

## DEVELOPING YOUR EMERGENCY SELF-CARE PLAN

### Why do I need one?

It is very hard to think of what to do for yourself when things get tough. It is best to **have a plan ready** for when you need it.

### What should be in it?

You need to address **3 areas**: what to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

### WHAT TO DO

#### 1. Make a list of what you can do when you are stressed or upset that will be good for you.

What will help me relax? For example:

- a) Breathing
- b) Muscle relaxation
- c) Music
- d) Reading for fun
- e) Exercise
- f) Talking a walk
- g) Watching a movie

#### What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood?

List all the things you like to do so you remember what they are when you need to think of something to do.

#### What can I do that will help me throughout the day?

- a) Avoid too much caffeine if feeling anxious
- b) Remember to breathe
- c) Watch my thoughts
- d) Avoid negative people
- e) Stay in the moment

#### Other

What else do YOU need to do that is specific to YOU?

#### 2. Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.

- a) Best friend, other friends, sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest etc.

- b) Divide the list of people into categories by asking yourself the following questions:
- Who can I call if I am feeling depressed or anxious?
  - Who can I call if I am lonely?
  - Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
  - Who will listen?
  - Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
  - Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?
  - Other

**3. Next, make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time.**

Example of negative self-talk:

- a) "I got a B- on my review; that proves that I shouldn't be in this role..."  
*CHANGE to:*  
"That is a good grade. I will work on getting a better one."
- b) "I do not understand this theory; I am so dumb."  
*CHANGE to:*  
"A lot of people are having a problem with this material. Maybe we could start a study group to help each other."
- c) "I can't get all this work done. I should just leave."  
*CHANGE to:*  
"I will develop a schedule so that I can get this all done." "I can check with other employees for ideas." "

You get it. Try to think about what you would say to a colleague with the same struggles and apply it to yourself.

**4. Next, make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time.**

**Examples of people to avoid:**

- a) My partner broke up with me. I will not call my sister as she always hated him. She'll be happy he's gone.
- b) I didn't get my job done on time and I'm worried about what will happen. I will not call my manager. He is a stickler for doing things in advance so that they are never late. He'll just give me a hard time.
- c) I am discouraged about my progress at work. I won't call my best friend because she'll just tell me not to worry about it and to quit the job if it's such a hassle.

- d) You get this too. Not everyone can be supportive or helpful with every situation. Go to the ones who can be supportive about the specific issue you are dealing with.

**Examples of things to avoid:**

- a) I should not stay in the house all day.
- b) I should not stay in bed all day.
- c) I should open the shades and let the light in.
- d) I should not listen to sad music.
- e) I should not drink too much alcohol.

**Other**

Again, you get it.

- 5. Write this plan on a 3x5 card. Keep it in your purse/wallet (and on your phone if you can). Look at it often. Add any good ideas to it whenever you can. USE IT!**