

A Focus on Engagement

How we involve people in the conversation about risk will largely depend on issues of language, as well as an appreciation of mild to profound communication difficulties that accompany the experience of some conditions. From the perspective of a number of mental health service users, the concept of *safety* is preferred to highlighting risk. This involves a series of considerations that service users should ask themselves when thinking about how they assess and manage their own risk.

Safety Plan Checklist

- When I am well, the following helps me to remain stable...
- When I am unwell:
 - The following makes me feel safe...
 - The following makes me feel unsafe...
 - The following things need to be taken care of in my personal life...
 - I want the following people to be informed...
 - I do not want the following people to be informed...
 - The following are my early warning signs of things getting worse...
 - This is my plan of action if early warning signs show...
 - The following are my usual causes of stress (danger situations, people, places, times of the year, etc.)...
 - This is my plan of how to avoid the above danger situations...
 - This is my plan of how to manage the above danger situations if I can't avoid them...
 - I prefer to work with the following staff if I am unwell because...
 - The following are what I would like services to do if I am unwell...
 - If I am unwell the following ways of working should be avoided if at all possible...
- How should the above information best be written down?
- Who should have copies of this information?

Note: The dual purpose of using a checklist or format is to support the person to develop their own picture of *safety*, and also to engage service users and practitioners in meaningful dialogue that can inform how they can most effectively *work with risk* in collaborative ways.

The above safety plan is based on the work of ARW Training and is included with their permission and acknowledgement to the original *Service User Personal Safety Plan*.