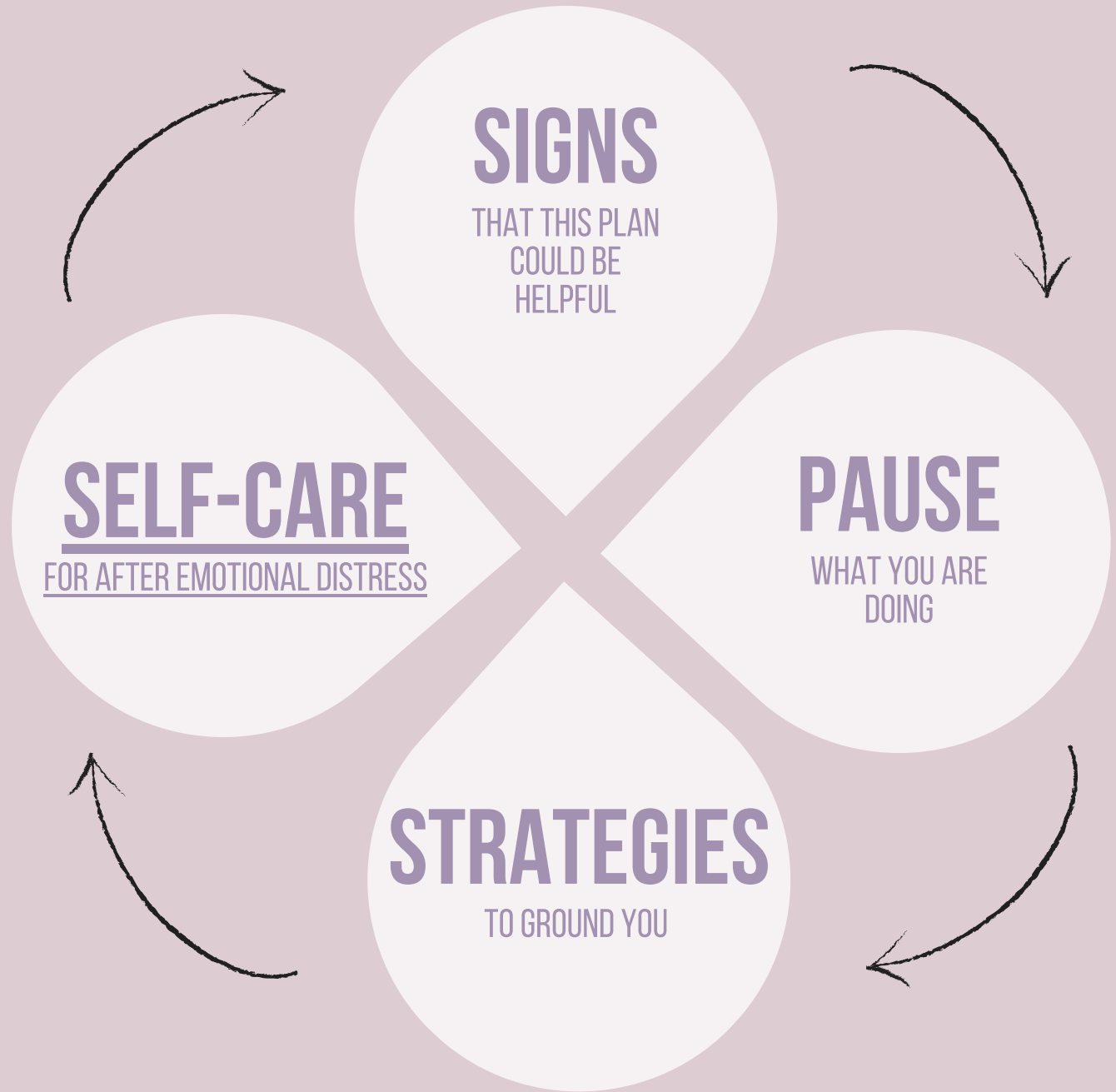


A GUIDE TO

# Emotional Safety Planning

BY WOMEN'S ADVOCATES  
[WWW.WADVOCATES.ORG](http://WWW.WADVOCATES.ORG)





You stop breathing or are breathing shallowly



You are feeling small, helpless, young, terrified, enraged, or out of control. You want to hide.



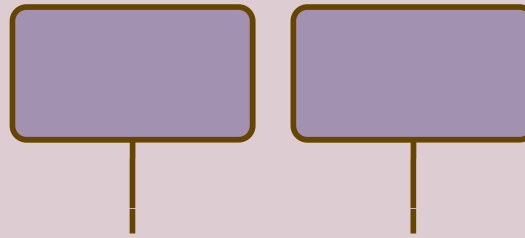
You are feeling immobilized, frozen, stuck, hopeless, depressed, or intensely sad

# Signs

THAT YOU MAY NEED SOME EMOTIONAL SUPPORT



You are feeling self-destructive, or like you want to hurt someone, being mean to yourself



You notice yourself thinking in "always/never", "Black/White". "either/or", "now or never"



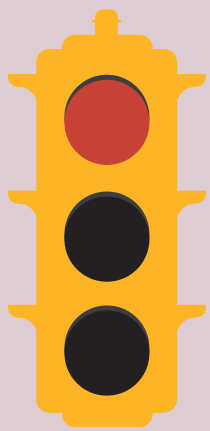
You are having a flashback, nightmare, panic attack, intrusive thoughts, feel regressed



You are feeling intensely urgent and want something to be decided right now



You feel like you can't decide what to do or can't figure out how to cope



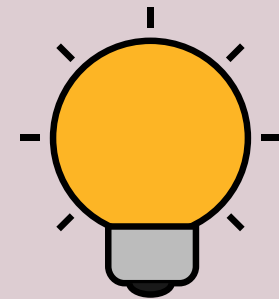
If you are engaging in an activity, try to take a break from it.



Try to get somewhere safe where you can focus on taking care of yourself



If you can, move into a different room or change your surroundings in some way

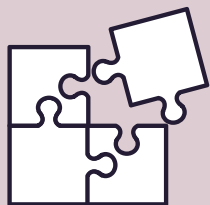


If possible, change the music (soothing or calming), lighting (brighten or dim), your physical position (sit up, lay down, child's pose), the taste in your mouth (something sweet or comforting)



# *breathe*

breathe slowly, deeply, with a straight back, try placing your hand on your belly



Engage in something other than what is causing distress: TV, movie, book, video game, puzzle, cards



focus on 5 senses, wiggle toes, focus on feel of feet on ground, orient to present



Take control in small ways: (when feeling helpless) reorganize your shelves, clean, make lists, put away laundry.

# *FOCUS*

concentrate on the specifics of your breathing: rising of the chest with inhale & falling on exhale, try counting breaths



Move: explore the full range of movement in your joints, dance, run, exercise



Create boundaries: lock doors, wrap yourself in blankets, make "keep out" sign



Do something with your hands: (esp. with anxiety) knit, quilt, fidget, build something, pet animals



Distract yourself: focus on work, school, a home project. Try to find something that is detail oriented

I'm interactive! Click on me for helpful links!



Listen to or sing music that can make you feel better or change your mood



Release: allow yourself to tremble, run, kick, scream into a pillow, cry, rock, say no, shake it out



Wake up your skin:  
Take a shower, wash  
your face, concentrate  
on textures



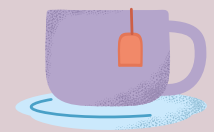
Nurture: long  
bath, manicure,  
lotion, nap,  
whatever feels  
good to your  
body.



Meditate:  
focus your  
thoughts,  
concentrate  
on a mantra,  
visualize a safe  
image



Express: create  
art, write, journal,  
talk about it, let  
out how you are  
feeling

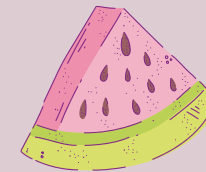


Take a break: make  
time for yourself. Let  
yourself do  
something frivolous,  
just because you  
want to.



Connect with something  
healing: nature, animals,  
children, friends,  
counselor, hotline

*self-care*  
 FOR AFTER EMOTIONAL  
 DISTRESS



Nourish your body:  
get sunshine, eat  
fresh fruits and  
veggies, drink water



Give yourself a gift:  
eat your favorite  
food, do something  
special for yourself,  
do a favorite activity,  
buy yourself a small  
present,  
allow yourself a  
small luxury.



Rewrite the story: imagine yourself  
doing it different, perhaps with  
whoever might help/protect you  
there helping



Meet the need: If you are feeling out of control, do something that  
makes you feel in control. If you need to feel loved, do  
something that shows love for yourself. If you need to be cared for,  
do something caring for yourself. If you need to feel safe, do  
something that feels safe to you.

