

Distress Coping Plan

Step 0: I can use a number of strategies to decrease my risk of experiencing intense negative emotions, including:
Downloading the FREE VirtualHopeBox app - to have instant access to a variety of coping tools that I can use anywhere/ anytime. 2) Take medications daily; 3) Eat every 4 hours (at least something –fruit, granola bar); 4) Follow a Sleep Schedule: go to bed, get up at same time (no naps); 5) Get Active: Turn non-moving activity into active activity; Walk stairs/park far away/go around block/walk during commercials; 6) Avoid alcohol and substance use due to negative effects on mood

Step 1: Warning Signs: *What are my warning signs that would alert me that it is time to use my plan? What are the red flags I should look out for?*

- Situations:
- Thoughts:
- Emotions/Feelings:
- Physical Sensations:
- Behaviors:

Step 2: Internal Coping Strategies: *What are some things I can do to take my mind off my problems for a while?*

- A. Practice Relaxation:** Deep diaphragmatic breathing- Breathe in deeply through the nose, filling the belly with air for about 3-4 seconds, then exhale through the mouth for about 4-5 seconds. While deep breathing focus the mind on the breath. (Also, use VirtualHopeBox app “Relax Me” tools: controlled breathing, muscle relaxation, guided meditation).
- B. Practice grounding the senses to self-soothe:** To help alleviate distress, break up hurtful thoughts and feelings by focusing attention on pleasant sensory experiences that can be created in the present moment:

- Sight/Hear:
- Smell/Taste:
- Touch/Feel:
- Focus on pleasant: Look at pictures that remind of pleasant memories (use VirtualHopeBox App “Remind Me” section); Other:

Distract w/ activity: To get some distance from distressing thoughts and feelings, engage fully in an activity:

- Leisure:
- Finish one doable task (feel accomplished):
- Contribute:

Change body chemistry: When distress is very high, it is hard to think about what to do. Try to:

- Exercise to use up extra energy: Go for a brisk walk or run Do pushups, jumping jacks, sit-ups, etc. Lift weights Other:
- Use cold water to change body temperature and decrease distress: Use cold water to quickly calm the body and the mind:
 Submerge entire face in cold water in sink Put an ice pack around the nose and eyes
 Hold ice in hand and notice it melting Take a cold shower

Step 3a: People to provide distraction: *Who are some people I can contact to take my mind OFF of my problems (to distract me but not necessarily to discuss how I'm feeling)?*

Name

Phone Number

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

Step 3b: Settings to provide distraction: *What are some safe places I can go to take my mind OFF my problems and to be around other people during the daytime or late at night?*

Open but not 24 hours: Park Mall/store Coffee shop Gym Restaurant

Religious establishment Support group Other:

Open 24 hours: Grocery store Walmart Waffle House Other:

Step 4: People I can ask for help: *Who are the people that I can ask for help during a crisis (discuss how I am feeling)?*

Name

Phone Number

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____

Step 5: Professionals to contact for a crisis: *What professionals can I contact to ask for help during a crisis?*

Clinician Name(s) and #:

Crisis Text Line:

National Suicide Crisis Line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Emergency: 911

Psychiatric Emergency Services:

Other: _____

Step 6: Means Safety: *How can I make my home safe?* Because episodes of extreme distress are almost always brief, temporarily putting space between yourself and means of self-harm can save a life.

Note: A trusted person may include friend/family; sponsor; clergy; or even police

Firearm(s) present- Y/N?

Recommended:

Patient Agrees to:

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication(s) present- Y/N?

Recommended:

Patient Agrees to:

Alcohol Present- Y/N? It is difficult to regulate emotions and avoid acting on impulse under the influence of alcohol.

Recommended:

Patient Agrees to:

Other risk/hazards present- Y/N? _____

Recommended:

Patient Agrees to: