

HOPELINEUK
0800 068 4141

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and practical advice.

HOPELINEUK

Call: **0800 068 4141**

Text: **07786 209 697**

Email: **pat@papyrus-uk.org**

Opening hours:

10am - 10pm weekdays

2pm - 10pm weekends

2pm - 10pm bank holidays

Our Suicide Prevention Advisers are ready to support you.

WHAT IS A SUICIDE SAFETY PLAN?



What is a suicide safety plan?

This is a plan of how to help you to stay safe for now from acting on thoughts of suicide.

Thoughts of suicide can be so overwhelming that it can be really hard to think about what to do or how to get help. By creating a safety plan and putting it somewhere where you can easily find it, you are giving yourself important steps to follow to help you to stay safe when things become overwhelming. This will help you to get through the moment and then access long-term support.

When should I make one?

It's helpful to work on this plan when thoughts of suicide aren't as strong, so that it is ready to use if things become overwhelming. It can also be helpful to fill out the plan with someone you trust or who knows you well, as they might have some suggestions about what might help you. It can also help them to support you as it tells them what you need when your thoughts of suicide become overwhelming.

You can also create a safety plan with the Suicide Prevention Advisers who work on **PAPYRUS HOPELINEUK**, and they will talk you through this step-by-step.

This plan should be personal to you and as detailed as possible. It should be changed when you think of new things to add, or things to remove which you no longer find helpful. If you have support from someone such as a counsellor or mental health team, share this plan with them so that they know how to best support you, and make sure you include them as sources of support too.

Sections in a suicide safety plan

Why do I want to stay safe?

When thoughts of suicide are overwhelming, it can be really hard to connect to that part of you that wants to stay safe and that wants to live. In order to create a plan to stay safe, it is important to remind yourself of why a part of you wants to stay safe, so that you are more likely to follow this plan. This can be a really difficult section to fill in. Anything that helps you can go in here – from wanting to get through the day, to being able to watch a favourite programme or to attend an appointment, to career and life goals. It can also be helpful to include people and things that mean something to you, such as family, friends or pets. You might even want to stick a photo or drawing on here of things you enjoy or people you are close to.

Making my environment safer:

When thoughts of suicide become strong, it can be difficult to make the decision not to act on them. By identifying anything you feel you might use to end your life and placing a barrier between yourself and these items, it becomes harder for you to act on thoughts of suicide impulsively. While having this barrier won't make it impossible to harm yourself, it will give you that extra few minutes to be able to think about staying safe.

What might make it harder for me to stay safe right now and what can I do about this?

We now need to have a look at anything that makes it harder for you to stay safe from acting on thoughts of suicide, so we can put up some guards against them when feeling suicidal.

Do I use any drugs, alcohol or medication?

Sometimes, you might use substances as a way to cope in the moment, but they can also make it harder to stay safe from suicide by increasing impulsiveness or lowering your mood. If you use these things, include a plan to avoid these when feeling suicidal, or to reduce use of them during these times. It is really important to also include a reminder to take any medication as prescribed that might help you to stay safe from suicide. If you feel any medication you are prescribed turns up the volume of thoughts of suicide, you need to talk about this with your doctor.

Have I acted on thoughts of suicide before?

This is where you include anything you have learned if you have acted on thoughts of suicide before, or if you have felt really suicidal and were able to stay safe too. This can include things you have noticed that triggered the thoughts of suicide, and whether there was anything significant about the time of day – where you were, or how isolated you were – that you felt made it harder to stay safe. You can then put a reminder of how to guard against this if your thoughts of suicide get overwhelming again.

Do I have any mental health concerns or symptoms that make it harder to stay safe?

Include any symptoms relating to mental health or mood that might impact on your ability to stay safe from suicide. This can include things like 'feeling anxious can make the thoughts of suicide worse' or 'I get more impulsive' or 'when I get angry, I find it harder to stay safe'. Then, add in what you can do if you notice this symptom, what might help you to stay safe when you experience this.

What can I do right now that will keep me safe?

This is where you can put things that feel doable right now, from sleeping, to alternative ways of coping, to distraction techniques that you find helpful. Also include looking after your basic needs, such as making sure you have had something to eat and drink as well as things that you find comforting or soothing.

Add as many ideas of things to try as possible in this section, and take out any that have not helped. The more that you put in here, the more you have to choose from when you need them. You don't need to wait for the thoughts of suicide to become overwhelming to start these strategies – it is best to start using them as early as possible, to give you more time to notice warning signs or things that make you vulnerable.

What strengths do I have that I can use to keep myself safe?

This can be really tough to think about, especially when overwhelmed with thoughts of suicide. It is a place to think about anything you can use to help to keep you safe. This might be strengths such as creativity, looking out for others, or being organised, which you can turn into distractions and things to focus on when overwhelmed. You might take strength from your faith or by focusing on qualities in other people who you admire.

You might include an image of someone you look up to here. Some people include things here such as positive coping comments as reminders of their strengths, or to remind them why they keep fighting, for example 'even the worst day can only last 24 hours'. If you can't think of a specific strength, it is important to remember that it takes courage and grit to be working on a plan to keep yourself safe, which you're doing right now. That is a great strength to have.

Who can I reach out to for help?

For this section, include any friends or family members you feel able to reach out to for support. They should be available, suitable, and able to help you. Even if they don't support you with thoughts of suicide specifically but can help to distract you, then include them here.

Add in any helplines or other support you use, and don't forget to include a reminder to reach out to the emergency services or NHS 111 if you still feel unable to stay safe despite following your plan, or need some immediate support. That's what they're there for.

Longer-term support plan:

Although this plan is a way to keep you safe-for-now, it can also be really helpful to add in any plans or support services you can use for anything impacting on your thoughts of suicide. The first port of call is usually a GP, but you can write ideas of the support that you want to ask them for here too.

You can also include things like charities providing specialist support, and ideas for what you want help with here too. That way, when you have stayed safe-for-now from suicide, you have a starting point for further support that might help you to feel more hopeful about the future.

What is HOPELINEUK?

HOPELINEUK is a confidential support and advice service for:

- **Children** and young people under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide.
- **Anyone** concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide.

HOPELINEUK advisers want to work with you to understand why these thoughts of suicide might be present. They also want to provide you with a safe space to talk through anything happening in your life that could be impacting on your or anyone else's ability to stay safe.

Young People

Our advisers are all trained to help you focus on staying safe from suicide. Their training enables them to provide advice and support that may help you to move forward and stay alive.

Concerned Others

If you are concerned that a young person is feeling suicidal, advisers can support you to start a conversation about suicide and explore options of how best to support them.
