

## **Overview of Considerations for Safety Planning**

“Safety planning for teletherapy: What therapists need to know” by Liz Talago  
[www.pathmentalhealth.com/blog/safety-plans-and-teletherapy/](http://www.pathmentalhealth.com/blog/safety-plans-and-teletherapy/)

Clinically reviewed by Nick Frye, MS, LCPC (May 19, 2023)

### **General Considerations:**

At a minimum, safety plans should include a list of:

- **Triggers:** What are the signs that there could be an increase in risk?
- **Coping strategies:** What are the client’s existing, effective coping strategies? Who can the client rely on for support in difficult situations?
- **Provider responses:** What steps will the therapist take to keep the client (or someone else) safe? What does the client need to know about the limits of confidentiality in these situations?
- **Emergency protocols:** Who is on the client’s emergency contact list? What other emergency numbers (crisis hotlines, etc.) or resources might be helpful to include?

Safety plans should include these basic elements but they should always be personalized to your client’s unique strengths and challenges.

### **TMH Considerations:**

- **Crisis response protocols appropriate for a teletherapy context.** During intake, collect your client’s emergency contact information and their exact location during their session. Without this information you won’t be able to direct emergency services to your client should the need arise. Be sure your client understands the importance of letting you know whenever they are accessing their session from a new location.
- **A clear plan of action in case your internet connection is weak or interrupted.** This might include directions for switching platforms or contacting you by phone if you lose access to your video conferencing platform. It’s also a good idea to check that your client has the numbers for local emergency services in their area. In addition, make time to ensure that your clients are familiar with how to use your teletherapy platform before they begin remote sessions.
- **Information on how to ensure confidentiality during remote therapy and a discussion of the [benefits and risks of teletherapy](#).** Be transparent about the privacy challenges associated with teletherapy and discuss ways your client can let you know if there’s a person nearby so that you can pause the session. This might mean using the chat feature or simply having a hand signal that means “Let’s pause, someone is listening.”