Treehouse Pediatrics

Safety Plan

If I am experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm, I will try each one of these coping skills:

Recognize the Warning Signs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Internal Coping Skills:

(Things I can do to take my mind off my problems without contacting someone else)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. Create intense sensations (e.g., cold/hot shower, ice cube trick, loud music, exercise)

Social Coping Skills:

(People and places that provide distraction)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

People I trust and feel supported by:

1. _____ Phone number: _____
2. _____ Phone number: _____
3. _____ Phone number: _____

Reason for Living:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I have tried each of my coping skills and they have not worked, or my thoughts are becoming too intense to manage, I can call any of the following:

1. **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** call or text 988
2. **Primary Care Physician:** Treehouse Pediatrics (512) 255-8868
3. **In an emergency, call 911!**

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Teen Suicide Prevention Resources

Who Can Talk	**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** Call or text 988 · Help is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
Numbers to Text	**Crisis Text Line** Text HOME to 741741 **Your Life Your Voice** Text VOICE to 20121
Virtual Chat	**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** 988lifeline.org/chat **Your Life Your Voice** www.yourlifeyourvoice.org
Websites to Visit	**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** 988lifeline.org **You Matter** youmatter.988lifeline.org **The Trevor Project** www.thetrevorproject.org

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Family Safety Plan

Warning signs to recognize:

- ☐ Feeling more tired than usual
- ☐ Withdrawing, avoiding interacting with others
- ☐ Not enjoying previously enjoyed activities
- ☐ Feeling sad/being tearful often
- ☐ Frequent negative thoughts
- ☐ Feeling worthless
- ☐ Feeling like you don't belong or that you are not connected to others
- ☐ Feeling like a burden on others
- ☐ Feeling hopeless/numb
- ☐ Demonstrating strong feelings of anger or rage
- ☐ Self-harm behaviors
- ☐ Talking about death and/or suicide
- ☐ Increase in alcohol and/or substance use
- ☐ Acting impulsive, reckless
- ☐ Other: _____

Safety Guidelines

- Continual monitoring by an adult
- Removing all access to weapons (e.g., guns, knives, cords, rope, razors)
- Secure all medications, only accessible by an adult
- If taking medication for chronic conditions, adult should monitor daily use
- Lock up/remove alcohol and illicit substances
- Lock up any poisonous cleaning supplies
- Lock doors and have proper seat belt restraints while driving

WHAT TO DO

- Show you care, ***gently and calmly***
  "I love you and I just want you to be safe"
- Validate the ***feelings***
  "I know this hurts"
  "That sounds really stressful"
- Be non-judgmental
  "I promise I won't get angry"
  Your child's safety is priority right now, not house rules.
- Suggest using the coping skills
  Be mindful that coming to you is one of them

DON'T

- Guilt trip
- Assign blame
- Threaten or make ultimatums
- Punish
- Lecture
- Ignore thoughts or comments
- Minimize it
- Become overly emotional
- Get angry
- Name call or criticize
- Say "stop thinking that" or "everything will be fine"
- Believe there is one quick fix...

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Validation

*Recognizing and affirming that your child's **feelings** are valid and worthwhile by showing understanding, acceptance, and support.*

It is difficult to see others, especially our children, suffering and experiencing feelings of hurt and sadness. It can be instinctual to want to help in those moments by trying to problem solve, correct their negative feelings and/or encourage them to change their perspective/outlook.

When someone is stuck in their negative thoughts and feelings, these efforts are not always helpful, despite your good intentions. In fact, they may even make someone feel worse for not being able to change their current outlook or feel like they can't even think their own thoughts correctly! It may also make them feel misunderstood and alone, shutting them down or making them defensive... **validation opens the line to future communication!!**

Ways to Validate

- Pay attention and LISTEN
- Reflect back on what is said
- Being sensitive to what is unsaid
- Express how what is being felt or said makes sense
- Show empathy & authenticity

What NOT to do

- Correct thoughts or feelings
- Give unsolicited advice
- Place blame
- Try to fix their feelings
- Make comparisons if you can't personally empathize

Examples of Validating Statements:

"That really stinks."

"I totally understand why you would think/feel that way."

"That sounds really exciting."

"That is so hard."

"You sound pretty mad."

"That is a tough thing to be going through."

Ask, **"Do you need me to listen or would you like my help?"**
This gives them the opportunity to express what would be most helpful for them. Respect their answer, which might mean accepting they don't want help right now...

Remember: You do NOT need to validate inappropriate behaviors but you can validate positive & negative thoughts and feelings. By validating your child you are letting them know that you hear them, you understand & that you will provide support no matter what they are experiencing.

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Crisis Units & Suicide Prevention Resources

In an emergency, call 911.

Who Can Help 24/7

Travis County Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT)
512-472-HELP (4357)
integralcare.org/program/mobile-crisis-outreach-team-mcot/

Williamson County Mobile Outreach Team (MOT)
512-864-8277
www.wilcotx.gov/ems

Williamson County Sheriff's Office Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
Non-emergency, after hours: 512-864-8282 (press 1, then 1) · Business hours: 512-943-1662
www.wilcotx.gov/692/Law-Enforcement-Bureau

Travis County Sheriff's Office Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
512-854-3430
www.tcsheriff.org/services/public-resources/mental-health

Austin Police Department Crisis Intervention Team
512-974-6200

Central Texas Crisis Intervention Teams
namicentraltx.org/crisis

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You Matter
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The Trevor Project
www.thetrevorproject.org

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When Your Child is Suicidal

Risk Level	Recommendations
Low Risk *Suicidal thoughts *No plan, preparations, intentions *No previous attempts	• Talk to your child calmly and validate their feelings. • Use the attached Safety Plan to discuss coping strategies to use when having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harm. • Review Safety Guidelines in the Family Safety Plan and consider closely monitoring your child and taking precautions to keep your home safe. • Reach out to your pediatrician to get connected with the Behavioral Health Team (BHT) to do formal safety planning and discuss recommendations for treatment.
Moderate Risk *Suicidal thoughts *Idea of how or method *No plan, preparations, intentions *Has had previous attempts	• Make an appointment with your pediatrician to discuss options for therapy services, pharmacological approaches and possible need for a psychiatry referral. Your pediatrician can connect you with the BHT to do formal safety planning and to discuss recommendations for treatment. • Talk to your child calmly and validate their feelings. • Use the attached Safety Plan to discuss coping strategies to use when having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harm. • Review Safety Guidelines in the Family Safety Plan. Closely monitor your child and take precautions to keep your home safe.
Severe Risk *Suicidal thoughts *Idea of how or method *Possible plan *Possible preparations with intentions *May have made previous attempts in the past month.	• Make an appointment with your pediatrician to discuss options for therapy services, pharmacological approaches and possible need for a psychiatry referral. Your pediatrician can connect you with the BHT to do formal safety planning and to discuss recommendations for treatment, which may include Partial Hospitalization or Intensive Outpatient Programs • Closely monitor your child and take precautions to keep your home safe, see Family Safety Plan. • If risk increases, go to the emergency department for a comprehensive assessment of safety or contact the Williamson/Travis County Mobile Outreach Team to come to your home to provide a safety assessment.
Extreme Risk *Suicidal thoughts *Idea of how or method *Has a plan *Has made preparations with intentions *May have made previous attempts in the past month.	• Go to the emergency department for a comprehensive assessment of safety or contact the Williamson/Travis County Mobile Outreach Team to come to your home to provide a safety assessment. • Confirm hospital staff will be contacting your pediatrician and sending discharge paperwork. • Anticipate consulting with your pediatrician or BHT consultant within 7 days of your child's discharge. • Closely monitor your child and take precautions to keep your home safe, see Family Safety Plan. • Likely next steps: Partial Hospitalization or Intensive Outpatient Programs (Resources to be provided if necessary).

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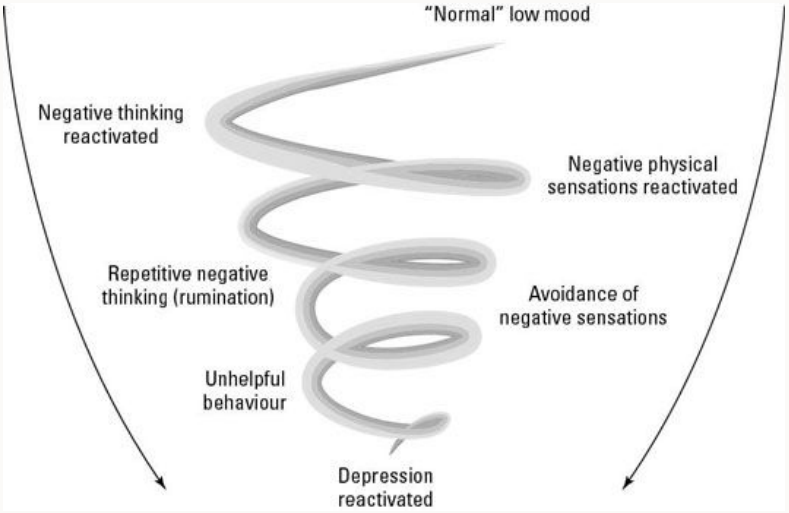
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Depression

We all get sad and down at times… the problem is when we are sad for long periods of time or when it impairs our ability to complete daily activities or function normally.

Thoughts	Feelings	Behaviors
Worthless or unlovable	Feeling sad or down	Change in sleep
Ruminate on negative thoughts	Feelings of hopelessness	Crying often
Being a burden on others	Irritability/easily upset	Loss of interest in activities
Not belonging anywhere	Fatigue, low to no energy	Avoidance
Difficulty focusing	Low motivation/apathy	Withdrawing or isolating
Difficulties with decisions	Boredom	Change in appetite
Thoughts of death or suicide	Physical aches and pains	Using alcohol/substances

Downward Spiral of Depression



Low mood (temperamental or resulting from a social/stressful situation) → starts negative thinking/interpretation of a situation → results in negative physical feelings or maladaptive behaviors → think about the negative thoughts/ interpretation over-and-over again (rumination) that make the negative feelings worse → avoid the negative thoughts and feelings resulting in maladaptive/unhelpful behaviors → exacerbating the low-lying depression to clinical depression

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Psychological Treatments for Depression

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

An evidence-based therapy founded on the idea that our thoughts and behaviors influence our feelings

Cognition:

1. Identify cognitive distortions or automatic negative thoughts
   - **Examples:** black and white thinking, fortune telling, negative labeling, "should"/"must," blaming self or others, mindreading
2. Employ cognitive restructuring techniques
   - **Examples:** what's the evidence supporting the thought? Will this matter in 10 years? What would you say to your best friend?

Behavior:

- **Behavioral Activation** - engaging in activities that increase opportunities to feel better (even slightly) and stop the cycle of inactivity that often makes feelings of depression worse *(see additional handout)*
  - Scheduling these activities will make it more likely to happen - use visuals and be creative (e.g., hard copy calendar, popsicle stick activities)

Help from parents...

- Moderate your expectations - if your child is truly depressed, getting them to move will be the hardest part
  - Strive for progress, not perfection
- Validate the emotions they are feeling! Just because you validate their emotion does NOT mean you are validating their behavior *(see additional handout)*
  - Ask: "do you want me to listen or help?"
  - **Examples:** "that sucks," "that sounds hard," "I would feel sad too"
- Practice daily gratitude and providing your child with regular affirmations *(see additional handout)*
- Provide regular, special time with one-on-one attention while limiting questions, commands, and criticisms
  - **Examples:** 5 minutes of daily special play time, scheduled parent-child dates

Keep your child's biological needs met to maintain emotional regularity by...

- Getting a good night's sleep
- Having regularly scheduled healthy meals
- Consuming adequate water
- Allowing times of fun and socialization with friends and family

Research has shown that CBT is as effective as medication with longer-lasting effects. However, medication can help those with severe depression or significant apathy/low motivation get started with psychotherapy... If you are interested in discussing medication options, please schedule an appointment with your pediatrician.

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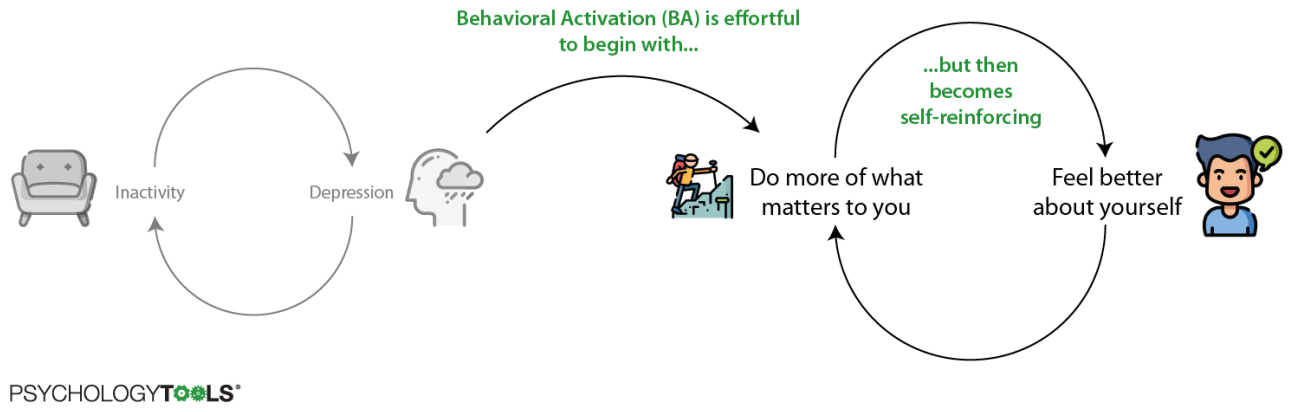
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Behavioral Activation

One of the most successful treatments for depression is behavioral activation!

Behavioral activation - activities that increase the opportunity for positive reinforcement

When we are feeling depressed we are not motivated to do anything. While being inactive may cause temporary relief, it triggers a cycle of inactivity that makes our depression worse! The goal of behavioral activation is to make efforts to stop the cycle of avoidance... doing even small activities gives us opportunities to feel good about ourselves & find pleasure!



Tips for getting started:

- Make a **LIST** of activities to get you started!!
  - Take a shower
  - Get dressed
  - Eat a healthy meal
  - Contribute to others
  - Take a walk
  - Talk with family member or friend
  - Partake in a hobby
  - Learn a new skill
  - Play a sport
  - Spend time with a pet
  - Change your scenery
- Set yourself up for **SUCCESS!**
  - Set small & realistic goals, schedule time during your day, and track them
    - Start wherever you need, like doing 1 activity a week or 1 activity a day
  - Write down the activities you do and how doing that activity made you feel. This is a great way to notice the relationship between our behaviors and feelings.
- Get your body **MOVING**
  - We may have to start from the outside and work inward... your mind may not be motivated, but when our body makes the effort, eventually our mind catches up!
- **REWARD** yourself!!!
  - It's hard work to get motivated when we feel depressed, so make sure you are rewarding yourself for your efforts, even the small stuff... TREAT YOURSELF!

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More Behavioral Activation Activities

- Walking the dog
- Drawing or painting
- Organizing the closet
- Meeting a friend at the park
- Cooking
- Cleaning your room
- Making a collage or craft
- Creative writing
- Going for a jog
- Joining a sports team
- Playing outside
- Skateboarding
- Riding your bike
- Dancing
- Singing
- Doing a workout
- Trying on outfits
- Volunteering
- Going swimming
- Playing a game
- Window shopping
- Doing a DIY project

Positive Behavioral Activation Activities

What are some activities you would be interested in doing? How rewarding do you think that activity would be on a scale from 1 - 10 (1 being not so rewarding, 10 being very rewarding).

Example: Singing along to my favorite song 8

Rating (1-10)

1) _____ _____

2) _____ _____

3) _____ _____

4) _____ _____

5) _____ _____

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Behavioral Activation Schedule

Making a schedule of activities to engage in that make you feel good or provide pleasure can help you track your goals and learn what activities are the most helpful toward your progress. When you feel unmotivated it can be hard to make big changes, so remember, it is ok to start small. **Realistic, achievable goals lead to success!**

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Example	*Take a shower*	*Practice guitar for 15 minutes*	*Walk the dog*
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

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