

# Suicide Prevention: Remove Things That Might Harm You

## Objective

To identify things that you might use to commit suicide and to remove these from your easy access.

## You Should Know

When someone is in the throes of depression to the point when they are fantasizing about means and methods for killing themselves, it is cause for serious concern. It is not uncommon for people who think about suicide to fantasize about using objects or substances to harm themselves. In those instances, they are typically thinking about ending their emotional pain and might not be thinking that the problems they are experiencing are able to be solved, or that their absence will deeply affect people in their lives. Impulsive action can be lethal.

If you are or have a history of suicidal thoughts or attempts, one thing you can do is to remove items or access to other means of harming yourself in order to put time and space between the thought or impulse and the actual action. During that time delay, you should immediately ask for help. Suicide, as many have said, is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Help is available.

If you feel like you are about to take action on your suicidal thoughts, call 911, go to your nearest hospital emergency room, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. Store these numbers in your phone now. As you review this worksheet, share your thoughts and answers with a trusted friend, relative, or mental health professional. Ask for their support in keeping you away from things that might harm you.

## What to Do

Write below a list of objects in your possession or your immediate environment that might pose a risk for you if you had access while feeling suicidal. For instance: alcohol, drugs, prescription medications, guns, knives, razor blades, scissors, rope, household chemicals, and so on.

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Next, make a safety plan to restrict your easy access to those objects and substances. One option is to enlist someone's help in locking these objects away in a safe or lockbox to which you do not have access. Below, list three people you can discuss this with and what means would provide safety for you when you are having urges to act on your suicidal thoughts.

Three safe people in my life are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Places where I can store harmful objects in my immediate environment:

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If removing these items from your home or immediate environment isn't possible, you can remove yourself from the situation by going somewhere else for a while, even if it is a temporary distraction to redirect your attention.

Here is a list of places you could go if you are feeling suicidal. Check the places that you would be willing to go to when you are feeling unsafe:

- Family member's home (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Neighbor's home (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Restaurant
- Coffee shop
- My office or school
- Library
- Mall
- Museum
- Movie theater
- Gym or health club
- Grocery store
- Other:

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If those steps fail to keep you feeling safe, call 911, or go to your nearest hospital emergency room if you are able to drive safely there. Or you may also reach out to the hotline noted earlier.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

1. If you have been suicidal in the past, what are some steps you have already taken to remove yourself from harm?

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2. Which of the suggestions in this worksheet seems the easiest to follow through on? The hardest?

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3. What would get in the way of your taking action to prevent yourself from acting on suicidal thoughts? Describe and share this information with someone on your list.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?

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