

Parent Talk

SEPTEMBER 2026

Safety Planning for Kids & Teens

As caregivers, you never want to think that your child may be thinking about or actually engaging in self-harm or other risky behaviors due to depression, anxiety, trauma, or another mental health condition. However, it can be helpful to pre-plan in the event of a crisis, even if that crisis doesn't come to pass. Below, we provide some information on how you prepare a safety plan and the steps you can take to make sure your child gets the support they need.

What Is A Safety Plan?

A safety plan is a collection of various resources, supports, and steps you and your child can use to ensure safety during difficult times. Safety planning typically starts as just an open and honest conversation about thoughts of suicide and self-harm. This can be between a child and caregiver, or a child and a therapist.

Why Might Kids & Teens Need A Safety Plan?

Kids may need a safety plan if they are experiencing intense feelings of depression, anxiety, or another mental health condition that causes them to have suicidal thoughts. Some kids may already have begun to self-harm and some may just be thinking about it. This can include them physically harming themselves or be something less obvious like heavy substance use or other risky behavior. A safety plan acts as a support for these kids, ensuring that they have someone to go to when they feel these thoughts coming on.

What Does An Effective Safety Plan Look Like?

A good safety plan should include the following:

Personal warning signs

These can be specific indicators that your child may be in distress or on the cusp of a mental health crisis. Identifying these early can help preemptively prevent an issue down the line.

Coping skills

Work with your child to figure out what they can do to make themselves feel better when depression or anxiety hits. Think about the things that bring them joy or provide calm and peace and make a list of these things.

Affirming spaces

Bring together a support system of loved ones including family members, friends, or teachers. Also think about spaces or things your child may consider safe. This can include hobbies or activities your child enjoys.

Resource lists

Lean on professional supports such as therapists and school counselors, as well as crisis resources like suicide prevention hotlines or online support forums.

If you or your child needs immediate help, please contact 911, visit your nearest emergency room, or reach out to the following lifelines:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-888-628-9454

Crisis Textline

Text HOME to 741741

NAMI HelpLine

1-800-950-6264

Need more help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away



Therapy & Treatment Services

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →



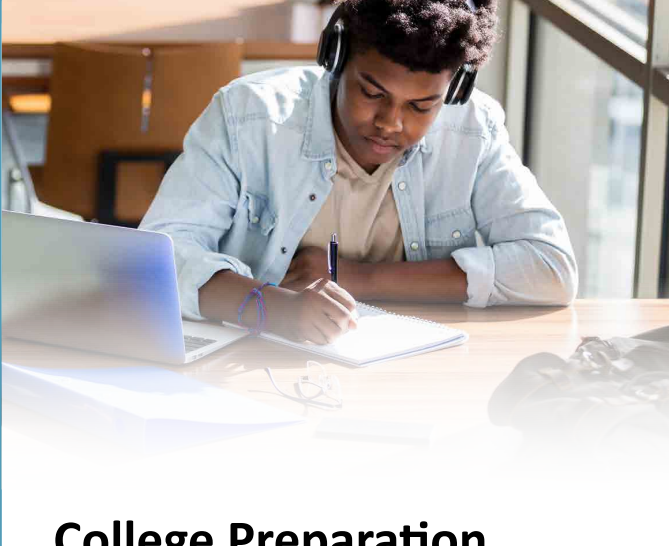
Special Education

MANVILLE SCHOOL →



Therapeutic Summer Camp

CAMP BAKER →



College Preparation

NEXT STEP →

Featured Resources



Safety Planning For Your High Risk Or Depressed Teen

In this seminar, we will discuss teenage depression, how to assess treatment for and manage the risk of self-harm and suicidal ideation, and how to proactively plan for your child's safety when they're struggling with mental health.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Safety Planning with Your Child or Teen

It's incredibly difficult to know what the right thing to do is when you have a child or a teen who is experiencing depression. It can be hard to talk openly about scary topics like self-harm and suicide, and caregivers often wonder if mentioning them is the appropriate thing to do at all.

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Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation Explained

A common mental health myth is that only adults and older adolescents can be depressed. In fact, kids and younger teens may experience depression too. In 2018-2019, 15% of adolescents reported experiencing a major depressive episode and 37% reported experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

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