



Appendix A: My Safety Plan

This is your personal plan for what to do when grief, fear, or pain feels too big to handle. Fill this in when you are calm so that you can refer to it during difficult moments. You can add to it or change it anytime.

Step 1: Recognize the warning signs

These are thoughts, feelings, situations, or behaviours that tell me I need to use this plan. Everyone's warning signs are different.

Thoughts I notice:

- _____
- _____

Feelings I notice:

- _____
- _____

Situations or triggers:

- _____
- _____

Behaviours I notice:

- _____
- _____

Step 2: Practice coping strategies

If I'm feeling panicky, shaky, or can't breathe, I can self-soothe/ground myself.

Grounding techniques I can try (pick 2–3 that work for you—not all techniques work for everyone). *If a grounding technique makes you feel worse or more anxious, it's okay to skip it and try something else.*

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Name 5 things I can see, 4 things I can touch, 3 things I can hear, 2 things I can smell, 1 thing I can taste

- Splash cold water on my face/wrists or hold an ice cube
- Slow breathing: Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4, out for 4
- Walk or move my body: Take a short walk, stretch, or do gentle movement
- Hold something comforting: A blanket, pet, pillow, or object that feels safe
- Listen to music or a podcast; my favourite is:

- Other:



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If I'm feeling intensely sad, angry, or overwhelmed, I can:

- Call someone from my support circle
- Text a supportive person (they don't have to respond; sometimes just reaching out helps)
- Go to a safe place (see "Places that feel safe" below)
- Write or journal about what I'm feeling (no one else has to read it)
- Cry, scream into a pillow, punch a pillow, or let the emotion come
- Draw, paint, or create something
- Move my body: dance, run, do yoga, or stretch
- Take a warm bath or shower
- Wrap myself in a blanket
- Watch a comforting show or movie
- Read something that brings me peace
- Spend time with a pet
- Sit outside in fresh air
- Other:

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One thing that usually helps me feel a bit better:

When I need to get away or feel overwhelmed, these are places where I feel calm or less alone:

1. Place: _____ Why it helps: _____
2. Place: _____ Why it helps: _____
3. Place: _____ Why it helps: _____

Someone I can go with: _____ Phone: _____

Or, if I don't have a physical place right now

- A memory of a place that felt safe: _____
- An imagined place (nature scene, room, etc.): _____

What NOT to do when I'm overwhelmed

Things that might feel good in the moment but don't actually help and can increase the risk of feeling worse. (check all that apply to you):

- Drinking alcohol alone
- Using substances
- Isolating for days without contact
- Other:

Instead, I will:



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Step 3: Contacts I can reach out to for help (my Support Circle)

Trusted people I can reach out to for distraction or companionship when I'm struggling (don't have to discuss suicidality):

In order of who to try first:

1. Name: _____ Phone: _____ Best time: _____
2. Name: _____ Phone: _____ Best time: _____
3. Name: _____ Phone: _____ Best time: _____

What I can say to them: "I'm struggling right now, and I need to talk," or "I need to do something to get calmer," or "Can you sit with me for a bit?"

Step 4: Crisis and professional help

If I'm having thoughts of harming myself, not wanting to live, or feeling unsafe, my first step is to reach out to one of these people or services RIGHT NOW:

- **9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline** (call or text): 9-8-8 or visit 988.ca
- **Local crisis line:** _____ Phone: _____
- **Emergency services** (if in immediate danger): call 911
- **Go to the nearest emergency department:** _____

Person I will call (primary): _____ Phone: _____

Person I will call (back-up): _____ Phone: _____
(These should be people who know about your suicidal thoughts and can respond quickly in a crisis. They can be the same people listed in your Support Circle above, or different people.)

What I will tell them: You can say something like, "I'm struggling and need help," or "I'm having thoughts of hurting myself, and I need support."

I need to go to the emergency department or call 911, when:

- I have a specific plan to harm myself and the means to do it
- I have started to hurt myself
- I feel like I cannot keep myself safe
- I am unable to reach anyone on my support list and feel in immediate danger





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Step 5: Make my space safer (reducing access to lethal means)

Temporarily removing or securing items that could be used to harm yourself can help keep you safe during a crisis. This is about making it harder to act impulsively.

Items I will secure, remove, or give to someone I trust:

- Medications** (prescription, over-the-counter): Locked away Given to: _____
- Sharp objects** (knives, razors): Secured Given to: _____
- Firearms** (if applicable): Removed from home Secured by: _____
- Alcohol or substances:** Removed Given to:

- Other:** _____

Person who can help me secure these items: _____ Phone: _____

Step 6: Reasons for living

Things I want to remember about myself. *It's okay if some of these feel impossible right now. You can leave them blank and come back later, or write something very small. Even one word counts.*

Times when I thought I couldn't go on, but I did:

Strengths I have (even small ones):

People who love and care about me:

One reason I want to stay alive (even if it's small):

One thing I want to try or do in the future (even if it feels far away):

A note from you to yourself: *Write something kind and true that you want to hear when you're in pain. You can read this when things feel dark.*



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What to remember: Overwhelming feelings are temporary, even when they don't feel that way. Reaching out is brave. You deserve support and safety. This plan is for you—use it however it helps.

Step 7: My safety plan at a glance

Use this to capture your top 3 steps from this plan (e.g., 'Try 5-4-3-2-1 grounding,' 'Call [name],' 'Text 9-8-8')

If a crisis hits, I will:

1. **First:**

2. **Then:**

3. **Then:**

I will keep this plan in:

(e.g., on my phone, on my fridge, in my wallet, with a trusted person)

