

TAKING ACTION: An Evidence-Based
Self-Help and Peer Support Approach
to Wellness and Recovery

Part 4: *Taking Action To Go*—Brief Action Plan



DOORS TO
WELLBEING
A Program of the Copeland Center

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WELCOME TO TAKING ACTION TO GO

Together, we're ready to take action for wellness and recovery. We can take action for any health concern and to support our wellness.



Tip: *Taking Action* is a self-care, wellness, and recovery educational program for individuals seeking or in recovery from mental health and substance use conditions. This includes anyone at any age, with different experiences, or from any community.

Taking Action is not a replacement for treatment or other recovery supports. It is a helpful, safe tool to use alongside these services and supports.

Taking Action works best when we are part of a local ***Taking Action*** peer support group. To find a group, start by contacting local peer support, recovery, or behavioral health organizations. Trained peer supporters usually lead these groups.

Not everyone, however, is able to find or commit to a ***Taking Action*** group. Using ***Taking Action To Go***, we can still do a lot for our own wellness! This brief planning guide reviews key concepts and suggestions for ***Taking Action***.

Tip: *Taking Action To Go* is a brief planning tool meant just for us. It is completely voluntary. We can feel free to share it, but only if we choose to do so on our own. An exception may be the brief crisis planning section. It is helpful for our supporters to know where to find this information when needed.

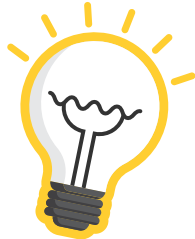


LET'S GET STARTED!

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR WELLNESS AND RECOVERY

Many lives and much research have helped us to understand the factors that are most important to recovery and wellness. We will briefly define each of these concepts for **Taking Action** in this section of our guide.

Under to each concept, there is space for us to write how we are, or could be, using these concepts to support our wellness and recovery.



Tip: Remember, we can always come back to these questions and change or add to them at any time.

Self-Care: Actions we take to care for ourselves and our own health, including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health

Self-Compassion: Feeling kindness, acceptance, understanding, and forgiveness toward ourselves

Self-Esteem: How we feel about and value ourselves and our worth

Hope: Belief that something that can happen, change, or improve in ways that we wish

Self-Determination: The ability to control and take responsibility for our own lives, goals, and decisions

Empowerment: The experience of using our power and freedom to take action for ourselves

Self-Advocacy: The process of speaking up for ourselves about our needs

Connection: Feeling connected to people, places, things, and ourselves in ways that are meaningful, supportive, and chosen by us



Education and Research: Finding, learning, and applying information that will help us in our wellness and recovery

Building Support: The process of actively finding and connecting with peers and other people, places, things, and tools that are helpful and supportive to us

Community Inclusion: The ability to be involved and belong to communities we choose, no matter our abilities, disabilities, or any other characteristics

Wellness Toolbox

We each have the power to take care of ourselves. As we grow and change over our lifetime, we learn what self-care tools work best for us. These tools become part of our so-called wellness toolbox.

Remember, we can always change what's in our toolbox, adding new tools or removing tools that no longer work for us. We may need different tools at different times.

We want to have a lot of wellness tools in our metaphorical toolbox. They should be simple, safe, and easy for us to use. The possibilities are endless.

What tools are in my wellness toolbox? These are tools we have used or would like to try. Good examples are spending time in nature, attending a support group, talking to a friend, walking, stretching, meditating, playing music, or creating a bedtime routine.

Peer Support

Peer support is a powerful part of **Taking Action** for recovery and wellness. It is a mutual relationship based in shared experiences, respect, values, and benefits for each person.

Peer support can also happen among more than two people. Many of us find peer support groups helpful such as 12-step or other substance use recovery groups, Hearing Voices Network groups, mental health peer-run organizations and substance use recovery community organizations, and faith-based groups.

My current peer supporters are:

I can take action to increase peer support by:

Who else is a supporter in my life? We can have many different types of supporters in our lives. These individuals could be biological or chosen family members, partners, friends, coworkers, roommates, neighbors, healthcare providers, or others.

Action Planning for My Wellness and Recovery

Action planning helps us be in charge of our own wellness and recovery, even during challenging times.

Taking Action planning tools can help us maintain our wellness from day to day, while we plan for the possibility of a crisis or other times when we may need additional support.

Taking Action helps us to decide what that support looks like, when we need it most.

DAILY MAINTENANCE PLAN

Feeling Well: What it feels like and looks like when I am feeling well.

Dreams and Goals: Big or small goals that I like to keep in mind for myself.

Daily List: Things I know I must do every day to maintain my wellness.

Reminder List: Things I need to do day to day, or week to week, to maintain my wellness.

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT TIMES

Triggers or challenges are people, places, things, or other situations that make me feel physical or emotional discomfort. Examples are anniversary dates of losses or trauma, family conflict, a health scare, financial problems, job loss, receiving bad news, certain smells or images, and many other experiences or sensations.

Helpful actions to respond to triggers or challenges:

Early warning signs are indicators that may or may not be obvious to others. These signs tell us we may need additional self-care or support. Examples include anxiety, forgetfulness, negative thinking, irritability, restlessness, isolating from others, increased cravings or urges, changes in appetite, trouble focusing, and other changes in our moods, bodies, routines, thoughts, or actions.

Helpful actions to respond to early warning signs:

Signs that things are getting worse or breaking down vary from person to person and may or may not lead to a crisis. These signs may be more disruptive or distressing to us. Examples are being unable to sleep or sleeping all the time, increased use of alcohol or other drugs, feeling overly sensitive or fragile, avoiding eating or eating too much, and other relevant changes in our lifestyle or health.

Helpful actions to respond when things are getting worse. The plan for myself now needs to be very direct, with fewer choices and very clear instructions.



CRISIS PLANNING

We all experience crisis in different ways. Crises can occur for medical reasons or due to other personal issues.

A *crisis* is any situation where we feel overwhelmed or have such difficulty that we want supporters to step in. In these moments, we want our supporters to take on responsibilities following our instructions for ourselves. These are actions that typically we don't need to rely on others to do for us.



Tip: Developing a full crisis plan is an important process. It can take some time to create. The *Taking Action: Action Planning Workbook* includes many helpful steps to creating a full crisis plan.

Here are several brief crisis planning items for our consideration at this stage of planning.

Existing Plans and Points of Contact

Some of us may already have **crisis plans, advance directives, or an appointed power of attorney.** Use this space to note if these resources exist and where to find them.

Indicators and Actions

Just as in earlier sections, we can identify signs that we are experiencing a crisis and need crisis support. Things to look for are being unable to recognize or correctly identify familiar people in our lives, neglecting personal hygiene, thinking we are someone we aren't, increased alcohol or other drug use or misuse, refusing to eat or drink, not getting out of bed, or other experiences that significantly affect our lives.

SUPPORTERS

Here, list the people we want to take over for us when the signs we listed above arise. We want to have **at least five people** on our list of supporters, so someone is available when we really need them. Not everyone is a helpful supporter in a time of crisis. There is also space where we can list **individuals we do not want contacted** during this time.

My key supporters and their contact information:

People I do not want contacted in a crisis:



TREATMENT AND CARE

In this space, we can list our preferences for the types of treatment (procedures and facilities), respite care, or other services we may need during a time of crisis. We might prefer specific treatments or culturally responsive practices that we know work for us.

It is also important to note any treatment or services that we do not want during this time. We can write our reasons for this so that our supporters are clear. We may want to avoid treatment that has harmed us or not worked in the past.

My preferences for treatment (procedures, facilities) or care:

Treatment or facilities that I do not want (and why):

WHAT I NEED FROM OTHERS

Thinking about treatment is only one part of crisis planning. We may know other things that supporters can do to help us work toward recovery and to feel safe and supported. Examples are being available to listen without judgment, leaving me alone to rest, bringing me nutritious meals, joining me at a recovery support group, or praying with me.

We may also be worried about other aspects of our lives that must be addressed in a crisis. Examples are letting an employer or supervisor know that we will be out, paying bills, or caregiving for children, pets, or other loved ones.

What I need from my supporters:

