



**Six Steps to Stable Ground:
How to start on the path
to recovery after a suicidal crisis**

WORKBOOK

Introduction

This workbook contains the complete set of worksheets from the online mini-course Six Steps to Stable Ground at the Lived Experience Academy. This format is provided to make it easy to have everything in one place as you work through the lessons.

When is this mini-course most helpful?

If you think you're in a crisis or you're in distress, then please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or send the text 'help' to the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

If you recently considered suicide or made a suicide attempt, and you're not currently in crisis, then this mini-course might be for you. The goals are to pause suicidal actions and to shift perspective so that you get a chance for potential help and support to improve your life.

A "Guide" helps someone
to reach a goal or follow a path
by traveling alongside him or her
to provide information and support
based on knowledge and experience.

Who is the Guide for this mini-course?

Dr. DeQuincy Lezine is a suicide attempt survivor with training in psychology and public health. Dr. Lezine believes that it is possible for you to get through a suicidal crisis, recover quality of life, and grow through reflection and learning.



If you're in crisis or distress right now:
Call the Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or Text "Help" to 741741

Putting suicide on pause

Step 1) Do you have a suicide plan right now?

If yes, please continue below. If not, then skip to Step 2 on the next page.

Do you have a **specific time** as part of your plan? If not, then go to the next question.

If yes - Can you erase the time? Can you replace the time with "idk"? Can you change it to "After <the time>"? Can you make it so the timing is still in question?

Do you have a **specific place** as part of your plan? If not, then go to the next question.

If yes - Can you erase the place? Can you replace the location with "idk"? Can you change it to "Maybe <that place>"? Can you make the location still be a question?

Do you have a **specific method** in your plan? If not, then go to the next question.

If yes - Can you erase the method? Can you replace the method with "idk"? Can you change it to "Maybe <method>"? Can you make the method still be a question?

Do you have a method you've been considering that you can **access** right at this moment? If not, then you're done with this step.

If yes - Can you get it out of your home? Can someone else hold onto it for you?* Can you lock it up and have someone else keep the key or make the combination/code? Can you double lock it up (like a gun lock on a gun that's in a gun safe)? Can you disassemble it and put the parts in different places?

You're making safeguards to protect you from yourself. It should not be easy for anyone (including you) to do something that could injure you.

*Note: It's safest to get firearms out of the home if possible. However, check state laws to see who is allowed to temporarily store a gun for you.



If you're in crisis or distress right now:
Call the Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or Text "Help" to 741741

Step 2) We're going to make a super-simple Pre-Planning Plan.

Please complete the following sentence:

Before I start doing anything in a suicide plan, I'm going to get a second opinion by talking to

_____.

Here are some suggestions for that blank space:

Pick someone you trust. It could be a therapist, psychiatrist, primary care doctor, friend, family, priest, coach, or roommate for example. You could put the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-283-8255) or the Crisis Textline (741741). Pick someone who will listen with care and offer good advice about what you might try next. You can also pick more than one person/resource. You're worth it.

Advice from NowMattersNow.org

"Sometimes people do things in the heat of the moment that they would never do otherwise... When you're on fire: shut it down." - Dr. Ursula Whiteside

When suicidal thoughts or feelings are too intense

Try to get some sleep. If you can't rest then take a cold shower or put your face in some ice-water for about 30 seconds at a time.* These things calm your emotions. Try not to panic and avoid making important decisions (ex. Deciding to die). Find someone to make eye contact with (it helps to connect with another person).

Find more tips and skills at [NowMattersNow.org](https://www.nowmattersnow.org)
(including videos from people who have lived through a suicidal crisis).

* Use this ice-water technique while sitting down if you might get dizzy. Also, if you have a heart condition or other health concerns, please check with a medical doctor about using the ice-water method.



Take a Break from Thinking

You can “get out of your head” by focusing on the senses. See the instructions below the table.

Favorite:	My senses	
	I like to look at... 	1. 2. 3.
	I like to listen to... 	1. 2. 3.
	I like to touch ... 	1. 2. 3.
	I like to smell ... 	1. 2. 3.
	I like to taste ... 	1. 2. 3.

Instructions for making your personal procrastination list:

1. Think about how you react when you are using your senses. Which one do you get most “carried away with”? In the column called “Favorite” mark the box next to that one.
2. For each sense, write up to three (3) things that you like. Making it specific is better.
3. For each sense, circle the thing that would be the easiest for you to get.
4. For the easiest thing in your favorite sense, make it a double or triple circle. This is your priority number one.
5. Extra Credit: Share your list with one or two people you trust who might be able to help you get distracted.



Why I want to keep living

What have you wanted to experience? See the instructions below the table.

For a long time I've wanted to	
Visit these places:	1. 2. 3.
Go see these things:	1. 2. 3.
Learn these things:	1. 2. 3.
Try these activities:	1. 2. 3.
Try these foods:	1. 2. 3.

Instructions for making your “Live for This” List:

6. For each category, write up to three (3) ideas that come to mind right away. Making it specific is better.
7. For each category, circle the one that would be the easiest to make happen.
8. Extra Credit: Share your list with one or two people you trust who might be able to help you make these dream experiences into realities. Who can you help you make the plans and carry them out?



Commit to More Life

Step 1) Choose a timeframe: To the best of my ability, **I can commit to live for...**

- A year
- A month
- A week
- A day*

Step 2) Choose who you're going to share this with. Pick someone who will be understanding and supportive (ideally someone you have in-person contact with): **I'm going to share this commitment with...**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Step 3) **Choose how** you are going to share your commitment with the person(s) you listed. You can pick more than one. (Note: Research shows that sharing written goals is the best way to succeed).

- Handwritten note(s)
- Email(s)
- Text message(s)
- Message app (Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Viber, Line, Telegram, etc.)
- In person conversation(s)
- Phone call(s)

Step 4) **Decide on what you are going to say.** Balance between feeling comfortable with what you share and making a specific commitment. Choose at least one from each column (examples are provided).

Sharing about the crisis experience:	Sharing your commitment:
<input type="radio"/> Say nothing about it (for now) <input type="radio"/> General ("I've been really stressed", "I've really been struggling")	<input type="radio"/> Indirect ("I promise I'll go to the movies with you next Friday. I'll get the tickets and you buy the popcorn.")
<input type="radio"/> Specific ("I was in crisis", "I was at my breaking point") <input type="radio"/> Very specific (Ex: "I was thinking about suicide")	<input type="radio"/> Direct ("I promise I'll keep living and trying to get help at least until next Friday")

* If you can't commit to at least another day of life, it would be a good idea to talk with a counselor through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) or Crisis Text Line (text "help" to 741741).



Safety Planning Reference

Developing a written plan for what you'll do in a crisis situation (safety planning) is recommended to all healthcare settings as standard care for someone following a suicidal crisis.

You can use this worksheet to help you make or improve a safety plan.

In Lesson 2 (Procrastinate) you completed the "BreakSheet" pictured here.

Take a Break from Thinking

You can "get out of your head" by focusing on the senses. See the instructions below the table.

write:	My senses	
	I like to look at...	1. 2. 3.
	I like to listen to...	1. 2. 3.
	I like to touch...	1. 2. 3.
	I like to smell...	1. 2. 3.
	I like to taste...	1. 2. 3.

Instructions for making your personal procrastination list:

Think about how you react when you are using your senses. Which one do you get most "carried away with" in the column called "Favorites" mark the box next to that one.
 For each sense, write up to three (3) things that you like. Making it specific is better.
 For each sense, circle the thing that would be the easiest for you to get.
 For the easiest thing in your favorite sense, make it a double or triple circle. This is your priority number one.
 Extra Credit: Share your list with one or two people you trust who might be able to help you get distracted.

You can put the items on your list into two categories: things you mostly do by yourself, and things you mostly do with other people.

Use the list of things you do by yourself to complete a safety plan section on "**internal coping strategies**" or "**calming skills**" or "**distress tolerance**" or "**distractions.**"

Use the list of things you do with others to complete a safety plan section on "**social settings that provide distraction.**" If you decided on a couple of people who might be able to help you stay distracted, then you can add their contact information here.

Step 2) Choose who you're going to share this with. Pick someone who will be understanding and supportive (ideally someone you have in-person contact with): **I'm going to share this commitment with...**

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

In Lesson 5 (Choice) you completed the worksheet about making a commitment to live, including a list of people who would share that commitment with. Use that list to complete the safety plan section on "**who you can call for help**" or "**support persons.**"

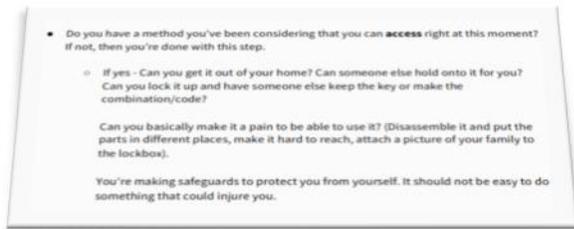
Step 2) We're going to make a super-simple Pre-Planning Plan.

Please complete the following sentence:

Before I start doing anything in a suicide plan, I'm going to get a second opinion by talking to _____

Here are some suggestions for that blank space:
 Pick someone you trust. It could be a therapist, psychiatrist, primary care doctor, friend, family, priest, coach, or roommate for example. You could put the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-283-8255) or the Crisis Textline (741741). Pick someone who will listen with care and offer good advice about what you might try next. You can also pick more than one person/resource. You're worth it.

In Lesson 1 (Pause) you decided on someone you would trust to talk to before doing anything in a suicide plan. You also got contact information for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) and Crisis Text Line (text "help" to 741741). Those two resources along with any professionals who you could talk to for a "second opinion" can go in the safety plan section on "**professionals or agencies to contact in case of a crisis**" or "**emergency contacts.**"



In Lesson 1 (Pause), there was a section on access to a method you were considering for suicide. The steps you decided on for making the method much harder to use will go in the safety planning section called “**making the environment safer**” or “**access to lethal means.**”

Because the Lived Experience Academy focuses on positive and life-affirming information we don't have a worksheet that applies here.

However, take a moment to reflect on the thoughts, images, feelings, and situations that made you feel like you needed to end your pain right away.

- *What made it hard to pause?*
- *What would you have wanted distraction from?*
- *What made death look like a better option than living?*

Use your reflections to help complete the safety planning section called “**Warning signs.**”

Note that this information is important to be aware of and that is why it usually at the top of safety plans templates.

At the Lived Experience Academy we want you to be aware of what brings you down, but spend the majority of your time focusing on a positive direction so we put it farther down.



In Lesson 4 (Reasons to keep living) you thought about reasons for not dying and reasons to keep living. A few safety plan templates now include a space for your top reason for staying alive.

This is your ‘Why’ for making a safety plan. The list you made is what you have to look forward to in the future.

As noted above, we want you to focus on the positive direction you can go from here, so we made this the final step on the worksheet.