Safety planning checklist

1) Have you read / completed the My Self-Care Plan document with your child? You might want to do it alongside a professional to help facilitate the conversation as it sometimes isn’t easy to ask the difficult conversations about risk, self-harm, and thoughts about not wanting to live.

2) Try to include as many of your close family & friends in the plan – they can help you and your child feel less pressure to get the plan right.

3) Talk to your child about how they’re feeling. Work out a safe way of them saying how they’re feeling without needing to go into detail. Some young people like to send a blank text when they want a chat or they feel like they’re going to harm themselves or others. Other young people like you to text them – often parents/carers will text their child on the hour, every hour, with something like ‘How are you doing on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is plans to take your life, and 10 is feeling pretty good?’.

4) Walk around your house and look for any signs of risk (it is sometimes helpful to do this with your child so they feel included in this part of the process). You will need to:
   a. Remove / lock away* any sharp objects (i.e. knives in the kitchen, razor blades in the bathroom)
   b. Remove / lock away* items that could be used as ligatures.
   c. Remove / lock away* medicines, and maybe think about regularly counting them so you know how many you have in the house at any one time, and whether you notice them go missing.
   d. Remove / lock away* poisonous / harmful substances (for example bleach)
   e. Closely monitor / supervise what your child is doing. Maybe this could involve as little as propping their door open (and agreeing with them that it has to stay open) and checking them every 15 minutes, or if you’re very worried about your child’s risky behaviour, maybe think about sleeping in the same room as them at night time.
5) Encourage your child to call Childline, or the Samaritans (telephone number 116123) if they need someone to talk to in the day or night. You don’t need to be feeling suicidal to call either of the phone lines – often people use these services to get things off their chest. As parents / carers you can call them as well if you’re feeling a bit overwhelmed by the situation.

6) If you are worried and you want to talk through your plan, you can call the Wakefield CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) on 01977735865 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday. If your child cannot be kept safe even after all the above precautions, call firstly 111 for guidance and then they can help you decide whether you need to take your child to A&E, and bring with you your risk planning document and this safety plan check list so they know what you’ve been doing.

* What do we mean by lock away: Some parents / carers put a padlock on one of the cupboards and put all your risky things inside it. And make sure only you and others you trust have a key. If you need to urgently remove risky things from your house, maybe think about putting them in the car boot in the short term, to reduce the risk.