

# Teens Coping Guide

Strength, Calm, and Clarity for Hard Days



# **WELCOME MESSAGE**

Life can feel overwhelming—especially after stress, loss, change, or disaster. This guide is your space to breathe, understand your emotions, and build real tools to help you stay steady. You don't need to be perfect. You just need skills that help you take things one moment at a time.

Bahali is here to remind you:

Your feelings make sense, your story matters, and you are stronger than you think.

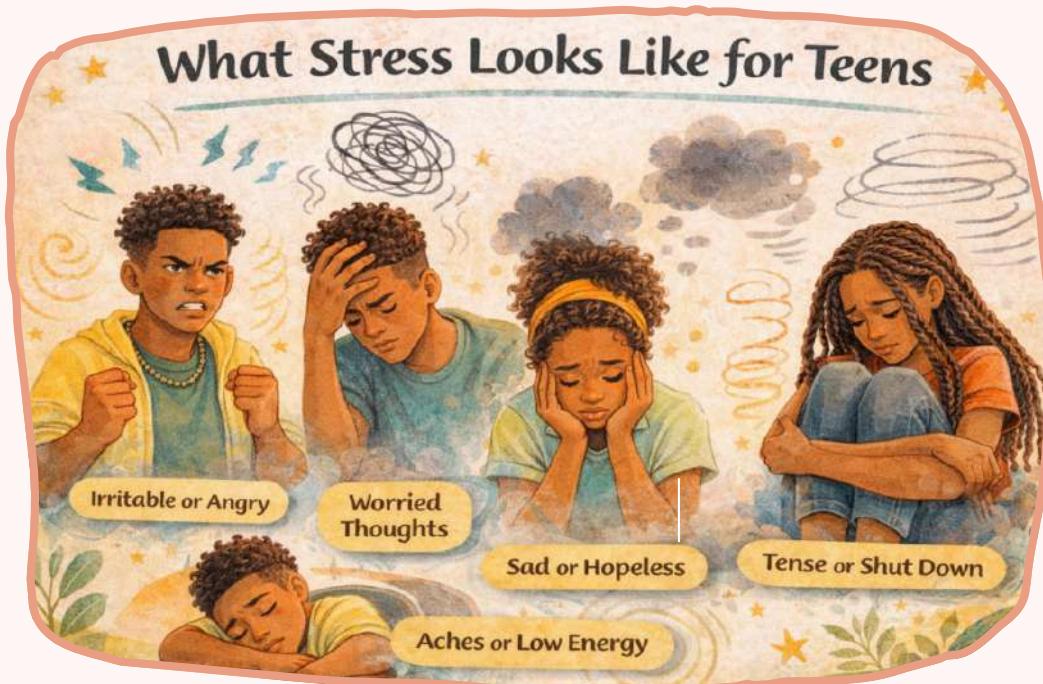
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01

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR STRESS



## WHAT STRESS LOOKS LIKE FOR TEENS

- Feeling tired even after sleep
- Headaches, stomach knots, chest tightness
- Trouble focusing or remembering things
- Feeling easily annoyed or overwhelmed
- Pulling away from people
- Losing interest in things you usually enjoy

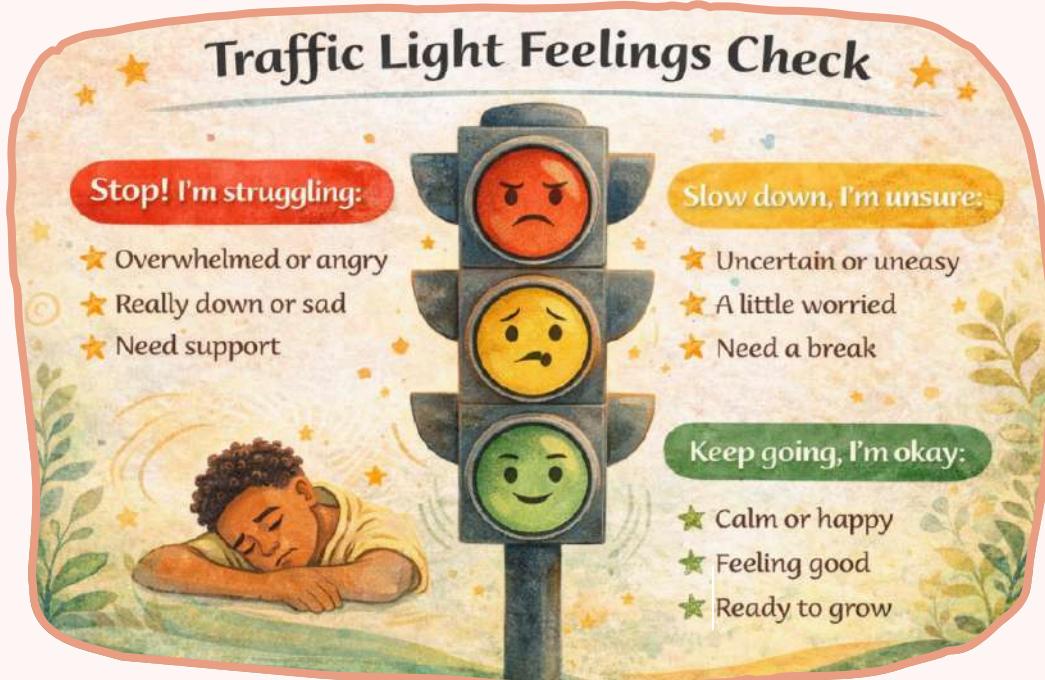
## COMMON STRESS SOURCES

- Social pressure
- School demands
- Family conflict
- Loss, trauma, or big life changes
- Natural disasters
- Future worries
- Feeling misunderstood or alone

# 02

## EMOTIONAL CHECK-IN

**Traffic Light Feelings Check**



**Stop! I'm struggling:**

- ★ Overwhelmed or angry
- ★ Really down or sad
- ★ Need support

**Slow down, I'm unsure:**

- ★ Uncertain or uneasy
- ★ A little worried
- ★ Need a break

**Keep going, I'm okay:**

- ★ Calm or happy
- ★ Feeling good
- ★ Ready to grow

## THE “TRAFFIC LIGHT FEELINGS CHECK”



### Red – STOP

Overwhelmed, angry, panicky, shut down



### Yellow – SLOW DOWN

Stressed, uncertain, irritated, confused



### Green – GO

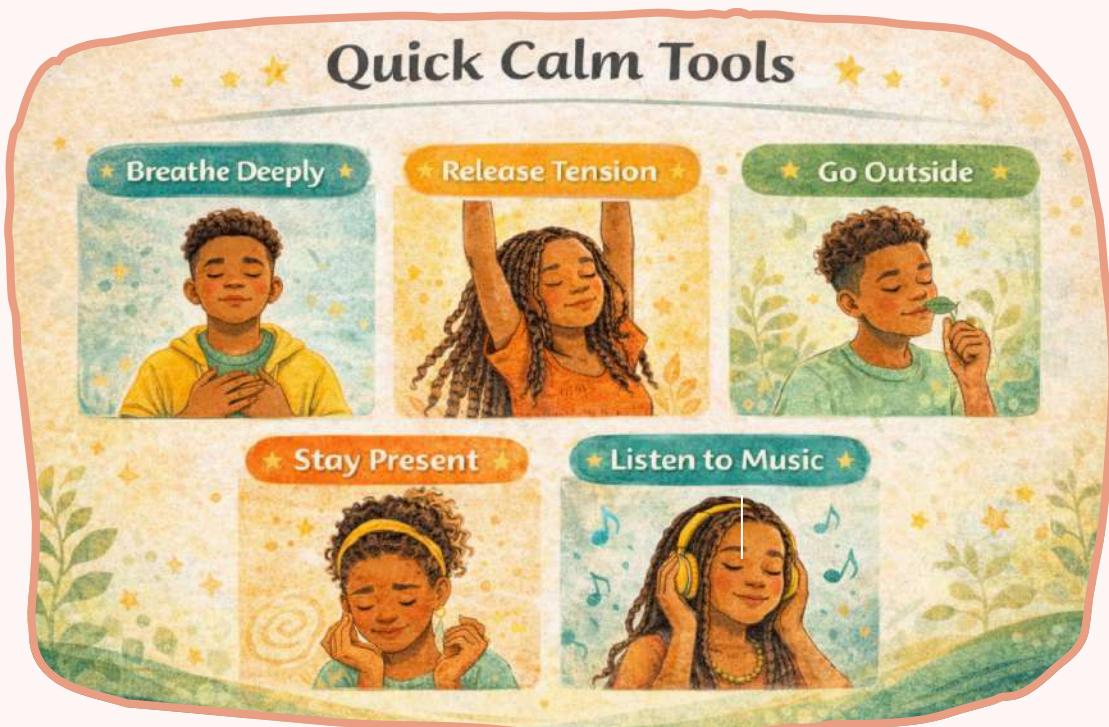
Calm, steady, focused, grounded

**Where are you right now?**

Write or circle: **Red | Yellow | Green**

03

# QUICK CALM TOOLS



## 5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING

Name:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste or are grateful for



This is great for panic or racing thoughts.

## 60-SECOND BREATH RESET

- Inhale for 3
- Hold for 1
- Exhale for 4
- Repeat 4–6 times.

## UNCLENCH & RESET

Release:

- Jaw
- Shoulders
- Hands
- Stomach

Say quietly to yourself:  
**“It’s okay for me to soften.”**

## TENSION RELEASE STRETCH

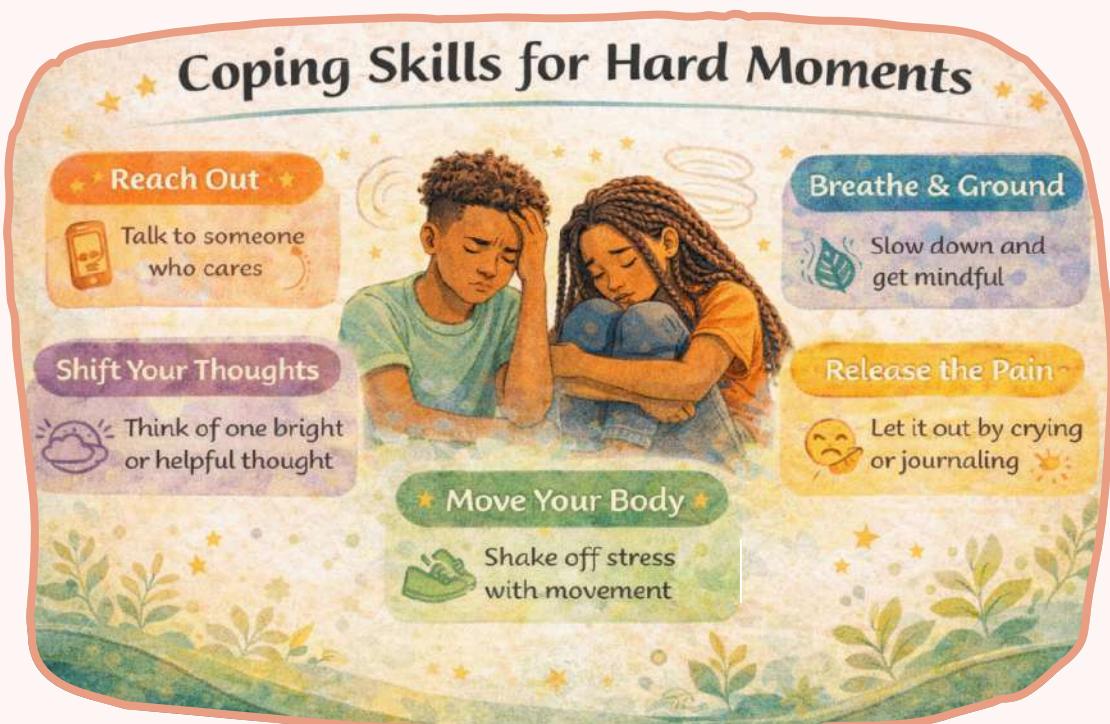
Reach arms up like a big yawn.  
Stretch fingers wide.  
Relax everything down on the exhale.

## THE “NAME IT TO TAME IT” SKILL

Say out loud or write:  
“I’m feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”  
This helps your brain calm down and organize the feeling.

# 04

# COPING SKILLS FOR HARD MOMENTS



## WHEN YOU FEEL ANGRY

- Step away for 2 minutes
- Splash cold water on your face
- Punch a pillow or run in place
- Write an angry letter and tear it up
- Use “I feel...” instead of “You never...”

## WHEN YOU FEEL SAD

- Listen to soft music
- Talk to someone safe
- Wrap in a blanket and breathe slowly
- Sit outside and feel the air on your skin
- Do something small that brings comfort (tea, shower, journal)

## WHEN YOU FEEL ANXIOUS

- Box breathing: count to 4 in your head as you breathe in, hold for a count of 4, and breathe out as you count to 4
- Hold something cold such as a piece of ice or cold bottle
- Ground your feet: stand firmly and push your feet into the floor. Notice how your feet make contact with the ground.
- Write 3 things you can control today

## WHEN YOU FEEL LONELY

- Call or text someone
- Go to a public space where you can see other or just sit quietly in the quiet space as you observe others.
- Remind yourself: "I'm not a burden."
- Do something kind for someone else
- Join a group, class, club, or faith-based activity

# 05

# HEALTHY THINKING

## Healthy Thinking

Slow Down

Take a deep breath



Look for Positives

Notice what's going well



Problem-Solve

Find ways to handle it



Check the Facts

Make sure it's true



Be Kind to Yourself

Use gentle self-talk

## CATCH THE THOUGHT

“What am I telling myself right now?”

## CHALLENGE THE THOUGHT

- Is this 100% true?
- Is this the worst-case scenario?
- What would I tell a friend if they felt this way?
- Is there another way to see it?

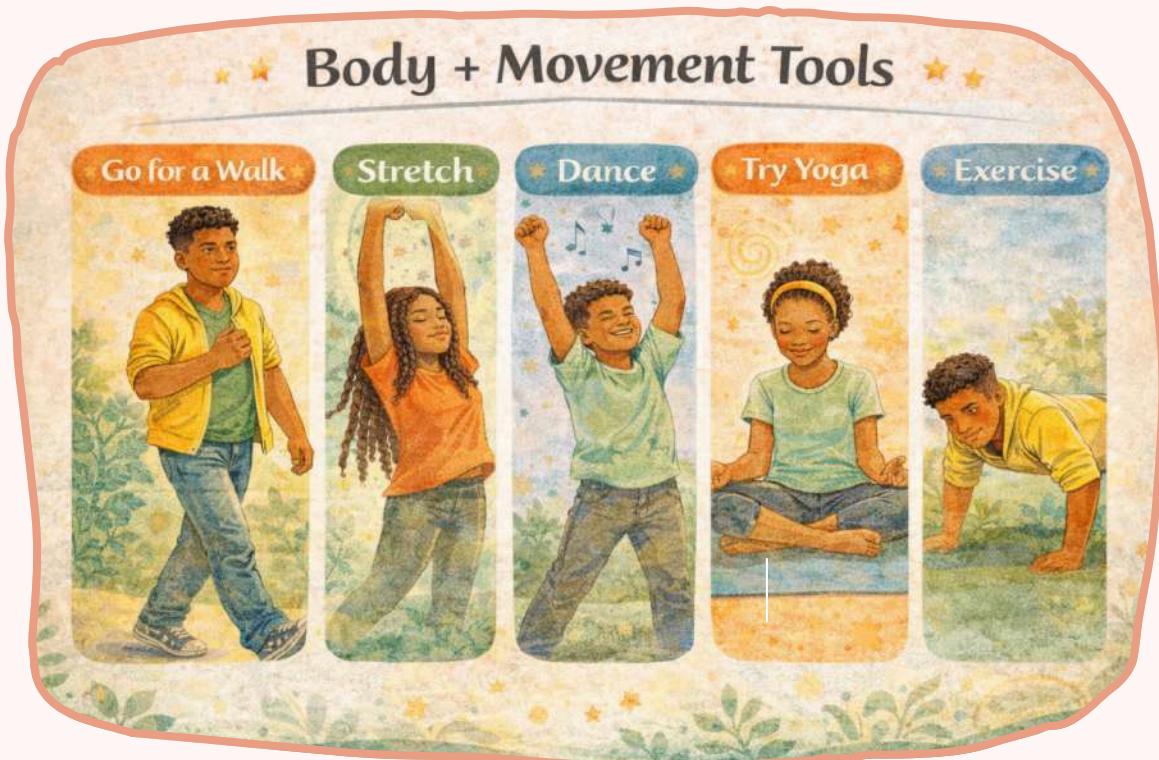
## REPLACE THE THOUGHT

Examples:

- You can replace the thought “I can’t handle this” with “I can take this one step at a time.”
- You can replace the thought “Everybody is judging me” with “Most people are focused on themselves.”
- You can replace the thought “I always mess up” with “I’ve gotten through hard things before.”

# 06

# BODY + MOVEMENT TOOLS



## TEENS REGULATE EMOTIONS THROUGH MOVEMENT MORE THAN THEY REALIZE.

Try:

- Slow walking
- Dancing in your room
- Jumping jacks
- Yoga stretch
- Rocking side to side
- Lying flat with hand on stomach and slow breathing

# 07

# SOCIAL COPING



## PEOPLE WHO FILL YOUR CUP

Write 3 names of people who make you feel safe or grounded.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPORT SCRIPT

When you don't know what to say, try:

"Hey, I'm stressed and don't want to deal with this alone. Can we talk for a few minutes?"

# 08

# DIGITAL + SOCIAL MEDIA BOUNDARIES

## Digital + Social Media Boundaries

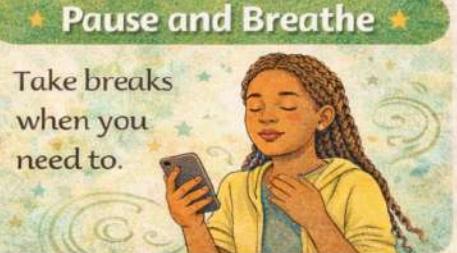
**Limit Time**

Set phone-free hours



**Pause and Breathe**

Take breaks when you need to.



**Protect Your Energy**

Mute + block negativity.



**Think Before Posting**

Consider how it might affect others.



## "Setting Boundaries That Support Your Wellbeing

### PROTECT YOUR PEACE

- Mute or unfollow accounts that make you feel stressed, compared, judged, or less than.
- Follow pages that inspire you, teach you, or make you laugh in a healthy way.

### SET TIME LIMITS THAT FEEL GOOD

- Take short “phone breaks” during homework, family time, or before bed.
- Try: **20 minutes on → 10 minutes off, or scroll only after responsibilities.**

### PAUSE BEFORE YOU POST

Ask yourself:

- *Does this represent the real me?*
- *Will this cause drama later?*
- *Will this make me feel anxious if people don't react the way I hoped?*

If the answer is “yes” to any of these, wait before posting.

## NOTICE HOW SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES YOU FEEL

- If you feel anxious, jealous, down, or overwhelmed after scrolling... take a break.
- Pay attention to what your body is telling you.

## DON'T COMPARE YOUR REAL LIFE TO SOMEONE'S HIGHLIGHTS

- People post their best moments, not their struggles.
- Remind yourself: "*I'm seeing a curated version, not the whole story.*"

## SET PRIVACY BOUNDARIES

- Keep location off.
- Don't share personal details in public spaces online.
- Only add people you actually know and trust.

## PROTECT YOUR ENERGY

- Pause messages from people who drain you.
- Turn off read receipts if they create pressure.
- Limit access to anyone who disrespects your boundaries.

09

# SLEEP + REST RESET



## "Simple Habits to Help Your Body Reset"

### **WIND DOWN SLOWLY**

Dim lights, play soft music, stretch, or take a warm shower.

### **PUT YOUR PHONE AWAY BEFORE BED**

Try 20 minutes of no scrolling. Use "Do Not Disturb."

### **BREATHE TO CALM YOUR BODY**

Inhale 4 • Hold 1 • Exhale 6 – repeat a few times.

### **MAKE YOUR SPACE COZY**

Cool room, soft blanket, low light, clean sheets.

### **AVOID STIMULATION LATE AT NIGHT**

Pause intense games, scary shows, heavy studying.

## WRITE OUT YOUR WORRIES

Do a quick “mind dump” so your brain isn’t holding everything.

## USE CALM SOUNDS ONLY

Instrumental, rain, or ocean sounds – avoid lyrics.

## TAKE MINI BREAKS DURING THE DAY

Stretch, step outside, or breathe slowly for 1–2 minutes.

## KEEP A GENTLE BEDTIME WINDOW

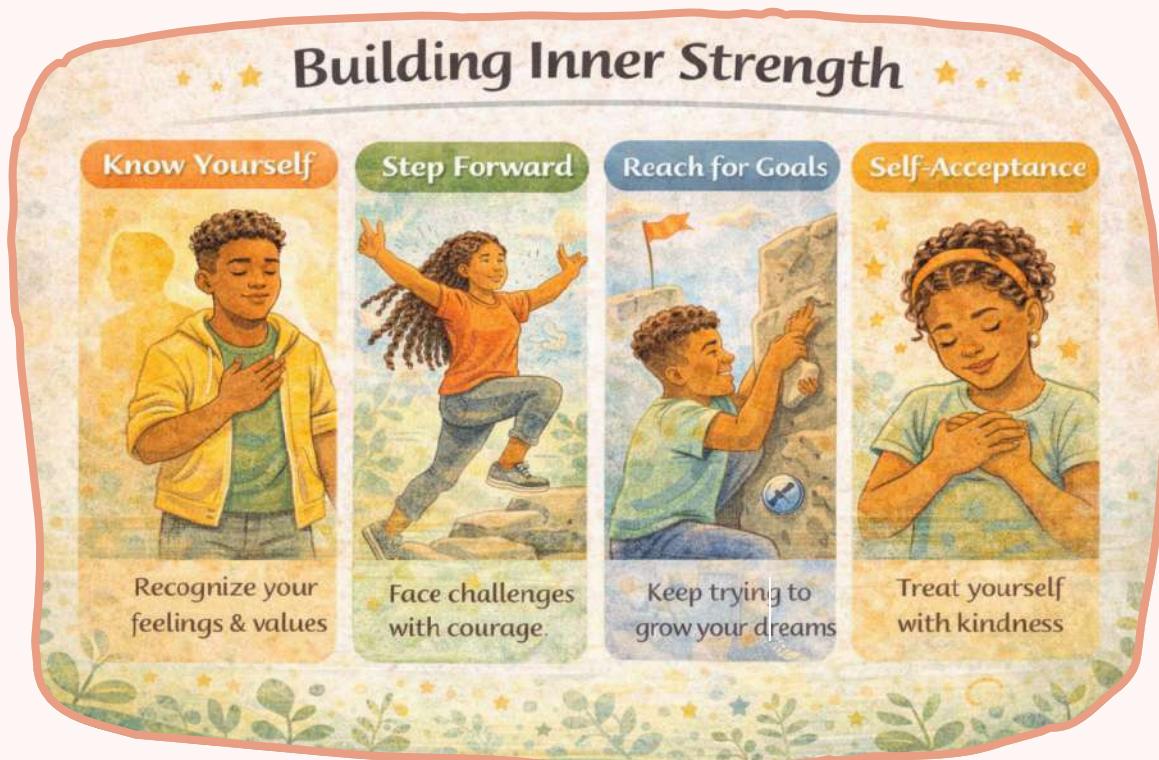
Aim for a range, like 9:30–10:30 PM.

## BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Some nights are hard – rest comes easier when you don’t stress it.

10

# BUILDING INNER STRENGTH



## YOUR PERSONAL STRENGTHS LIST

Circle or write yours:

- Caring
- Creative
- Responsible
- Brave
- Loyal
- Hard-working
- Honest
- Determined
- Kind
- Wise
- Funny
- Resilient

Add your own:

# 11

# GOAL SETTING FOR TEENS

★★★ Goal Setting for Teens ★★★

Dream	Decide	Plan Small	Stay Focused	Be Proud
Think about what you want	Pick a goal to work toward	Break tasks into smaller actions.	Follow your plan, step by step	Celebrate your progress

## USE SMALL, CLEAR GOALS:

**Today I will:**

---

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**This week I will:**

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**I want to get better at:**

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# 12

## WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP

When to Ask for Help

Too Hard to Cope	Big Changes or Loss	Feeling Low Most Days	Increased Anger	Unsafe Thoughts
You're overwhelmed	Something big has happened	You're often sad or numb	You're irritable or mad a lot	You're not safe with yourself
				

It's okay to reach out when you need support.

## WHEN FEELINGS FEEL TOO BIG

Crying often, feeling overwhelmed, or emotions that won't settle.

## WHEN STRESS AFFECTS SLEEP OR SCHOOL

Trouble focusing, falling behind, or not being able to rest.

## WHEN YOU PULL AWAY FROM PEOPLE

Losing interest in friends, activities, or wanting to be alone all the time.

## WHEN YOUR THOUGHTS WON'T SLOW DOWN

Worry loops, fear, overthinking, or thoughts that feel heavy.

## WHEN YOUR BODY SHOWS SIGNS OF STRESS

Pause intense games, scary shows, heavy studying.

## WHEN YOU FEEL NUMB OR DISCONNECTED

Feeling empty, checked out, or not yourself.

## WHEN CONFLICT FEELS TOO HEAVY

Pressure, arguments, or stress at home, school, or in friendships.

## WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE

Any situation that makes you scared, uncomfortable, or unsure.

## WHEN ONLINE LIFE FEELS OVERWHELMING

Drama, comparison, cyberbullying, or pressure from social media.

## WHEN YOU HAVE THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM

Any thought about hurting yourself or wishing you weren't here means you should reach out **right away**.

## WHEN YOUR GUT SAYS SOMETHING IS WRONG

You don't need a "big reason." Your feelings are enough.

# 13

# CRISIS SAFETY PLAN

\*\*\*\*\* Crisis Safety Plan \*\*\*\*\*

Feelings	Coping Steps	Safe Supports	Emergency Help
When things feel like too much...	Ways I can calm myself down...	People I can reach out to...	Where to go or call for immediate help...
			
When things feel like too much...	Ways I can calm myself down...	People I can reach out to...	Where to go or call for immediate help...

### MY WARNING SIGNS:

### WHAT HELPS CALM ME:

### PEOPLE I CAN CALL:

1.

2.

3.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS:

*Add your local crisis, family doctor, pastor, or hotline.*

14

# ENCOURAGING MESSAGE TO CLOSE

You're Worthy of Support and Care! ★★

- ★ You don't have to go through tough times alone.  
Asking for help is a sign of strength.



You are not your hardest moments.

You are not your mistakes.

You are not alone.

You deserve peace, support, and space to grow.

Bahali is here to walk with you—one skill, one day, one breath at a time.

## Feelings Chart for Teens



Happy



Sad



Angry



Calm



Worried



Excited



Tired



Confident



Lonely



Guilty



Scared



Proud

# GROUNDING PRACTICE

**Help Yourself Feel Calm in the Moment**

**Stop, remind yourself, “I’m right here and I’m safe in this moment”**



**I CAN NAME 5 THINGS I SEE:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**I CAN NAME 4 THINGS I CAN TOUCH:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



### I CAN NAME 3 THINGS I CAN HEAR:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



### I CAN NAME 2 THINGS I CAN SMELL OR I AM GRATEFUL FOR TODAY:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Review:** Did this practice help me feel calmer?



Not much

2

3

4

Yes, a lot

Do I need anything else now?

# MY CALM PLAN

Take Note of What Helps you Feel Steady



## MY CALM ACTIVITIES

Little things that help me find some peace:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## PEOPLE WHO HELP ME FEEL SAFE

People I can call or reach out to when I need support:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## WORDS THAT HELP ME COPE

Uplifting words I can say to myself:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## GROUNDING MOVES

Physical actions that help me feel calmer:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**When I'm stressed, I'll use this plan to help me find my balance.**

# MY EMOTIONAL THERMOMETER

check your feelings today

**RED: REALLY UPSET**

I'm feeling:

---

---

I feel this way when:

---

---

**YELLOW: GETTING STRESSED**

I'm feeling:

---

---

I feel this way when:

---

---

## GREEN: FEELING PKAY

I'm feeling:

---

---

I feel this way when:

---

---

## BLUE: CALM & GOOD

I'm feeling:

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---

I feel this way when:

---

---

## My Coping plan:

To clam myself, I can:

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---

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Someone I can talk to:

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One positive thing I can tell myself:

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# MY SAFE PEOPLE MAP

Draw your circle of support

A trusted adult  
I can go to:

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A person I can  
talk to on hard  
days:

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---

---

Me:

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---

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A friend who  
can listen and  
understand:

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---

---

I can also reach  
out to:

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---

---

## My safe places to go when I feel overwhelmed

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

# MY STRESS SIGNALS

## Check Signs of Stress or Overload



### BODY SIGNALS

My body's signals of stress:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



### FOCUS + ENERGY SIGNALS

Stress shows up in my thoughts and energy like:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## EMOTIONAL SIGNALS

My feelings of overwhelm feel like:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## RELATIONSHIP SIGNALS

Physical actions that help me feel calmer:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Two Helpful Calm Tools I can Use:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_