

What To Do When I Don't Feel Okay:

A Crisis Plan Developed for People with I/DD and Mental Health Support Needs

About this guide

This guide was written by Ren Koloni, an autistic self-advocate with mental health support needs who has experienced crisis.

Ren is a part of the team at [CommunicationFIRST](#), a partner of The Link Center.

To write this guide, Ren combined their lived experience with other resources for crisis support.

That means this guide isn't the result of research and shouldn't be taken as medical or legal advice.

For more information on resources for people with I/DD and mental health support needs, connect with The Link Center via email at thelinkcenter@nasddds.org.

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About this guide

This is a guide to help you when you aren't feeling okay in the future.

- ✓ You should fill out this guide when you are feeling well.

Later, when you don't feel okay, you can look back at this guide to help you figure out how to feel better.

- ✓ Every part of this guide is optional.

That means you don't have to fill it out if you don't want to.

Also, if you decide you want to include something that isn't written down here, do it!

This is a guide to help **you**.

If you think of something that might help you in the future, write it down!

- ✓ You can use it how you choose.

You can type into this guide, print it out and write on it, or use it as a guide to make an audio or a video recording.

You can fill it out by yourself, or you can complete it together with your supporters.

About me

My name is:	
My birthday is:	
I use these pronouns:	
I live in Town/City/County: State:	
Here's how I describe my disabilities:	
What does it look like when I am feeling okay?	
How do I know when I am doing well?	
What do I need to do every day to feel well?	
What do I need to do every day to feel well?	

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Who else can help me?

<h1>988</h1>	<p>988 is the number for the national lifeline. You can talk to them if you are having a hard time or if you are in crisis. They will try not to call the police. To reach 988, you can call, text, chat online, use a TTY service, or video call in ASL. Click here to talk to someone at 988.</p>
<h1>911</h1>	<p>911 is the number to reach emergency services. You should call 911 if you or someone else is badly hurt. If you call 911, you might go to the hospital. 911 might call the police.</p>
<h1>DIAL</h1>	<p>DIAL is a national disability information line. You can talk to them if you need help finding resources. To reach DIAL, you can call, text, chat online, use a TTY service, or video call in ASL. Click here to learn how to talk to someone at DIAL.</p>

My local crisis response team:

How to reach them:

To find your local crisis unit, search online for the name of your county and then “mobile crisis response.” These teams might also be called mobile crisis units, crisis intervention services, or community crisis services.

My History of Crisis

I have had a crisis before.	Yes or No
What kind of crisis?	<p>Circle all that apply:</p> <p>I wanted to hurt myself / I hurt myself on purpose</p> <p>I wanted to die / I tried to kill myself on purpose</p> <p>I wanted to go away or disappear / I tried to go away or disappear</p> <p>I wanted to hurt someone else / I hurt someone else on purpose</p> <p>I was manic</p> <p>I had hallucinations or delusions</p> <p>I had a meltdown / I had a shutdown</p> <p>I had burnout / I got more disabled / I “regressed”</p> <p>I couldn’t take care of myself like I usually do</p> <p>Something else:</p>
When did that happen?	
When I had a crisis, I . . .	<p>Circle all that apply:</p> <p>I hurt myself</p> <p>I hurt someone else</p> <p>I went to the hospital</p> <p>I stayed in an inpatient hospital</p> <p>I took medication</p> <p>I needed extra help taking care of myself</p> <p>I used drugs or alcohol in a way that wasn’t safe</p> <p>Something else:</p>
Triggers, or things that cause me to feel worse :	

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My Medical Information

I have these medical conditions:

Are any of my conditions triggered by stress or medication?

I have these allergies:

I take these medicines:

I use this medical equipment:

My Medical Information *(continued)*

I need help from someone else to... (Check all that apply)

- Stay clean
- Get dressed
- Use the bathroom
- Eat
- Make food
- Communicate
- Take medicine
- Keep my space clean
- Move around
- Leave my home

Things you should know about how I take medicines...

- I can't swallow pills
- I need to disguise the taste, by: _____
- I have a port or a PICC line

Other notes about how I take medicine:

Things you should know about the food I eat...

- I can't eat a certain kind of food: _____
- I can't eat with my mouth; I use this instead: _____
- I can always eat these safe foods even if I'm feeling bad: _____

Other notes about how I eat food:

My Medical Information *(continued)*

I use this assistive technology:

- Mobility aid
- Breathing aid
- High-tech AAC (speech generating device, app on my phone)
- Low-tech AAC (picture cards, letterboard)
- Other assistive technology I use:

Sensory experiences that make me feel good, calm, happy, or safe - these can help me calm down or feel better in unfamiliar places:

Sensory experiences that make me feel bad, upset, unsteady, or dysregulated - these will make things much worse:

Anything else people should know about my medical history and disabilities:

Step by Step

How do we know I'm not okay?

<p>Stage One: I don't feel great...</p> <p>I feel stressed out.</p> <p>I feel upset.</p> <p>I'm having feelings and I need to get them out.</p>	<p>Warning signs that I'm not feeling well:</p>	<p>Who can support me now:</p>	<p>Here is how I communicate best: <i>Let me talk</i> <i>Let me use my AAC:</i> <i>Yes/no questions</i> <i>Give me choices</i> <i>Tell me what to do</i> <i>Something else:</i></p>
<p>Stage Two: Distressed and dysregulated</p> <p>I feel like something's about to happen.</p> <p>I'm in my "rumble stage."</p> <p>Something's definitely wrong and I need help.</p>	<p>Signs that I'm distressed or about to have a crisis:</p>	<p>Who can support me now:</p>	<p>Here is how I communicate best: <i>Let me talk</i> <i>Let me use my AAC:</i> <i>Yes/no questions</i> <i>Give me choices</i> <i>Tell me what to do</i> <i>Something else:</i></p>

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<p>Stage Three: Crisis</p> <p>I need help now or someone is going to get hurt.</p> <p>I hurt myself already and need medical care.</p>	<p>Signs that I'm in crisis:</p>	<p>Who can support me now:</p>	<p>Here is how I communicate best:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Let me talk</i> ○ <i>Let me use my AAC:</i> ○ <i>Yes/no questions</i> ○ <i>Give me choices</i> ○ <i>Tell me what to do</i> ○ <i>Something else:</i>
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Notes:

Step by Step

What do I want to happen when I don't feel okay?

What helps me feel better?

<p>Stage One: I don't feel great...</p> <p>I feel stressed out.</p> <p>I feel upset.</p> <p>I'm having feelings and I need to get them out.</p>	<p>What helps me when I'm feeling stressed, upset, or uncomfortable?</p>
<p>Stage Two: Distressed and dysregulated</p> <p>I feel like something's about to happen.</p> <p>I'm in my "rumble stage."</p> <p>Something's definitely wrong and I need help.</p>	<p>What helps when I'm really upset, or feel like something's about to happen?</p>

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<p>Stage Three: Crisis</p> <p>I need help now or someone is going to get hurt.</p> <p>I hurt myself already and need medical care.</p>	<p>What helps me calm down when I'm in crisis?</p>
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Notes:

Step by Step

What do I NOT want to happen when I don't feel okay?

What makes me feel worse?

<p>Stage One:</p> <p>I don't feel great...</p> <p>I feel stressed out.</p> <p>I feel upset.</p> <p>I'm having feelings and I need to get them out.</p>	<p>What should people avoid doing when I'm feeling stressed? What makes my distress worse?</p>
<p>Stage Two:</p> <p>Distressed and dysregulated</p> <p>I feel like something's about to happen.</p> <p>I'm in my "rumble stage."</p> <p>Something's definitely wrong and I need help.</p>	<p>What should people avoid doing when I feel this way? What makes me more upset or more likely to have a crisis?</p>

<p>Stage Three: Crisis</p> <p>I need help now or someone is going to get hurt.</p> <p>I hurt myself already and need medical care.</p>	<p>What should people avoid when I'm in crisis? What makes me feel worse?</p>
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Notes:

Communicating when I'm not feeling okay

I use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) to communicate...

All the time / Sometimes / I can always use speech

I use these kinds of AAC:

Things that bring me joy

Things that are happier and better because I'm here (pets, friends, a garden):

Special interests or things that light me up inside:

Things I want to learn more about:

Things that make me laugh:

My favorite music:

My favorite foods:

Comfort items:

Getting through it

Are there basic body needs that you could meet to feel even 1% better?

Drinking water, eating a snack, going outside, taking a bath or shower, wiping down, changing clothes, getting a blanket, using a fan, stimming, taking deep breaths, going outside, stretching, listening to music, being in a dark place, etc?

What are things that will help me feel more comfortable in my body?

What are things that can help me pass the time when I am having a really bad moment?

Learning from my past

Last time I felt this bad, it helped me to...

A kind note to my future self: