

# RETURNING TO SAFETY

Choosing safety over suicide



## WHAT IS A SAFETY PLAN?

A safety plan is a written list of personalized coping strategies and resources that you can use to feel better when you are in crisis.

Many survivors of suicide attempts report that, just before their attempt, they were experiencing unbearable emotional pain and saw suicide as a way to find relief from this pain.

A safety plan is a way to identify other options of relieving your pain, before you are in crisis, when it may be difficult for you to think of them. By writing them down ahead of time, you will always have the set of coping strategies available even if you are upset or not thinking clearly. This can help ease your pain and reduce the temptation to act on suicidal thoughts.

You can complete your plan on your own or with the help of a counselor, family member, or friend. This pamphlet will help you to brainstorm elements of your safety plan.

Creating a safety plan can feel intimidating at the beginning, but don't let that discourage you. Many people have felt anxious about using a safety plan, but have found it very helpful once they completed it.

**“Once I finished my safety plan, I respected myself so much more.”**

— Survivor of a suicide attempt

## RESOURCES

**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** 24/7 support for individuals in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts.

**Call or text 988 or chat via [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)**

**Teen Line** Confidential hotline for teens in need of support from peers.

**Call us at (800) 852-8336 (6-10 p.m. PST) or text TEEN to 839863 (6-9 p.m. PST)**

**CalHope Warm Line** Mental health support and resources for California residents during difficult times or crises.

**Call (833) 317-4673 or chat via [calhope.org](https://calhope.org)**

**The Trevor Project** Life-saving support and resources for LGBTQ+ youth.

**Call us at (866) 488-7386, text START to 678678 or chat via [thetrevorproject.org](https://thetrevorproject.org)**

**CopLine** 24-hour support line for law enforcement officers and their families. **Call (800) 267-5463 or visit [copline.org](https://copline.org)**

**Emergency Services** For immediate medical, fire, or safety assistance, call **911**.

**For additional resources, scan the QR code:**



### **STEP 1: Warning Signs/Activators**

What situations, thoughts, feelings, body sensations or behaviors do you experience that signal you are beginning to think about suicide? Then you can anticipate them and put strategies in place to avoid them or manage them effectively. What activates your suicidal thoughts?

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### **STEP 3: Distractions and Engagement**

Another way to manage suicidal thoughts is by distracting yourself with activities involving others or going to places that make you feel better. Being around supportive people or environments can help keep negative thoughts from escalating. What are some places you can go or things you can do with others to maintain your well-being?

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### **STEP 5: Professional Support Network**

Sometimes, you may not feel able to reach out to your personal support network and sometimes the other parts of this plan don't seem to be helping to keep yourself safe. List the names, numbers and/or locations of mental health professionals, crisis teams and support services you can contact:

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### **STEP 2: Internal Coping Strategies**

One way to take your mind off your suicidal thoughts is to do something that helps you feel better. Small actions that improve your personal environment when you're alone, can help ease your thoughts of suicide. What are the things you can do by and for yourself (reading, exercising, playing with your dog, etc.) to take your mind off your problems?

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### **STEP 4: Personal Support Network**

It can be helpful to have someone with whom you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts of suicide. Ideally, this is someone who is aware of your suicidal thoughts and understands their role as a resource in your plan. Who are the people you feel comfortable and safe with and who can provide you with non-judgmental support?

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### **STEP 6: A Safer Environment**

At times, if you forget to use your plan, or if it isn't enough to make you feel better, having items close by that could be used to harm yourself can create a dangerous situation. It is important to remove items that you may use impulsively. What items do you have nearby that you may use to harm yourself and how can you safely remove them for the time being?

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**Things that are important to me and give me hope:**

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