



Lorain County Safe Harbor

a collaborative community effort to provide a responsive system of care for victims while also raising awareness about domestic violence

Emotional Safety Plan

Healing from trauma takes time. It is normal for negative thoughts, emotions, flashbacks, nightmares, and other feelings to surface throughout the healing process. There is no time limit to healing; you may experience these feelings immediately, months down the road, or even years later. Sometimes they can come back even if you haven't experienced them for a while. This return can make it feel like nothing has changed, and when we start thinking this way it is helpful to remember healing is cyclical. Each time we revisit these feelings we can learn more about ourselves. You are experiencing common reactions to abnormal circumstances. It is important to recognize the strengths and skills you already have or are working to build.

WORKSHEET INSIDE

Emotional Safety Plan Worksheet

Creating an emotional safety plan can help remind you or teach you how to take care of yourself. Healing from trauma takes time. It is normal for negative thoughts, emotions, flashbacks, nightmares, and other feelings to surface throughout the healing process. There is no time limit to healing; you may experience these feelings immediately, months down the road, or even years later. Sometimes they can come back even if you haven't experienced them for a while. This return can make it feel like nothing has changed, and when we start thinking this way it is helpful to remember healing is cyclical. Each time we revisit these feelings we can learn more about ourselves. You are experiencing common reactions to abnormal circumstances. It is important to recognize the strengths and skills you already have or are working to build. **You do not need to answer every question; just answer the ones that are useful to you.**

1. Ask yourself: "When I'm not okay, what happens to my thinking? My body? My senses?"

a. Some reactions are:

b. Does my body give me any warning signs before negative experiences surface?

c. Some triggers that increase trauma reactions are:

2. Try to create a feeling of safety and tranquility where you are. Grounding techniques often use senses (focusing on things you can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell) to bring us back to the present.

a. Some things I can do to ground myself and bring myself back to the present when I'm experiencing trauma are:

b. Some things I can do by myself to make me feel safe are:

c. Some things I can do to make me feel safe while I'm in public or other social spaces are:



d. Some things I can do to take care of myself and make me feel safe while I'm in the presence of people who have harmed me are:

e. Some things I can do to make me feel safe when I've been forced to isolate are:

3. Healing from trauma can take a toll on your body. It is important to take care of your body and your mind.

a. Activities I can do to rest are:

b. Activities I can do to connect with my body are:

c. Activities I can do to help me process my emotions are:

d. Activities I can do to move my body are:

4. Having negative and/or painful feelings about yourself or your experience is common. It can be hard to remember that what happened is not your fault. The things we read, watch, and hear can also have an impact on our wellbeing. Remember: You are strong, you are brave, you are resilient.

a. Some social media accounts that make me feel good are:

b. Some shows and movies that uplift me are:

c. Some podcasts, books, and magazines that make me feel good are:

d. If I'm feeling bad about myself, some things I can do to help me remember how strong I am are:



e. People and spaces (at home, outside of home, or digital) that uplift me are:

5. Setting boundaries can help me communicate how I want to be treated. I have a right to set and maintain boundaries with myself and others.

a. Some boundaries I can set for myself (including negative self-talk, values/beliefs, interactions with social media, etc) are:

b. Some emotional boundaries I can set for my interactions with others are:

c. Some physical boundaries I can set for my interactions with others are:

6. Coping strategies are the behaviors, thoughts, and emotions we use to help us manage and reduce stress. Some coping skills are active (addressing the stress), while others are avoidant (trying to ignore the issue for a while). Coping strategies can be healthy or unhealthy, and can include things like sleeping, seeking support, problem-solving, distraction (sometimes with substance use), humor, exercise, self-blame, relaxation, meditation, venting, isolating, and countless others.

a. Some coping strategies that help me manage stress are:

b. Some coping strategies that help me relax are:

c. If I feel the urge to drink to the point of black out, instead I will:

d. If I am having thoughts of hurting myself, I will:



7. It can help to talk about your thoughts, emotions, and reactions with people you trust and feel safe with. (Note: If you are concerned about an abuser finding this information, do not print it out or make it accessible to them. Other options include: memorizing the number(s); adding the number(s) to your phone with a safe name; or giving the number(s) to a safe person you have access to.)
- a. A trusted person I can talk with is: _____
 - i. Their number is: _____
 - b. If that person is unavailable, I can talk with: _____
 - i. Their number is: _____
8. The advocates at the Women and Gender Advocacy Center are available to help you with your safety plans. It can be helpful to talk to someone about what you are experiencing. If you are interested in connecting with an advocate one on one, call the VAT hotline (available 24/7) or email us at wgac@colostate.edu to set up a time to chat via phone or confidential video chat.
- a. The Women and Gender Advocacy Center (WGAC) is a confidential resource.
 - i. The 24/7 Victim Assistance Team (VAT) line is: 970-492-4242
 - ii. The WGAC email is: wgac@colostate.edu
 - b. There are lots of helplines with advocates to talk to.
 - i. The RAINN sexual assault hotline number is: 800-656-4673
 - ii. The National Domestic Violence Hotline number is: 800-799-7233
 - iii. Other helpline numbers that I find helpful are: _____

