

# Writing Social Narratives for Mental Health

## What information do I need to create a mental health social narrative?

### What is the specific situation or trigger that may lead to a mental health crisis?

For example: sensory overload, frustration, unexpected change in routine, etc.

### What coping strategies are helpful for the person?

Examples: deep breathing, using a calm-down kit, asking for a break, sensory toys, etc.

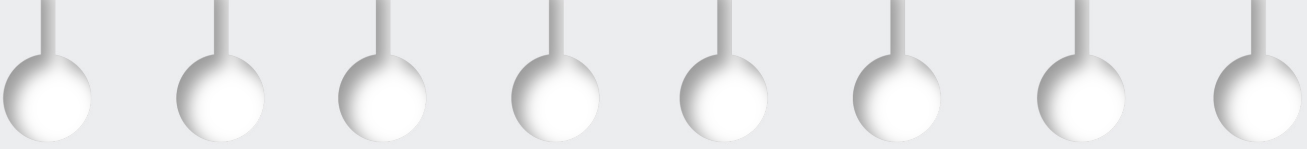
### Who are the trusted individuals they can turn to for support?

Examples: family members, caregivers, therapists, teachers, etc.

### What positive outcome would you like to reinforce?

Example: feeling calmer, gaining control over emotions, learning to ask for help.

### Does the person prefer text-based narratives, visuals, or a combination?

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- *Triggers are related to changes in routine*
  - *Familiar coping strategies are using a calm-down kit and asking for a break*
  - *Trusted person is their mother*
  - *Would like to reinforce gaining control over their emotions and asking for help*
  - *A text only format works well for this person*

Fletcher, A., Mallory, S., Ambrosie, A., & CDS DNEA Team. (2024). *DNEA resource guide: Grab and go supports: Social narratives for mental health*. Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism

Additional resource guides at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/>.

# Writing Social Narratives for Mental Health

Here's a sample social narrative for handling an unexpected change in routine:

Title: "When Things Change, I Can Stay Calm"

## Sometimes, plans change

"Sometimes, things don't go the way I expect. Maybe we can't go to the park today, or we need to leave the house earlier than planned. It's okay for things to change."

## It's okay to feel upset

"When plans change, I might feel upset, confused, or frustrated. These feelings are normal, and it's okay to feel them."

## What I can do when I feel upset

"When I start to feel upset, I can use my calm-down kit. I can take deep breaths, squeeze my stress ball, or use my favorite fidget toy. These help me feel better."

## Ask for a break

"If I need more time to calm down, I can ask for a break. I can say, 'I need a break,' and that's okay. Taking a break helps me stay calm and in control."

## My mom can help me

"If I am still feeling upset, I can talk to my mom. She will listen to me and help me feel better. She is there to support me."

## After I calm down

"After I use my calm-down kit or take a break, I will start to feel better. I can get back to doing what I was doing, even if plans have changed."

## I am learning new skills

"Every time I use my calm-down kit or ask for a break, I am learning how to handle my feelings better. I am getting stronger at staying calm when things change."

## I can feel proud of myself

"After I get calm, I can feel proud. I am in control of my emotions, and I know how to ask for help when I need it."

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