

Coping Suggestions for the Suicidal Person

Here are some suggestions for supportive tools that you can create now to help you at those times when you are feeling down and distressed. When you start to feel bad, take them out and go through them; read them, examine them, listen to them; they are there to remind you that you want to be **alive**.

Construct a Hope Kit

A Hope Kit is a scrapbook or container that holds mementos that serve as personal reminders of reasons for you to live. This kit can include photographs, letters and meaningful souvenirs. Be as creative as possible when making your Hope Kit.

One girl decorated a shoebox and filled it with photos of family members and friends she especially loved, lyrics from a song that made her happy, a sentimental childhood toy and images from a favorite movie.

The process of putting together a Hope Kit can be a touching and self-affirming experience in itself. It often leads to the discovery of reasons to live that had been previously overlooked. This kit can also include the following items:

A Safety Plan

Plan specific actions that you will take when you start to feel bad. These will help interfere with two behaviors that fuel a suicidal state: passivity and isolation.

- What activity are you going to do to make yourself feel better? (ie: take a walk, play with your dog, bake brownies, meditate, watch a funny movie?)
- Where are you going to go to be with people and take your mind off your negative thoughts? (ie: to the mall, to the park, to an athletic event)
- Who are you going call to talk to? (ie: a specific friend, relative, minister) Make sure that you have that person's phone number.
- And finally, make sure that you have the [Suicide Hot Line Number – 1-800-273-TALK](#) (8255) – in your phone:

A List of Reasons for Living

When writing this list, consider the following questions. If you have difficulty answering them now, think about how you would have answered them during a time when you were feeling happier.

- What makes me light up?
- What sparks my interest?
- Who are the people who would say that it matters to them that I am in their lives?
- What activities do I enjoy?
- What do I enjoy doing with my time?

And don't forget about this reason: I get to see how the stories of the people I love turn out and, best of all, I get to see how my story turns out.

Coping Cards

Coping Cards can be used to list the activities that you have outlined in your Safety Plan that you are going to do to make yourself feel better. Write a different activity on each card. When you feel down, refer to these cards and choose one of the actions that they suggest.

Coping Cards can also be used to counter the negative thoughts that occur when have turned against yourself. It is helpful to enlist the help of a friend for creating these since friends have more compassionate and realistic ways of seeing us than we do.

Think about the negative thoughts you have when you are feeling self-destructive. Once you have identified one, think about how you would counter it. Imagine what you would say to a friend if they thought that toward themselves. This will help you have a more objective point of view toward yourself. Write this thought on a Coping Card.

Now turn the card over and write an action that you can take that will counter your negative thought and that will support the way of thinking about yourself that the card expresses.

For example, if you typically think: “You don’t fit in anywhere; you are a bother to people,” you could write: “I’m feeling down but that doesn’t make me a creep. There are people who care about me and want to help me.” For an action you could write: “I am going to call someone right now and talk to them.”

When you start having these negative thoughts, refer to your Coping Cards. Read the more objective and compassionate view toward you and take the action that will strengthen it.

GET HELP:

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN CRISIS OR IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE HELP, CALL Crisis 24 hours:1-800-232-7288 (Toll free service available to Northern Alberta) and Crisis 24 hours: (780) 482-HELP (4357).

This is a free hotline available 24 hours a day to anyone in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.

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Edmonton Numbers

- If feeling suicidal go to the hospital or call emergency supports: AHS Mobile Mental Health Team (780-342-7777) or AHS Adult Crisis (780-482-0225) or AHS Stabilization Unit (780-342-7692) or the 24-hr Distress Line (780-482-4357).