Suicide Prevention – How to Create a Safety Plan

**What is a safety plan?**

* Prioritized written list of coping strategies and resources for use during a suicidal crisis.
* Provides a sense of control and framework for prevention.
* Brief and to the point, easy-to-read and understand.
* Involves a commitment to the treatment process and staying alive.
* Is easily accessible.
* Frequently reviewed and changed as needed to fit situation.
* Communication is an important part of the process.
* Update and review frequently (can be daily or weekly depending on the situation), change as needed.

**Suggestions for a Safety Plan:**

1. Use compassion and open communication. No shaming or blaming!!
2. Secure items that could be used to harm oneself - firearms, sharp objects, medications, etc.
3. List warning signs that apply to your situation - how will you know when you need to use the plan, what will you notice?
4. Determine coping skills that can help, including activities that are distractions.
5. List supportive contacts with phone numbers.
6. Call trusted friends and family and share the plan with them.
7. Include a “suicide contract” statement: “I agree not to kill myself.” “I will call \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ if I feel like I want to hurt myself” etc. Google suicide contract, can easily find one online.
8. Identify triggers to avoid - people, places, etc.
9. Review and update the plan frequently, it is a work in progress. This action in itself can be a suicide prevention tool.
10. Discuss where copies of the plan should be placed so that it is easily accessible.

**Make the safety plan fit the person and the situation.**