



LIFESTYLE

I N T E R V E N T I O N S

A FREE FAMILY GUIDE

8 Things Every Family Should Prepare Before an Intervention

A practical checklist to help you walk into the conversation prepared, instead of hoping it goes well.

From Lifestyle Interventions · Los Angeles, California · (866) 826-0985 · lifestyleinterventions.com

Free checklist

A 10-minute read



A calmer way to walk in

Most families don't plan an intervention after one bad night. They plan one after years of trying everything they could think of, and watching none of it hold.

Here's what I'd tell you if you called me. Most of those earlier conversations weren't wrong. They just weren't prepared, and they happened one person at a time.

Every family is different, so there's no script that fits everyone. But these eight questions come up in almost every intervention I've been part of. The families who answer them first tend to have a very different day.

Work through one page at a time. Write your answers down. By the end you'll know what you're walking into.

WHAT YOU'LL PREPARE

- 01 Who's in the room
- 02 What each person says
- 03 The option on the table
- 04 Timing and place
- 05 If they say no
- 06 What changes either way
- 07 The day after
- 08 If things escalate

If someone is in danger right now

This checklist can wait. Safety can't. Call **911**, or call or text **988** for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Who's in the room

WHY IT MATTERS

The people in the room decide whether your loved one listens or shuts down. This isn't about who deserves to be there. It's about who they'll actually hear.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ You've picked people your loved one trusts and respects, not only the people who are angriest.
- ✓ The group is small enough to stay calm. Most families do better with a handful of people than a crowd.
- ✓ Everyone has agreed to speak with care, even the ones who are hurting.
- ✓ You've thought honestly about who's too close to the conflict to help right now.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Inviting someone because they'd be offended to be left out.
- ✗ Including a person who can't get through a sentence without anger.
- ✗ Making the group so large it feels like an ambush.

A note from Chris: *If you're unsure about someone, ask yourself one question. Would your loved one be glad they were there?*

What each person says

WHY IT MATTERS

When people speak off the cuff, the conversation drifts into old arguments. Deciding the message in advance is what keeps it on track.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ Each person knows the one thing they're going to say.
- ✓ The messages are specific and personal, built on what you've seen and felt.
- ✓ Everyone speaks from concern rather than blame.
- ✓ You've said the words out loud beforehand, not just thought them through.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Improvising, and letting old grievances take over the room.
- ✗ Using labels or diagnoses instead of describing what you've actually seen.
- ✗ Making threats nobody intends to follow through on.

A note from Chris: *Short is better than complete. One honest sentence lands harder than ten minutes of history.*

The option on the table

WHY IT MATTERS

A yes is fragile. If your loved one agrees and then waits a week while you make phone calls, the moment usually closes.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ A specific next step is arranged before the conversation, not after it.
- ✓ You know what it involves, what it costs, and when it could start.
- ✓ Someone is ready to drive or travel that same day if needed.
- ✓ You have a second option in case the first one isn't the right fit.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Asking someone to agree to something vague.
- ✗ Starting the research only after they say yes.
- ✗ Assuming a place will be available whenever you happen to call.

A note from Chris: *The question isn't only will they say yes. It's what happens in the ten minutes after they do.*

Timing and place

WHY IT MATTERS

When and where matters more than most families expect. The same words land very differently at the wrong hour, in the wrong room.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ You've chosen a time when your loved one is most likely to be clear-headed.
- ✓ The place is private and familiar, and not somewhere they feel cornered.
- ✓ There's no audience and no clock pressure.
- ✓ You've thought about how everyone gets there, and what happens after.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Holding it straight after a fight, or when someone is under the influence.
- ✗ Choosing a public place in the hope it will keep things calm.
- ✗ Squeezing it in before someone has to leave for work.

A note from Chris: *Mornings are often steadier than evenings. You know your family's rhythms better than anyone.*

If they say no

WHY IT MATTERS

Some people say no. Deciding what happens next, before the day, is what keeps a no from turning into chaos.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ Everyone knows what the family will do if the answer is no.
- ✓ You've agreed, in advance, to stay calm rather than escalate.
- ✓ The door is left open out loud, so they know they can come back to it.
- ✓ You've decided who follows up, and when.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Treating a no as a failure and reacting in anger.
- ✗ Making a threat in the moment that nobody has agreed to.
- ✗ Having no plan at all, so the room falls apart.

A note from Chris: *A calm no is not the end. Plenty of families get a yes later because the first conversation stayed respectful.*

What changes either way

WHY IT MATTERS

Boundaries are the part families dread. They're also what makes the conversation real rather than one more request.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ Each person knows what they're willing to change, and can say it calmly.
- ✓ The boundaries are things you'll actually hold.
- ✓ They're framed as care, not punishment.
- ✓ You've talked them through as a family, so nobody is surprised on the day.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Announcing a boundary you already know you won't keep.
- ✗ Using a boundary as a threat rather than a limit.
- ✗ One person holding a line while someone else quietly undoes it.

A note from Chris: *A boundary you keep is worth more than three you don't.*

The day after

WHY IT MATTERS

Families put everything into the conversation and almost nothing into the next morning. That's where a yes tends to unravel.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ You know who's handling what once the conversation ends.
- ✓ The practical things are covered: work, kids, pets, the drive.
- ✓ Someone is checking in the next day, and it's been agreed in advance.
- ✓ You've thought about support for the family, not only for your loved one.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Assuming the hard part is over once they agree.
- ✗ Leaving the logistics to whoever happens to be least overwhelmed.
- ✗ Forgetting that the family needs support too.

A note from Chris: *Write down who does what. Memory gets unreliable on a day like this.*

If things escalate

WHY IT MATTERS

Most conversations don't escalate. Having a plan anyway is what lets everyone stay calm if one does.

WHAT GOOD PREPARATION LOOKS LIKE

- ✓ You know the signs that mean it's time to stop.
- ✓ Everyone has agreed that safety comes before finishing the conversation.
- ✓ The numbers are written down beforehand, not looked up in a panic.
- ✓ You understand that ending early is a decision, not a defeat.

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ Pushing on when someone is clearly in distress.
- ✗ Assuming it couldn't happen in your family.
- ✗ Having nobody assigned to make the call for help.

A note from Chris: *Safety first, always. Nothing in this checklist matters more than that.*

Write these down before the day

If life is in danger, call **911**. For immediate crisis support, call or text **988**, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. In Los Angeles County, the Department of Mental Health ACCESS line is **800-854-7771**.

Your quick checklist

Keep this page beside you while you plan. When you can tick all eight, you're ready to have the conversation.

☐ I know who's in the room, and why each person is there.

☐ Each person knows the one thing they'll say.

☐ A real next step is arranged and ready today.

☐ The time and place are chosen, private, and unhurried.

☐ We've agreed what happens if the answer is no.

☐ Each person knows the boundary they're ready to hold.

☐ We know who's handling what the next morning.

☐ We have a safety plan and the numbers written down.

A note from Chris: *If you can't tick them all, that's useful information. It usually shows you exactly where to start.*

How Lifestyle Interventions can help

Lifestyle Interventions is a Los Angeles intervention and recovery advisory service founded by Chris Howard. I help families plan the conversation, prepare for resistance, and arrange the next step before the intervention happens.

I'm not a therapist and I'm not a treatment provider. My job is to bring structure and calm to a conversation that's been going badly, and to make sure something real is waiting on the other side of it.

My services include Crisis Interventions, Family Support Services, and Recovery Mentoring. Based in Los Angeles, I support families across the United States.

1

I listen to what you're going through.

2

I help you understand your options.

3

You decide the next step, at your pace.

Ready to talk it through?

A confidential conversation is a quiet first step. No decisions, and nothing to sign.

(866) 826-0985

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