

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

A simple process for recovering and making a new plan

1

STOP

Pause before reacting, rushing, or giving up.

2

NOTICE

What happened? What part of the plan changed?

3

REGULATE

Take a breath. Use a calming or sensory strategy if needed. Give yourself time to think.

4

CONSIDER YOUR CHOICES

Can I fix part of it, try another way, or change the plan?

5

ASK FOR HELP IF NEEDED

Explain what happened, share what you tried, and ask for the support you need.

6

KEEP GOING OR MAKE A NEW PLAN

Continue toward the goal, adjust the goal, or decide when to try again.

SUCCESS CAN LOOK DIFFERENT

Success may mean noticing what happened, adjusting the plan, and continuing in a different way.



How to Use This Visual



Use the When Something Goes Wrong visual to help an individual work through mistakes, unexpected changes, or problems without immediately giving up or relying on someone else to fix the situation.

The visual can be introduced before a problem occurs and then used during real situations at home, school, work, or in the community.

1. Stop

Encourage the individual to pause before reacting, rushing, or giving up. Give them enough time to recognize that something has changed or did not go as planned.

2. Notice

Help the individual identify what happened.

Questions might include:

- What happened?
- What part of the plan changed?
- What is making this difficult?
- What do you need to figure out?

Allow the individual to describe the problem in their own way.

3. Regulate

If the individual feels frustrated, overwhelmed, or upset, give them time to regulate before expecting them to solve the problem.

They might:

- Take a breath
- Use a calming or sensory strategy
- Move to a quieter space
- Ask for a short break
- Give themselves more time to think

4. Consider Your Choices

Help the individual think about what they could do next.

Ask:

- Can you fix part of it?
- Can you try another way?
- Can you change the plan?
- Is there another choice available?

Avoid immediately providing the solution. Give the individual time to identify an option independently.





5. Ask for Help if Needed

Remind the individual that asking for help is one possible strategy.

Encourage them to explain:

- What happened
- What they already tried
- What type of help they need

Provide the smallest amount of support needed so the individual can remain involved in solving the problem.

6. Keep Going or Make a New Plan

Help the individual decide whether to:

- Continue with the original goal
- Adjust part of the plan
- Choose a different goal
- Try again later

The new plan may look different from the original plan and still be successful.

After the Situation

Talk briefly about what helped:

- What did you notice?
- What did you try?
- What helped you continue?
- What might you do next time?

Focus on the individual's awareness, effort, flexibility, communication, and recovery rather than whether the original plan worked perfectly.

The goal is to teach that something going wrong does not have to end the activity. The individual can pause, adjust, ask for support, and continue in a way that works for them.

