



NAVIGATING THE STORMS

A self-paced guide to emotional resilience

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Welcome



Thank you for being here.

Over the next ten pages, we'll cover a lot of ground. Please remember - there is no trophy for finishing first. This guide is an invitation to learn about yourself at your own pace and strengthen your resilience for the seasons of life ahead.

While this guide is a powerful tool for self-reflection, I encourage you to invite a friend to join you. Discussing these concepts with someone you trust doesn't just deepen your understanding, it builds a dedicated partnership for whenever life's next storm arrives.

Take it slow.

Be curious.

I'm glad you're starting this journey.

Angela Schilaty

Registered Mental Health Therapist Intern
Supervised by Danielle Proch (LMHC MH16044)

PREPARING FOR EMOTIONAL STORMS



Thanks to technology, we are often alerted to physical storms in a timely manner to prepare. This can allow us to stock up on supplies or securing our homes. These storms can be dangerous if we aren't properly prepared. Similarly, our own "emotional storms" have warning signs. Building emotional resilience doesn't have to be intimidating, it just requires a proactive plan so you can ride through the storm safely.

This **four-point guide** focuses on practical ways to prepare before the clouds roll in:

1. Spotting the Clouds: Identify Early Warning Signs
2. Working with Your Weather
3. Assembling the Coast Guard
4. What If the Surge Gets Too High?

If you're ready to get started, let's do it!

Please Note: This program is for educational purposes and is not a substitute for medical advice or therapy. If you are in an extreme emotional storm right now, please reach out to a trusted friend or use these vital resources:

- Emergency: 911 | Florida 211: Dial 2-1-1
- National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 (Call or Text)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Part one:

SPOTTING THE CLOUDS



In Florida, you learn to carefully watch the clouds - unless you enjoy getting drenched ten minutes after hitting the beach. Our emotions work in a similar manner. By tracking your "internal weather," you can spot a storm before it breaks.

A great tool for this is the *Window of Tolerance*, a concept by Dr. Dan Siegel, that maps out your emotional capacity.

The Three Zones of Internal Weather

- **Clear Skies (The Window):** You're grounded and resilient. The sea of life might be choppy, but you're navigating the waves without capsizing.
- **High Winds (Hyper-arousal):** The "Fight or Flight" zone. Expect a racing heart, irritability, and a frantic need to move or talk.
- **The Doldrums (Hypo-arousal):** The "Freeze" zone. You feel numb, exhausted, or "checked out" - like you're wading through molasses.

The Goal: Perfect weather 24/7 isn't realistic. The goal isn't to banish the clouds; rather the goal is to recognize the moment you've been blown out of your window so you can steer back to safety before the storm hits.

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNAL STORM



Tracking your internal weather allows you to find your footing before the storm breaks. Use these **five prompts** to map your emotional landscape and tune into your early warning sensors:

- **The First Gust:** What is the very first physical signal that your stress is rising? (Think: tight shoulders, a clenched jaw, or the onset of "brain fog.")
- **The Storm Surge:** Which thoughts start playing on a loop? Do you become hyper-critical of yourself or others? Do you feel a sense of hopelessness, or a "tunnel vision" that makes every problem feel permanent?
- **Your Natural Instinct:** When the pressure peaks, do you *Seek Cover* (withdraw/freeze) or try to *Outrun the Storm* (overwork/hustle)? Do you find yourself over-explaining or trying to control the small details around you?
- **The Care Plan:** What are your go-to habits when the weather shifts? Do you reach for a walk, a screen, or a friend? Which of these actually helps clear the clouds, and which ones just keep you in the rain?
- **Your Coast Guard:** Who is one person you trust to help you spot your "early warning signs"? Reach out to them this week.

The Takeaway: Self-awareness is your best defense. By identifying your "First Gusts" and knowing your "Coast Guard," you shift from simply reacting to the storm to navigating through it with intention. Knowing your patterns is the first step toward staying grounded, no matter what the weather brings.

Part two:

WORKING WITH YOUR WEATHER



Recognizing the view from your window is the first step in working with your body rather than against it. Just as it would be unsafe to swim laps during a lightning storm, honoring your internal climate empowers you to choose the right gear - whether that means waiting it out, grabbing an umbrella, or donning your rain boots.

Each "weather" space has a specific goal and a way to work with it so you can navigate safely.

Caring for yourself in these moments builds the internal architecture needed to stop surviving the storms and start splashing in the puddles. As author Emily Nagoski suggests, you must move stress through your body to "complete the cycle" and signal to your brain that the emergency is over.

Be patient. It often takes 10–15 minutes for your nervous system to catch up to these calming signals.

Remember to experiment with different tools, because everyone's "weather gear" is unique and personalized - each looks a little different!

TOOLS TO NAVIGATE THE STORMS



Once you identify where your body is at, you can begin working with the weather instead of against it.

High Winds (Hyper-arousal)

Goal: Expel excess energy and slow the system down.

- **Move Your Body:** Physically discharge energy to signal the stress cycle is over.
- **Breath Brake:** Use long, slow exhales to tell your brain you are safe.
- **Big Chill:** Splash cold water on your face for an immediate physiological reset.

The Doldrums (Hypo-arousal)

Goal: Gently wake the system up and reconnect.

- **Sensory Spark:** Use a favorite scent or upbeat song to pull yourself back into the "now."
- **Gentle Re-entry:** Try a slow stretch or rub your hands together to reconnect with your body.

This list is a starting point, not the finish line. Use it to discover what truly resonates with you. Get creative and journal your progress, but remember: effective regulation feels good both now and later. Choose tools that build you up without creating new hurdles down the road.

Part three:

COAST GUARD



Just as a hurricane can shift paths at the last second, our internal weather can change in a heartbeat. You can't recruit a crew while taking on water - you need your Coast Guard ready before the storm makes landfall.

Who is in Your Crew?

Pull out your phone and scroll through your contacts and ask the following questions:

- Who would I feel safe calling at 2:00 AM in the event of an emergency?
- Who would I "drop everything" for in return?

If your list feels short, don't worry, it just means your storm shelter is still under construction.

Finding Your Coast Guard

Need to expand your team? Try these simple moves:

- *"Thinking of You" Text:* Message a past contact who always made you feel safe.
- *Low-Pressure Invite:* Ask a new acquaintance or trusted colleague for a quick coffee.
- *Bridge Repair:* Send a brief "I miss our chats" to a friend you've lost touch with.
- *Shared Interest:* Join a local group or class where proximity breeds connection.

Establishing these anchors today ensures that if the winds pick up, you won't face the hurricane alone.

SOS CHALLENGE



Pick one person on your list and reach out today. We're going to set up a "code word" - a simple way to ask for help without having to find the "perfect" words when you're overwhelmed.

Pick a word or emoji that fits your vibe:

- Classic: "Pineapple" (Unique enough to stand out immediately).
- Hurricane: "Anchor" (I need help staying grounded).
- Practical: "Flashlight" (I'm in the dark and need some guidance).

Send this text to get started:

"Hey! I'm building my 'Coast Guard' for when life gets stormy. If I ever text you the [Code Word/Emoji], it means the winds are getting too high and I could use some friendly support. No pressure to solve anything - I just want you in my corner!"

By setting this up now, you're making sure that when the storm surge hits, you have a direct line to safety.

Part four:

WHAT IF THE SURGE GETS TOO HIGH?



In a physical storm, the signs to call for help are usually obvious - downed power lines or rising water. For mental health, the signals can be a bit more subtle.

Internal Inspection: Is the Surge Too High?

How do you know when the weather has exceeded your current toolkit? Take a second to be honest with yourself and ask:

- *Alarm Test*: Am I in a constant state of panic even when the sky looks clear?
- *Routine Check*: Am I struggling to eat or sleep because the "fog" or "downpour" is too thick or overwhelming?
- *Volume Knob*: Are hopeless thoughts getting louder and harder to ignore?
- *Isolation Factor*: Am I "ghosting" my crew because I'm too exhausted to be seen?

If you answered "yes" to any of these, the storm is growing. Admitting the surge is high isn't a sign of weakness - it's the first step toward reaching safe harbor.

Stop. Drop, and Roll



"Stop, Drop, and Roll" might sound more like a fire drill than a weather report, but in a mental health crisis, your brain can often "go offline."

You shouldn't have to brainstorm a survival plan while the winds are howling - you need an in-place protocol that is pure muscle memory.

When the storm surge hits, use the **Stop, Drop, and Roll** of mental health:

- **Stop** trying to white-knuckle it alone
- **Drop** the shame of needing help
- **Roll** into action by calling for professional backup

Calling the Professionals:

There is no shame in calling for help when you're treading water and the waves are over your head. Knowing when the conditions have outpaced your gear is the mark of a seasoned sailor. If the internal alarm is all you can hear, it's time to bring in the experts:

- *988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)*: The "911" for mental health. Free, confidential, and available 24/7 via call or text.
- *Crisis Text Line*: If speaking feels like too much, text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained counselor.

Action Step: Add "Crisis Lifeline" (988) to your phone contacts now. It's like a life vest under your seat while flying on an airplane - you hope you never need it, but you'll breathe easier knowing it's there.

Conclusion



Thank you for engaging with this guide. Your peace starts with self-awareness.

By "shining a light" on how you function, you have gained the clarity needed to honor your needs and the tools to stay centered through any emotional storm.

Final Thoughts

- **Be Patient:** Self-discovery is a practice, not a destination.
- **Stay Curious:** Continue to observe how you show up in different areas of your life.
- **Prioritize You:** Continue to take care of yourself and review these course materials whenever you need a refresher.

Need Extra Support?

If you would like some help walking through the concepts covered in this class or want to discuss how to apply these tools to your specific situation, I am here to help!

Reach Out Today!

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MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

find your center in a changing world



Hello!
I'm Angela Schilaty
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Supervised by
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Insurance & Pricing

Standard Self-Pay: \$85

Superbills & Sliding Scale

Aetna | Cigna | Evernorth
Florida Blue | United |
UBH

Florida Women
Convenient telehealth
starts here.

Reach Out Today

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