

# Keeping Safe: Working Through Hard Times

A mental health first aid kit  
that can help when things  
are at their hardest



**Call 0300 123 1503**  
**[www.wellbeingnands.co.uk](http://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk)**

### Looking after me

Sometimes when you're feeling really low, it can seem like there's nothing you can do to make yourself feel better. It can also feel incredibly overwhelming, and it may be difficult to think straight or to ignore suicidal thoughts.

This workbook will help you to create a safety plan. By doing this you're making sure that when you do feel really low or that you want your life to end, there are strategies you can use to keep yourself safe.

Think of your safety plan as your 'mental health first-aid kit'; it includes many different things that will help you through a crisis.

Having a safety plan can help you feel more in control when everything feels out of control.

It is important to create this plan at a time when you feel you are coping. If this is a struggle, try to work through this workbook with someone else who can help.



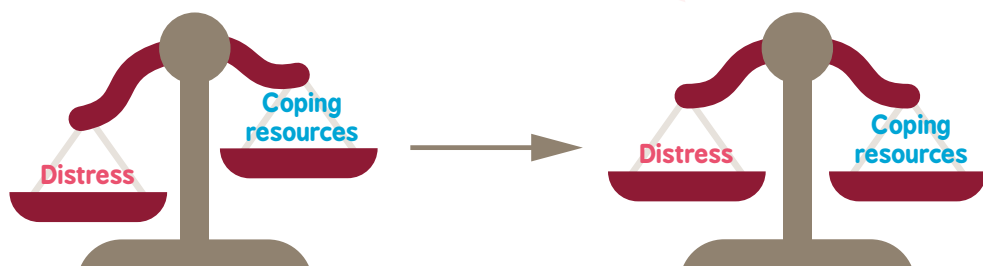
Throughout this booklet, examples have been given by people who have found it difficult to cope at times too and who have given permission for their experiences to be included.

## Safety Plan

If you sometimes struggle with overwhelming thoughts or feelings, working on a plan for those tough times can help. When you feel overwhelmed, follow your plan one step at a time until you feel safer.

Feeling overwhelmed or suicidal is the result of experiencing extreme distress and not having the resources to cope. We therefore need to reduce distress and increase coping resources.

**“Sometimes things just feel so impossible, like I’m trying to swim in a stormy sea with no help. It’s times like these I go back to my safety plan, working through it step by step helps me stay afloat, and find my way back to shore..”**



Keep the plan where you can easily find it when you'll need it.

**Situations or times that I sometimes find difficult or overwhelming**

**"Night time is hardest for me"**

**"After I've come back home from visiting someone"**

**What signs or triggers are there that warn me I am getting distressed?**

**"Over-thinking is the first sign for me"**

**"I know I'm beginning to spiral down when I get snappy and irritable"**

What do I need to do to keep myself safe?

"I make sure I don't have alcohol in the house"

"Asking someone else to look after my medicine for me when things are really bad keeps me safe"

What have I done in the past that helps? What ways of coping do I have?

"Going somewhere I find calming, like a park, has helped me in the past"

"I have found doing something quiet like a puzzle, has calmed me down before"

## Safety Plan

### What I will do to help calm and soothe myself:

Create a list of things you can do that are soothing and will make you feel safe and protected when you're upset. Example: listening to music, going for a walk, playing guitar, baking a cake, having a warm shower.

"I find certain smells soothing, like lavender, so lighting a lavender candle calms me down"

"Walking soothes me, I find rhythm and movement calming";  
"baking a cake, or even just making a cup of tea can help to quieten my mind"

### What I will remind myself. What I will tell myself instead of the dark thoughts:

"I remind myself that my feelings will pass, they won't last forever"

"One of the things I learnt in therapy that I repeat is: thoughts are not facts, they are just thoughts!"

What would I say to a close friend who was feeling this way?

“Things will get better”

“There is always something to live for, even if it doesn’t feel like it right now”

A safe place I can go to:

This might be a physical place, but it might be a safe place in your mind or imagination:

“I take myself somewhere I can people-watch or hear the birds, like a park or a street bench”

“My sofa is my safe place, I have a warm blanket and a special cushion for when I feel distressed”

“I close my eyes and imagine I’m walking in a wood, with sunlight and a light breeze on my face”

## Creating a safe place

It can be helpful to come up with somewhere nice in home / work where you can go when you are feeling low or stressed.

Create a self-care package / box. Have things that you like in there, that might remind you of meaningful things, or can distract you and shift your mood.

This could be a list of activities you know improve your mood, or put things in the box that cheer you up. Try including your favourite book or film, a notebook and pen to write down your thoughts or notes of encouragement to yourself. It might feel difficult or a bit silly to put it all together but it can be a really useful tool if you're feeling too low to come up with ideas later on.

### Other examples of things for your box that other people have used are:

Smell can be a powerful mood changer and relaxer – pop in a scented candle, incense sticks, or other smelly thing that soothes you; snacks, relaxing, meaningful or upbeat music (iPod), cushions, artwork, puzzles, books, mindfulness CDs, contact numbers for friends / family.

**"I've written a letter to myself which I keep along with a few other 'feel good' items in a tin box. The letter reminds me that although the storm has to take its course, it will eventually pass and things will get better."**





## **Helpful contact numbers:**

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Tel: **0844 477 9400**

[cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk)

Charity providing information and support after someone you know has died.

### **Depression UK**

[depressionuk.org](http://depressionuk.org)

A self-help organisation made up of individuals and local groups.

### **The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)**

Tel: **0808 801 0331** (freephone from landline and mobiles)

[napac.org.uk](http://napac.org.uk)

A charity supporting adult survivors of any form of childhood abuse. Provides a support line and local support services.

### **NCT**

Tel: **0300 330 0700** [nct.org.uk](http://nct.org.uk)

National charity for parents, providing information and support for all parents.

### **Samaritans**

Helpline: **116 123**

Chris, PO Box 9090, Sterling FK8 2SA

[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

### **Shout text service**

**85258** – free UK 24/7 text service for anyone in need of help. A 24-hour telephone helpline for people struggling to cope.

### **Stay Alive App**

Free to download on Google Play store or Apple Store or [www.prevent-suicide.org.uk](http://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk)

### **Wellbeing Support Line:**

Tel: **0808 8020288** (Freephone)

Monday to Friday, 8pm - midnight

Saturdays, 2pm - midnight

Sundays, 8am - midnight

**Your GP number:**

**Friends:**

**People involved in my care:**

**Out-of-hours line:**



# Safety Plan

## Contact us

✉ Wellbeing Norfolk and Waveney,  
The Conifers, Drayton High Road,  
Norwich NR6 5BE

✉ Wellbeing Suffolk,  
Mariner House, 43 Hanford Road,  
Ipswich IP1 2GA

🌐 [www.wellbeingnands.co.uk](http://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk)

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If you would like this information in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or a different language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and we will do our best to help.

Email [PALS@nsft.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@nsft.nhs.uk) or call PALS Freephone **0800 279 7257**



*Wellbeing Norfolk and Waveney and Wellbeing Suffolk are partnerships of NHS and voluntary organisations working together to offer a wide range of support for low mood, anxiety and depression.*

• Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust • VoiceAbility • Suffolk Young People's Health Project (4YP) • Relate • Shaw Trust  
• Suffolk Family Carers • MTCIC • Great Yarmouth and Waveney Mind • Norwich and Central Norfolk Mind • West Norfolk Mind

*We work together to deliver a range of support interventions for people of all ages with low mood, anxiety and depression. For more information about who we are see: [www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/about](http://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/about)*

*Wellbeing is commissioned by Great Yarmouth and Waveney, North Norfolk, Norwich, South Norfolk, West Norfolk, Ipswich and East and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups.*