

A photograph of a wooden table with a bowl of food (quinoa, broccoli, and pickles) and a spoon. A window is visible in the background.

PRINTABLE COPING GUIDE

Your Next-Step Mental Health Support Plan

When you are struggling with your mental health, you do not have to solve everything at once. Use this guide to check your safety, get through the next few minutes, and connect with the right support.

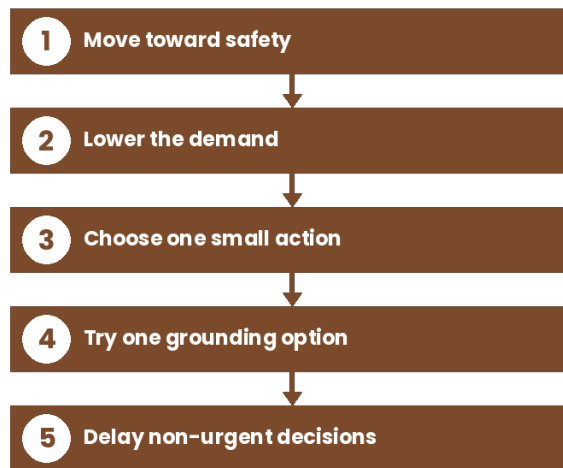
Au sommaire

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! Start with safety

If you may harm yourself or someone else, cannot control an immediate danger, or cannot stay safe without help, contact local emergency services, an urgent mental health service, or the nearest emergency department now. If you are in the United States, call or text 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline; call 911 for a life-threatening emergency. Elsewhere, verify the correct crisis or emergency number for your country.

A plan for the next few minutes



1 Move toward safety

If possible, move away from immediate dangers, go somewhere safer, and ask a trusted person to stay with you while support is contacted.

2 Lower the demand

Reduce stimulation by stepping away from stressful notifications, arguments, crowded spaces, or intense media when you can do so safely.

3 Choose one small action

Sit somewhere calmer, place both feet on the floor, open a window, drink some water, or send a short message saying that you are having a difficult time.

4 Try one grounding option

Describe objects around you, notice your body against a chair or floor, identify sounds or smells, or take a comfortable breath. Stop and switch approaches if focusing on breathing makes you feel worse.

5 Delay non-urgent decisions

Give yourself time before making important choices. Alcohol and recreational drugs can intensify difficult feelings for some people and make risk harder to judge.

Gentle support for a difficult day

Have something to eat

A simple meal is enough; perfection is not the goal.

Drink some water

Keep the next step easy and visible.

Rest or follow a gentler bedtime

One difficult night does not require punishment.

Get daylight or step outside

Choose only what feels manageable.

Try gentle movement

A few minutes may be enough.

Complete one personal-care task

For example, showering or changing clothes.

Choose a low-pressure activity

Keep it supportive rather than demanding.

Take prescribed medication as directed

Do not change it on your own.

BUILD YOUR MENTAL HEALTH COPING & SUPPORT PLAN

A personal plan helps you prepare, cope, and get support—before you need it most.



YOU ARE NOT ALONE. SUPPORT IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE.

SUPPORT PLAN DIAGRAM Use the flow of safety, immediate coping, trusted support, and professional care to shape a personal plan.

Support is appropriate before a crisis

Reach out to a healthcare professional when distress is ongoing, worsening, or interfering with daily life.

Keep trusted people, professional services, local crisis resources, and emergency information somewhere easy to find.

You do not need to know exactly what is happening before asking for help.

A coping exercise is an option, not a test. If it increases distress, stop, try another approach, or contact appropriate support.

Choose the next level of support

What is happening	Next step
You may harm yourself or someone else, or cannot stay safe	Contact local emergency services, urgent mental health care, or the nearest emergency department now.
Distress is ongoing, worsening, or disrupting daily life	Contact a healthcare professional and explain what you have been experiencing.
You need help getting through the current moment	Ask a trusted person to listen, stay with you, or help you contact a service.
You feel overwhelmed but are currently safe	Reduce stimulation and choose one small grounding or basic-care action.



How to Choose an Appropriate Source of Mental Health Support

Different situations call for different kinds of support. Use this guide to help you decide where to reach out.



SUPPORT OPTIONS FLOWCHART A quick visual reminder of when to use emergency, professional, or personal support.

i Keep this message ready

"I am having a difficult time with my mental health. I do not need you to fix it, but could you stay with me, listen, or help me find support?"

These coping ideas may help during a difficult period, but they do not diagnose a condition or replace professional treatment. Emergency and crisis resources vary by country.