

Safety in the Home

1. Make a safety plan with your child or youth.

Safety plans reduce the chance of suicide. When someone is in crisis, clear thinking becomes difficult. That's why having a step-by-step plan is important. A safety plan empowers your child or youth to help themselves and tell you when they are in crisis. Make the plan together (you can use the [SELF toolkit](#) for an example). Practice using the plan, update it as needed, and keep it easy to find – like on the fridge or your youth's phone. The easier it is to access, the more likely your child or youth will use it when they need it.

2. Create a safe environment.

Creating a safe home environment is important when your child or youth comes home from the hospital or is home on pass. What safety looks like will depend on your child or youth's needs. Discuss the safety strategies you use with your child or youth, so that you both can consider each other's needs. The ideas below may help increase your child or youth's safety in the home. Talk to your primary care provider about these strategies. Adjust them to fit your family's needs. Some safety strategies may be hard to use or only needed for a short time. It is important to keep this in mind. The need for these strategies may change over time.

- Provide close supervision. Be aware that this might feel intrusive to your child or youth. It's important to find a balance between supervision and alone time.
- Consider always keeping your child or youth's bedroom door open. Some parents and caregivers have found sleeping in the same room with their child or youth to be helpful.
- Be aware of the time your child or youth may be alone in the home, including in the bathroom. Create a plan to monitor alone time. Include how often you will check on them, especially during bathing, showering, or using the bathroom.
- Arrange for an adult who understands the risk and necessary level of supervision to oversee visits to friends, relatives, or others when you are not present.
- If you leave the house, think about taking your child or youth with you or asking an adult friend or family member to stay with them.
- Give your child or youth's prescription medications to them and watch them swallow them.
- Talk to the counselor or administrator at your child or youth's school. Make a plan to meet your child or youth's safety needs, such as safe transport to and from school, and having a trusted person and place your child or youth can go to while at school.

3. Search your house for the following items and remove them from the home or lock them up. Youth at risk of suicide or self harm can be very resourceful.

Buy lockable cabinets and keep them out of your child or youth's reach. For example, medicine cabinets in your bedroom or cabinets for poisons and sharp objects in the garage. You can use combination locks, but keep the code or keys hidden.

If your child or youth is experiencing an emergency, call 911 or go to your nearest Emergency Department

Weapons

- Remove all guns and ammunition from the home- if they cannot be removed, then firearms and ammunition should be stored separately in locked storage and the keys hidden

Medications & Poisons

Lock or remove:

- all prescription and over-the-counter medicines (for example, Tylenol, vitamins and supplements) *dispose of all unused or expired medications at your nearby pharmacy
- recreational substances (for example, e-cigarettes, vapes and marijuana)
- all toxic chemicals including cleaning supplies (for example, laundry detergent)

Sharp objects

Lock or remove:

- knives, razor blades, pencil sharpeners, box cutters, craft knives/scissors
- glass and mirrors that could easily be broken into pieces

Other things to consider

- Remove belts, ropes, wires, cords, dog leashes
- Block access to high level windows, rooftops
- Reduce access to power tools, gardening tools, hobby tools (for example, saws, hot glue guns)
- Involve your child or youth – ask them to show you stashes of medications or weapons
- Search the house for stashes that your child or youth didn't tell you about

4. Monitor online activities for:

- Researching methods of suicide
- Purchasing materials/items that could be used for harm
- Spending time in chatrooms or social media sites dedicated to self-harm or suicide
- Receiving texts or direct messages from peers about suicide, or peer bullying
- Messages with requests for help

Where to get more help:

Suicide Prevention/Crisis Line

- [1-800-SUICIDE \(1-800-784-2433\)](tel:1-800-SUICIDE) BC Suicide Prevention and Intervention Line
- [1-800-588-8717](tel:1-800-588-8717) BC KUU-US Indigenous Crisis and Support Line <https://www.kuu-uscrisisline.com/about>
- Call or text [988](tel:988) National Suicide Crisis Helpline.
- For mental health or substance use crisis support:
- [310-6789](tel:310-6789) BC Mental Health Support Line
- Hope for Wellness Indigenous Support Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310) <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

Crisis Response Teams

- CART 604 874-2300 (Vancouver – referral required)
- START (E. Fraser, S. Fraser, N. Fraser) (formerly CYCP)
South-604 585-5561
North-604 949-7765
- IYOS (N. Shore) 604 904-4300
- TRACC (Richmond) 604 207-2511

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