

## How to Help Yourself as a Suicide Survivor

### (1) Start/Continue to work with a therapist

Check in with them frequently and let them help you. If you feel like therapy isn't for you, perhaps it's the specific approach that isn't helping rather than therapy itself. Speak to your therapist about what works and what doesn't so together you can both come up with a comprehensive plan to help you cope and come out stronger than ever!

### (2) Visit a doctor

It is important to meet a doctor to ensure your physical health is being taken care of as the mind and body are deeply interconnected. Understanding how your physical health is impacting your mental health can help you mitigate this crisis to a large extent. If your health issue is part of the problem then the doctor can also help you adjust to your new reality.

### (3) Look after yourself, no matter what

You need to take care of your basic needs - eating well, getting enough sleep, maintaining hygiene, staying active. It's the little things you do daily that go a long way in the recovery process.

### (4) Acknowledge your current feelings

The following are examples of feelings common among suicide survivors:

- Why did I survive? I wish I were dead!
- I don't have the energy to try and feel better
- I am so lonely but I can't do this alone
- What will others think of me if they find out I did this?
- Maybe I survived for a reason, maybe my life will get better now?

It's okay to have these thoughts but know now that your life CAN and WILL get better.

### (5) Create a ritual

These can be things you do every morning when you wake up (skincare, shower, make breakfast), every night before you go to bed (read a book, stretch), every evening (taking a 20 minute walk outside) or even every other day (working out). This helps keep you occupied, gives you a purpose everyday and can serve as a healthy distraction.

### (6) Have a safety plan in place

This is a document that includes information to help mitigate suicidal behaviour/attempts. It includes the warning signs to look out for, triggers of suicidal thoughts, coping strategies that have helped in the past, a list of emergency services/helplines to contact, people/places of support, reasons to live.

**(7) Create a Hope Box and have it on hand at all times**

This 'box' would contain items that lift your spirits, can change your mood and mitigate a crisis. It could be on your phone: A folder containing pictures, a list of reasons to stay alive, a list of things that can successfully distract you, inspiring messages, and anything else that is important to you and can help you cope.

**(8) Keep in frequent contact with your support system**

Staying connected is one of the best ways to help yourself. Reach out to those that care about you and spend some quality time with them.