

WHERE'S THE HELP?



For individuals experiencing thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm.

"I believe I'm here for a reason" she said, "and I think the reason is to throw little torches out to the next step to lead people through the dark. When you're kind to someone in trouble, you hope they'll remember and be kind to someone else. And it'll become like a wildfire. Each person helping someone else who helps someone else, and so on. I'm afraid that I'm going to wake up one day, and the wind will be so strong that no torch can bear up to it. I think that's my biggest fear – that I won't be strong enough to keep throwing the torches. But I know I'll keep trying." - Whoopi Goldberg, Parade Magazine 11/4/92

Words Save Lives knows that experiences and the meaning one makes of them are unique to that individual.

We recognize that available resources to help people live the lives they deserve and are glad to live vary from community to community. We also know that people have many different types of experiences with suicide. These may include grief after the death by suicide of people we love and/or admire; living with our own suicide thoughts, attempts, and/or self-harm; trying our best to support loved one(s) who are struggling with suicide; and working in paid or volunteer roles as a helper for people with experiences of suicide.

Our beliefs about what helps us live well is based on the ["Safety Plan" developed by Barbara Stanley and Gregory Brown](#). These steps can be used to help keep oneself safe or to help someone else write out their plan.

EVERY 11 MINUTES
SOMEONE IN THE
UNITED STATES
DIES BY SUICIDE.¹

24/7 FREE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

[All Nations Hotline - Text Support to 402-275-2444](#)

For and staffed by Native Americans.

[Call Blackline - 800-604-5841](#)

Peer support and counseling for and by BIPOCs.

[Crisis Text Line - Text "Start" to 741-741](#)

[National Domestic Violence Hotline - 800-799-7233](#)

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 988](#)

or 800-273-TALK

[RAINN -800-656-HOPE](#)

(Rape Abuse Incest National Network)

[Trans Lifeline - 877-565-8860](#)

For and staffed by trans and nonbinary people.

[The Trevor Project - Chat & Text 866-488-7386](#)

For LGBTQ+ teen and young adults.

[Veterans Crisis Line - 988](#)

or 800-273-8255, Option 1

FREE RESOURCES - NOT 24/7

[NAMI - 800-950-NAMI](#)

(National Alliance on Mental Illness)

[7 Cups of Tea](#)

Peer-to-peer support.

¹ Retrieved August 7, 2022 from [cdc.gov/suicide/facts](https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts)

SAFETY PLAN

Write out the steps below AND have your current version easily available 24/7. This may be in the form of a Safety Plan app, notes on your phone, paper that you keep with you, or a journal to keep thoughts over time. The plan is intended to be updated so that what it contains is truly helpful to you. Steps 1-5 are meant to be used in that order. If one doesn't help enough, try the next. Steps 6 and 7 can be worked on and updated at any time.

- **Step 1. What thoughts, emotions, situations, physical sensations, or behaviors are your personal signs that you are not feeling well emotionally?** Work toward recognizing these so you can do something before you're feeling worse.
- **Step 2. What are soothing, distracting, safe things that work for you that you can do alone?** Try to do some of these things.
- **Step 3. Where are some safe spaces where you can yourself be around other people?** You don't have to talk to anyone there, but you will be reminded that there are other people around. Go to one of those places to give yourself some time to help calm your emotions and thoughts.
- **Step 4. List "your people" - the close friends or family who you can talk with openly.** Reach out and consider starting the communication with something like "Are you up for a conversation? I will understand if you aren't. I'm having a rough time and wonder if we can talk." If the first person isn't available, trust that their "no" is about them and not about you - none of us are immediately available 24/7 and move on to the next person.
- **Step 5. Who are the paid or volunteer support organizations or people trained and available to help with an emotional crisis?** Some of these are unique to you such as support people who are regularly part of your life. Others may be found on the "Free 24/7 Mental Health Supports" list above. Make sure that the ones you will use are in your phone's contacts.
- **Step 6. Make your personal spaces safer by making it harder to get to the things that you consider using to hurt or kill yourself.** Dispose of things you are willing to permanently get rid of. If you are not able to do so, you may have a trusted friend store these items for you. Other items may be things you need to have in your home, but you can store them in a way that requires several steps to get to them. This step creates the opportunity to calm your thoughts and emotions before you act.
- **Step 7. List one or more things (including people and pets) that are most important and worth living for.** If your initial reaction is that there is nothing, then consider your reasons for dying, and how those can be the clues to what is important to you. Some may become available to you when you let the right people help. Consider having some tangible reminders of what is worth living for. This could mean a "Hope Kit" of things in a box or an envelope, a display in your home, photos on the dashboard of your car, a tattoo, and so many other possibilities for reminders.

