



**Children's Behavioral Health**  
**C.A.R.E.S. Class: SAFETY**



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**Welcome & Introduction**

❖ **Group Commitments**

- Confidentiality and Respect


❖ **Please Share Briefly**

- Your name
- Name and age of your child
- A *brief* description of what is going on with your child



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**Children's Behavioral Health Overview**


Every patient comes to us struggling with *something*. Many of our patients have difficulty managing strong emotions.

- ❖ Our unit is an *acute crisis stabilization unit*.
- ❖ For most patients, inpatient *treatment is brief*.
- ❖ At discharge, your child *may continue to struggle* with the behaviors that led to admission.



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## C.A.R.E.S. Overview


**C**aregiver **A**dvocacy, **R**esources, **E**ducation, & **S**upport

**Our Goals:**

- ❖ We **educate** caregivers – providing information about your child’s treatment interventions.
- ❖ We **equip** caregivers – teaching skills and tools for caregivers to continue to care for and help your child.
- ❖ We **empower** caregivers – connecting you with resources and services to help you after discharge.



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## Safety Class Overview

This class provides information about *how to make your home environment safer for your child’s return after discharge.*



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## Safety Class Overview

**What we’ll review today:**

- ❖ Safety Planning for Concerns of:
  - Suicide
  - Aggression/Property Destruction
  - Run Away Behavior
  - Lack of Awareness of Surroundings
  - Electronics Safety
- ❖ Crisis Prevention Planning (briefly)



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## Safety Class Overview

**Handouts:**

- ❖ Home Safety Planning Worksheet
- ❖ Crisis Prevention Planning Worksheet
- ❖ Navigating the Digital World/Online Safety Tips
- ❖ Printout of this presentation to take notes if desired



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## Pause & Check-In


**Before we get started...**

This material is heavy and can be intense.

- ❖ There are a handful of intentional "pause & check-in" slides throughout this material.
- ❖ Please let us know if additional breaks or explanations would be helpful.
- ❖ *Please consider ways to care for yourself after this meeting.*



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# SAFETY PLANNING



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### Why is Safety Planning Important?

- ❖ **Bad News**
  - Can NEVER guarantee "safety"
- ❖ **Good News**
  - Can ALWAYS decrease risk, whether event is impulsive or planned
- ❖ **How?**
  - We CANNOT control what children/teens will do, but we CAN attempt to *manage* both impulsive and planned events:
    - Safety Planning: Make harmful behaviors toward self or others more difficult to engage in by removing and/or locking up items that could lead to dangerous situations
    - Crisis Prevention Planning: Put plans in place to support youth in the event of a crisis

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### Types of Safety Events?

- ❖ **Safety events come in all shapes and sizes**
- ❖ **Events that are commonly encountered with our patients include:**
  - Suicide attempts and self-harm
  - Aggressive behavior toward others
  - Property Destruction
  - Run Away Behavior
  - Challenges associated with electronics




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### Goals of Safety Planning

- ❖ **Goals are simple:**
  - Increase safety and reduce risk
  - Remove or lock and thoughtfully manage safety hazards in the child's environment.
- ❖ **In so doing, remember that time is always your "best friend"**
  - The more time it takes to find a dangerous item, the more time there is to coach or intervene.
  - The more time between the child's thought and the child's access to a way to hurt oneself or someone/something else, the more time there is for the child to "cool off" and begin to think more rationally.

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### How do you Enhance Safety?

- ❖ One of the best methods of prevention of suicide, self-harm, aggression, and property destruction is "means restriction."
- ❖ **"Means"** = Item/object needed to complete act (e.g., pills, firearm, rope, prized possession)
- ❖ **"Means restriction"** = Access to the "means" by which a child might attempt suicide/self-harm or engage in aggression/property destruction is restricted, prohibited, or made challenging.
  - "Means restriction" offers the opportunity for some kind of intervention because of TIME
  - The more the child has to work to find access to "means," the more opportunity there is for some kind of intervention.



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### Suicide: Firearms

- ❖ The vast majority of youth who die by firearm suicide use a family member's gun/rifle.
- ❖ Do you own a firearm? Does your child/teen have access to a firearm?
- ❖ **Recommendations:**
  - Remove firearms from home, car, etc., at least while your child is at high risk.
  - If removal is not an option:
    - **Be TRIPLE SAFE:**
      - Firearms should be stored **locked** and **unloaded**, preferably in a lock box or gun safe, with ammunition **locked** and stored in a separated location.
      - More information about appropriate firearm safety measures: *Project Child Safe*
    - **Choose hiding places carefully.**
    - Assume that your child/teen knows where the firearm and ammunition are stored and/or where the key/combination is hidden. **HIDE EVERYTHING!**
    - As a first step, **change your lock combination NOW!**



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### Suicide: Suffocation (Strangulation)

- ❖ **Items commonly used for suffocation/strangulation:**
  - Plastic bags, belts, ties/scarfs, bedsheets, ropes, cords, shoelaces, etc.
- ❖ **NOTE:** Elaborate "set-ups" from high places are **NOT** needed for hanging; only requirement is leverage and can be completed with door knob, bed post, etc.
- ❖ **Recommendations:**
  - Lock or remove extraneous and unneeded items around the house.
  - If cannot lock or remove all items, remove enough such that it is readily apparent if something is missing or amiss upon the completion of a quick visual scan of the area.



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### Suicide: Poisoning (Overdose/Ingestion)

- ❖ **Items commonly used for poisoning (overdose/ingestion):**
  - Medications (both prescription and non-prescription), drugs/alcohol, cleaning agents/supplies, insecticides/pest control, gardening agents, etc.
- ❖ **NOTE: Not all medications are created equal; some medications are much more lethal in overdose than others.**
  - No medication or combination of medications is good in high quantity.
  - Just because a medication is sold "over the counter" does not mean it is safe.
    - For example: Tylenol, ibuprofen, and cold medicines can be very dangerous medications, especially when taken in high quantities.
  - During times of high risk, parents/caregivers should dose medications and watch to ensure it was taken.
    - Be wary of medication hoarding
    - "Cheeking" precautions (only if necessary)



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### Suicide: Poisoning (Overdose/Ingestion)

- ❖ **Recommendations:**
  - Remove or lock up all poisonous agents – a lock box is a great place to store medications
    - Choose an extremely careful hiding place.
    - Assume children/adolescents know where medication is stored and/or where the key/combination is hidden. **HIDE BOTH!**
  - If removal/locking up is not possible, keep only a very limited supply on hand
  - Lock/monitor all medications, prescription or over-the-counter, of all family members in the home.
    - Youth will overdose on whatever medication is available, whether or not intended for them. All medications should be accounted for at all times.
  - Control/manage child/teen's medications by giving it at prescribed times and watching them take it.
  - Children/teens should not be in charge of their own medication administration at this point.
  - Parents/caregivers must also pay attention to other poisonous items in their home (e.g., cleaning agents, insecticides, etc.).
    - These, like medicines, should also be locked and stored.



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### Suicide: Sharps

- ❖ **Sharps are dangerous temptations for youth at high risk**
- ❖ **Commonly used items: knives, razors, paperclips, tools, pencil sharpeners, X-Acto knife blades, etc.**
- ❖ **Recommendations:**
  - Remove all sharps, temporarily, to be as safe as possible
  - If removal is not possible:
    - Use of a lock box with the caveats discussed previously (e.g., careful hiding place, store key/combination separate from box, assume that child/teen knows where hidden).
  - Some parents/caregivers struggle to lock up all sharps in the family home:
    - The safest option is to lock up all sharps.
    - An alternative option that ensures less safety is to limit the number of knives that are out such that it can be easily determined what is missing with a visual inspection.
    - In order to remove all sharps, think about alternatives (Electric razors rather than razors, check-in/check-out system, etc.)
    - Remove/Lock up the most dangerous items!



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## Pause & Check-In

- ❖ **Reminder:** this is a pre-emptive conversation about safety.
- ❖ We have brought up a number of concerning topics and want to reiterate: safety planning and enhancing your home is a way to **reduce the risk of harm**.
- ❖ Not all of these methods will apply to all children. We cover all risk factors.
- ❖ **Safety Planning is necessary when children/teens are at high risk or in crisis.** This is not permanent!



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## Aggression/Property Destruction

- ❖ **Carefully consider items that could be used to aggress against others and/or used to destroy property:**
  - **Firearms:**
    - Be TRIPLE Safe!
      - Firearms should be stored **locked** and **unloaded**, preferably in a lock box or gun safe, with ammunition **locked** and stored in a separated location.
    - Choose hiding places carefully.
    - Assume that your child/teen knows where the firearm and ammunition are stored and/or where the key/combination is hidden
  - **Sharps/Tools:**
    - Remove or lock items that may be used as a weapon, including items that can be broken and used as a weapon
    - If removal is not possible:
      - Use of a lock box with the caveats outlined above (e.g., careful hiding place, store key/combination separate from box, assume that child/teen knows where hidden).



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## Aggression/Property Destruction

- **Lighters/Matches:**
  - Remove or lock lighters and matches
  - Choose hiding places carefully
  - If locked, assume your child/teen knows where the lockbox is stored and/or where the key/combination is hidden
- ❖ **Property Destruction:**
  - **Valuable, fragile, meaningful, sentimental possessions**
    - These items may be a "target" for youth who engage in property destruction
    - Temporarily remove, lock or secure these items so as not to risk them being destroyed
    - This is to support both the child/teen as well as the parent/caregiver!



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### Run Away Behavior

- ❖ **Runaway behavior is challenging to manage**
  - Look for patterns. Does running away happen more on weekends? After an escalation? Know when to increase supervision.
- ❖ **Recommendations:**
  - Preplan with your child a safe alternative. Discuss whether there is a safe space your child can go and how they can let you know when a break is needed.
  - In the event your child has run away:
    - **Contact 911 and report your child as missing.**
  - Preventive Strategies (will discuss later)



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### Lack of Awareness of Surroundings

- ❖ **Temporary (psychosis) and enduring (developmental delay)**
- ❖ **Concerns related to safety at home/leaving home**
- ❖ **Recommendations:**
  - In the event your child has wandered away from home:
    - **Contact 911 and report your child as missing**
  - Preventive Strategies similar to concerns of run away behavior



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### Preventive Strategies / Helpful Resources

- ❖ **Monitoring Products**
  - Alerts you if your child leaves the home (e.g., alarms/chimes for doors/windows)
    - *Never acceptable to lock a child in a room for night or permanently seal windows and/or other exits*
  - Culture City Lifeboks - [www.kulturecity.org/lifeboks/](http://www.kulturecity.org/lifeboks/)
- ❖ **Project Lifesaver**
  - Enrollment into the program as a means of adding a layer of protection
  - [projectlifesaver.org](http://projectlifesaver.org)
- ❖ **Create a Smart 911 Profile ([www.smart911.com](http://www.smart911.com))**
  - Free service to create a safety profile for emergency response teams
  - This is a nationwide service, but not all public safety agencies (law enforcement, fire and medical responders) use it yet.
  - Check their website to see if the service works in your area!



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## Responding to Run Away Behavior


**Consider filing a CHINS Petition (Child in Need of Supervision):**

- ❖ **Purpose:** To obtain assistance and support from the juvenile court in maintaining the care, custody and control of the child and to assist in the resolution of family conflict, after alternatives to court intervention have been attempted.
- ❖ **Definition:** A child under the age of 18 who does any of the following:
  - Being subject to compulsory school attendance, is habitually truant from school
  - Disobeys the reasonable and lawful demands of the child's parents, guardian, or other custodian and is beyond their control
  - Leaves, or remains away from, the home without the permission of the legal guardian
  - Has committed an offense established by law but not classified as criminal or one applicable only to children
  - In any of the foregoing, is in need of care or rehabilitation

*Please discuss with a clinician if you're considering a CHINS Petition.*



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## Pause & Check-In

- ❖ This ends the Home Safety Planning portion.
- ❖ Continue to check-in with your outpatient providers about how long items should be locked up or hidden.
- ❖ Again, Safety Planning is necessary when children/teens are at high risk or in crisis. This is not permanent!

**Questions about Safety Planning?**



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# ELECTRONICS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND PRIVACY



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### Electronics: Internet, Social Media & Phone Safety

- ❖ Technology/electronics pose safety risks for many youth
- ❖ Appropriate electronic use needs to be explicitly taught
- ❖ American Association of Pediatrics Recommendations
  - Monitor online and media content. Watch programs with your kids to ensure age-appropriateness.
  - Turn off devices (TV, tablets, computers) when not in use.
  - Try not to use media to soothe unless special circumstances (for example, you're at an appointment and it's a limited amount of time).
  - Have a media free zone in the home. Keep bedrooms, meal times, and interactive/play time with your kids media free.
  - Turn off all screens at a minimum of 1 hour before going to bed.

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### Electronics: Internet, Social Media & Phone Safety

**Additional Recommendations:**

- ❖ Prior to providing your child with a phone or tablet, create a contract to ensure expectations are clear
- ❖ Keep "technology" in common areas, making "drive-by" possible
- ❖ Who pays the bill? If you do, you have the right to "limit" use
- ❖ Model the behaviors you want to see: "Electronics" for all family members has a "bedtime"
- ❖ Communicate basic messages regarding Internet/Smart Phone use in daily conversation
  - Never share passwords/personal info online as it can jeopardize safety
  - "Once in cyberspace, always in cyberspace"
  - Do not blindly trust people you meet on-line
  - Schools have policies about forwarding emails and photos from others: "cyberbullying" comes with consequences
  - Encourage open communication between yourself and your child regarding any instances of bullying or harassment




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### Electronics: Internet, Social Media & Phone Safety

❖ Online Resources to help you keep your child safe:



**Common Sense Media**  
"Independent non-profit organization dedicated to helping kids thrive in a world of media and technology."  
[www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)

**ConnectSafety**  
"Non-profit organization dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy and security."  
[www.connectsafety.org](http://www.connectsafety.org)

**Be Internet Awesome.**  
"To make the most of the internet, kids need to be prepared to make smart decisions. Be Internet Awesome teaches kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety so they can explore the online world with confidence."  
<https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com>

**Family Online Safety Institute**  
"International, non-profit organization which works to make the online world safer for kids and their families. FOISI's Good Digital Parenting provides parents with videos, tip sheets, resources, blogs, and more to help them keep their kids safe."  
[www.foisi.org/good-digital-parenting/](http://www.foisi.org/good-digital-parenting/)

**CyberWise**  
"Digital parenting is daunting, but we can help! CyberWise is a resource site for BUSY grownups who want to help youth use digital media confidently and safely."  
[www.cyberwise.org](http://www.cyberwise.org)

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## Some Thoughts on Privacy

- ❖ **During times of high risk...**
  - Desire to limit "private time" for fear of what a child/teen may do without "eyes on"
  - Struggle between caregiver and child/teen
  - Often leads to upset behavior
- ❖ **Recommendation:**
  - Find ways to offer privacy while making sure your child is safe:
    - **Safety Enhance your child's room**
      - *Your child's door should not lock*
      - *Don't take the doors off rooms, make sure the room is safe.*
    - **Room Searches**
    - **Parent Check-Ins**



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## Some Thoughts on Privacy

- ❖ **Room Searches**
  - Occur at parent's/caregiver's discretion, but never without child/teen's knowledge
    - *Announce need to complete a search in the moment (no advance warning).*
    - *Offer child/teen the opportunity to be present. Never complete without their knowledge.*
    - *Share that you prefer honesty and would rather they "hand over" or share where you will find concerning items, rather than finding them on your own.*
    - *If they do so, thank them for their honesty and commitment to their own safety.*
  - If you have questions or concerns about discussing these expectations with your child/teen, please be sure to speak with your child's primary therapist.



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## Some Thoughts on Privacy

- ❖ **Parent Check-Ins**
  - Children/teens likely want to spend time alone in their room
  - Parents have right to "check-in," but must always knock
    - *Frequency of check-ins determined on case by case basis*
    - *When youth in crisis, higher frequency (e.g., 15 - 30 minutes)*
    - *When youth stable, less frequent*
  - When parents knock, child/teen must answer
    - *If child/teen does not answer in reasonable time frame (5-10 seconds), parent may enter.*
    - *No need for conversation, can use signals, etc.*
    - *Must make visual contact and see that all is well.*
  - If you have questions or concerns about discussing these expectations with your child/teen, please talk with your child's primary therapist.



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## Pause & Check-In

- ❖ This ends the Electronics, Technology, and Privacy portion.
- ❖ Be sure to reference some of the resources we have highlighted to further educate yourselves.
- ❖ If you have specific questions related to any of this content and your child, please be sure to speak with your therapist.

**Questions about Electronics, Technology, and Privacy?**



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# CRISIS PREVENTION PLANNING



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## Crisis Prevention Planning (CPP)

- ❖ Safety Plans are how you safety enhance your home
- ❖ Crisis Prevention Plans are:
  - Thoughtfully laid out
  - Intended to help you and your child prevent a small problem from escalating into a large problem or crisis
- ❖ "Prevent" is the operative word
- ❖ CPPs are not:
  - The solution to the crisis once the crisis occurs
  - A guarantee that a crisis will not occur
- ❖ Carefully constructed CPPs serve to guide you in making choices and taking actions that help to defuse difficult situations and prevent them from reaching a crisis.



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### Crisis Prevention Planning (CPP)


❖ In creating a CPP, you will develop a plan for managing difficult situations by identifying, understanding, and discussing:

1. **TRIGGERS** that lead to negative or troublesome feelings and behaviors,
2. **WARNING SIGNS** that signal a situation is headed in a negative direction and warrants intervention,
3. **SKILLS** that children/teens can use to help themselves,
4. **ACTIONS** that parents/caregivers can take to help support the child/teen, and
5. **OTHERS** that can be called upon to help manage the situation, if need be.



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### Crisis Prevention Planning (CPP)

- ❖ Caregiver, your child, the primary therapist
- ❖ This ideally takes place a few days prior to discharge
- ❖ Crisis Prevention Planning Worksheet – bring to CPP meeting



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### WRAP UP



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## Resources and Handouts

- **Resources:**
  - PIRC: 205-638-PIRC (7472)
  - Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255, [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
  - Crisis Center: 205-323-7777, [crisiscenterbham.org](http://crisiscenterbham.org)
  - Smart 911 Profile: <https://www.smart911.com/>
  - Project Child Safe (lock boxes): <http://www.projectchildsafesafe.org/>
  - Project Lifesaver: <https://projectlifesaver.org>
  - Kulture City Lifebooks - [www.kulturecity.org/lifebooks/](http://www.kulturecity.org/lifebooks/)
- **Handouts:**
  - Home Safety Planning Worksheet
  - Crisis Prevention Planning Worksheet
  - Online/Digital/Electronic Safety Websites (see handout)
  - Printout of this presentation



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## Next Steps

- ❖ Any questions or concerns that we can escalate to your Treatment Team?
- ❖ Are you scheduled for a Crisis Prevention Planning meeting with your child's therapist?



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# THANK YOU

Questions or Comments?



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