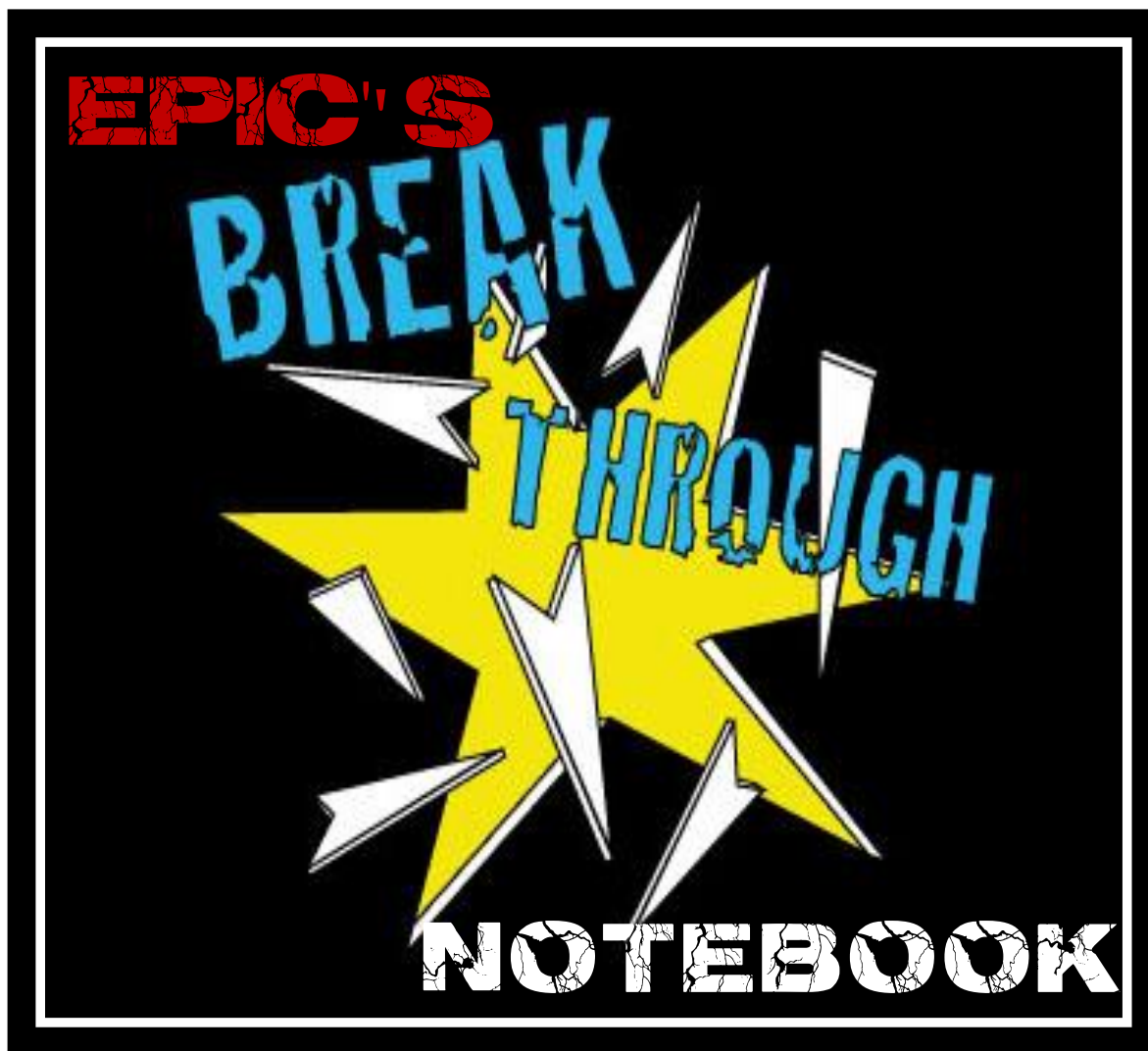


Educational Program Innovations Charity Society



Rising from the Pitfalls

YOUTH INSIGHTS

2012-2013





**Breakthrough
2012-2013**

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



Hello, my name is John Doyle. I graduated from Breton Education Centre in 2008, went to the Nova Scotia Community College in Sydney in 2009, and got my certificate for heavy equipment operator. I came to the Youth Peer Program when I was in Grade 9 and continued to the present date. I was a victim of bullying. I surpassed it with help from family and friends. My quote to young people being bullied is, "If people are trying to bring you down it only means that you are above them."



My name is Noah Larose and I am 22 years old. I was tutored at the Youth Peer Program for 5 years. I wanted to come back to help with the Breakthrough Notebook because everyone was always so nice and supportive and I wanted to give back.



Hello, my name is Stephanie Rich. I am currently in school at Memorial Composite High School. I am taking an electrical trade at the school. I started at Youth Peer Program as a student in Grade 9 and was there for two years. After YPP I found myself at the program at Breakthrough. You can talk openly and feel trust in this friendly place.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



My name is Jarred MacCormack and I am 16 years old. I have been coming to the Youth Peer Program for 4 years. Joining Breakthrough helped me to get back into school and has helped me through difficult times.



My name is Chelsey Marie Allen. I am 20 years old and most recently attended school at Sydney Academy. I enjoy hobbies such as dancing, singing, softball and volleyball.



My name is Eric Mercer and I became part of the Breakthrough Program through being tutored at the Youth Peer Program. I graduated from Breton Education Centre High School. I have experienced mental illness and with help I have been able to manage and progress. I hope that this Notebook will help my younger generation to “breakthrough” their problems.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



My name is Brennan. I am 27 years old. I have 2 boys, Michael and Ryder. I currently travel to work all over western Canada. I have been involved with Youth Peer and Breakthrough programs since I was 14 years old. The Centre is a place to call home with snacks, smiles and lots of laughter. We are a family here. I have really enjoyed my time here and for as long as I can I will keep attending. Lots of love, Brennan



My name is Emma Laing. I moved to Sydney three years ago from Ontario. I loved Breakthrough and it was one of the best things I have done so far. It was a great opportunity to help kids growing up.

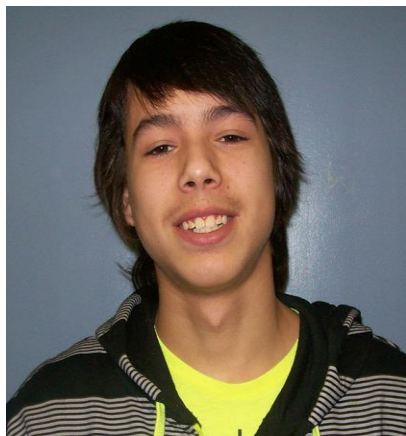


My name is Jenna Besso and I'm 18 years old. Breakthrough helped me through some hard times, especially with friends, school and family issues. The people in Breakthrough showed me love and support and welcomed me with open arms. I'll miss the Facilitator and Alicia, the Assistant, who helped me through some tough stuff. For that I am very thankful.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



My name is Kori Marie Young. I am 16 years old. I have dreams for the future but most of all I want to be a good mother. I attend Breakthrough because I like the food and the people. I get great support from the group. It's a fun group.



Hello. My name is Darian Marshall. I am 15 years old. I enjoy coming to Breakthrough because I love the food and enjoy the people here. I can't wait to come back.



My name is Steven Campbell and I am a grade 10 student at Sydney Academy. I joined Breakthrough this year after being part of the Youth Peer Program for many years. I love coming to group meetings because we get to talk about subjects that affect us youth. I also especially love the laughs and nachos.

PREFACE

Youth ages 14-26 were invited to the Youth Peer Centre in Sydney, Nova Scotia, for 2 hours each Tuesday night throughout the 2011-2013 school years, to share stories about their lives—particularly the parts that have not always gone smoothly. They attended as volunteers, drawing upon personal experiences with crisis to choose topics and brainstorm strategies that could help youth in similar situations. The Breakthrough Notebook is the result of their insights and a testament to what youth can and will do when they are provided a safe environment, supported by experienced and caring adults, and afforded the opportunity to give to others.

Breakthrough was created by EPIC (**E**ducational **P**rogram **I**nnovations **C**harity) in 2011 to augment support for at-risk youth in the multi-year-national-award-winning Youth Peer Program and reach out to vulnerable former participants. The objectives are: 1) empower at-risk youth to build upon the acceptance and well-being they experienced at Youth Peer into facilitated discussion on catalysts of crisis and strategies of resiliency, 2) guide volunteer participants to distinguish safe paths from pitfalls, act upon their heightened awareness, and apply practical approaches towards personal advancement and 3) generate the Breakthrough Notebook as a resource to transform the insights of youth participants into a lifeline for other youth.

Out of 20 youth invited to Breakthrough, 12 pictured in the Author Biographies volunteered as regular contributors to the Notebook. Facilitator Barb Donovan, along with Writer/Assistant Alicia Morrison, oversaw and guided the discussions. The Facilitator utilized her expertise working with youth-at-risk as the long-time Director of Youth Peer, to ensure focus and efficacy. The Writer/Assistant compiled and drafted the ideas, biographies, and photos of young authors. Special care was taken to ensure confidentiality of the personal stories shared. The Artist/Assistant Blake MacLean collaborated with youth to design the Breakthrough logo. EPIC Board volunteers Barry and Nancy Waldman, who are experienced in writing and publishing, completed the editing. Breakthrough youth and volunteers carried out the binding and production of the notebooks. We are grateful to the outstanding Youth Peer Breakthrough and Parents PEACE staff, to Sara Pino and Katie Young who assisted, and to Breagh Potter who enhanced Breakthrough sessions through her generous spirit and fine music. We are especially appreciative of the Breakthrough volunteer authors who made the Breakthrough Notebook a reality.

We offer special recognition to the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia as the largest external contributor to EPIC's programs for youth at risk. We also wish to acknowledge support for Breakthrough and production of the Notebook by Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, Intact Foundation, Democracy 250, and Central Cape Breton Community Health Board. This is a youth-generated resource which can evolve and be enriched by other youth using it to confront crisis in their lives. We hope the reader will benefit from the topics discussed and recognize how great the results can be when program recipients are empowered to serve as the givers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

School.....	1
Rumours are going around about me.....	1
It's hard starting over at a new school.....	2
Teachers and administrators hate me.....	3
Everyone sees me as a bad kid.....	4
I am mad I have to transfer to a new school.....	5
I feel stressed and have started skipping classes.....	6
 Relationships & Sex.....	 7
I can't maintain an intimate relationship.....	7
I am being called "slut" and "whore"	8
I cheated on my girlfriend.....	9
My boyfriend cheated on me.....	10
I don't know when I should have sex.....	11
I'm not sure what makes sex "safe"	12
I am confused about my sexuality.....	13
I have been sexually abused.....	14
My boyfriend is pressuring me to move in.....	15
 Group Conflict.....	 16
I can't deal with conflict but also can't ignore bullying.....	16
People judge me because of my tattoos.....	17
Somebody drew nasty pictures and words on my car.....	18
 Friends.....	 19
My friend moved in with me and we fight all the time.....	19
I don't like what my friends are doing but I don't want to lose them.....	20
I have a hard time saying "no" to my friends.....	21
My friends betrayed me and I can't forgive them.....	22
 Health & Wellness.....	 23
I feel fat compared to other girls.....	23
I'm bored and think there's nothing to do around here.....	24
My lifestyle is unhealthy but it's hard to change.....	25
I have strong feelings of anxiety.....	26
I keep making bad decisions.....	27
I can't handle all this stress.....	28

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Health & Wellness (continued)	29
I get sudden panic attacks.....	29
I have suicidal thoughts.....	30
My friend committed suicide and I feel guilty.....	31
I often feel depressed.....	32
I am afraid my friend will hurt himself.....	33
I'm in trouble with the law.....	34
I can't get a job.....	35
I can't control my anger.....	36
 Family	 37
My parents are too controlling.....	37
I can't talk to my parents.....	38
I was trying to be careful but I got pregnant as a teen.....	39
I have a baby but I don't know what to do as a teen parent.....	40
My dad went away to work and it's weird without him.....	41
My mom is sick and it's hard to help her.....	42
My grandpa died and we were really close.....	43
My father is cheating and my mother doesn't know.....	44
I've been pressured to go away for work but I don't feel ready.....	45
 Drugs & Alcohol	 46
I think I'm addicted to prescription drugs.....	46
I got caught using marijuana.....	47
I drink alcohol for fun but it's causing me problems.....	48

SCHOOL

There are rumours going around school about me.

Pitfalls

- I have been skipping school to avoid the drama and my marks have been getting worse.
- I was so mad that he was saying that stuff to me that I punched him in the face.
- I never want to do anything anymore, I just feel sad and alone.
- My friends believe the rumours and they never want to hang out anymore.
- I am scared to tell someone because it might make the situation worse.
- It is embarrassing to be picked on and I don't want anyone else to know.
- I told my principal, but he ignored it.

Lifelines

- My English teacher is really cool and I know that he would look out for me if he knew what was going on.
- I think the principal is a little scary, but he might be the only one who can do anything about this.
- My guidance counsellor is always there to listen.
- I was able to find out who my true friends are and I know they will be there when I need them.

Pulling Up

- When I was younger I found it hard to stick up for myself. Now I don't care what people say about me - I know the truth.
- Talking about it with people I trust makes me feel so much better.
- I try not to show that it bothers me so they don't know I'm hurt. I hope eventually this will just make them give up.

Safe Path to Being OK

- If you stay true to yourself and try not to be concerned with what others say, then you will get past the challenges.

I just moved to a new area and school. It's hard starting over.

Pitfalls

- I am surrounded by people at school, but I feel alone all the time.
- I feel sad and tired and I never want to leave my room.
- I wish I never left my old school and friends. This place sucks.
- I would rather not be alive than live here.
- I have been getting in trouble for talking back in class but at least the other kids are noticing me.

Lifelines

- The school should have a way to introduce new students so we don't have to find our way alone.
- My old friends make me feel better by calling and texting me.

Pulling Up

- I am going to start to talk to the kids sitting next to me in class.
- I always wanted to try rugby, so I might join the team to meet some people.
- I will try not to be invisible and take a chance to let them know me.

Safe Path to Being OK

- If you had friends and others liked you at your old school, you can do it again at a new school. Just give yourself time.

The teachers and administrators at my school hate me.

Pitfalls

- No matter how hard I try, I think they are going to fail me.
- My teachers never give me a chance. When someone else talks in class they are told to stop; when I talk I am told to go to the office.
- What is the point of going to school if I am going to be treated so badly?
- If they think I was bad before, I will show them what being bad really is.

Lifelines

- If I tell my parents maybe they can talk to my teachers.
- My friends are good to talk to because they see what is happening and understand.
- The guidance counsellor is always fair when I go to her about anything.

Pulling Up

- Talking about it to someone I trust makes me feel better and I hope they are able to help.
- I want to prove them all wrong! I am going to try to be a good student and they will have to notice the positive change.
- Even though I want to yell at my teachers I need to zip my lip and not make things worse.

Safe Path to Being OK

- School is important even if it's not always fun. If you just give up you're allowing others to limit who you are. Just find a trusted adult who will help you be treated fairly.

Everyone just sees me as a bad kid. It's tough to escape a bad reputation.

Pitfalls

- Everyone at school is scared of me.
- Teachers never trust me.
- I like having people scared of me because then they leave me alone.

Lifelines

- At least one of my parents usually supports me and knows I am not like everyone thinks I am.
- My band teacher is really nice to me, so maybe she will be able to give me advice.

Pulling Up

- I have to not let them get to me.
- If I just be myself, the people that matter to me will see the real me.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Some reputations are not that damaging like “jock” or “nerd” but others like “psycho” can make a person’s life miserable. Reputations are easy to get and hard to lose, so represent yourself as you want to be known.

I am transferring to a new school next semester and I am really mad I have to start all over again.

Pitfalls

- I am going to stay home for a few days while everyone gets settled in.
- Maybe I won't go back this semester. Eventually I can probably go to adult school.
- I just made a good group of friends and now I have to go to school with people I don't know.
- I don't know any of the teachers at the new school and they don't know me.

Lifelines

- Meet with my new teachers before school begins so we'll both be familiar with each other.
- Talk to my parents about my fears.

Pulling Up

- I have goals to go to university, so I know that I have to go to school to meet those goals.

Safe Path to Being OK

- You have to stay strong to succeed in life. There will be many things that may be difficult and scary but you will never go further in life if you can't move past them.

I moved to a new school and feel stressed and have already begun skipping classes.

Pitfalls

- I'm here only two weeks and I'm bored already.
- My mother is going to be really angry with me.
- I can't seem to be able to stop myself from skipping classes.
- I am even trying to get other people to do it with me.
- I am concerned that I have no self-control, no discipline.
- I am asking myself why I am putting this pressure on myself and my new friends.

Lifelines

- I have some friends in this group that I trust. They told me that I have an outgoing personality. I could get involved with the drama club at school and learn lots of new skills.
- I could get rid of my pent-up energy in a good way.
- I know I can talk to the guidance counsellor because they know what extras are offered at the school.

Pulling Up

- I can choose courses and after school activities I am interested in.
- School is important for my future so if I keep skipping I will limit what I can do later.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Involving yourself in positive activities that are fun and rewarding will help reduce anxiety and balance your energy.

RELATIONSHIPS & SEX

It seems impossible to maintain a good intimate relationship.

Pitfalls

- We might be moving too fast.
- My boyfriend and I spend all of our free time together and my friends are mad that I don't have time for them anymore.
- I don't want my boyfriend hanging out with his friends because they are bad influences.
- My boyfriend thinks I am flirting with every guy I talk to.
- We have been fighting a lot lately.
- I am lucky to have my boyfriend and I will never find someone as good as him.

Lifelines

- My friends help me enjoy things I did before I got into my relationship, like going to kickboxing.

Pulling Up

- I sometimes need to take time for myself.
- I need to know what I want in a relationship and make sure that I am getting it.
- It helps when I share my feelings with my partner and ask him to share with me.
- When my boyfriend treats me with respect, I make sure I give that to him in return.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Your relationship will be strong if you have respect for one another and continue being open and honest.

I hooked up with a few people and now everyone is calling me names like “slut” and “whore.”

Pitfalls

- My so-called friends believe the rumours and are now ignoring me.
- My self-esteem has become non-existent.
- I feel alone and sad all the time. I don't want to get out of bed or go to school. Sometimes I wish I could crawl under a rock and live there forever.
- I was just with boys because I thought they would like me more.
- The next person to call me a name will get a punch in the face.
- She thinks I'm a whore? Well she is worse and I am going to make sure everyone knows it.

Lifelines

- My older sister is easy to talk to and she gives the best advice.
- The health nurse at my school has given me some good advice about being safe.

Pulling Up

- I try to ignore the comments, but after a while it gets hard.
- I let them say what they want and never let them show that it hurts me.
- Having a safe place to get my feelings out can help calm me down.

Safe Path to Being OK

- The most important point is to know yourself and not allow others to knock you down. Do not give them that much power over your life.

I care about my girlfriend, but I hooked up with someone else.

Pitfalls

- I could lie about it. What she doesn't know won't hurt her.
- My own guilt is making me question everything my girlfriend is doing.
- Maybe I should just end the relationship so things don't get worse.
- I am scared she is going to hate me.

Lifelines

- My best friend gives me awesome advice and never judges me.
- I see a counsellor when I need someone to talk to and he always makes me feel better.
- My dad has given me honest advice before and I trust his opinion.

Pulling Up

- I need to be honest about my true feelings for her. Maybe the fact that I cheated means I'm not ready for a committed relationship.
- It would be better for her to hear the truth from me rather than someone else.
- I really want her to understand my point of view, so I need to write my thoughts in a letter to keep them organized. I can decide later whether I should send it.

Safe Path to Being OK

- You made the mistake and you need to face the consequences. The ball is now in her court and she gets to decide what move is next.

My boyfriend cheated on me.

Pitfalls

- I feel like he never cared and just was using me.
- Maybe no one can love me.
- He must have no respect for me.
- I don't understand why he would do this to me.
- He might have gotten an STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection) and have given it to me.

Lifelines

- My best friend convinced me to make an appointment with the doctor to make sure I haven't contracted any STI's.

Pulling Up

- I need to tell my boyfriend exactly how I feel.
- I will take time to think so I don't say something that I'll regret later.
- My friends told me to fight the girl he cheated on me with, but if she didn't know that he had a girlfriend then it wasn't her fault.
- I lost trust and will have to work on gaining it back.

Safe Path to Being OK

- You can't take back what happened. Now you need to decide if the relationship is worth fixing or if it is time to move on.

I don't really know when I should be ready to have sex.

Pitfalls

- My friends all say they're having sex.
- My boyfriend keeps pressuring me and I want to make him happy.
- Movies and TV make it look fun and cool.
- I am really curious about it.
- I think I am in love, so sex seems like the next step.

Lifelines

- My school has a Sex Ed class, but it's not all the help I need.
- The school nurse makes me feel comfortable and I trust her.
- The local walk-in clinics are great resources for information and birth control.
- I am happy my parents talk to me about sex because I probably would never have brought it up.

Pulling Up

- Knowing all the facts will keep me safe and feel protected.
- I trust my boyfriend.
- My boyfriend needs to respect the decisions that I make regarding sex.
- We have talked about what we both want and understand our expectations and fears.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Once you know all the facts you will be prepared to make a thoughtful decision. Just do what is right for you.

I've heard a lot about "safe sex" but I'm not sure how to do that.

Pitfalls

- I doubt anything is going to happen.
- I don't have any plan if I get pregnant.
- I'm not sure if my boyfriend had STI (Sexually Transmitted Infection) testing.
- My boyfriend had past girlfriends, but I don't know if they were sexually active.

Lifelines

- My older sister helps me a lot when I have questions about boys. She has been through many of the same problems and learned a lot.
- Sex Ed class at my school has been somewhat helpful.
- The school nurse has told me about my options for birth control.

Pulling Up

- Being prepared with birth control makes me feel safer.
- I had my boyfriend visit his doctor for STI testing. He found it uncomfortable, but I was there to support him.
- I feel educated about protection from STI's.

Safe Path to Being OK

- There are always risks involved with sex. Be prepared by educating yourself and having open communication between you and your partner.

I am confused about my sexuality.

Pitfalls

- Everyone else seems to have someone, but I feel different and lost.
- I am scared of what my family and friends will think of me if I say that I'm gay.
- I don't want to be a target at school.

Lifelines

- A friend of mine has been openly gay for a year and talking to him gave me a lot to think about.
- My best friend always listens when I have problems. She would never judge me and always keeps my secrets.

Pulling Up

- I have been doing some reading about sexuality online. There are tons of blogs about people's experiences with being gay and how they knew and how they came out.
- There is no rush to make a decision so I am just going to be myself and that is enough.
- By experimenting safely, I might be able to see what is right for me.

Safe Path to Being OK

- There is no reason why you have to fit into a particular label. Just be yourself and do what makes you happy.

I have been sexually abused and don't know how to deal with it.

Pitfalls

- When I was younger, I had nightmares and kept wetting the bed.
- My private parts were touched without my consent by someone I thought I could trust, so I felt it must have been my fault.
- Sometimes I cry or feel scared when there's no immediate reason. Maybe I'm holding in too many uncomfortable feelings and fears about being abused.
- I was molested by someone in my family. It felt yucky, but I didn't stop it and I let it happen more than once, so there must be something wrong with me.
- I tried to say "no" but I felt overpowered. I felt that if I told someone, either they wouldn't believe me, or it would cause major problems in the family.

Lifelines

- I finally decided to tell my best friend what happened and he said that what happened wasn't my fault and that what was done to me was wrong.
- I went to see the adult who accepts me the most for who I am and she said I should bring this forward to someone who can help make sure the abuse doesn't happen again.

Pulling Up

- I know abuse first-hand so now I have a better idea how I can avoid settings, situations, and people that could put me at risk of further abuse.
- I was advised to see a counsellor and I agreed to try it. She said I was a victim who didn't deserve what happened, that the abuser should be stopped, and that I should work on easing feelings of shame by doing things that make me feel valued. She also said I should allow time for healing to regain my self-respect.
- Talking about my sexual abuse to someone who was genuinely supportive helped me vent hidden feelings and gave me a better understanding of how to move forward.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Each person needs to know the value of their body and mind. It helps to have a parent who shows you love and teaches you how to love yourself. If that doesn't happen, you need to find a caring adult who will honour you as a person and protect you from abuse.

My boyfriend is really pressuring me to move in with him.

Pitfalls:

- I really care for him and I'm scared I'll lose him if I say no.
- I feel like I'm being pulled apart and the pressure I'm feeling is messing with my head.
- I really want to be with him but I don't know much about cooking, cleaning and keeping a budget.
- There's a lot of stress at home so it's a good excuse to get out.

Lifelines:

- I know if I told my friend she would tell me not to rush into anything.
- I need to ask myself if I am stable enough to live away from my parents.
- Living at home has its perks; I just painted my room and made it comfortable.
- I would probably have to get a part-time job to help pay for groceries and the rent.
- I really want to finish my education and moving would mean changing schools, making new friends, leaving my neighbourhood and saying goodbye to our family cat.

Pulling Up:

- I could talk with my boyfriend and explain my thoughts and feelings.
- I know my parents would freak, but I can talk to my grandmother. She is a good listener.
- I could also talk to my family doctor. He's known me since birth.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Find the courage to go slowly and look at the pros and cons. This is a big decision and it's your life and your future.

GROUP CONFLICT

I don't know how to handle conflict but I also can't ignore the bullies' taunts anymore.

Pitfalls

- I want to just punch him.
- My boyfriend wants to get involved even though he has nothing to do with it. He plans to go after this guy.
- I will probably just stop going to the club meetings because I know the bully is going to be there. I don't care how much I love going, it's not worth the torture.
- He is now texting and Facebooking rude messages to me. I can't get away from it.

Lifelines

- I told the director of the group that the bully and I are both in, and she was able to mediate a meeting between the two of us.
- I told my parents and they went into the school to talk to the principal.

Pulling Up

- I blocked his number and deleted him as a Facebook friend.
- As much as I wanted to freak out at him, I kept my cool and was the bigger person in the situation. This also helped during mediation because there was proof of his actions and I had not done anything wrong.
- He was the one with the problem. I needed to move on and not let his issues affect my life.

Safe Path to Being OK

- When someone is harassing you it is easy to ignore at first, but usually gets harder. At this time you need to get help from a trusted adult.

People judge me because I have tattoos.

Pitfalls

- People think I am a troublemaker.
- I get followed by employees while I am shopping because they think I look like someone who will steal.
- Some people assume I am part of a gang.
- Everyone is already treating me like a criminal, so I might as well act that way.
- I have been told that I won't get some jobs because my tattoos are visible.
- I heard that there are health risks involved with tattoos. I don't know if the artist was safe with his tools.

Lifelines

- My parents have always trusted my choices and they support my decision to get a tattoo.
- A few of my best friends have tattoos and they tell me to stay proud of them.

Pulling Up

- I need to do the research on the place I got my tattoo to make sure that they are clean.
- I will tell my doctor to test me for any possible infections I could have contracted from the tattoo.
- I got this tattoo for a reason and it has meaning to me.
- I need to own my decisions and be confident in my choices.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Tattoos are becoming more acceptable in society. It's your body and you can decide what you can do to it. Be happy with your decision and don't let what others think hurt you.

I took my parent's car to school and when I came out it was covered with dirty drawings and vulgar words.

Pitfalls

- I feel like a joke and that everyone is laughing at me.
- I wonder if they actually think those things about me.
- I was so embarrassed, I don't know if I can face them again.
- I am going to skip school until I feel like it has blown over.
- People acted like it was not a big deal, but it really hurt me.

Lifelines

- My best friend helped me clean it off and was really mad at the guys who did it. She kept telling me it would be okay.
- I talked to my art teacher about it and she said that she would talk to the boys involved and the principal.

Pulling Up

- I can't let others keep me from going to school. I need to go even if I am not over it.
- The boys want to apologize. I am still upset, but listening to their apologies did make me feel better.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Everyone can react differently to a situation. Just because one person finds something funny doesn't mean that everyone will. We need to think about how others will feel before we act. As a victim we need to not give the power to those who hurt us. Apologies can go a long way toward fixing a situation that might become a bigger problem later on. You can still apologize even if you didn't mean to hurt the other person.

FRIENDS

My friend moved in with me. I thought it was going to be fun but we fight all the time.

Pitfalls

- I sleep all day to avoid being around her.
- I never get a moment to myself. I used to have my room to come and relax in, but that's gone now.
- I don't feel comfortable in my own home.
- We have been fighting more and more. I am so sick of being angry.
- We were very close before but I don't think we could ever get that back.

Lifelines

- If I tell my mom my feelings then maybe she will be able to find my friend another living arrangement.

Pulling Up

- I am going to have to talk to my friend or I will lose her forever.
- Until we find other arrangements we have decided to have some room rules so we are not stepping on each other's toes.
- She told me to tell her when I needed my own space and promised to disappear when I asked.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Your friend obviously needed help and you were a great friend to open your home to her. It has been a huge adjustment for both of you. Having a plan and a set of rules to follow could help you live without a glitch.

I don't like some of the things my friends are doing but I don't want to lose them.

Pitfalls

- We have been friends since Grade 2 and I don't want to give up on the long friendship we had.
- She has always been there for me in the past and I feel bad not to support her.
- If I don't have these friends, I probably won't have any.
- They are popular and if I go against them I might not be part of the group anymore.
- They always stand up for me when I get in trouble. If I don't have them to back me then I will be a target to bullies.
- She has always made me feel better about myself, so I don't want to complain about the way she's been acting.

Lifelines

- My mom knew that there was something up. She questioned me about my friends. I thought she would be mad but she was proud that I was able to make up my own mind.

Pulling Up

- I am going to get help for my friends before someone gets hurt.
- I have been inviting them to come to the YMCA with me. We have a great time at the Zumba class every time we go.
- I love my friends, but I have to put myself first.

Safe Path to Being OK

- You can try to steer your friend down the right path, but ultimately it is their decision. You can be there for them either way or you can move on.

I have a hard time saying “no” to my friends.

Pitfalls

- It’s hard to say “no” when everyone else in the group is doing it.
- I am scared they might make fun of me if I don’t do it.
- What if she won’t be my friend anymore?

Lifelines

- I found one friend that I can trust. I talked to her privately and she agreed to back me up the next time I don’t want to do what other friends are doing.

Pulling Up

- I like to shut my phone off and get my parents to tell my friends I’m not home.
- I tell my friends the truth and if they are real friends they will not mind my saying “no.”
- I try to be creative about my excuses, like if my friends want me to smoke weed I tell them I have to get a drug test for a possible job.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Peer pressure is difficult to overcome but you need to have the ability to make your own decisions and say “no” when the time is right.

The people I thought were my friends betrayed me and I am having a hard time forgiving them.

Pitfalls

- I am tempted to get back at them.
- I try to avoid them by not going to class or practice.
- I feel like an idiot for trusting them in the first place.
- It will be hard to open up for other people in the future.
- I feel like no one understands why I am so hurt. I am in this alone.

Lifelines

- My coach knows what happened and talked to me about coming back when I am ready.
- I am always able to talk to my mom and she wants me to feel comfortable before I have to face them again.
- I need to hear out my friends. They want to apologize and I need to listen so I can move on.

Pulling Up

- I need to make a decision whether they are worth forgiving or if I should just move on to new friends.
- I can't let being uncomfortable around them ruin something I enjoy doing.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Surrounding yourself with people you can trust is important in life. Sometimes people who are truly your friends can just make a big mistake and you need to forgive them. But sometimes they aren't the kind of friend you need. If that's the case, admit it, move on and find other people who will treat you right and be supportive of you.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

I feel so fat compared to the other girls at school. I'll do anything to lose weight.

Pitfalls

- I have been skipping meals to cut down on fat and calories.
- I have been throwing up after eating.
- I have been working out during all my spare time.
- I ordered diet pills online.

Lifelines

- My mom took me to a nutritionist to discuss healthy food options for losing weight.
- The gym I go to offers personal training. They told me that working out too much can cause injury. They are going to teach me the right types of workouts for my problem areas.

Pulling Up

- I am proud of the steps I have taken to have a healthy lifestyle.
- My new goal is to be healthy, not just be skinny.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Everyone is different and that is normal. If you are comfortable in your own skin then your confidence will make you stand out.

I am bored all the time and there is nothing to do around here.

Pitfalls

- My friends and I got caught spray painting a bridge. We were so bored we were making our own fun but now we are in trouble with the law.
- I play video games a lot.
- Watching TV and movies is more interesting than my life.
- My friends and I drink in the woods behind the school most weekends.

Lifelines

- Since I started playing hockey, I have been really busy. We practice a few days a week and have a game every weekend.
- I have always liked taking photos, so I joined the yearbook committee and I get to go to a lot of school events to take pictures.
- The local YMCA has tons of fun classes, but most of the time my friends and I go there to play basketball.
- My guidance counsellor referred me to the Youth Peer Program. I go once a week and they help me with homework and then play lots of games. I have met a lot of new friends that go to other schools. It's my favourite day of the week.

Pulling Up

- If you don't make an effort to find something to do you will never find something.
- Try new things because you will never know if you like it until you try.
- Start a hobby, like photography, painting or writing.
- Your school will have sports teams and clubs, find which one interests you. You will be able to meet people with similar interests.

Safe Path to Being OK

- It is easy to get into a slump and avoid life, but it is much more fun if you get out there and interact with your peers.

My lifestyle is unhealthy but I find it hard to change.

Pitfalls

- I have been smoking off and on for five years.
- I play video games until 1 am and then I can't fall asleep until hours later.
- I never eat breakfast because I am always in a rush in the morning.
- The most exercise I get is walking to the school bus.

Lifelines

- If my mom made something I could take on the bus then I would eat breakfast.
- Addiction Services has a free quit smoking program.
- My brother always asks me to go out to play basketball with him and his friends.

Pulling Up

- By eating a balanced diet I will get the nutrients I need to make me more energized and alert.
- I will stop buying a pizza slice and pop every day for lunch. I will start packing my own lunches with healthier options.
- Once I started going out to play basketball I found myself wanting to do more. I thought it would make me more tired, but it actually gave me more energy.
- I make sure to stop playing video games early in the evening. I found they were stimulating my brain too much to sleep. I now put on some relaxing music or read a book to calm down before bed.
- My doctor said I may have a sleeping disorder and that if I'm not able to correct it through a healthy lifestyle I may need a drug prescription.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Taking care of yourself keeps you at the top of your game. You will be more alert in class and will do much better in school.

I have strong feelings of anxiety.

Pitfalls

- I constantly feel overwhelmed.
- I feel afraid of doing things that others seem to do so easily.
- Smoking marijuana helps me escape these feelings.
- I had a friend who would cut herself because she said it gave her a sense of control.
- I never want to leave my bed. I wish I didn't have to go to school or even talk to anyone.
- During anxiety attacks I feel like I am having an out-of-body experience. I don't feel like myself and more like someone else.

Lifelines

- I told my doctor about my feelings and she prescribed medication and referred me to a therapist.
- My best friend is the only one I feel comfortable talking to about my anxiety. She makes me feel like I am not alone.

Pulling Up

- Since seeking therapy I have learned ways to cope with my anxiety.
- The medication my doctor prescribed has made me feel less emotional and more balanced.
- I am able to release some anxiety by going for a run. I put on my iPod and shut out the world while I run.
- I love the nachos and cheese that they give us at the Breakthrough Program and it always reminds me of being safe and I get comfort in knowing I am accepted there.
- My dog is always there when I get home and he gives me joy knowing that he loves me unconditionally.
- Expressing my problems has helped me release them.

Safe Path to Being OK

- By knowing your triggers and being armed with coping skills you can now control your anxiety and not allow it to control you.

I feel like I am always making bad decisions.

Pitfalls

- I have been labeled by everyone, but I don't mean to be this way.
- My parents are upset all the time. I feel like we don't even have a relationship anymore.
- The teachers at school assume the worst.
- I tend to just follow along with my friends, but many times that gets me in trouble.
- If everyone is going to a party I can't miss out.

Lifelines

- My older brother used to get in trouble when he was my age but he turned his life around. Maybe he can give me some advice if I ask for it.

Pulling Up

- I need to seek advice from someone I trust.
- I try to think about things before I jump into them.
- My friends from elementary school never get in trouble so I am going to start to hang out with them again.
- I used to love basketball. I am going to try out for the team so everyone can have a new view of me and I will keep busy and stay out of trouble.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Everyone makes bad decisions sometimes. The best part is that you can learn from them and grow. Try to think before you act to avoid future problems.

I can't handle this stress anymore.

Pitfalls

- I feel a lot of pressure from my parents to get good marks. I get the most stressed during exams.
- I snap at everyone even though I don't mean to.
- I feel uneasy all the time and find it hard to relax because my brain won't stop.
- I have a presentation on Friday and I am so nervous.
- The stress gets so bad I don't feel like eating and I find it hard to sleep.

Lifelines

- I have talked to my doctor about the stress I have been feeling and she helps put me at ease.

Pulling Up

- I have been taking time for myself to have peace and quiet.
- I have been taking a yoga class to learn ways to relax.
- I try to have positive thoughts.
- I go for a run to clear my head.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Stress is a normal part of life. Everyone gets stressed and everyone handles it differently. Too much stress can be harmful so you need to find your own ways to cope.

Sometimes I get a sudden panic attack.

Pitfalls

- I feel like I'm not in control of myself.
- My heart feels like it's pounding out of my chest.
- I have difficulty breathing
- I get shaky.
- I feel extreme fear of crowds.
- I get sweaty and nauseous.

Lifelines

- My doctor thinks that I should talk to a psychologist about my anxiety.
- I attend group meetings at the hospital to talk with others that have the same problem as me.

Pulling Up

- I have learned my triggers. I know that I can't handle large crowds.
- Some situations can't be avoided so I have learned skills to cope.
- I have been taking the medication prescribed by my doctor. It has lowered my anxiety.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Being in a panic state is scary. This can really take over your life and prevent you from doing normal activities. You need to ask for help from someone you trust.

Sometimes I wish I weren't alive.

Pitfalls

- I am depressed all the time.
- I regularly have thoughts of death.
- I know how I would kill myself if I were to do it.
- I feel like no one cares or understands me.

Lifelines

- My dad came to me because he noticed a change in my personality. I'm glad that he opened the door to talk because I was too afraid.
- The Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) is available for me to talk to someone any time. It's much easier to be honest with people that I don't know. They are helpful and make me feel like I'm not alone.
- If I needed immediate help I could call 911.
- If the suicidal thoughts are serious you can be admitted to the Regional Hospital for 24 hour observation.

Pulling Up

- It's embarrassing to tell people how I feel, but when I do, I realize that I'm not as alone as I feel.
- My family cares about me a lot. I would not want to hurt them that much.
- Having regular appointments with my psychologist has given me a release.

Safe Path to Being OK

- If you have a suicidal thought, especially if you plan how and when to do it, get help immediately. Your life is important and people love you and want you in this world. It gets better!

My friend took her life and I feel like I should have stopped it.

Pitfalls

- I should have known and tried to stop it.
- If I had been there more, then maybe she would have told me.
- I feel like I lost part of me.
- I am so sad and I can't see myself getting over it.

Lifelines

- My mom knew how much I cared for my friend and she has been there to talk when I need her.
- The school offered counsellors for us to talk to.
- My friends are feeling the same loss as me. We have been a support group for each other.

Pulling Up

- Grieving allowed me to come to terms with my loss.
- I don't want her to be remembered this way. I always try to think of the good times we had together.
- We set up an information session at school so kids can be aware of teen suicide and hope to prevent this from happening again.
- I found closure when I was able to understand that I couldn't have changed her decision.

Safe Path to Being OK

- I now understand that being a friend was all I could do. She was good at hiding her pain and no one saw this coming. Hopefully her story can help others not end their lives too soon.

I often feel depressed.

Pitfalls

- I always feel down.
- I am tired all the time and find it difficult to get out of bed.
- I lost touch with my friends.
- I don't enjoy doing the things I once enjoyed.

Lifelines

- My father had depression as a teen and noticed that I was experiencing the same symptoms. He told me he will find me help.
- I saw my doctor about my mood problem. He diagnosed me with depression. Now that we know, we can find the help I need with medication and therapy.

Pulling Up

- I feel a sense of relief when I write my emotions down in a journal.
- When I listen to my favourite music it helps me get into a better mood.
- Going for a quiet walk to my favourite place lets me focus and get over the hump.
- My friends are always there to listen and help get my mind off my problems.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Talk to an adult that you trust and never be afraid to ask for help. Depression is a serious illness and needs attention.

I am scared my friend may hurt himself.

Pitfalls

- My friend has been acting depressed.
- He has been abusing his prescribed drugs.
- School has always been tough for him. He has always been bullied and picked on.
- He lashed out at a teacher the other day in class. He has never been an angry person but now he seems to have a short fuse.
- I feel the friend I used to have is gone and this person is someone else.
- He has mentioned suicide before. He said how he would do it if he were going to. It seemed hypothetical, but now I'm not too sure.

Lifelines

- I talked to my mom about it. She was happy I came to her and she talked to my friend's parents.
- I gave my friend the number to the local crisis help line: (902) 562-HELP.

Pulling Up

- I will be available when he needs me and always assure him I am there for him.
- I will listen and support but not judge or degrade him.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Always be a friend. Remind your friend that life is worth living and there are many people who care for them. It might feel like there will be no light at the end of the tunnel but that is not true. It *does* get better.

I'm in trouble with the law and I'm afraid about what happens next.

Pitfalls

- I don't know my rights or what will happen after I am charged. I have so many questions.
- I am scared of the police and parents reactions.
- Why did this happen to me? There are worse criminals out there that the cops should be worrying about.

Lifelines

- I was referred by the police to attend Restorative Justice. They will allow me to take full accountability by understanding directly the effects of my actions on the victim and the community.
- I need a lawyer who understands my rights and will protect them.
- My parents are still very upset with me but they are going to do what they can to help. Just knowing that they are there gives me hope.

Pulling Up

- I can try to find out what my rights are.
- I have learned my lesson. I hope they are able to see how truly sorry I am about my actions.

Safe Path to Being OK

- If you are going to break the law you obviously know that there is a chance you will get caught. You ultimately made that choice so you need to live with the consequences. The best thing you can do is learn from your mistakes so they don't happen again.

It's impossible to find a job around here.

Pitfalls

- There is nothing here so why even bother.
- My friend sells drugs to make money.
- I don't know how I am going to pay my bills or put food on the table.
- I never get any job I apply for. No one ever wants to hire me.

Lifelines

- There is a summer job lottery that happens each year for students. I found the application and dates at the guidance counsellor's office.
- The YMCA helped me update my resume and also helped me develop skills in my field of interest.
- I check the Service Canada Job Bank every day for a job that fits my needs. (www.jobbank.gc.ca)
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada offers programs to help individuals enter the workforce. They have a special program for youth and they were able to get me a summer job at a local park.
- Ask family and friends if they know about any job openings. Sometimes it's good to know someone to get your foot in the door.

Pulling Up

- I will keep trying and not give up.
- I have been volunteering at the SPCA and that will look good on a resume.
- I had my resume updated and now it looks great.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Our economy may be at a low point but there are a lot of opportunities in entry level jobs. You probably won't get your dream job immediately but gaining experience and a good work ethic is vital, even if you end up having to leave to find work.

I can't control my anger.

Pitfalls

- I always end up making things worse.
- I get into fights all the time because I can't hold back my anger.
- When I am angry I say things that I don't mean and wish I could take back.
- I wish I didn't hurt the people I care about but they are my usual targets.
- It is embarrassing that I lash out so much.

Lifelines

- My school referred me to an anger management program. There I am able to learn how to get out my anger in a positive way.

Pulling Up

- I learned to walk away until I have calmed down.
- I love going to kickboxing class. It allows me to get out my frustrations and energy.
- Listening to music relaxes me.
- I started to keep a journal. By writing my feelings I feel less burdened and happier.
- Talking to my friends about my problems instead of letting them build up keeps me from exploding.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Anger is an emotion that is natural. Some people are able to control it better than others. You need to find a way to release that anger before you or someone else gets hurt.

FAMILY

My parents are so controlling and never let me do what I want.

Pitfalls

- I don't care if they won't let me do something, I'll just do it anyway.
- We can barely talk without a fight.
- My mom said she was disappointed in me, but I think that she just doesn't understand me.
- I'm angry all the time and taking it out on everyone.
- I hate lying to my parents, but I have no choice.
- I lost the relationship that I once had with my mom due to rebelling.

Lifelines

- My dad is easier to talk to so maybe I could talk to him first and we could talk to my mom together.

Pulling Up

- I try to be respectful in hopes that they will learn to trust me to make my own decisions and mistakes.
- Sometimes I think to myself that I only have to be home until I'm 18 and then I'll be free. So I can suck it up and wait it out.

Safe Path to Being OK

- I know my parents are just doing what they think is best but they don't understand what it's like to be a teenager now. There is no simple answer, but we all need patience.

I can't talk to my parents because they always overreact.

Pitfalls

- I feel like they don't respect me and so I treat them the same way.
- When I tell them anything it ends up in a fight, so I just avoid it.
- I am angry that they don't trust me.
- I would rather not tell them or lie to them than have to put up with the drama.
- They don't understand me and I don't understand them.
- I sometimes get so mad that I can't control what I say so I speak before thinking.
- We used to have a good relationship but we have lost it.

Lifelines

- My older sister had dealt with the same thing. She is great to talk to for advice or just to listen to me complaining.
- My grandpa and I have always been close and he has helped me talk to my parents before.

Pulling Up

- At times I like to write my feelings in a letter to my parents. By writing I am able to get my point across without interruption and emotion.
- I attempt to talk to them while keeping my cool. If I stay calm and don't overreact, there's a better chance they will do the same.

Safe Path to Being OK

- There is an age gap and parents are from a different generation so it's understandable that it's difficult to understand each other. Both sides need to respect each other's opinion and try to see where they are coming from. There is no easy answer but respectful communication will help.

I was trying to be careful but I got pregnant as a teen.

Pitfalls (*for the mother-to-be*)

- I don't know if I can handle this news. Maybe I shouldn't have this baby?
- I am feeling scared. Who is going to help me? Who can I trust?
- How am I going to tell my family and friends?
- Is this going to affect my popularity? People are staring and talking behind my back.
- I feel different – freaking out. My body is changing. My moods are up and down.
- How is this going to affect my body? Will I get my body back?
- Am I going to be full of stretch marks?
- What if I have a miscarriage, or even worse, die giving birth?
- What about my education? How can I stay in school and take care of a baby?

Pitfalls (*for the father-to-be*)

- I feel overwhelmed and frustrated. How can I even be certain that I am the father?
- Since she told me the news, she's been acting so weird - emotional and moody.
- I want to support her, but I don't know how much more I can take.
- This is my baby too and I want to be a good father, but I don't know how.
- The agencies involved can be so challenging and unhelpful.
- We are facing discriminations and people are judgmental.

Lifelines

- I will cope because I have to - because I have a little person growing inside me.
- My boyfriend and I will support each other.
- I will try not to panic. I will trust my instincts.
- I recognize the hardest part is dealing with negative, judgmental people.
- I will lean on my family, grandparents, and friends.
- I will talk with my family doctor and community health nurse.
- I will try to seek help from local community support groups.
- I will try to stay in school and also seek financial support.
- I will contact a local councillor to help me connect with a counselling service.

Pulling Up

- I know I'm young and having a baby will change my life forever, but I will try to be brave.
- People I care about have reassured me that I am not alone.
- Surrounding myself with people who are supportive and positive is so important to me.
- I'll learn about nutrition and development so my baby and I will be the best we can be.

Safe Path to Being OK

- If you stay focused on the health and well-being of you and your baby, then you will be better prepared to deal with the challenges ahead of you.

I have a baby but I don't know what to do as a teen parent.

Pitfalls

- I find it hard to trust people.
- I feel lonely. My friends are disappearing and I miss them.
- I am afraid of being abandoned and I worry about financial support.
- I don't know if I can handle the responsibilities that come with the baby.
- I worry a lot about the health of the baby but I dread the medical follow-ups.
- My hormones are out of whack, and I am feeling emotional and overwhelmed.
- I feel resentment over losing my freedom.
- I worry about my partner cheating on me.
- I worry a lot about everything.

Lifelines

- I can get parenting support from family and friends.
- I can get community support through child care services and youth resource centres.
- I can get help with my baby through Victorian Order of Nurses and prenatal follow-up programs.
- I can make sure my baby stays healthy through regular visits to my family doctor.
- I can ask my teacher, guidance counsellor, or administrator to help me continue my education.

Pulling Up

- I will try to stay positive.
- I will be good to myself by eating better and getting more rest.
- I will stay away from drugs and drug dealers.
- I will protect myself by practicing safe sex.
- I will make sure my babysitters are qualified and certified.
- I will make it my goal to finish high school.

Safe Path to Being OK

- I will reach out and seek support. I will lean on my family and friends.
- I will do what I need to do to stay positive, work hard and love my baby.

My dad had to go out West for work and it's so weird at home without him.

Pitfalls

- I feel sad when I don't have him close.
- Our family feels empty without him.
- I just want to get it off my mind so I just go out and party as much as I can.

Lifelines

- My mom has noticed that I have been missing dad a lot so she has made more of an effort to be there for me the way he was.
- My friends have been visiting a lot so I don't have to be alone.

Pulling Up

- Dad calls a few times a week to catch up.
- We both have Skype accounts and use that to video chat. It is almost as good as having him here.
- I just joined the gym so I can keep busy and get out of the house while Dad is gone.

Safe Path to Being OK

- I know that he doesn't want to go. There are not many job opportunities locally and he will be able to support our family if he travels.

My mom is really sick and I don't know what I can do for her and for my family.

Pitfalls

- I cry a lot thinking about losing her.
- I feel depressed.
- I don't know what this all means. I'm confused about the illness and no one seems able to tell me anything.
- I feel helpless. There is nothing I can do to change what is happening.
- I was trying to ignore what was going on so I wouldn't be hurt.
- I am so scared that I may lose my mom.
- When I am drunk or high I am sometimes able to forget, but it also can make it worse.

Lifelines

- My grandmother has been a huge support for my family through all of this. She has been great to talk to or even just to hold me when I cry.

Pulling Up

- It was too hard to try to do everything myself so I had no choice but to ask for help and we are all better off now.
- I still enjoy doing the things I always loved and that helps me get my mind off my mom.
- I didn't want to talk about my fears at first, but it made me feel better.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Illness of a parent can put a lot of strain on the kids, but you are a kid and you are not expected to take it all on alone.

My grandpa passed away and we were really close.

Pitfalls

- I have been so sad all the time.
- What will I do without him?
- He was the leader of our family and we will be lost without him.
- Why did he have to be taken from us? I am so mad that it was him.

Lifelines

- My family and friends have been supporting me and helping me through this terrible time.

Pulling Up

- I like to think about how wonderful my grandfather was. It makes me feel better knowing he had a great life.
- Talking about my feelings has made the grieving process easier.

Safe Path to Being OK

- My grandfather would not want me to waste my life missing him. There is a time to grieve and a time to move on. He will always be part of my life.

I found out my father is cheating on my mother. She has no idea and I don't know what to do.

Pitfalls

- I avoid going home as much as possible so I don't have to face them.
- My anger keeps building up and I feel like I might explode.
- I can't look at my mom because I feel so bad for her.
- My dad wants me to keep the secret. I'm so confused.
- My dad keeps buying me things. It feels like "hush money" to keep quiet.
- I don't want my parents to divorce so I just want to forget it happened.

Lifelines

- I was able to open up to my aunt about the situation. She was able to talk to my mom.
- I told my older brother and we talked to my dad together.
- My guidance counsellor was there to listen so I could get it all off my chest.

Pulling Up

- I need to decide what the right thing is to do.
- I need a plan to tell my mom or to confront my father because it can't continue like this.
- I must realize that adults—even parents—are people who make mistakes. Though it hurt me, this is ultimately their lives, not mine.

Safe Path to Being OK

- No one ever wants to be lied to. Usually, getting the truth out is the right thing to do even if it hurts at first, though you have to be careful and sensitive. Mostly, you have to remember that you aren't responsible for what happened or the hurt that follows and you shouldn't take on the responsibility for what is someone else's mistake.

I am being pressured to quit school and go out West to find work but I don't feel like I'm ready.

Pitfalls

- I find it hard to get motivated
- Moving that far away is scary
- I heard there are lots of drugs out there, especially crystal meth
- I know that the job sites do hair and urine tests to check for drugs
- I heard that sexually transmitted diseases are rampant there and I don't want to bring any of them back to my community.
- What if I fail?
- Should I really leave high school before I graduate?

Lifelines

- I could ask my girlfriend to help me update my resume and knock on lots of doors to let people know that I am serious about finding work here.
- I could do some volunteer work and that would motivate me to have routine in my life and people would see that I am a hard worker.
- I could talk to an employment counsellor about getting registered in a training program.

Pulling Up

- I could look at the pros and cons of going or staying. "Is this right for me?"
- I could talk to a family member or my best friend about my anxieties.
- I could talk to someone about protecting myself against sexually transmitted diseases.
- I could do some research and talk to someone who's been there – find out as much as I can about the work situation out West.
- I could get a buddy to go with me or hook up with someone there to ease the transition.
- I could communicate with folks back home with cell phone, texting and Skype.
- I shouldn't go unless there is something concrete lined up.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Take care of yourself by finding out all you can about the job market, and knowing about the dangers of drugs, sexually transmitted diseases and unsafe work conditions.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

I think I may be addicted to my prescription drugs.

Pitfalls

- I don't think I could stop taking the meds if I wanted to.
- I have been running out of my prescription before it has been refilled.
- It is not having the same effects it once did so I have been mixing it with street drugs to help get the feeling.

Lifelines

- Addiction Services has given me the resources and tools to fight my addiction.
- My doctor has noticed the issue with my meds and has decided to try something else.
- I was able to check myself into detox at the Regional Hospital.

Pulling Up

- Acknowledging the dependence was the most important step.
- There is no way I could have gotten off the drugs without help.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Being able to ask for help is scary but important. Addiction is serious even when it is prescription drugs.

I got caught using marijuana. I think it's normal for teens to try it.

Pitfalls

- My parents knew I was high because my eyes were bloodshot. They don't trust me now and are threatening to give me drug testing.
- I got caught at school with a joint. I was suspended for 5 days and they said I will be expelled if I get caught again.
- My cousin started using marijuana but now uses harder drugs. His life is a mess.
- I had weed that was laced with something. I was so out of it that I couldn't control my actions.

Lifelines

- Many adults had experiences with marijuana when they were younger. Find someone you trust and open up to them.

Pulling Up

- Know the law. It is an illegal substance so if you get caught you will have to face the consequences.
- Know the possible side-effects.
- There can be permanent damage to your body when you are inhaling smoke of any kind, so know all the facts.

Safe Path to Being OK

- Marijuana is an illegal uncontrolled substance. There are no regulations on how it's grown or what has been mixed with it. Find activities and other ways to feel high without it being high risk.

I drink alcohol for fun but it's causing me problems.

Pitfalls

- I can't have fun without drinking.
- Sometimes I drink so much that I black out and don't remember what happened.
- My parents knew I was drunk on Saturday and they grounded me for a month.
- I got caught by the cops. They had to drive me home and I had never seen my parents so disappointed in me.
- My friend drank so much last weekend he got alcohol poisoning and needed to get his stomach pumped at the hospital.

Lifelines

- Alateen meetings can help or you can talk to a friend who stopped drinking.

Pulling Up

- I'm sick of being sick. I'm going to have to start saying "no."
- I had fun before I started drinking and I need to get back to that.

Safe Path to Being OK

- If you think you may have a dependency, you need to seek help. If you don't think you have a problem but just want to stop, then you need to find healthier things to do.