

## **The 7 Know's of Developing a Crisis Plan**

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Know: where you can go

Know: how you will get there

Know who can help you

Know how to contact them

Know everything that you might need and pack it in a bag in advance

Know all of the possible escape routes

Know how to protect yourself. Call local churches, community centers, or talk with your school counselor to find a self-defense class.

Being prepared for an emergency when there is danger in your environment is so important. Just like planning escape routes in the case of fire or a tornado, planning how to protect yourself if something happens can make the difference between getting out or being helpless. None of us would like to think that we would need such a plan; after all, should it not be our homes where we are most safe? For some of us this is true; for others, unfortunately, it is not. The reality is that some of us are not safe in our homes. Some of us struggle to find food, shelter, safety, and/or protection.

Contacting a professional is also a way to reach out for help. Counselors can help to provide the protection that you need while trying to keep the situation as private as possible. Counselors can help give you local resources and information to add to your plan. They can also help you add details to your plan or see potential risks that are not yet covered. The other side of utilizing professional counseling services is that, more often than not, if you are placed in the position of having to create a crisis plan, you most likely need someone to talk to.

If this article describes your situation, please do not feel that you are alone. More of your friends than you know are probably in similar situations. The scariest part of handling the situation is, first, admitting that there is a situation and, second, asking for help. Asking for help can be very difficult, but it might be the one thing that can change your situation for your future. Most states will allow minors aged 16 and up to have several counseling sessions outside of school without permission from a guardian or parent. You may obtain information about professional counselors through your school counselor, the internet, or by calling local information numbers. To help you to start asking for help, a few numbers are listed below.

"211" United Way. Provides any possible referrals for services that you may need in Michigan including food pantries, shelters, counselors, and state assistance. If they do not know the answer, they will give you information on how to find the answer. Toll-free number.

"586-307-9100" Macomb County Crisis Line. Provides 24-hour confidential crisis counseling services including information, referral, and disaster response. You may call this number collect, if necessary.

"800-942-4357" Michigan statewide 24-hour Child Abuse Reporting Hotline. If you suspect that you or someone that you know could be a victim of physical or sexual abuse, call this number to make a confidential report. Even if you are not sure what abuse means, the state will assist you in making that determination. Toll-free number.