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Cope Ahead Plan

A hard situation is coming. Plan it while you are calm, rehearse it in your head, and walk in with your skills ready.

EMOTION REGULATION · FILL IN A FEW DAYS BEFORE



The five steps

1 Describe
The facts: who, where, when, what will likely happen.

2 Expect
Which emotions and urges will show up, and how strong?

3 Choose
The exact skills you will use and the words you will say.

4 Rehearse
Picture yourself in the scene now, coping. Then the hard version.

5 Relax
A few minutes of slow breathing after you rehearse.

My plan

The situation (who, where, when, what will likely happen)

Emotion I expect	0 to 10
	/10
	/10

Urge that could get in the way	0 to 10
	/10
	/10

Skills I will use (be specific: what I will do, and the words I will say)

The scene I will rehearse (eyes closed, I am in it now, using my skills)

Plan B (if it goes differently)

Plan C (the hard version, and how I get through it)

My way out (a break, a walk, a ride home) **and who I can text afterwards** ☐ Rehearsed ☐ Relaxed afterwards

After the event

What happened	What worked	Next time I will

Too much while rehearsing? Open your eyes, breathe slowly, and try again later with a smaller part of the scene. Cope ahead is for planning, not for a crisis.

Practice this on your phone with the free DBT-Mind app.
Scan to download for iPhone or Android. Full guide: dbt-mind.com/guides/cope-ahead

This sheet supports skills practice. It is not therapy or emergency care. **In danger right now?** Call or text 988 (US), call 112 (EU) or your local emergency number.

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