



Self and safety: a resource for people identifying as LGBTIQA+

Developed by the Mind Equality Centre Aftercare Team



**If at any stage you feel the need to contact someone,
these services offer 100% free and confidential support:**

Rainbow Door (10:00AM-6:00PM) LGBTQIA+ Peer support

☎ 1800 729 367  0480 017 246

QLife (3:00PM-Midnight) LGBTQIA+ Peer Support

☎ 1800 184 527

🖱 www.qlife.org.au/resources/chat

Lifeline (24/7) crisis support and suicide intervention

☎ 13 11 14

Suicide Call-Back Service (24/7) suicide support call-back service

☎ 1300 657 467

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Your self-care and safety plan | 3 |
| What does safety mean to you? | 3 |
| What do I enjoy when I feel safe? | 4 |
| Connection | 4 |
| What helps me build safety when I want to hurt myself? | 5 |
| Your personal Keep Space | 6 |
| Self-care | 7 |
| Step 1: Evaluating strategies | 8 |
| Step 2: Identifying needs | 10 |
| Physical | 10 |
| Emotional | 11 |
| Spiritual | 12 |
| Social | 13 |
| Financial | 14 |
| Psychological | 15 |
| Step 3: Emergency self-care | 16 |
| Relaxation and staying calm | 16 |
| Self-talk | 17 |
| Social support | 18 |
| Mood | 19 |
| Your Safe People contacts | 21 |
| Your On-the-go Safety Booklet cut out | 22 |

Introduction

This is a resource developed by and for LGBTIQ+ people with a lived experience of mental illness. It has been designed as a guide to help you develop your sense of safety and security while awaiting access to supports.

This resource is designed as a tool for you. Use it in whatever way feels right for you; don't feel compelled to fill in every blank space. If you find an activity just doesn't work for you, tear it out if need be. What you need isn't the same as what everyone else needs, and that's okay.

With all that said, some of the questions and activities in this resource may be emotionally triggering and as such **you may want a support person present** when you fill out some areas. This person could be a friend, support worker, chosen family, partner, community leader or someone else that you can trust. Choose someone who can be there for you if you begin to struggle.

If you require support while filling out this document, please contact [QLife \(3:00PM-Midnight\) LGBTIQ+ Peer Support \(Aust wide\)](#)

☎ 1800 184 527



Your self-care and safety plan

Safety means something different to everyone. This tool is designed to help you build your understanding of what safety means for you. As members of the LGBTIQ+ community we build our own safety, and this tool is designed to help you do this. Completing this tool may be tiring and challenging however, so we recommend taking time for breaks, self-care and reaching out if you need support.

There are many different aspects that make up safety and you will be exploring several of these to build your safety plan.

Print this plan out and keep it somewhere you can access. When you start to have thoughts or urges for

suicide or self-harm, this is something you can use to rebuild that feeling of safety.

What does safety mean to you?

It is important that you know what feels safe for you. Your experience of safety and security will be different to anyone else's. Think about what is important for you to feel physical and emotional safety and try writing down some sentences, words, or ideas.

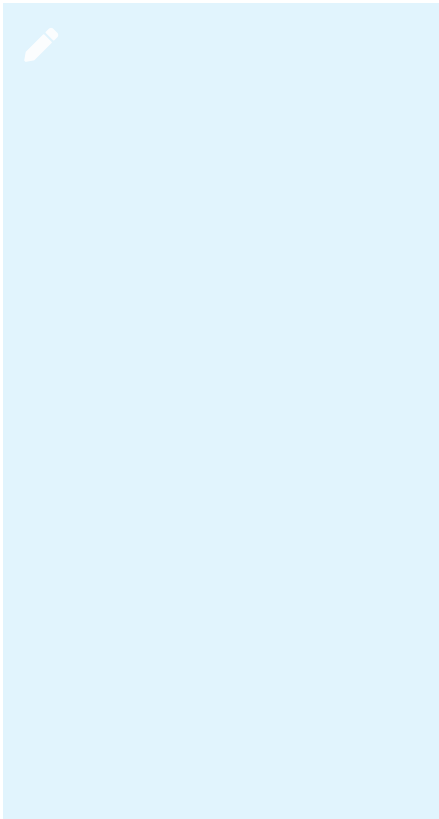
E.g. Sense of control/power, validation of identity, freedom to act, connection to community, emotional and physical boundaries, emotional or physical outlets, physical aspects of home or environment...



What do I enjoy when I feel safe?

Having determined what safety means for you, now is an opportunity to write down some of the things you enjoy doing when you're experiencing this feeling. These are activities that you can reflect on and come back to at times when having thoughts or urges to suicide or self-harm.

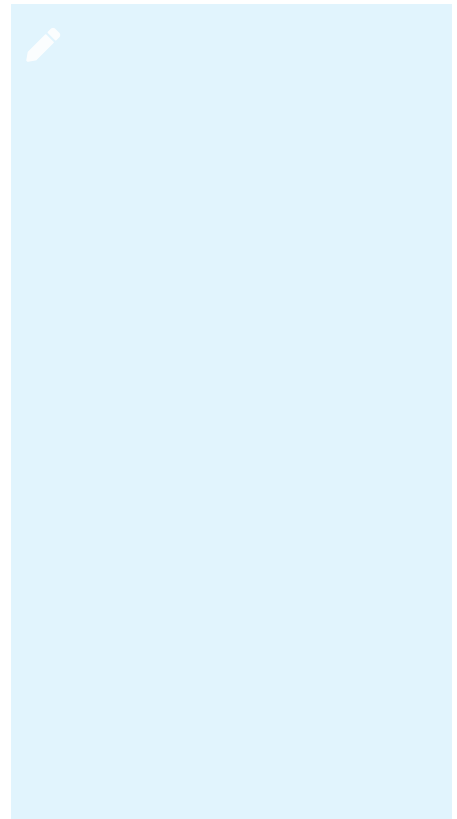
E.g. Going to LGBTIQ+ events and community hubs, playing board games, reading, spending time with friends, exercising, writing poetry...



Connection

For LGBTIQ+ individuals one of our greatest strengths can be our connection to the world around us. While we may often feel isolated and alone, that is never the case. This space here is to write a list of things you can do that help you feel connected.

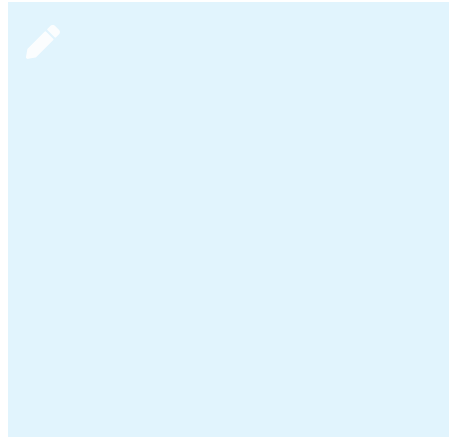
E.g. Watching LGBTIQ+ Films, going to community spaces (bookstores, cafes, LGBTIQ+ community rooms, etc.), walking in nature, engaging in art, spiritual practice, reading LGBTIQ+ authors, being with certain people...



What helps me build safety when I want to hurt myself?

Now you have created an idea of what safety feels like, the things you enjoy, and what keeps you connected. Well done. If you need, take a little break here. Then, in your own time, reflect on what you can use to build up a sense of safety or security when you feel like you are going to hurt yourself or are having thoughts of suicide.

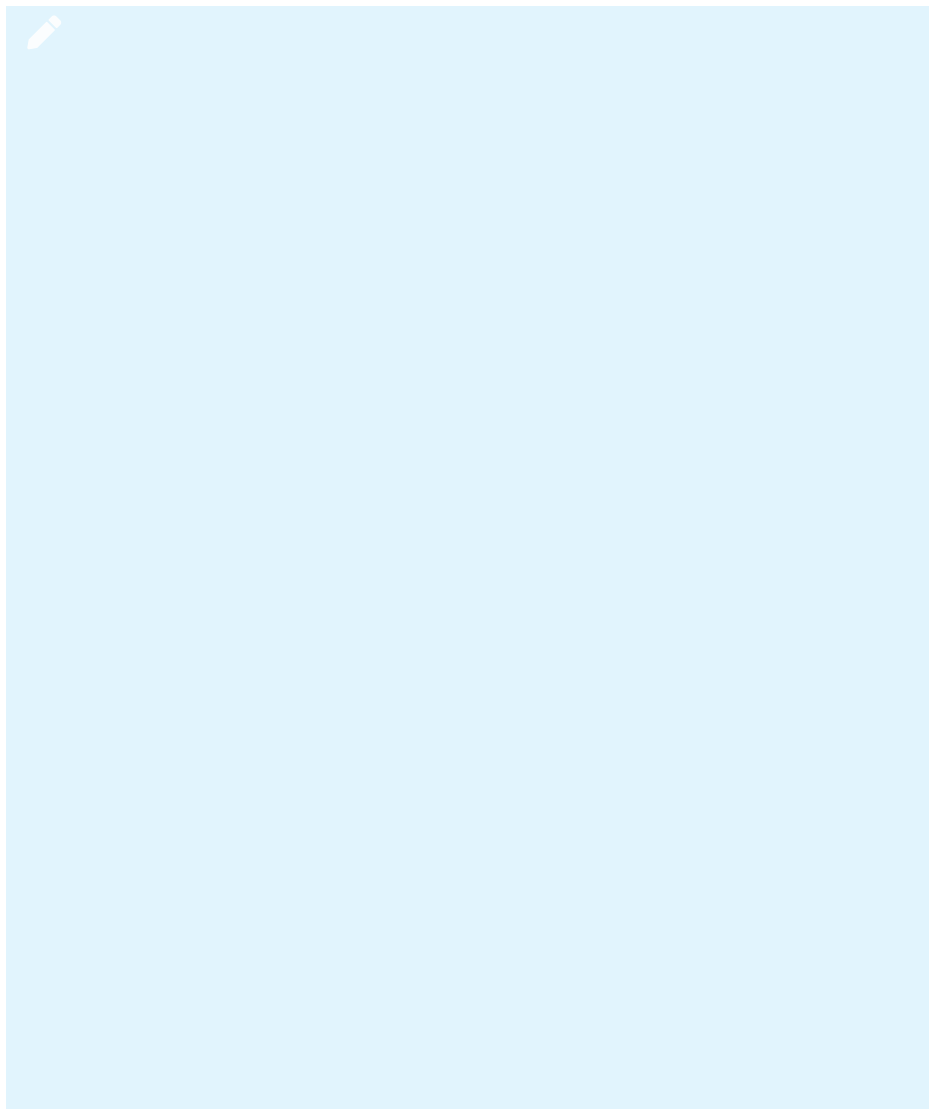
E.g. Specific people, locations, a favourite drink, soothing strategies, box breathing technique, getting rid of objects I might use to hurt myself, etc.



Your personal Keep Space

This space is here to take a moment to keep a piece of writing, artwork or other medium that has some special meaning to you. It could be a poem,

book excerpt, meme, letter from a friend, anything at all that is important to you. Paste or write it down in the space below.

A large, light blue rectangular area intended for users to paste or write their personal content. In the top-left corner of this area, there is a small, white icon of a pencil, indicating where to start writing or pasting.

Self-care

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” Audre Lorde in her book of essays A Burst of Light 1988.

Many of us hear the term self-care every day, from advertisers trying to sell things, medical professionals telling us to get some rest or employers pushing meditation to ‘increase productivity.’ Self-care however was not born in these spaces, but has a radical history in black, person of colour, and queer communities of resistance. In this way,

self-care belongs to those of us on the margins as an act of radical self-love that can change the way we think and the value that we place upon ourselves and our community.

And sometimes, hey, it just feels nice.

Having done a safety plan, now we are going to go through some self-care planning to help you get the most out of what you can do to look after yourself, and hopefully make it so that the safety plan doesn’t need to be enacted.



STEP 1: Evaluating strategies

We all have coping strategies that we use to get through life’s struggles. Now is your chance to figure out which of these strategies are helpful and which are not so helpful. The table included below contains some examples. You may wish to add some of your own strategies as well.

| Helpful | Unhelpful |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div><i>Deep breathing</i></div> <div><i>Connecting with others when it’s good for me</i></div> <div><i>Exercising</i></div> <div><i>Spending time in nature</i></div> <div><i>Taking time out to connect with myself</i></div> | <div><i>Yelling</i></div> <div><i>Skipping meals</i></div> <div><i>Excessive substance use</i></div> <div><i>Withdrawing form support when I need it</i></div> |

**“Because you
deserve to
feel good
as hell. We
deserve to
feel good
as hell.”**

- Lizzo, 2019 MTV Music Video Awards

Step 2: Identifying needs

Here we'll be looking at some of the things that you value and need in everyday life and at things you can do daily to better meet your needs in this area.

Physical

Our physical needs are the things that our body needs to function well. Things like eating regularly, getting enough sunshine, finding positive exercises, medical check-ups, etc. all help meet

our physical needs. This is a place to fill out the things that you are currently doing and some things that you would like to try out in the future.

| Things I'm already doing | Things I want to try |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Going for walk in the park once a week</i> <i>Having showers</i> <i>Ordering a healthy salad or poke bowl on uber eats</i> <i>Went to the dentist last week</i> | <i>Have a regular yoga practice - start off by doing free youtube yoga classes</i> <i>Keep my GP appointments</i> <i>Eat a healthier meal twice a week (stir fry) by cooking for myself</i> <i>Sit in the sun and do stretches</i> <i>Roller derby? (long term)</i> |

Emotional

Emotional needs are important for helping us feel safe, happy and fulfilled. Things like engaging in positive activities, honouring our boundaries,

acknowledging accomplishments, and expressing our emotions all help meet this need.

| Things I’m already doing | Things I want to try |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Taking time out when I need to</i></p> <p><i>Listening to my body when I’m feeling anxious</i></p> <p><i>Connecting with people I care about once a week</i></p> <p><i>Writing poetry to get my feelings down on paper</i></p> <p><i>Watching weekly episodes of Golden Girls/Drag Race/my favourite TV show that makes me laugh</i></p> | <p><i>Using a diary to reflect on things I’m grateful for</i></p> <p><i>Saying “no” to things when I need to</i></p> <p><i>Saying “yes” to things when I want to</i></p> <p><i>Call a telephone counselling line when I feel I can’t talk to anyone</i></p> |

Spiritual

Spiritual needs are those that provide us with meaning and help us feel connected to the world around us. These needs are sometimes the hardest for queer people to meet because many of us have had difficult experiences with religion and other forms of spirituality. However for many of us, spirituality can be a major strength for the same reason... the difficulties we have faced.

It may take more time for you to complete this section; **this is okay.**

Self-reflection, spending time in nature, meditation are all ways to engage our spiritual needs. However there are many others, such as reading things which inspire and connecting with cultural and community history.

Things I’m already doing

Have an appreciation for nature
Went to a religious gathering last year
Went to nightclub and had an amazing dance
Curious about spirituality/meditation
Speaking with LGBTIQ+ community elders and hearing their wisdom

Things I want to try

Do a meditation class or youtube weekly
Go on a bushwalk
Connect to an LGBTIQ+ faith based group
Learn more about LGBTIQ+ history and my belonging
Travel
Create my own ‘sacred space’ at home

Social

Social contact is important for maintaining our wellbeing; we were never meant to spend all our time alone

or at work. It can also help us feel a greater connection to our community.

| Things I'm already doing | Things I want to try |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>Speaking to my sister once a fortnight</div> <div>Watching sport with friends</div> <div>Organising a political action group/going to marches</div> <div>Hanging out with my housemates</div> <div>Spending time with my grandchildren</div> | <div>Speak to my sister once a week</div> <div>Join a queer social group, e.g. The Shed.</div> <div>Do an education course for fun in a topic I'm interested in, e.g. how to do drag makeup, flower arrangement, macrame.</div> <div>Reach out to my friend and let them know how I'm feeling</div> <div>Volunteer at an animal rescue or bush regeneration</div> <div>Try a new restaurant</div> |

Financial

Some parts of our financial reality cannot be changed overnight. This means that we need to work with what we do have in certain circumstances. We can undertake financial self-care by contacting local aid organisations

to receive groceries when money is tight, organising payment plans to ease the burden of bills (this can be done with the help of a support worker at your local community Neighbourhood House).

| Things I'm already doing | Things I want to try |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Paid off my credit card two years ago</i></p> <p><i>Making my rent on time</i></p> <p><i>Set up a savings account but haven't added any money to it yet</i></p> | <p><i>Add money (\$XX/per week) to my savings account</i></p> <p><i>Talk to a financial counselor</i></p> <p><i>Switch banks</i></p> <p><i>Automate my bill payments so it's less stressful to remember them all</i></p> <p><i>Go to Thornbury Church of Christ, RISE or other community aid groups who give out free groceries if I get stuck</i></p> |

Psychological

This area often gets confused with emotional, however our psychological needs can be slightly different and can

include things like disconnecting from technology, learning new skills, and accessing counselling.

| Things I'm already doing | Things I want to try |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Stopping myself about half the time when I find myself 'doom scrolling' on my computer</i></p> <p><i>Going for walks when I'm stressed</i></p> <p><i>On psychologist waitlist</i></p> <p><i>Checking in with friends if they have capacity before I vent to them</i></p> | <p><i>Try to get into the psychologist/counsellor sooner - tell them how I'm feeling</i></p> <p><i>Follow positive social media accounts</i></p> <p><i>Learn how to communicate during conflict better</i></p> <p><i>Turn my phone off after 10pm</i></p> <p><i>Have respite care days so I have time off from my caring responsibilities</i></p> <p><i>Talk to GP or psychiatrist about medications I'm on</i></p> <p><i>Learn to be kinder to myself - read books about self-kindness</i></p> |

Step 3: Emergency self-care

This area is for the self-care you need to do when you feel unsafe or have high levels of stress.

Relaxation and staying calm

What activities help you stay calm?
What things might you do that will make you more frustrated?

Enact the things that help calm and seek support with things that might make you more stressed.

| Helpful | Unhelpful |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div><i>Responding to how I'm feeling</i> <i>Smashing it out at the gym</i> <i>Cuddling up in bed with my dog/cat</i> <i>Taking three deep breaths</i> <i>Progressive muscle relaxation</i> <i>Listening to classic FM radio</i> <i>Clean up the kitchen</i> <i>Drink a glass of water</i></div> | <div><i>Reacting to how I'm feeling</i> <i>Thinking about why I'm upset over and over again and not distracting myself or disrupting these thoughts</i> <i>Using alcohol or self-injury to numb out</i></div> |

Self-talk

How do you tend to talk to yourself when you're experiencing a crisis? What are some of the things you say that are unhelpful and what can you say to yourself to show a greater deal of kindness, empathy and self-love? (Tip: If it's hard to say these to yourself, visualise a friend, loved one or support

person saying them to you and practice saying these things to yourself outside of crisis.)

Helpful self-talk may include things like I can handle this, I am safe, I deserve love, etc.

| Helpful | Unhelpful |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>This will pass - all feelings pass</i> <i>Everything changes with time, I've just got to ride this out.</i> <i>I am a human being and all human beings are worthy of connection and love</i> <i>I got this, we got this</i> <i>Productivity doesn't define my self-worth</i> | <i>Things will never change</i> <i>Its too hard</i> <i>Nobody will ever care about me</i> |



Social support

Who are the people that you can reach out to for support? Which people do you need to avoid to maintain your wellbeing?

| Helpful | Unhelpful |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Part of person that is helpful to tap into</i></p> <p><i>My sister</i></p> <p><i>My friends _____ and _____.</i></p> <p><i>My GP</i></p> <p><i>My chosen family</i></p> <p><i>My ex who I'm still friends with</i></p> | <p><i>Part of person thats not helpful to tap into</i></p> <p><i>My aunt - need boundaries</i></p> <p><i>The friend that makes me feel drained</i></p> <p><i>The friend that puts me down</i></p> |

Mood

What activities support your mood?
Think things such as listening to
uplifting music, getting sunshine, eating

good food. What activities drain your
mood? E.g. staying in bed all day, or
avoiding social engagement.

| Helpful | Unhelpful |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>Eating my favourite food</i></p> <p><i>Sitting in the sun with a coffee</i></p> <p><i>Playing with my dog</i></p> <p><i>Singing in the car</i></p> | <p><i>Not leaving the house for two days or more in a row</i></p> <p><i>Avoiding people and not replying to messages</i></p> |



When self-care gets hard, just remember:

This is just a moment in time; this moment will pass as will the next. Things get easier with practice and most of all:

Loving yourself isn't always going to be easy, but that doesn't mean it won't be worth it.

You deserve self-love.



Your Safe People contacts

This is a space to put in all the people you can contact, speak to or spend time with, who make you feel safe to be around. It is good to have a wide variety of contacts available including friends, professional supports and supportive family. However, don't feel the need to fill out the table completely or include supports from all categories.

| Who | Number | When (what days/time) |
|-----|--------|--------------------------|
| | | |

Don't forget you can always contact any of these numbers below as well!

Rainbow Door (10:00AM-6:00PM) LGBTQIA+ Peer support (VIC only)

☎ 1800 729 367  0480 017 246

QLife (3:00PM-Midnight) LGBTQIA+ Peer Support (Aust wide)

☎ 1800 184 527

🖱 www.qlife.org.au/resources/chat

Lifeline (24/7) crisis support and suicide intervention (Aust wide)

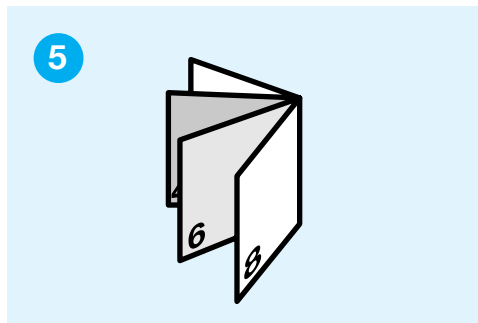
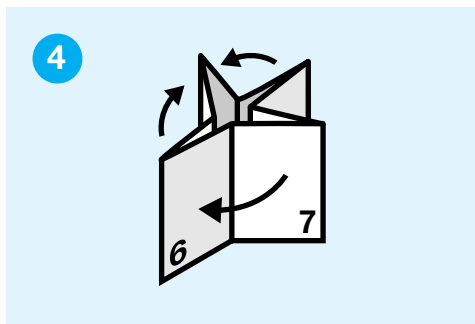
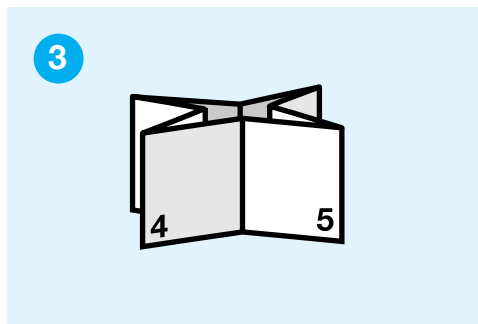
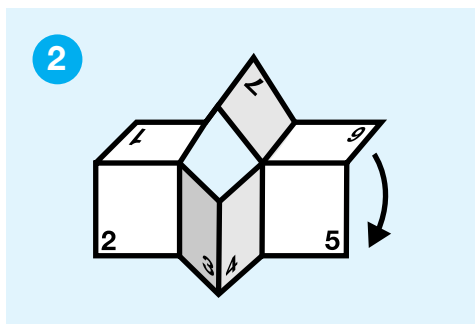
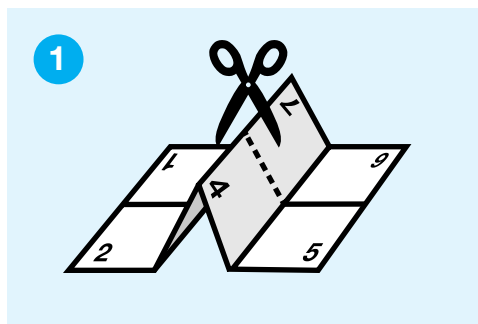
☎ 13 11 14

**Suicide Call-Back Service (24/7) suicide support
call-back service (Aust wide)**

☎ 1300 657 467

Your On-the-go Safety Booklet Cut Out

Our final page is a cut-out booklet for you to put some tools in that help you keep safe. This booklet cuts into a small size that can easily fit into a pocket/wallet/purse and can be wherever you find yourself.



| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | |
| Things I can do to care for myself | Things that bring purpose to my life | Things that make me feel safer | Things to avoid when I feel less safe |
| Places I can go to feel safer | People who can help me to feel safer | My supports and helplines | |
| | | <p>Switchboard (Qlife) 1800 184 527 3-12pm LGBTQIA+ peer counselling Webchat: qlife.org.au</p> <p>Lifeline 13 11 14 24/7 crisis support and suicide intervention</p> <p>Suicide Call Back Service 1300 657 467 24/7 suicide support call-back service Webchat: suicidecallbackservice.org.au</p> <p>My peer practitioner contact</p> | <p>My Safety Book</p> <p>Name</p> <p>Phone</p> <p>Date</p> |



Residents at Haven Frankston

Mind acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the intergenerational impact of the history of invasion, dispossession and colonisation and are committed to the recognition, respect, inclusion and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples.

Mind values the experience and contribution of people from all cultures, genders, sexualities, bodies, abilities, spiritualities, ages and backgrounds. We are committed to inclusion for all our clients, families and carers, employees and volunteers.



Mind Connect

1300 286 463

Carer Helpline

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