



Your Safety Blueprint: Creating a Safety Plan

In times of crisis, you may struggle to determine your next steps due to uncertainty, fear, or feeling overwhelmed. A safety plan is a tool that can help you stay safe and feel empowered during a crisis. It provides clear steps to follow, so you're not left feeling unsure or overwhelmed about what to do next. A safety plan helps you make better decisions, protect yourself, and reduce the chances of further harm. Read below to learn the steps for making a safety plan to use during times of crisis, then use the attached template to create your safety plan.

Note: Safety plans can be developed for different situations. The information below is intended to be used in response to emotional crisis and not if you are in physical danger. If you are in immediate physical danger, please call 911.



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Steps for Making Your Safety Plan

Step One:

Identify Your Internal Warning Signs & Triggers

Internal warning signs are physical or emotional reactions to your circumstances. These are early indicators that something needs attention before it becomes more serious. Recognizing your warning signs can help you determine if a problem is getting worse.

Common warning signs:

- **Physical:** chest pains, difficulty breathing, sudden dizziness, excessive substance use, or other potentially harmful coping behaviors
- **Emotional:** mood changes, loneliness, withdrawal from social activities, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating, neglecting responsibilities, lack of interest

A trigger is something external that causes a negative reaction, often reminding you of a past event or underlying issue. Triggers can spark emotional, psychological, or physiological responses.

Common triggers:

- Sounds such as a loud bang or sirens
- Scents or odors
- Certain roads or locations
- Being around a person or group of people
- Conversations or topics
- Holidays or key dates

Steps for Making Your Safety Plan

Step Two:

Identify Your Internal Coping Strategies

Internal coping strategies can help you manage your stress and negative reactions to crisis. These strategies involve using your thought processes, emotional management skills, and personal strengths to take care of yourself.

Examples of coping strategies:

- **Engaging in positive activities:** listening to music, exercising, cooking, and participating in hobbies.
- **Connecting with others.**
- **Attending to your emotional health:** practicing gratitude, reframing thoughts, deep breathing, positive self-talk, guided meditations, self-reflection, affirmations, and progressive muscle relaxation.



Steps for Making Your Safety Plan

Step Three:

Identify Your External Support & Resources

External support from loved ones, professionals, and other outside resources can help you manage stress and respond to crises.

Examples of external support:

- Personal relationships
- Professional help
- Community resources
- Emergency information

IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE:

- For medical emergencies or if you are in danger: call 911
- For emotional or mental health crisis: call or text 988

Hotlines can provide support and referrals to additional services and resources to meet your needs. It is especially important to know who to contact in times of immediate crisis. Here is a list of some key hotlines that may be helpful to you:

[VictimConnect](#): Offers a referral helpline for victims
Call or text 855-4-VICTIM (855-484-2846), or chat [online](#)

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
Call 800-799-7233, text "START" to 88788, or chat [online](#)

[National Sexual Assault Hotline](#)
Call 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673), or chat [online](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline](#)
Call (800) 662-4357

Steps for Making Your Safety Plan

Step Four:

Ensure a Safe Environment

Prepare your surroundings to support your safety, especially during times of crisis. Keep essential items easily accessible—this includes money, medications, important documents, and contact information. Limit access to anything that could be used to cause harm.



This could include:

- Asking a trusted person to help manage medications
- Reducing or removing access to firearms
- Safely storing or disposing of sharp objects like glass or blades
- Strengthening safety procedures in your home

Taking these steps can help create a more secure and supportive environment.

Safety Plan Template

Instructions for using this template:

Fill in the template by adding specific details to each of the sections below. Be sure to review and update it regularly as your needs and circumstances change. Keep your safety plan accessible, and consider keeping a copy on your phone for easy access.

1: My Internal Warning Signs and Triggers

Identify your warning signs, triggers, and other risk factors that can help you determine if you are in crisis and if your safety plan should be used.

List your most common internal warning signs.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List your strongest triggers.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2: My Internal Coping Strategies

List the coping strategies that can help you when you are struggling or feel overwhelmed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Adapted from the Stanley-Brown Safety Plan

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1647361853/sdcoenet/pum47gcab4uaktlyojoy/Stanley-Brown-Safety-Plan.pdf>

Safety Plan Template

3: My External Supports and Resources

List key people whom you can contact to help you feel safe.

This could include a friend, family member, mental health professional, or other person you trust.

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

List other external resources that can help (such as local agencies and services).

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

List hotlines for support and referrals.

National crisis hotline(s):

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Local crisis hotline:

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Safety Plan Template

If you are in a mental health crisis, call 988. Get 24/7 support anytime by phone, text, or chat with a 988 Lifeline counselor during tough times.

If I need to go to an emergency room or urgent care, I will go to the one that is closest to me:

ER Name: _____

ER Address: _____

General Emergency Number: 911

4: Ensuring a Safe Environment

I will share this safety plan with these people whom I trust:

Name _____

Name _____

Name _____

These are the ways I will make my environment safer: _____



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