY 4: DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN WAITING AREA



**Patient becomes verbally aggressive and disruptive in the waiting area, causing distress to other patients, families, and staff.**

## **Challenge:**

Safely managing the disruptive behavior while minimizing the impact on others and maintaining a calm and safe environment.

## **Strategies:**

- Ensure the safety of all individuals involved by removing any immediate threats and contacting security if necessary.
- Attempt to de-escalate the situation using active listening, empathy, and clear communication.
- Provide a private and calm space for further discussion or resolution.
- Involve appropriate staff members to address the situation and develop a plan to prevent similar incidents in the future.

# REVIEW

Overall, behavioral mental safety planning plays a critical role in promoting a culture of safety, enhancing patient experiences, protecting staff well-being, and optimizing the delivery of quality healthcare services. By prioritizing these aspects, healthcare facilities can create a positive and supportive environment that benefits everyone involved.



# BURNOUT

“The physician will hardly be thought very careful of the health of his patients if he neglects his own”. In fact many physicians and other HCWs have lost sight of their own personal health and well-being while they confront the stresses of increased work load, rapidly expanding knowledge base, increasing government regulations, and malpractice suits and how to balance their personal and professional lives.



# HIGHEST BURNOUT

01

PHYSICIAN

Physicians may have one of the highest-paying jobs in the world but it comes at a price: it's also one of the jobs with high burnout rates. One of the risk factors for burnout is working with people. For physicians, this is exacerbated by the fact that those people are sick and maybe even dying. As if this emotional toll isn't bad enough, physicians often work long hours with very little sleep.

03

SOCIAL  
WORKER

For social workers, burnout is often linked to compassion fatigue or secondary traumatic stress. Setting boundaries is an important strategy to adopt when you see the signs that you're heading for burnout but it's not that easy when you're dealing with people in traumatic situations. High caseloads and overwork increase the burnout risk for social workers.

02

NURSE

Nursing also has a high burnout rate. Like doctors, they tend to work long hours, dealing with people who are sick and scared. However, they also do the dirty work and can easily feel unappreciated for that, increasing their risk of burnout.

04

EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE  
WORKER

Emergency response workers such as paramedics, emergency medical technicians and firefighters have some of the most sleep-deprived jobs in Canada. They often work night shifts, which messes with their sleep patterns. In addition, they're prone to PTSD because of what they see in a typical day's work, so the burnout rates in this field come as no surprise.

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# Self Care ISN'T SELFISH

Self-care is essential for maintaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being, especially in high-stress environments like healthcare.





# STRATEGIES FOR SELF CARE

## Practice Mindfulness

Engage in mindfulness meditation or deep breathing exercises to help reduce stress and promote relaxation. Take breaks throughout the day to focus on the present moment and cultivate awareness of your thoughts and emotions. Incorporate mindfulness into daily activities, such as eating mindfully or savoring moments of calm.

## Seek Support

Connect with colleagues or peers who can relate to your experiences. Share and discuss challenges, successes, and concerns to gain perspective and support. Consider joining professional support groups, where you can receive guidance, encouragement, and advice from others in similar roles. Seek supervision or consultation from mentors or senior staff members who can provide guidance and support in navigating difficult situations.

## Establish Boundaries

Set clear boundaries between work and personal life. Create dedicated time for self-care, hobbies, and activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Learn to say "no" when your workload becomes overwhelming or when additional commitments may negatively impact your well-being. Prioritize self-care activities and make them non-negotiable parts of your routine.

# STRATEGIES FOR SELF CARE

## ENGAGE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Regular exercise has numerous benefits for physical and mental health. Find physical activities that you enjoy and incorporate them into your schedule.



Take short movement breaks during the workday to stretch, walk, or engage in light exercise.



Consider outdoor activities or exercise classes that allow you to connect with nature and boost your mood.

## MAINTAIN HEALTHY HABITS

**PRIOTIZE** a balanced diet, ensuring you eat regular meals and incorporate nutritious foods to support your energy levels and overall health.

**GET** sufficient sleep to promote physical and mental rejuvenation. Establish a consistent sleep routine and create a restful sleep environment.

**LIMIT** caffeine and alcohol intake, as they can negatively affect sleep and exacerbate stress levels.

## PRACTICE SELF COMPASSION

Be kind to yourself and acknowledge your own limitations. Recognize that you are doing meaningful work and that it's essential to care for yourself to provide the best care for others.

Practice self-compassion by offering yourself understanding and forgiveness when facing challenges or setbacks.

Celebrate achievements and milestones, no matter how small they may seem.

# Remember

Self-care is an ongoing process and may require adjustments based on your changing needs and circumstances. Prioritize self-care as an integral part of your daily routine to maintain a healthy work-life balance and enhance your overall well-being.

Starts with Leadership Work  
Life Balance  
Share Resources



I CAN'T CONTINUE WORKING  
THESE HOURS...I FEEL AS  
THOUGH I'M MISSING  
MICHAEL'S CHILDHOOD

HIS NAME'S  
**MARK!**



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# SAFETY PLANNING WITH PATIENTS

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# STANLEY - BROWN SAFETY PLAN

## STEP 1: WARNING SIGNS:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 2: INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES – THINGS I CAN DO TO TAKE MY MIND OFF MY PROBLEMS WITHOUT CONTACTING ANOTHER PERSON:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 3: PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DISTRACTION:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Place: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 4: PEOPLE WHOM I CAN ASK FOR HELP DURING A CRISIS:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 5: PROFESSIONALS OR AGENCIES I CAN CONTACT DURING A CRISIS:

1. Clinician/Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Clinician/Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Local Emergency Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Department Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Department Phone : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

## STEP 6: MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER (PLAN FOR LETHAL MEANS SAFETY):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

The Stanley-Brown Safety Plan is copyrighted by Barbara Stanley, PhD & Gregory K. Brown, PhD (2008, 2021). Individual use of the Stanley-Brown Safety Plan form is permitted. Written permission from the authors is required for any changes to this form or use of this form in the electronic medical record. Additional resources are available from [www.suicidesafetyplan.com](http://www.suicidesafetyplan.com).

# WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

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Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself

Expressing feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, or having no purpose in life

Increased use of drugs or alcohol

Withdrawing from friends, family, or society

Expressing feelings of being trapped, in unbearable pain, or a burden to others

Giving away possessions or expressing that they have no need for them

Displaying extreme mood swings or expressing rage without cause

Searching online for means/methods of suicide or self-harm

Expressing feelings of being a burden to others

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# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are the positive influences that can help reduce the likelihood of someone experiencing poor mental health, substance abuse, or suicidal thoughts.

## Good Problem-Solving Skills

Individuals who are able to identify and address challenges in a positive way may be better equipped to manage stressors and reduce negative outcomes.

## Strong Support Network

Having close relationships with family, friends, or community organizations can provide a sense of belonging, love, and support during difficult times.

## Stable Income and Housing

Having stable employment and housing can provide a sense of security and stability, which can contribute to overall well-being.

## Access to Mental Health Care

Being able to access and afford mental health services can help individuals recognize and address mental health concerns before they become more severe.



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

## Healthy Coping Skills

Individuals who are able to manage stress in healthy ways, such as through exercise, meditation, or engaging in hobbies, may be less likely to experience negative outcomes

## Positive Self-Image

Individuals with a positive self-image and who have a strong sense of self-worth may be more resilient in the face of challenges.

## Conscientious Temperament

Individuals who are purposeful, self-disciplined, and reliable may be better equipped to handle stressors and navigate challenges in a positive way.

Overall, protective factors can help individuals maintain their mental health and well-being, reduce the risk of negative outcomes, and promote a positive outlook on life.

# RISK FACTORS

Risk factors refer to the factors or situations that increase the likelihood or chance of individuals developing poor mental health, substance abuse, or suicidal thoughts. Here are some examples of risk factors:



## Genetic Predisposition

Certain mental health conditions can run in families, making individuals with a family history of mental illnesses more vulnerable to developing them as well.



## Trauma or Adverse Life Experiences

Individuals who have experienced trauma such as abuse, neglect, or violence, are at increased risk of developing mental health disorders.



## Substance Use or Abuse

Substance abuse, such as smoking, alcohol, or drug abuse, can increase an individual's risk of developing mental health problems or addiction disorders.



## Chronic Physical Illness

Living with chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, or heart disease, can increase a person's vulnerability to depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.



## **Social Isolation or Loneliness**

Individuals who lack support, social connections, and feel lonely may be at higher risk of developing mental health disorders or suicidal thoughts.



## **Financial Stress**

Individuals who face financial difficulties such as debt, unemployment, or poverty can experience added stress, which may increase the risk of mental health disorders.




## **Negative Life Events**

Major life changes such as a death of a loved one, divorce, or job loss can increase an individual's risk of developing mental health disorders.

# **RISK FACTORS**

It is important to note that having one or more of these risk factors does not necessarily mean that an individual will develop poor mental health, substance abuse, or suicidal thoughts. Rather, it highlights that individuals who experience these risk factors may be more vulnerable to experiencing negative outcomes and hence may need additional support or resources to help mitigate these risks.



# INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES

Internal coping strategies refer to techniques that an individual can use to regulate their emotions and manage stress without seeking the support of external sources.

## MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

This involves practicing mindfulness, which is a state of heightened awareness of the present moment without judgment or distraction. Mindfulness meditation can help individuals to decrease stress levels, improve focus, and enhance their emotional resilience.

## RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, or tai chi can all be effective ways to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.

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## COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

This involves identifying and challenging negative or irrational thoughts and beliefs to replace them with more positive and realistic ones. This technique can help individuals to reduce stress and increase their sense of control over their thoughts and feelings.



# MAKING AN ENVIRONMENT SAFE

What items in your environment might you use to hurt yourself?

- These may include weapons, firearms, drugs, medications, household toxins, alcohol or any other potential lethal means
- Reduce access to lethal means
- Discuss safe storage (gun locks, safes), medication lock boxes, smaller amounts in-home, relying on family for dispensing



# SOCIAL SETTINGS

Social settings that provide distraction can be helpful in managing stress and reducing the focus on negative feelings.

## **PARTIES OR GATHERINGS**

Social events, such as birthday parties, holiday celebrations, or dinner parties, can provide opportunities for individuals to socialize, engage in conversation, and enjoy the company of others. Such events can shift the individual's focus away from their stresses and worries, and towards the enjoyment of the present moment.

## **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

Participating in outdoor activities, such as hiking, camping, or going to the beach, can provide a change of scenery and an opportunity to connect with nature. Additionally, outdoor activities often involve physical exercise, which can release endorphins and reduce stress hormones.

## **SPORTING EVENTS**

Watching or participating in sporting events can be an enjoyable way to distract oneself from stress. Sporting events are often social, and individuals can connect with others who share a similar interest in sports. Additionally, cheering for a team or engaging in friendly competition can be an engaging distraction that helps to reduce stress.

## **MUSIC CONCERTS OR FESTIVALS**

Attending music concerts or festivals can be an enjoyable way to distract oneself from stress. Music can be a powerful mood enhancer and can evoke positive emotions that help to reduce stress levels. Additionally, attending such events with friends can add a social element to the experience.

\*It is important to note that distraction can be a helpful coping mechanism in some situations. Still, it is essential to address the underlying sources of stress to avoid using distraction as the primary coping mechanism continually. Engaging in healthy coping mechanisms that address stress at its source is vital for overall mental health and well-being.

This involves using positive and encouraging statements to motivate and empower oneself. Positive self-talk can boost mood and self-confidence and help individuals to overcome negative self-talk and self-doubt.

### Positive Self-Talk

Laughter can boost mood by releasing endorphins, reducing stress hormones, and promoting relaxation. Humor can also help individuals to shift their perspective and become more resilient to difficult situations.

### Laughter

Physical activity can be an effective way to reduce stress, improve mood, increase self-esteem, and promote overall well-being. Exercise can increase the production of endorphins, decrease stress hormones, and promote relaxation.

### Physical Exercise

# COPING STRATEGIES

Not all coping strategies work for everyone, and different strategies may be more effective in different situations. Additionally, individuals may benefit from using a combination of both internal and external coping strategies to manage stress and promote mental wellness.

## RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**If you're in crisis, get immediate help:** Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, [chat](#) with trained counselors 24/7, or get help in [other ways](#) through the Lifeline

**[How Right Now](#)** (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention): Resources for coping with negative emotions and stress, talking to loved ones, and finding inspiration

**[Youth Engaged 4 Change](#)**: Opportunities for youth to make a difference in their lives and in the world around them

**[Supporting Emotional Wellbeing in Children and Youth](#)** (National Academies of Medicine): Tools for children, teens, and parents to learn how to cope with challenges

**[Mental Health Resource Center](#)** (JED Foundation): Information about common emotional health issues and how to overcome challenges

**[Youth Wellbeing Initiatives](#)** (National Council for Mental Wellbeing): Collection of initiatives to improve mental wellbeing in youth and young adults

**[Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#)** (National Alliance on Mental Illness): Resources for young people to get mental health support

**[One Mind PsyberGuide](#)**: A guide to navigating mental health apps and digital technologies

**[FindTreatment.gov](#)** (SAMHSA): Information on substance use and mental health treatment

**[Trevor Project](#)**: Suicide prevention and crisis intervention resources for LGBTQ+ young people

**[AAKOMA Mental Health Resources](#)** (The AAKOMA Project): Resources to support the mental health of youth of color and their caregivers

**[Mental Health for Immigrants](#)** (Informed Immigrant): Tips for managing the mental health of yourself and others



# SUICIDE AND CRISIS LIFELINE: 988

**Dial (888)901-2726 to reach CPAN**  
Then dial the numbers below for region and institution

**Dial 1**  
North and Northeast Region

- 1 University of North Texas Health Science Center
- 2 The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
- 3 The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler

**Dial 2**  
South and Southeast Regions

- 1 Baylor College of Medicine
- 2 The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- 3 The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston

**Dial 3**  
Valley and Central Regions

- 1 Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin
- 2 The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
- 3 The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine
- 4 Texas A&M University System Health Science Center

**Dial 4**  
West Region

- 1 Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
- 2 Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso

Harris county is covered by both Baylor College of Medicine & The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

CPAN  
Child Psychiatry Access Network

## CPAN or Child Psychiatry Access Network

- For pediatric clinicians in Texas, free
- Offers provider-to-provider consultations related to identifying and treating mental health issues

# MHID 24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE: 1-888-767-4493

**QUESTIONS?**



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