



Safety Planning for Individuals at Risk of Suicide

All individuals who are at risk of suicide should have their own safety plan. A safety plan is a written prioritized list of coping strategies and sources of support designed to decrease the probability that an individual will attempt suicide in the near future.

Safety planning is an intervention, discussed and developed collaboratively by a clinician and the person at risk for suicide, and includes the following six components.

1. Warning signs
2. Internal coping strategies
3. Social settings or contacts who may distract from the crisis
4. Family members or friends who may offer help
5. Professionals and agencies to contact for help
6. A safe environment

Visit <http://www.suicidesafetyplan.com/> for information and a safety plan form.

For a brief course on developing a safety plan, go to **Safety Planning Intervention for Suicide Prevention** at <http://zerosuicide.sprc.org/sites/zerosuicide.sprc.org/files/sp/course.htm>.

All safety plans should meet these criteria:

- Be in the patient's own words, brief, and easy to read
- Include ways to restrict access to lethal means (e.g., firearms, medications), which is balanced with respect to legal and ethical requirements under federal and state laws
- Involve family members as full partners in the collaborative process, especially to establish their roles in responding to the individual's crises
- Be in the individual's possession (not solely the clinician's)
- Updated whenever warranted but ideally reviewed at each session

Actively engaging individuals in their own care and suicide prevention does the following:

- Takes into account the individual's experiences and resources
- Empowers the individual to resolve crises and long-term problems using the least invasive methods possible
- Builds the individual's hope for recovery

Every safety plan should address reducing access to any lethal means that are available to the client. For more information on this aspect of safety planning, take the following free online course: **Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)** at <http://training.sprc.org>

Sources: Adapted with permission from the following: Education Development Center. (2015). Zero suicide toolkit. Retrieved from <http://zerosuicide.sprc.org/toolkit>.



**Emerald Coast
Behavioral Hospital**

www.emeraldcoastbehavioral.com

1940 Harrison Avenue

Panama City, FL 32405

For Admissions and Referrals, please call (850)763-0017