



Provider Tools and Materials

Creating a Safety Plan

What is a Safety Plan? It is a written set of instructions that a patient and clinician create as a contingency plan should the patient have thoughts of harming themselves.

- The Safety Plan includes written steps to be taken to create safety and wellness.
- The patient should have multiple copies to keep in a purse, wallet, on the fridge, a bedside table, etc., so it can be easily found if needed.

The Safety Plan includes the following and is put in the patient's own words:

- **Warning signs:** The type of situations, thoughts, feeling, behaviors that precede or accompany suicidal urges
- **Ways to comfort yourself:** A list of activities that are “self-soothing” when the patient is in pain or upset. What does the patient do to reduce stress? Remember it should be a healthy option, not drinking for example.
- **Reasons for living:** Often when patients are in pain, they forget the positive things in life. This list helps the patient refocus on what is important in living.
- **Positive things to think about:** Reminders of happy memories, something positive that happened, or something good in a person's life
- **Trusted contacts:** who in the patient's life offers support; family, significant others, friends, clergy
- **List of professional resources:** Therapist, psychiatrist, PCP, and the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) or text “go” to 741 741

In a situation where the Safety Plan is not enough to create feelings of safety and wellness, the patient should go to the nearest emergency room and get assistance. Suicidal thoughts always come and go. Reassure the patient that it is best to be safe and have support until suicidal thoughts go away.

**See the next page for a printable Safety Plan you can use
with your patients.**



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My Safety Plan

Follow these steps if you have thoughts of harming yourself or suicide.

Step One: Recognize my warning signs of a crisis developing (such as suicidal thoughts, destructive behavior, low mood). My warning signs are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step Two: Things I can do to feel better? What helps me soothe myself? Examples: Exercise or going for a walk, listening to music, journaling, watching TV, talking to someone, interacting with pets.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step Three: What are my important reasons to live?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step Four: Positive things that I can focus on right now. Examples: a nice memory, something positive that happened, something good in my life, people who care about me.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step Five: If these coping strategies do not work, who can I contact?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step Six: If these calls do not help, who should I contact?

1. My therapist: _____
2. My psychiatrist: _____
3. Suicide prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-(TALK) 8255 or 988

Step Seven: If the above steps are not helpful and I feel I may take my life, I should go to the nearest emergency room or call 911.