

When the Urge *Feels Strong*

When you feel like hurting yourself, the urge can seem overwhelming, but it won't last forever. These steps can help you stay safe through the next few minutes, and the next.



Pause the clock

You don't have to act on an urge. Set a timer for 10 minutes and focus only on getting through it. Then set another.



Put space between you and harm

Move away from anything you could use to hurt yourself, go to a different room, or ask someone you trust to hold onto it.



Be near people

Go where others are, sit with someone safe, or call a friend and stay on the line. You don't have to talk about it.



Come back to the present

Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste. Press your feet into the floor.



Slow your breathing

Breathe in for a count of four, then out for a count of six. A longer out-breath tells your body it can settle.



Give your mind a job

Shower, walk, cook, clean, play a game, do a puzzle, or put on a show. Choose something that holds your focus.



Let it out safely

Write, draw, scribble, cry, or say the feelings out loud. They don't have to make sense. They just need somewhere to go.



Ride the wave

Urges build, peak, and fade, even when they feel endless. Watch this one rise and fall without acting on it.



Just this moment

You don't need to solve everything tonight. Get through the next few minutes, and then the next.



Tell someone

You can keep it simple: "I'm having a really hard time and I'm worried about hurting myself. Can you stay with me?"

My plan for hard moments

Fill this in on a calmer day, ideally with your therapist, and keep it where you can find it.

People I can call: _____

A safe place I can go: _____

What helps me most: _____

Reasons to stay safe: _____

In crisis or can't keep yourself safe?

988

Call or text, any time.

- **Call or text 988** to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 24/7. You can also chat at 988lifeline.org.
- **Veterans, service members, and families:** dial 988, then press 1.
- **Text HOME to 741741** to reach the Crisis Text Line.
- **In Utah:** the free SafeUT app connects you with a crisis counselor by chat or phone.
- **If you are in immediate danger, call 911** or go to the nearest emergency room.

This handout offers coping ideas and is not a substitute for professional care or emergency services. Lakeshore Counseling is not able to respond to crises. If you are struggling with thoughts of hurting yourself, please reach out to 988 or emergency services, and let your therapist know so you can make a plan together.

