

Beyond “Checking the Box:”

Creative and Effective
Strategies for Utilizing the
Suicide Safety Plan

CHECKLIST



Objectives

Objective 1:

Following this presentation, participants will be equipped with a minimum of two safety plan templates that can be utilized when working with suicidal clients.

Objective 2:

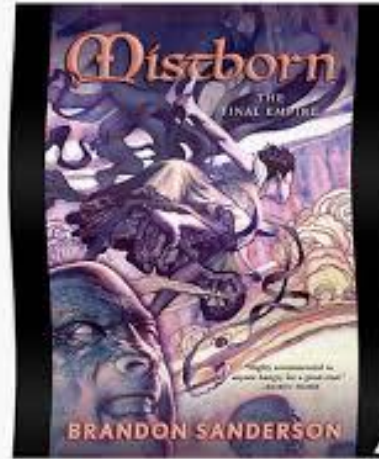
Following this presentation, participants will be equipped with three strategies for overcoming client (and counselor) resistance to utilizing safety planning

Objective 3:

Following this presentation, participants will have expanded their understanding and empathy of the suicidal client through the lens of cultural humility and trauma-informed care.

About Me

- Director of Counseling Services with Bryan College
- Licensed Professional Counselor, Approved Supervisor
 - Practicing for 10 years.
 - Incorporates CAMS, DBT, EMDR, and attachment science into my practice.
- Christian, Husband, cat dad, lover of horror movies, and avid book reader.






My motivation for learning more about suicide.

What comes up for you when you think about safety planning?

History of Safety Plan

A move away from no-suicide contracts.

- Research has found them to be ineffective and potentially harmful (Feedenthal, 2018) .



Brown and Stanley met in the early 2000's and developed the suicide safety plan later as part of a study.



Stanley-Brown Template is most commonly used (Gamarra et al, 2015).



3 C's of Combatting “Safety Plan Fatigue”

Curiosity: The Role of Psychoeducation

“I want to teach you to become your own
suicidologist” (Jobes, 2023).



Use of Imagery

“Tunnelling”
(Scheidman, 1993)

“White Hot Room”
(Linehan, 2020)

Parts Language



Fanning the Flame (Jobes, 2023).

Collaboration: Connecting Over Safety

CAMS Chair Method

- Have the client complete the safety plan while you are sitting adjacent.

Follow Up

- What worked?
- What did not work?

Collaborating with those in the client's social support system.

- With releases of information, include the client's support system in the implementation of the safety plan.

Creative: Make the Safety Plan Unique and Innovative

Understanding the client's cycle.

What are the client's drivers, triggers, and disinhibitors?

Use a Likert-scale question to assess client motivation (look up presentation).

Ex: "On a scale from 0 to 5, how likely are you to use your safety plan?"

Use cultural humility to reframe "the resistant client."

Ex: A gun owner versus a person who owns guns.



Conclusion: Modeling Hope

Questions?

References

- Gamarra, J. M., Luciano, M. T., Gradus, J. L., & Wiltsey Stirman, S. (2015). Assessing Variability and Implementation Fidelity of Suicide Prevention Safety Planning in a Regional VA Healthcare System. *Crisis*, 36(6), 433–439. <https://doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000345>.
- Flemons, D., & Gralnik, L. (2013). Relational suicide assessment: Risks, resources, and possibilities for safety. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Freedenthal, S. (2018). Helping the suicidal person: Tips and techniques for professionals. Routledge.
- Jobes, D. A. (2023). Managing suicidal risk: A collaborative approach (3rd ed.). The Guilford Press.
- Knapp, S. K. (2024, November 25). Applications of an ethical perspective to contemporary issues. [PowerPoint Slides]. The Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) and Center for Counseling and Psychological Services at The Pennsylvania State University.
- Linehan, M. (2020). Building a life worth living: a memoir. First edition. Random House.
- Shneidman, E. S. (1993). Suicide as psychache: A clinical approach to self-destructive behavior. Jason Aronson.

Contact

-
- Email: nharris6972@bryan.edu
 - LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/nathan-harris-a5b9b793