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## Asking for Help

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### MAIN POINTS

- ★ It is very common to have difficulty asking for help if you have PTSD and substance abuse.
  - ★ You must get help from others to recover. No one can do it alone.
  - ★ In learning to ask for help, start "small": Practice on safe people, with simple requests.
  - ★ Try to ask for help before a problem becomes overwhelming. But you can call any time—*before, during, or after* a hard time.
  - ★ Prepare how you'll handle it if the person refuses your request for help.
  - ★ In asking for help, you don't have to "spill" everything.
  - ★ Asking for help makes you stronger and more *independent* in the long run.
  - ★ Learning to ask for help may feel very awkward at first.
  - ★ If there is no one in your life to ask help from, work on building a support network.
  - ★ When asking for help, be gentle—no demands, threats, or insults.
  - ★ Discover whether your fears are accurate: Compare your *prediction* to *reality*.
  - ★ Carry in your wallet a list of phone numbers you can call.
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## Approach Sheet

★ Fill in the first three parts now. Later, after you've approached the person, fill in the last part.

(1) Who will you talk to?

(2) What will you say?

(3) What do you predict will happen?

(4) What did happen in reality?

★ You may want to ask yourself:

- ◆ What did you learn from trying this?
- ◆ Did you get what you wanted, or at least part of what you wanted?
- ◆ Is there anything you might do differently next time?
- ◆ How do you feel about your experience?
- ◆ How difficult was it?

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## Ideas for a Commitment

*Commit to one action that will move your life forward!*

*It can be anything you feel will help you, or you can try one of the ideas below.*

*Keeping your commitment is a way of respecting, honoring, and caring for yourself.*

- ✦ Option 1: Write a list of people you can call when you are having problems (e.g., wanting to talk, feeling afraid, drug cravings, needing a ride, etc.). Include friends, family members, self-help sponsors, treaters, hot-lines, drop-in centers, and anyone else you can think of (see example below).

### **List of people to call for help**

1. My friend Martha: 466-4215 or 252-7655
2. My therapist (Dr. Klein): 855-1111 or can page at 855-1000
3. My AA sponsor (Barbara): 731-1502

- ✦ Option 2: Go for it! Fill out the Approach Sheet.

### **APPROACH SHEET-EXAMPLE**

Fill in the first three parts now. Later, after you've approached the person, fill in the last part.
<p align="center"><b>(1) <u>Who</u> will you talk to?</b></p> <p align="center">My friend Elizabeth.</p>
<p align="center"><b>(2) <u>What</u> will you say?</b></p> <p align="center">"Please help me not drink at the party tonight—you can help by not offering me any alcohol and checking in with me at times during the party to see if I'm okay."</p>
<p align="center"><b>(3) What do you <u>predict</u> will happen?</b></p> <p align="center">She won't want to help me. She'll think I'm pathetic.</p>
<p align="center"><b>(4) What did happen in <u>reality</u>?</b></p> <p align="center">I called Elizabeth. She was very willing to watch out for me at the party, and also gave me the phone number for a good AA group in town. She didn't convey any judgment or negative views of me.</p>

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