



Los Angeles County DMH, Continuum of Care Reform Division

Trauma/Resilience Tip of the Week: Safety Planning

After a trauma, a person's sense of safety and security is shaken which may result in feelings of anxiety and fear. One step in restoring and rebuilding safety and security is to create a safety plan. A safety plan is designed to keep a person safe when they are suddenly confronted with a difficult situation or crisis. Although not all traumas or disasters are avoidable, by planning ahead an individual can develop a greater sense of mastery and safety.



1. Think Ahead

Identify potential triggers and how these can be avoided. If they cannot be avoided, identify several methods of coping with them. Common external triggers include: Seeing people, places, or television shows which are reminders of the trauma: anniversaries, holidays, smells (ie: smell of a hospital), seeing an accident.

2. Create a List of Emergency Numbers

Make a list of supportive people to call if support is needed. Identify multiple people, should the first person you call is not available. Program these numbers into your phone, in addition to writing and placing them in an easy to access location.

3. Make Sure You Have Your Medication With You

Make sure to have prescribed medication readily available.

4. Identify Ways of Coping

Create "coping cards"; use index cards and write down, step-by-step, what is needed to for a particular coping strategy (i.e. deep breathing or grounding); use as needed. Phone apps are also available which can help prepare for crises.

5. Identify Early Warning Signs

Learn to recognize warning signs, these may include changes in: thinking, mood, behavior.

6. Enlist The Help Of Others

When going to a location where triggers might be present, have someone you trust make contact several times throughout the day to check-in if support is needed.