

Suicidality Safety Plan Completion Guide

Step 1: Warning Signs

- Ask “How will you know when the safety plan should be used? What warning signs will you notice?”
- Ask “What types of thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, or behaviors come up when an overwhelming situation arises?”
- List the signals in the survivor’s own words

Step 2: Coping Skills

- Ask: “What can you do on your own to help keep yourself from acting on suicidal thoughts?”
- Ask: “What coping skills can you use? What skills have you used in the past? Are there any that you haven’t tried that you would be willing to?”
- Ask: “What might get in the way of using these coping skills in an overwhelming situation?”
- List coping skills and potential barriers to using them. Brainstorm collaboratively how they could overcome those barriers

Step 3: People and Environments That May Provide Distraction

- If Step 2 does not mitigate the feelings of overwhelm, use Step 3
- Ask: “Who can you contact to help you take your mind off of an overwhelming situation?”
- Ask: “Is there a place you can go that may offer temporary distraction from the situation?”
- List safe people or places to provide distraction. Brainstorm potential barriers to utilizing this step, and think about ways to overcome them

Step 4: Close People to Contact Who May Offer Help

- If Step 3 does not mitigate the feelings of overwhelm, use Step 4
- Ask: “What family, friends, or loved ones in your life could you reach out to in times of a crisis?”
- Ask: “Who are some supportive people in your life that would be able to talk to when you’re feeling overwhelmed?”
- List several close people to contact in times of crisis
- Brainstorm potential barriers to utilizing this step, and think about ways to overcome them

Step 5: Agencies or Professionals

- If Step 4 does not mitigate the feelings of overwhelm, use Step 5
- Ask: “What mental health professionals can you contact in times of overwhelm?”
- List names and phone numbers of local mental healthcare professionals. Include local Urgent Care and National Suicide Prevention Hotline phone number



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Step 6: Ensuring a Safe Environment

- Ask: "What are some ways to make your environment safer in or before moments of crisis?"
- List examples of creating a safer environment (ie: locking up medications or giving them to a trusted friend, getting rid of any objects/weapons that could be used for self-harm, removing firearms from the home, leaving the environment altogether)
- Brainstorm specific ways to remove potentially dangerous objects/substances from the home. Where/to whom will these items go?

Step 7: Reasons to Live

- Ask: "What do you love? Who do you love? What is important to you? What makes life worthwhile to you?"
- Help the survivor identify important, meaningful people and things in their life
- Encourage the survivor to consider these reasons regularly and in moments of overwhelm