

Making a Before-During-After (BDA) Plan

Creating a **before-during-after plan**, or **BDA**, for an event may be helpful if you anticipate that the event may cause a flood of emotions, an increase in symptoms, or an increase in impulses or safety concerns. BDAs can be used for both positive and negative events, including telephone calls, family meetings, holidays/anniversaries/ birthdays, appointments, meal times, etc. We encourage you to review your BDA with staff and/or your treatment team prior to using it in order to get feedback and suggestions.

The **before** portion of the plan should include things you can do to mentally, emotionally, and physically prepare yourself prior to the event. Depending on the situation, this portion of the plan may start one or more days before the event or a few hours before the event. It should include things like symptom management skills (grounding, dialing down, imagery, containment, progressive muscle relaxation, etc.), a staff check-in, self-soothing, internal communication and safe places (if applicable), and prn medication if necessary.

The **during** portion of the plan should include things to help you stay present and safe while the event is happening. This portion of the plan should include symptom management skills (grounding, deep breathing, past versus present, etc.). Depending on the event, it may also include a specific script of what you want to talk about (bullet points or outline), what you want to avoid talking about (setting boundaries), a code word or signal to staff that you need assistance, or a specific schedule of activities.

The **after** portion of the plan should include things you can do once the event is over in order to manage emotions and impulses that may arise. Try to plan for all possible outcomes (e.g., for a telephone call, reaching someone's voicemail, having a good conversation, or having to end the conversation early). This portion of the plan should include things like symptom management skills (grounding, containment, imagery, etc.), a staff check-in, self-soothing, distraction, internal communication (if applicable), and prn medication if necessary.

It may be helpful to:

- Schedule specific times for each part of your BDA.
- Be specific and detailed about which interventions you are going to use (e.g., identifying colors for grounding).
- Incorporate your crisis continuum.
- Keep your BDA with you in an easily accessible place (e.g., taped to your journal).
- Review your BDA after the event and revise as necessary.
- Get feedback from self-states when creating and revising your plan (if applicable).
- Keep your BDA and rework it as needed for similar situations.