

SAFETY PLAN:
My personal plan for getting through a crisis safely.

Step 1: Warning signs.

It is important to recognize when you are getting into trouble. Ask yourself:

1. What changes do I notice in myself when I feel extremely distressed?
2. What do other people say they notice when I feel this way?

These might include thoughts, images, moods, behaviors, or physical reactions. List your personal warning signs in the blanks below. When these things happen, it is time to use your safety plan.

Warning signs:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 2: Healthy, fun activities that help take my mind off of my stress.

These are things that you can do on your own, often without contacting another person. Ask yourself:

1. What are the things I enjoy most?
2. What used to be fun for me that I need to start doing again?

List your ideas in the blanks below. Make sure these activities are going to be helpful instead of causing more problems. If they improve the situation and help you feel better, that's great. If they don't, go on to step 3.

Healthy, fun activities that help take my mind off of my stress:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 3: People and places that provide distraction.

If you continue to feel overwhelmed, stressed, or unsafe, it is time to contact a positive person or go somewhere that is comforting and supportive. The people you list in this step do not have to be those who you share intimate details with; they are simply fun, safe people to be around. List several in case your first contact is not available. Ask yourself:

Who helps me relax? Where are my favorite places to unwind?

People and places that provide distraction:

- 1. Name _____ Phone _____
- 2. Name _____ Phone _____
- 3. Place _____ 4. Place _____

Step 4: People who can help me resolve a crisis.

If the people or places in Step 3 aren't enough, the next step is to contact someone for help. These are people who you are comfortable talking to about the problems or issues you are dealing with. These are people who know you well, and who are willing to help you anytime you need them. These often include family members, close friends, sponsors, and religious or spiritual leaders. Ask yourself:

Who is most willing to listen to my struggles and help me work through them?
Does this person reliably answer the phone and respond to my messages?

Make sure to write down your contacts' phone numbers down, and always have them available. Don't rely only on your phone to store numbers. You may find yourself in an area with poor reception, your phone may not be charged, or it might get broken during a crisis. It is very important to have a back-up plan.

People who can help me resolve a crisis:

- 1. Name _____ Phone _____
- 2. Name _____ Phone _____
- 3. Name _____ Phone _____

Step 5: Professional resources I can use during a crisis.

- If you need more support than your loved ones can provide, the next step is to contact a professional or agency for help. If you already have a doctor, counselor, social worker, or case manager, write them in below. If not, think about agencies you might be willing to contact for help. Ask for help locating resources in your area if you can't think of any.

Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

*** VETERANS CRISIS LINE: 1-800-273-8255, Press 1 (free, 24/7)**

Step 6: Strategies for helping me stay safe.

Identify several things that can help you maintain your safety. These might be strategies for avoiding a crisis, like avoiding alcohol or drugs. They also might be things you can do now to help avoid harming yourself or someone else if you have a crisis, like giving the gun cabinet keys to a friend or having someone keep your extra medications hidden.

Strategies for helping me stay safe:

1. _____

2. _____

Based on: Safety Plan Treatment Manual to Reduce Suicide Risk: Veteran Version (Stanley & Brown, 2008).