PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN



FOR TIMES WHEN THINGS FEEL OVERWHELMING

My Safety Plan

A step-by-step plan for getting through moments when thoughts of suicide or urges to self-harm feel strong. Best filled in together with your psychologist.

myMHC
www.myMHC.com.au

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Name:

Date made:

Review date:

BEFORE YOU START

About your safety plan

Thoughts of suicide and urges to self-harm usually come in waves. They can feel unbearable, but they rise, peak and pass. A safety plan is a list of steps you have worked out ahead of time, while you're calmer, to help you get through the wave safely.

If you are in immediate danger

If you feel you can't keep yourself safe right now, or you have already hurt yourself or taken something, **call 000** or go to your nearest hospital emergency department. You don't need to work through the steps first.

How to use it

1. Notice your **warning signs** (Step 1). They tell you it's time to use your plan.
2. Work through the steps **in order**. If one step doesn't help, go to the next.
3. You can skip straight to **professional help** (Step 5) at any time.
4. Keep going until you feel safer. Then let your psychologist know you used your plan.

Keep it where you can find it

- Take a photo of your completed plan and keep it on your phone.
- Cut out the wallet card on page 8 and keep it with you.
- Give a copy to someone you trust, so they know how to help.
- Review it with your psychologist every few months, or when things change.

You are not alone in this

Many people have thoughts of suicide or self-harm at some point, often when pain feels bigger than their ways of coping. Having these thoughts doesn't make you weak or broken. It means you are carrying a lot, and you deserve support. Talking about them openly with your psychologist is safe, and it is an important part of getting through.

This plan is based on the Safety Planning Intervention developed by Stanley and Brown (2012).

1 My warning signs

What tells me a crisis might be building? Think about the thoughts, feelings, situations and behaviours that come before things get hard.

Thoughts

e.g. "I can't do this anymore", "I'm a burden"

Feelings

e.g. hopeless, numb, trapped, overwhelmed

Situations and triggers

e.g. arguments, being alone at night, anniversaries

Things I do

e.g. withdrawing, not sleeping, drinking more

2 Things I can do on my own to cope

What helps me take my mind off things, calm my body or ride out the wave, without contacting anyone?

Ideas to try: slow breathing (in for 4, out for 6) · 5-4-3-2-1 grounding: name 5 things you see, 4 you hear, 3 you can touch, 2 you smell, 1 you taste · my Calm Place or Container · a walk outside · a warm shower · music that soothes me · time with a pet · writing down what I feel · a comforting show or podcast · prayer or meditation

3 People and places that help me feel better

Who can I be around, and where can I go, to take my mind off things? I don't have to talk about how I'm feeling.

Name	Phone

Places I can go

e.g. a cafe, the library, the beach, a friend's place, a park

4 People I can ask for help

Who can I tell that I'm struggling? Choose people I trust, who would want to know.

Name	Phone	What I'd like them to do

It can help to agree on a word or text you can send that means "I need support now".

My code word or text: _____

5 Professionals and services I can contact

Who can I call for professional help? You can go to this step at any time.

Service	Phone	When
My psychologist Julie-Anne Peake, myMHC	**0435 025 393**	Business hours. Not a crisis line.
My GP		
Local psychiatric triage (public mental health service)		24/7
Lifeline Also text 0477 13 11 14	**13 11 14**	24/7
Suicide Call Back Service	**1300 659 467**	24/7
13YARN Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	**13 92 76**	24/7
Kids Helpline Ages 5 to 25	**1800 55 1800**	24/7
Emergency Police, ambulance, fire	**000**	24/7
My nearest emergency department	*Address:*	

6 Making my surroundings safer

When I'm in a crisis, what could I use to hurt myself, and what can I do to make it harder to reach? Work this out with your psychologist and the people who support you.

Things that help: ask someone I trust to look after medications, so I keep only small amounts at home · return unused or old medicines to a pharmacy · ask someone to hold onto anything I might use to hurt myself · go somewhere I feel safer, or be with someone · avoid alcohol and drugs when I'm distressed, because they make urges stronger and harder to resist

MY PLAN

7

My reasons for living

What matters to me? Who and what do I want to stay for? Think about people, pets, plans, values, beliefs and things I'm looking forward to, even small ones.

The thing that matters most to me right now is:

When you can't think of any reasons

In a dark moment, it can be hard to feel any reasons at all. That's exactly why it helps to write them down now. If this page feels hard to fill in, leave it and work on it with your psychologist. Some people add photos, a letter from someone they love, or a note to their future self.

SELF-HARM

When urges to self-harm come up

Self-harm is often a way of coping with feelings that seem too big to bear. It isn't attention-seeking, and you deserve care, not judgement. The goal of this page is to give you other ways through the wave, and to keep you as safe as possible.

Ride the wave

Urges build, peak and fade, often within 15 to 30 minutes. If you can delay acting on an urge, it usually gets weaker. Try telling yourself: "I don't have to act on this right now. I'll wait 15 minutes and see." Set a timer, use something from the list below, and check in with yourself again when it goes off.

Ways through that don't hurt

Soothe

- Wrap up in a soft blanket
- Have a warm drink
- Put on calming music
- Smell something comforting

Ground

- Name 5 things you can see
- Feel your feet on the floor
- Describe the room out loud
- Hold a comforting object

Express

- Write it down, then tear it up
- Draw or scribble the feeling
- Let yourself cry
- Say how you feel out loud

Move

- Go for a brisk walk
- Dance to loud music
- Squeeze a soft ball
- Stretch slowly

Connect

- Text or call someone from Step 4
- Sit near other people
- Call Lifeline on 13 11 14
- Cuddle a pet

What works for me

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you have hurt yourself

Call 000 or go to an emergency department if a wound is deep, gaping or won't stop bleeding with firm pressure; if a burn is large or deep; or if you feel faint or unwell.

If you have swallowed anything, or taken more than the prescribed dose of any medication, get help straight away, even if you feel fine. Call 000, or the Poisons Information Centre on **13 11 26** (24/7).

For smaller injuries, clean and cover the area, and see your GP if it becomes red, hot, swollen or painful. Please tell your psychologist at your next session. You won't be judged.

KEEP IT WITH YOU

My wallet card

Fill in both halves, cut around the dotted outline, and fold along the dotted line in the middle. Keep it in your wallet or phone case.

My safety plan

MY WARNING SIGNS

THINGS I CAN DO

MY REASON TO STAY

Who I can call

SOMEONE I TRUST

MY PSYCHOLOGIST
0435 025 393 (business hours)

LIFELINE
13 11 14

SUICIDE CALL BACK
1300 659 467

13YARN
13 92 76

EMERGENCY
000

A second card, to keep somewhere else or give to someone who supports you:

My safety plan

MY WARNING SIGNS

THINGS I CAN DO

MY REASON TO STAY

Who I can call

SOMEONE I TRUST

MY PSYCHOLOGIST
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Phone numbers checked October 2026. Services can change, so check healthdirect.gov.au if a number doesn't work.

myMHC
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YOUR PSYCHOLOGIST

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ABN 87 804 953 581 · Provider No. 260262FK

If you are in crisis: call 000 in an emergency, or Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours).

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