

# Runaway Missing Toolkit for Youth and Families

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**BHD** | Behavioral  
Health  
Division

A Division of the Department of  
Health & Human Services



## Things to Ask Myself before I Runaway

You may be struggling with deciding whether to leave your home or placement. It can be a difficult decision. As a helpful next step, we encourage you to sit down and think about how you would answer these questions:



- When I feel ready to leave my home/placement why is it that I want to go?
- What can I do to make things better where I am?
- Who have I reached out to on my team that I trust to make things better where I am?
- Who can I talk to about my concerns? Call 1-800-RUNAWAY ([1-800-786-2929](tel:1-800-786-2929)) to speak with a trained NRS staff member or volunteer who will listen and support you.
- How will my leaving impact the people that love and care about me?
- What other trusted family or friends can I possibly take a break with and inform my team so they can help me, instead of leaving?
- What will I do for money? Shelter? Food? Transportation?
- What about school?
- How will I get access to my medications?
- Am I going to be gone awhile or coming back in a few days?
- Who can I depend on if I leave where I am?
- Who and how will I stay in contact with someone that I trust?
- If I have an emergency or end up in trouble who can I call?
- When I want to come back who can I call?
- Do I have a solid plan when I leave and what is my plan b in case my first plan doesn't work?

## WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN MY CHILD GOES MISSING OR RUNS AWAY...

Wraparound Milwaukee and your team are very concerned when your son or daughter goes missing and will make every effort to find your child and make sure they are safe. We need your input and we need you to stay in communication with us during these difficult times.

- If your son or daughter goes missing from your home, please:

\_\_\_\_\_ Refer to the **INFORMATION NEEDED FOR YOUTH WITH A RUNAWAY HISTORY OR FOR YOUTH WHO ARE MISSING** sheet and file a MISSING PERSONS REPORT with local law enforcement. Note: **FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS LAW ENFORCEMENT FROM ESTABLISHING A WAITING PERIOD BEFORE ACCEPTING A MISSING CHILD REPORT. FEDERAL LAW APPLIES TO YOUTH UP TO 20 YEARS OLD UNDER "SUZANNE'S LAW".** Let your care coordinator know if you need assistance with this.

\_\_\_\_\_ Notify your Care Coordinator right away and talk about who will let other team members know. If your child is on a court order, the court may issue a CAPIAS, which means the police may pick up your child if they find him/her and take them to Detention.

\_\_\_\_\_ Look at the Crisis Plan from your child's Plan of Care to see if there are other things you and your team could do that you talked about.

\_\_\_\_\_ Call the National Runaway Safeline at 1-800-RUNAWAY for extra support.

\_\_\_\_\_ Call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THELOST (843-5678) once a missing persons report has been filed with the police.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ask for an emergency team meeting so your team can talk about what to do when your child is found. Your Care Coordinator needs a plan from your team so that your child may not have to go to Detention if they were not involved in any dangerous or illegal activities while they were missing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Let your Care Coordinator know right away if you talk to your child while they are missing or if you think you may know where they are.

- If your son or daughter goes missing from an out of home placement please:

\_\_\_\_\_ Make sure the placement lets you know as soon as your child goes missing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Make sure they have filed a MISSING PERSONS REPORT with local law enforcement in the town or city that placement is located in. If they haven't, encourage them to do so. Your Care Coordinator can help you with this.

\_\_\_\_\_ Notify your Care Coordinator right away and talk about who will notify other team members. If your child is on a court order, the court may issue a CAPIAS which means the police may pick up your child if they find him/her and take them to Children's Court and Detention.

\_\_\_\_\_ Refer to your Crisis Plan from your child's Plan of Care to see if there are other things you and your team discussed that should be happening.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact the National Runaway Safeline at 1-800-RUNAWAY for extra support and guidance.

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THELOST (843-5678) once a missing persons report has been filed with the police.

\_\_\_\_\_ Request an emergency team meeting so your team can discuss what to do when your child is found. The team needs to make a plan so that your child may not have to go to Detention if they were not involved in any dangerous or illegal activities while they were missing.

\_\_\_\_\_ Let your Care Coordinator know right away if you talk to your child while they are missing or if you think you may know where they are.



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## **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD COMES BACK FROM BEING MISSING OR ON THE RUN?**

1. Try showing your concern in a positive way even though you may feel angry and hurt. National Runaway Safeline at 1-800-RUNAWAY can help you with this if you don't have other people to talk to.
2. Meet their basic needs. Give your child a chance to eat and rest.
3. Contact your care coordinator right away. Depending on your plan, you can talk about who to call (police, Center for Missing and Exploited Children, child welfare, probation, the courts, etc) and what to do.
4. If you think your child may have been harmed or hurt in any way, talk with your care coordinator right away and talk about where to take them for a medical exam.
5. Ask for an emergency team meeting. Talk about what could have been done differently and what worked well and what did not. Talk about what needs to change and who and what will help your child stay safe and in one place. Make adjustments to the crisis plan as needed.
6. Know that you and your child may need to go to a court hearing with your care coordinator to present your plan to the judge depending on what happened while they were gone and to clear the CAPIAS.

## Who do I Contact if my Child Runs Away?



### **1) Contact local Law enforcement to file a missing person's report**

#### **When you call law enforcement:**

- Provide law enforcement with your child's name, date of birth, height, weight and descriptions of any other unique identifiers such as eyeglasses and braces. Tell them when you noticed your child was missing and what clothing he or she was wearing.
- Request law enforcement authorities immediately enter your child's name and identifying information into the FBI's **National Crime Information Center Missing Person File**.

### **2. Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).**

They have a team of trained staff and volunteers who connect with adults who are concerned about the young people in their lives. They listen to their personal stories, offer advice on how to improve a situation and connect them to critical resources.

- 3) Call your child and or use social media to try and make contact with them**
- 4) Contact your child's school, friends, family and community supports who might know where your child is**
- 5) Contact your care coordinator to inform them, so they can inform your team and help you locate your child and plan for their return.**

#### **Helpful Websites to support you until your child returns home**

<https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow>

<https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/support/teamhope>

<https://www.1800runaway.org/concerned-adults>

<https://www.missingpersons.doj.wi.gov/>

## INFORMATION NEEDED FOR YOUTH WITH A RUNAWAY HISTORY

### OR FOR YOUTH WHO ARE MISSING

This tool is to be used to report youth who are missing to law enforcement at the time of their absence.

**FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS LAW ENFORCEMENT FROM ESTABLISHING A WAITING PERIOD BEFORE ACCEPTING A MISSING CHILD REPORT. FEDERAL LAW APPLIES TO YOUTH UP TO 20 YEARS OLD UNDER "SUZANNE'S LAW".**

Recent photo on file (with parent or guardian permission) \_\_\_\_\_

Description: Height \_\_\_\_\_

Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Hair Color \_\_\_\_\_

Hair Color \_\_\_\_\_ Eye Color \_\_\_\_\_

Complexion \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Special Identifying Features (glasses, braces, tattoos, body piercings, other unique physical features):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Medical and dental records available and from where: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is the youth 12 years old or younger? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the youth have cognitive, psychological, emotional, physical or medical /needs?

Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does the youth have alcohol or drug issues? What? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE ANSWERED AT THE TIME THE YOUTH GOES MISSING**

Is the youth believed to be in a life threatening situation? Please describe:

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Is the youth believed to be in the company of an individual who could endanger his or her welfare? Who? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is the youth absent in a way inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior? How? \_\_\_\_\_

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Other important information: \_\_\_\_\_

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