

RECOVER ARRIVE BECOME

CLINICAL THERAPY PRACTICE

CREATE DISTANCE, TIME & SPACE

PRACTICAL STEPS TO REDUCE ACCESS TO POSSIBLE MEANS FOR SUICIDE

WHY TIME & DISTANCE MATTER

- Suicidal crises can change. Creating a pause between a person and something that could cause serious harm can provide time to get support.
- Means safety is not punishment or loss of independence. It is a temporary protective step during periods of increased risk.
- If you are worried about yourself or someone else, involve another trusted person whenever possible.

MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER

- Temporarily remove or securely lock items that could be used for self-harm.
- Ask a trusted person to help with safe storage or access control.
- Keep only necessary quantities of medications accessible and use locked storage when appropriate.
- Avoid being alone during a high-risk period when possible, and make a plan for who to contact.

FIREARM SAFETY

- During a suicide-risk period, consider temporarily storing firearms away from the person at risk when lawful and feasible.
- Otherwise, keep firearms unloaded and securely locked in a safe, lockbox, or with an appropriate firearm locking device.
- Store ammunition locked and separately.
- A trusted family member, friend, firearm retailer, range, or other lawful storage option may be able to help; local laws vary.

FREE FIREARM LOCKS

- Project ChildSafe partners with law-enforcement agencies and community organizations to distribute free firearm safety kits with cable-style gun locks where available.
- Use Project ChildSafe's 'Get a Safety Kit' locator to check participating locations near you.
- Veterans can request a free cable gun lock from a local VA facility; VA states no paperwork is required.
- Availability varies, so calling the location first can save a trip.

CREATE A PAUSE & GET SUPPORT

- Move to a safer setting and stay near supportive people.
- Use grounding, breathing, movement, or another coping strategy while the intense moment passes.
- Tell someone directly when you are having thoughts of suicide or are worried you may act on them.
- A clinician or crisis counselor can help make an individualized safety plan.

CRISIS & SUPPORT RESOURCES

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988 in the United States.
- Veterans Crisis Line: call 988, then press 1; or text 838255.
- Call 211 for local community resources.
- If there is immediate danger or a suicide attempt is underway, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

Small barriers can create time for a crisis to change and support to arrive.

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