

YOUR SAFETY PLAN

Create a written plan of action or a "safety plan" with your mental health provider that you can refer to when you're considering suicide or in a crisis. Learn to spot your warning signs early, so you can put your plan into action.

Your plan is a checklist of activities and actions you promise to do, so you can stay safe if you begin to have thoughts of suicide.

As a foundation for your safety plan, take these steps:

- **Stick with your treatment plan.** Commit to taking your medication as prescribed and attending all treatment sessions and appointments.
- **Keep a list of contact names and numbers readily available.** Include your doctors, therapists and crisis centers that can help you cope with suicidal thoughts. Include friends or loved ones who agree to be available as part of your safety plan.
- **Remove potential means of killing yourself.** This may include ridding your home of guns, razors or other objects you may consider using to hurt or kill yourself. If possible, give your medications to someone who can safeguard them for you and help you take them as prescribed.
- **Schedule daily activities.** Activities that brought you small pleasure in the past can make a difference — such as listening to music, watching a funny movie or visiting a museum. Or try something different. Because physical activity and exercise may reduce depression symptoms, consider walking, jogging, swimming, gardening or a new activity.
- **Get together with others.** Establish your support network by reaching out to friends, family and people who care about you and are there when you need them. Make an effort to be social, even if you don't feel like it, to prevent isolation.
- **Join a support group.** Joining a support group can help you cope with suicidal thinking and recognize that there are many options in your life other than suicide.
- **Avoid drug and alcohol use.** Rather than numb painful feelings, alcohol and drugs can increase suicidal thoughts and the likelihood of harming yourself by making you more impulsive and more likely to act on any self-destructive feelings.

- **Avoid risky websites on the Internet.** Stay away from websites that may encourage suicide as a way to solve your problems.
- **Write about your thoughts and feelings.** Consider writing about the things in your life that you value and appreciate, no matter how small they may seem at the time.
- **Practice “breath prayers” such as “Lord, have mercy”, or “My help comes from the Lord”.**
- Feed on God’s Word. There are many easy to read translations as well as great Bible apps available for download.