**SAFETY PLANNING INTERVENTION**

**The purpose of the Safety Planning Intervention is to provide people who have experienced a suicidal crisis with a specific set of coping strategies and resources to use in order to decrease the risk of suicidal behavior.**

**The Safety Planning Intervention is more than completing the Safety Plan form and actually consists of the following tasks**

**Conduct a Risk Assessment**

and obtain a description of a recent suicidal crisis to identify warning signs and how risk increases and decreases over time.

**Provide a Rationale for a Safety Plan**

to identify coping strategies and resources before a crisis to better manage the future crisis and allow time to pass without engaging suicidal behavior.

**Describe the Development of a Safety Plan**

as a collaborative process between the clinician and the individual.

##### **Collaboratively complete the steps of the Safety Plan**

Steps 1 – 7 (see back)

**Explain How To Use the Safety Plan**

once it has been developed.

**Discuss the Details of the Safety Plan**

Discuss the location of the Safety Plan, who to share it with, the likelihood of its use and potential barriers.

**Steps of the safety plan**

1. **RECOGNIZE WARNING SIGNS OF AN IMPENDING SUICIDAL CRISIS.**

One of the most effective ways of averting a suicidal crisis is to address the problem before it fully emerges. These warning signs include personal situations, thoughts, moods, or behaviors and serve as a reminder to retrieve and follow the Safety Plan.

*“How will you know when the safety plan should be used?”*

*“What do you experience when you start to think about suicide or feel extremely distressed?*

1. **EMPLOY INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES.**

In this step, patients are asked to identify what they can do, without the assistance of another person, should they become suicidal again. Such activities function as a way for patients to distract themselves from the crisis and allow time for the suicidal thoughts to subside.

*“What can you do, on your own, if you become suicidal again, to help yourself not to act on your thoughts or urges?” “How likely do you think you would be able to do this step during a time of crisis?”*

1. **UTILIZE SOCIAL CONTACTS AS A MEANS OF DISTRACTION FROM SUICIDAL THOUGHTS.**

Patients can utilize socialization strategies of two types: socializing with other people in their natural social environment or healthy social settings that may help to distract themselves from their suicidal thoughts.

*“Who or what social settings help you take your mind off your problems at least for a little while?*

*“Who helps you feel better when you socialize with them?”*

1. **CONTACT FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS WHO MAY HELP TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS as appropriate.**

This step is distinguished from the previous one in that patients explicitly reveal to others that they are in crisis and need support and assistance in coping with the crisis.

*“Among your family or friends, who do you think you could contact for help during a crisis?” or “Who is supportive of you and who do you feel that you can talk with when you’re under stress?”*

1. **CONTACT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS OR AGENCIES.**

Patients are instructed to, or assisted with, contact a professional or agency who are trained to provide or get help during a suicidal crisis.

*“Who are the mental health professionals that we should identify to be on your safety plan?” and “Are there other health care providers?”*

1. **MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER BY REDUCING THE POTENTIAL USE OF LETHAL MEANS.**

Even if no specific plan is identified by patients, a key component of the Safety Plan Intervention involves eliminating or limiting access to any potential lethal means in the environment to allow time to pass so that the suicide risk subsides.

*Which means they would consider using during a suicidal crisis and collaboratively identify ways to secure or limit access to these means. Restricting the patients’ access to a highly lethal method – patient can identify a designated, responsible person to help with this—usually a family member or close friend, or the police*

1. **IDENTIFY REASONS FOR LIVING**

*“What is important to you? What makes life worth living?”*