

# Developing an Emergency Self-Care Plan



## Why you should have an emergency self-care plan.

It's very hard to think of what to do when things get tough. But the best defense is having a plan ready for those times when you need it.

Consider these your guiding thoughts: What to *do*, what to *think*, and what to *avoid*.

We suggest writing this plan on a 3x5" card and keeping it in your purse/wallet ( and on your phone if you can) to have it readily available for suggestions.

Look at it often. Add more good ideas when you can. Make sure it's a list that works for you.

### 1. Make a list of what you can do when you are upset. Ask yourself:

- **What will help me relax?** Some examples include:
  - Breathing, muscle relaxation, or listening to music.
  - Reading for fun or watching a movie
  - Exercising or taking a walk
- **What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood?**
  - List all the things you like to do so you remember when you are struggling to find something to do.
- **What can I do that will help me throughout the day?**
  - Avoid too much caffeine if you're feeling anxious
  - Actively focus on breathing
  - Pay attention to where your thoughts wander
  - Stay present in the moment

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

- Examples include: your best friend, other friends, a sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.
- Then divide the list into categories asking:
  - Who can I call when I'm depressed or anxious?
  - Who can I call if I'm 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?

### 3. Make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time.

### 4. Make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time.