



VIEW THE
DIGITAL VERSION

Make Your Home Suicide-Safer

The steps on this checklist can make things safer if you or your Veteran are at risk for suicide.

When you can, make decisions while the Veteran at risk—whether that's you or someone else—is calmer. The goal is to plan ahead so decisions aren't made in crisis-mode. Remember that at the end of the day, every individual has control over what to do with themselves, their belongings, and their home.

FIREARM MANAGEMENT

- ☐ If possible, temporarily store guns away from home.
 - **Transfer them** to a trusted friend or relative. Check out worriedaboutaveteran.org/state-laws for transfer laws by state.
 - **Secure them out of the home** in a legally appropriate place like a gun shop or storage unit.
 - **Store a critical part of each gun** (like a firing pin) away from home so they will not fire.
- ☐ When it's not possible to store firearms out of the home, **remove access**.
 - **Lock up all guns and hold the key/combination** for the at-risk person. See worriedaboutaveteran.org/storage-options.
- ☐ When access cannot be prevented, **take steps to delay access**.
 - **Create distance** from where they are most likely to be during a crisis. Example: Move a gun safe from your bedroom to your garage.
 - **Add time** between having a suicidal thought and acting on it. Example: Put the cable lock keys into a real-estate lockbox, disassemble the firearms.
- ☐ **Separate ammunition** from firearms.

OTHER WAYS TO MAKE THE HOME SAFER

- ☐ **Ask your Veteran** if they know how they would attempt suicide.
- ☐ **Take steps to reduce risk** for any methods they mention.
 - Example: If they have attempted to cut themselves before, remove unneeded knives and keep necessary knives locked up.
 - Example: If a Veteran has thoughts about crashing their car, hold their keys.

REMEMBER: It's impossible to 100% suicide proof a home. But slowing things down gives your Veteran a chance to reflect or seek help.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

- ☐ **Dispose of unneeded or expired medications**.
 - See safe.pharmacy/drug-disposal/ for a list of secure disposal sites in your area.
- ☐ **Limit the immediately available supply** to what is needed.
 - For over-the-counter medications, **ask a pharmacist about quantities** that would not do serious harm if taken at once.
 - For prescription medications for chronic concerns, **ask the doctor about more frequent refills**. Example: Switch a 3-month refill to a 1-month or 1-week refill.
- ☐ **Lock up excess medications**.
 - **Consider using a locked electronic device** that dispenses pills on a timer.
 - **Do not lock up rescue medications** like inhalers, epi-pens, or naloxone.

REDUCE IN-THE-MOMENT DECISIONS

- ☐ **Remove alcohol/mind-altering drugs** from home or lock them up.
- ☐ **Keep reminders of reasons for living** in plain view. Example: Photos of loved ones, encouraging notes, etc.
 - Think about putting reminders right on containers/safes for guns and meds

In a Crisis?

Call 9-8-8 (Press 1 for Veterans) for advice & guidance on how to support your loved one during a mental health crisis. Call 9-1-1 if your loved one or someone else is in immediate danger.

Checking in on a Veteran at Risk of Suicide: An Ongoing Plan

You don't have to wait for a crisis. It can be hard learning that a loved one has considered suicide in the past. Trusting you with this knowledge provides the opportunity to offer regular support.

Start by building a team. Ask your Veteran about others they feel comfortable having these conversations with. If they don't have anyone in mind, ask if they would be open to you connecting with others.

Need Other Ideas? Call 844-CLL-2WAV to get advice from trained peers.

Suggested Activities

Who's
Responsible?

How
Often?

PREPARE FOR FUTURE CRISES

Help your loved one **build a Suicide Safer Home** with our checklist. (other side)

Ask your loved one how they would like you to respond if their suicidal thoughts become worse.

Save numbers in your phone of supports your loved one is okay with you calling in a crisis. (Example: "Bob's Therapist," "Tina's Mom," "Crisis line")

Ask your loved one to build a "Safety Plan" with a therapist or application.

If you are willing to be a "Social Support" on their Safety Plan, let your Veteran know the best ways to reach you.

SUPPORT THE RECOVERY JOURNEY

Help your loved one connect with care that meets their needs. (Example: therapy, AA, medical care)

Periodically ask about treatment and support them if changes need to be made to their treatment plan.

Provide ongoing encouragement for their treatment as well as other personal goals. (Example: Exercising, job hunt)

WATCH FOR DOWNTURNS

Have regular "general" check-ins. Ask about all changes, both good and bad. (Example: Weekly coffee date, Daily phone call)

Ask your loved one about their warning signs that a crisis could be coming. (Example: Drinking more, not leaving the house, taking big risks)

Check in about suicidal thoughts directly. For those who are willing, it is a chance to be open about the ups and downs of suicidal thoughts.

SELF-CARE

Check in with your own therapist or support group. Consider resources like NAMI, AFSP chapters, or Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

Go over this plan with your Veteran from time to time. Be conscious of your limits for types & frequency of activities.

Decide who's doing what and how often (daily? weekly? monthly?) based on your lifestyle and your loved one's needs.

Leave areas blank for activities you don't feel comfortable taking on or that do not fit your Veteran's needs. You can always come back to this list later.

**CHECKLIST AND PLAN
SUPPORTED BY:**



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