



# Wellness Today

For Parents & Families

## Making a Safety Plan

A safety plan for mental health is a list of coping strategies and people who can help. Safety plans are meant to help people safely through a crisis, such as when they feel suicidal, depressed, or overwhelmed.

### How to Make a Safety Plan:

- Think of times the plan would be used, such as after recognizing certain triggers or warning signs.
- Create a list of things that bring happiness or comfort.
- Make a list of things or people that make life worth living.
- Compile a list of people, complete with their contact information, who would be helpful to talk to during a time of crisis.
- Include numbers for national hotlines, local crisis numbers, or other ways to reach professional help.
- Plan how to make an environment safe during a crisis.

An example of a safety plan can be found [here](#). Consider sitting down with your children and helping them make their own safety plan.

## How to Make Goals to Improve Mental Health

Do your children feel depressed but want to feel happier, feel anxious but want to manage anxiety, or feel like they are worthless but want to feel confident?

For these and other mental health struggles, goal-setting is often an effective way to improve mental health.

### Benefits of Setting Goals:

- Accomplishing goals gives the brain a **boost of dopamine**, a “feel good” transmitter. In this way, goal setting can make someone feel happier. This is why many people make to-do lists; they feel happy each time they cross something off their list.
- **Performance is improved** as your children are supported, challenged, rewarded, and given feedback in their goal setting.
- Setting goals gives your children **valuable experiences and skills**, such as resilience, self-esteem, and independence, all of which contribute to healthy mental health.

While setting goals is great, there are some tips to consider to make sure the goals aren't actually detrimental to your children's mental health.

### Goal-Setting Tips:

- **Leave room for change.** Not reaching a goal can cause low self-esteem. Let your children know it's okay for them to reassess and update their goals often and make changes as necessary to help them meet their goals.
- **Make S.M.A.R.T. goals.** To avoid goals that are too hard to reach or end up causing more depression and anxiety, teach your children how to make goals that are **specific, measurable** (not vague), **achievable, relevant** (they actually want to do it), and **time-bound**.
- **Find support.** Check on their progress. Encourage them to share their goals with others, and praise their effort.

Whether or not your children struggle with their mental health, goal-setting can be a healthy way to improve and grow, and it's a great way to kick off the new year.