

Brown-Stanley Suicide Safety Plan Brief Instructions

**adapted from Safety Plan Treatment Manual to Reduce Suicide Risk: Veteran Version (Stanley and Brown, 2008)
www.suicidesafetyplan.com*

The suicide safety plan can be used for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide. The safety plan should be completed by the suicidal person, written in their words, with guidance from the supportive person.

Step 1: Recognizing Warning Signs

- Ask, “How will you know when the plan should be used? What are the signs that emotional distress or suicidal thoughts are coming?”
- List warning signs, including thoughts, moods, emotions, behaviors, and thought processes.

Step 2: Using Internal Coping Strategies

- Ask, “What can you do on your own to distract you from your suicidal thoughts?” “What has worked for you in the past?”
- List very specific activities and coping skills. Avoid unhealthy or risky strategies such as drinking or shooting a gun.
- Discuss potential barriers to implementing these strategies.

Step 3: People and Social Settings that Provide Distraction

- Ask, “Who helps you take your mind off your problems? What social situations provide distraction from your problems?” Note, these are not people that they need to disclose suicidal thoughts to.
- List specific people and places where they feel safe. Avoid people or places that may increase risk.

Step 4: People who May Help Resolve a Crisis

- Ask, “Who is someone that you can talk to when you’re in distress? Who could you talk with that would be understanding and supportive?”
- List specific people in prioritized order.
- Discuss potential barriers or doubts about talking to these people about suicidal thoughts.

Step 5: Contacting Professionals and Agencies

- Ask, “Who are the professionals that you can contact during a crisis?”
- List personal clinicians and local or national crisis support services.

Step 6: Lethal Means Safety

- Ask, “Have you thought about how you might attempt suicide?”
- Discuss safety with any means they identify. For methods with low lethality, they can create safety on their own. For methods with high lethality, a responsible person should be involved to ensure safety. This should be done collaboratively and voluntarily.
- List specific steps for plan.

Step 7: Reasons for Living

- Ask, “What is at least one thing that is most important to you that is worth living for?”
- List all reasons.