"And the trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more."

—Erica Jong
(20th-century American writer)
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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star</th>
<th>Fill in the first three parts now. Later, after you've approached the person, fill in the last part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>Who will you talk to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>What will you say?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>What do you predict will happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>What did happen in reality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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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