

Identifying Support Systems and Creating a Crisis Plan

A crisis plan, or safety plan is designed to help you have what you need at your fingertips so that you don't have to think much about what you need and how to support yourself in that moment. It's helpful to have this plan in an easily accessible place so it's there for you when you need it. You can also use the printable template in "Appendix A: A Plan for Crisis" (in the full report) to create a plan.

Below is more about the reasons why and way to create a crisis plan and how to identify the systems that could support you. It's also a great idea to have someone you trust help you in creating your plan so they can know how to support you. If you are a carer or loved one of someone, it's a great idea to support the person through creating a safety plan - you do not need to be a professional to support someone in recognizing how they might be able to deal with a crisis in the moment.

If you are supporting a trans person in your life who is having suicidal ideation or thoughts you should not force them to create a crisis plan, rather if they have disclosed these feelings to you and asked for support, offer this as a tool that you could complete together so they can have additional support if they need. It is important to never force someone to create a plan they are not ready to create, but it is also a myth that talking about suicide leads to suicide, so it is important that we still bring forth these conversations and tools with those we are supporting.

What Goes into a Crisis Plan?

1. Your personal warning signs: What thoughts, images, moods, situations, and behaviours indicate to you that a crisis may be developing or that you are feeling unwell? Write these down in your own words.

Examples:

- > Situation: argument with a loved one
- > Thoughts: "I am so fed up with this and I can't handle it anymore"
- > Body sensations: Urge to drink alcohol
- > Behaviours: Watch violent movies, irregular eating schedule

2. Your coping strategies: List things (distracting activity, relaxation or soothing technique, physical activity) that you can do on your own to help you not act on urges to harm yourself.

Examples:

- > Distracting activity: Watch a funny movie
- > Relaxation technique: Deliberate breathing
- > Physical activity: Go for a bike ride

3. Your distracting people or places: List people and social settings that may help take your mind off of difficult thoughts or feelings

Examples:

- > Places: Go to a movie, sit in a park
- > People: Text friend (name, phone), go for coffee with a coworker (name, phone)

4. Your safe supporters: List the folks in your life who are supportive to you and who might be able to assist you in seeking more help if needed. The people on this list should know that they are part of your support network.

Examples:

- > Friend
- > Partner
- > Parent
- > Peer support groups

5. Contact mental health professionals or agencies: Make a list of names, numbers and/or locations of clinicians, local emergency rooms, and crisis hotlines. It's also a great idea to add these numbers as new contacts within your phone.

Examples (add these in your phone!):

- > Trans Lifeline: 1-877-330-6366
- > Canada Suicide Prevention Helpline: 1-833-456-4566
- > LGBT Youth Line: 1-888-687-9688

6. Ensure your environment is safe: Have you thought of ways in which you might harm yourself? List the steps to be taken to remove access to means of suicide from the environment

Examples:

- > Pills: Give to pharmacist or friend for disposal/safekeeping
- > Guns (or rope): Remove from home (give to a friend, etc.)