Autism and Safety Toolkit: Understanding Suicide and Safety Tips for Autistic Individuals

EASY READ

AUTISM & SAFETY TOOLKIT: SAFETY TIPS FOR SELF ADVOCATES

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE AND SAFETY TIPS FOR AUTISTIC INDIVIDUALS

SARTAC
You are Not Alone - Get Help for Suicidal Thoughts

If you ever have thoughts about hurting yourself, remember that you are not alone. There are ways to stay safe.

Get Professional Help

You can talk to your doctor or a therapist. They can help you talk about your feelings and find ways to feel better. It might take time to find the right therapist, but they can create a safety plan for you and provide support.

Explore Group Therapy

Consider group therapy. It can be helpful for individuals dealing with suicidal thoughts. Look for accessible and autistic-friendly group therapy sessions. If one does not work for you, try searching for another.
Reach Out to Supportive Communities

Connect with religious leaders, community groups, or strong support networks. Sometimes, talking to community members can be more helpful than talking to therapists.

Lean on Friends

Reach out to friends who can offer support. They can provide a listening ear and help prevent dangerous actions. Ask a friend to come over and spend time with you if you are feeling at risk.

Engage with the Autistic Community

Join a group of people who are like you. They can provide ongoing help and friendship. Look for local groups or online communities. Keep in mind that these groups might not be ready for big crises, especially if you are new.
Creating Your Safety Plan

Consider creating a safety plan for when you are struggling with suicidal thoughts.

Your plan can include:

- Your therapist or a person you trust
- Positive thoughts and reasons to stay alive
- Things to remove from your surroundings when you are not safe
- Friends or family to call
- Safe places to go
- Other ways to feel better
Reaching Out for Immediate Help

If you need immediate assistance, consider:

• Calling or texting a mental health crisis hotline
• Going to a safe place, such as a friend's house or a community center
• Be careful calling the police, as they may not be trained to handle mental health crises
• If you feel that you need to go to a hospital, consider asking a friend to come drive
• If you are seriously hurt and need medical attention, call 911 so they can send an ambulance

Considering Psychiatric Hospitals

Psychiatric Hospitals are a last choice. Some people find them helpful, but others do not. Talk to your community and family before you make a decision.

Keep in mind that if you say you are suicidal, a hospital may be able to keep you in the hospital for several days. They will be able to keep you in the hospital even if you decide you want to leave.
Writing a Psychiatric Advance Directive

If you are worried about the future, you can make a plan that tells people what you want during a crisis.

It might include:

- Who can make choices for you
- Who can visit you in the hospital
- Which hospitals you prefer
- What medicines work for you or do not
- What treatments you want or do not want

Check your state's laws for ideas on creating a psychiatric advance directive.

No matter what you are going through, you deserve help and care. Reach out to those around you, explore various options, and create a safety plan to prioritize your well-being.

Remember: You Deserve Help and Support