

Stay Alive

Crisis Survival Plan

If you are struggling right now, this is for you. Walk through this step by step, making a plan for your survival to get through these really hard moments, because there are things ahead for you on the other side of this crisis. This is your personal healing plan that is an alternative to hospital and medical intervention. First we start with motivation, your why. Then we make a customized support system plan to help you weather the storm of intense symptoms.

1. Why do I want to stay alive?

These are my biggest reasons:

2. Someone to call

A. Friends + Family

These are people who are informed about withdrawal, are emotionally safe and supportive, not panicking, criticizing or insisting on hospitalization or medication. This could include a therapist if they are withdrawal-informed. If you do not know who in your family or friend group can do this, I have resources for you about finding and resourcing these people in your life. (video to come)

Who are some safe people I can call when I'm in a crisis?

B. Warmline

These are peer support lines that you can use to talk to someone who can help you through that moment of crisis. There's no intervention or calling the police involved with warmlines. It is simply another emotionally safe person who's able to listen and be a source of help in a time of need. Explore the directory at warmline.org/directory and choose a few to add to your contacts, or write the numbers down here:

3. Somewhere to go

A. Friends, Family

This is the healing of coregulation. Being physically present with people who are emotionally safe and will not panic, criticize, or insist on medication or hospitalization. These people can be with you in a gentle, supportive way. If you do not know who in your family or friend group can do this, I have resources for you about finding and resourcing these people in your life. (video to come)

Who can go to see when I am in crisis?

B. Safe places

This is a list of places that give you a feeling of safety. It could be a coffee shop, a corner of your house, a chair, your bed with a weighted blanket. List your safe places. This may change at times.

Where can I go to feel safer?

C. Group calls

There are video calls for withdrawal sufferers and survivors; this is another way to coregulate:

Life After Meds lifeaftermeds.com/meet (Elissa and I run these)

HeartCore heartcorecollective.com/supportcircle (Angie Peacock and others)

ACE Peer Support antidepressantinfo.org/peer-support-meetings (free peer-led calls)

Wildflower wildfloweralliance.org/alternatives-to-suicide (for those who are suicidal)

4. Something to do

What can I do to physically regulate during panic or crisis?

1. Temperature: Briefly immerse your face in cold water while holding your breath, repeating 2-3 times. / Take a cold shower. / Apply an ice pack or ice cube to your skin (avoiding extreme or prolonged cold). / Hold a wet cloth on your face or neck.
2. Intensive exercise: Exercise at moderate intensity for ~15 minutes, being careful not to overdo it: Walk briskly, jog, swim laps, ride a bike, jump rope, jumping jacks.
3. Paced breathing: Inhale through your nose for a count of 4, hold for 7, exhale through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat several times.
4. Progressive muscle relaxation: Sit or lie down comfortably. Tense the muscles in your feet for 5 seconds, then slowly relax them as you say the word "relax." Repeat with your calves, thighs, mid-section, back, chest, arms, and face.
5. Lay down in the dark with a weighted blanket.
6. Take a hot shower.
7. Walk in nature.
8. Listen to music that helps me:
9. Eat gentle foods that are soothing:
10. Drink a warm drink:
11. Listen to meditation audio (links to come)
12. Ground myself with bare feet (links to come)
13. Read stories of hope (links to come)
14. Write down other ideas here:

5. Truths to remember

1. I will heal.
2. I am not alone.
3. Others have felt this way too, survived it, and gone on to better days.
4. I am loved.
5. I belong to others.
6. This will pass.
7. My body is resilient.
8. I have felt better before, and I will feel better again.
9. More truths to remember: