

SUICIDE SAFETY PLAN TEMPLATE

“If you’re feeling like giving up, just remember all the reasons why you’ve held on for so long. It may not seem like it now, but you CAN get through this and you’re NOT alone.”

The urge to act on suicidal thoughts goes down eventually! If you’re unsure what to do when the urge is strong – just follow these simple steps.

1. Know your warning signs

- a. Identify what situations, thoughts or feelings trigger you to feel suicidal.
- b. If you notice these warning signs, follow your suicide safety plan.

2. Contact someone

- a. Write down the numbers of those you identify as potential contacts. Have multiple contacts, in case someone doesn’t answer their phone.
- b. There’s an app called My3 you can use, which is for this exact purpose.
- c. SADAG (The South African Depression and Anxiety Group) – 0800 567 567 or 0800 456 789. These calls are free, so it’s okay if you don’t have airtime, you can call and speak to a counselor anytime (they’re available 24 hours a day, every day). You can also WhatsApp a counselor 076 882 2775.

3. Take a look at your list of reasons for living

- a. Write a list of your reasons for living, which you can look at when you need to. It doesn’t need to be a long list and can include even the smallest of reasons – e.g. my plants. This is a list just for you, so you don’t have to share it with anyone.

4. Take a look at your list of things to do to feel safe, comforted and calm

- a. It’s SO important that you have a list of options of helpful things you can do, when the urge to act on your suicidal thoughts is strong. Instead of having to come up with ideas in the moment, you can refer to the list.
- b. Calm Harm app is GREAT and has LOTS of helpful ideas for activities people can do when feeling distressed and unable to cope.
- c. Remind yourself (as many times as you need to) that these intense thoughts, feelings and urges are not permanent, yet suicide is.
- d. Remember you’re incredibly strong – you’ve managed to not act on these thoughts before and you can most definitely continue to do so... but remember, you don’t have to manage all on your own – help IS available!
- e. Remember – a lot of the thoughts running through your mind are NOT true. So it’s important to not just believe the thoughts in your head that are telling you you’re worthless etc.
- f. Make sure anything that you could use to harm yourself is **UNAVAILABLE**.
- g. Try letting your feelings out in any way that feels right, but that isn’t harmful to you (crying, drawing, writing, listening to music, exercising, screaming into a pillow etc.).



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- h. Do something that distracts you – drawing, listening to music, watching something, practicing a relaxation technique etc.
- i. Google DBT Distress Tolerance skills and try some of them out. It can help to have already identified which skills work for you, so in the moment, you can implement them straight away.
- j. Practice self-compassion – Listen to a loving-kindness/self-compassion meditation on YouTube or via a meditation app (smiling mind/insight timer app). Give yourself a hug (it may seem silly, but it can be really comforting!!). Remind yourself, it's okay that you're not okay – this means you need to show yourself some extra love and kindness, just as you would to others who are not okay!
- k. **Don't be alone** – it can really help to not act on urges if someone else is around. Being alone can increase the risk of acting on these thoughts.