

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active Listening

is what I believe *might* have saved my son
who died by suicide aged 19

ACTIVE LISTENING
might help save
your life
or the life of someone
you love

by Frances Bromley, in memory of her son, Beck Bromley

Anyone

can have thoughts that make them suicidal or want to harm themselves or others

An NHS Digital Survey found that
1 in 15 of us have attempted suicide
1 in 12 have self-harmed
1 in 5 of us have had thoughts of suicide

When we experience any significant loss, trauma or CHANGE in our lives, our thoughts can become too distressing for us to manage

This happens when we are not AWARE of the resources that we have available to help us cope

This is NATURAL and NORMAL

In that moment or period of time, our beliefs can make us want to take actions that are unsafe for ourselves and our community

These thoughts can take away our passion for life

Know that these feelings will pass

We generally see what we look for and hear what we listen for
using 3 types of listening

Competitive: We want to reply with a better story

Combative: We want to change what the other person thinks

Passive: We're not actually interested in anything the other person is sharing
But there is a fourth... **Active Listening**

What makes a skilled **Active Listener**

Attitude

Someone who is interested in what we have to say

Attention

Someone who is not distracted

Adjustment

Someone who tries to fully understand us
by asking the right questions

Compassion

Someone who doesn't tell us what to do but helps us
to understand in a way that works for us

Important

It is virtually impossible to be an active listener all the time
either to our own thoughts or for others,
especially when we are in distress

This is why we must not rely on one person or resource
but instead start to build our community of listeners

When your thoughts become too distressing for YOU to manage

PAUSE

Follow your safety plan
Find an **Active Listener**
Share your thoughts with them

Once you fully understand the crisis, only then can YOU be guided
or guide others to SAFETY

Here are three FREE 24/7 UK listening services,
that's anytime, day or night
Papyrus also offer a 24/7 British Sign Language translation service



Call Hopeline
0800 068 41 41



www.papyrus-uk.org



text SHOUT to
85258



www.giveusashout.org



Call 116 123



www.samaritans.org

Safety Plan

A safety plan is a prioritised written list of coping strategies and sources of support we can use before or during a suicidal, self harm, or harm to others crisis. The plan is short, prepared in YOUR own style and is EASY to follow.

These are the most important questions when I write *my* safety plan.

- 1: Who do I know who is an active listener?
- 2: What charities and support groups, that fully understand the need to listen, offer 24/7 services?
- 3: Where can I go, close by, to find active listeners?
- 4: What will I say or text or do to start a conversation?

Save your plan here, or where YOU can easily find it. Your plan might change over time, so set a reminder to update it each month or year... whatever works for you. Create it with the help of a professional if you need to.

Here are websites that will show you other styles of safety plan that might work better for you.



www.papyrus-uk.org



www.every-life-matters.org.uk



www.merseyscare.nhs.uk

Help protect yourself and others

If we ALL practise our active listening skills, we will naturally develop our resilience and ability to listen to **ourselves** and **others** in times of need. **Together** we will understand that although thoughts of suicide, or harm to ourselves and others might affect any one of us, we will ALL be **aware** of the resources available to help us cope and ultimately thrive.

Active listening and **safety plans** are nothing new. The thing is, no-one communicated to me in a way that I understood, why it was so **important** to learn about them BEFORE I needed them.

I just want you to realise that one day, they **might** save YOUR life or the life of someone YOU love.

My son is 21, but he died by suicide **aged 19**. I am now able to **accept** that although I can no longer be one of his guides in life, I can still allow him to guide me. My own personal safety plan is built around the letters of his name B.E.C.K. and I am learning from wisdom shared through **centuries of lived experience**, to find ways to survive and laugh again.

A friend shared the Serenity Prayer with me, but I personally believe that **everyone** has the ability **inside themselves** to create **powerful change for the better**. This is why when things are really tough, I try and stay in the present and repeat...

I *pause* and accept the things I cannot change
I have the *courage* to change the things I can
I *LISTEN* to life's lessons that teach me to understand
the difference between the two

and I use the K in B.E.C.K. to remind me that

Kindness is King as I embrace the joy in life
and empower others to do the same

YOUR solutions to grief will be as **UNIQUE** as you are in this world

To find active listeners or improve your active listening skills
EXPLORE resources like
this 5 minute animated summary of the book
“You’re not listening” by journalist Kate Murphy



and
FREE training courses and
local face to face and digital wellbeing services
like those offered by
Zero Suicide Alliance - www.zerosuicidealliance.com
Changes Health and Wellbeing - www.changes.org.uk
and Andy’s Man Club - www.andysmanclub.co.uk



Zero Suicide
Alliance



Changes Health and
Wellbeing



Andy's Man Club

Help protect yourself and others

CREATE
your own safety plan

PRACTISE
Active Listening

and

SHARE
your knowledge with a smile



Credits

I don't have the space to thank all my sources of inspiration here, but they include the support from friends and strangers, music, silence, sport, relaxation, books, art, and all the beauty in nature. A poem my sister offered was a reminder to always look for the **silver threads** in life... however fine they are, there is always something to be found that **glimmers**.

I fundamentally thank Beck, my life experiences and a mother's grief, for helping me to learn that we need a community of active listeners to help us survive life's natural depths of despair and exhilarating highs.

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