

**“And the trouble is,  
if you don’t risk anything,  
you risk even more.”**

—Erica Jong  
(20th-century American writer)

---

## Asking for Help

---

### 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.
-

## 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?

From *Seeking Safety* by Lisa M. Najavits (2002). Copyright by The Guilford Press. Permission to photocopy this form is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see copyright page for details).