My Support Circle

> *"Be not ashamed to be helped; for it is thy business to do thy duty like a soldier in the assault on a town."*
>
> Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 7.7 (tr. Long)

Marcus reminded himself that needing help is no disgrace - a lame soldier still climbs the wall with a hand from another. Write down at least three people. It helps to tell them they are on your list.

PERSON	HOW TO REACH THEM	BEST FOR (A CHAT, A CRISIS, A LIFT, PRACTICAL HELP)	WHAT I MIGHT SAY

Services and helplines

My GP: _____ Local alcohol service: _____

Meeting I can go to (AA, SMART or other): _____

UK: Samaritans 116 123 (free, 24 hours) · Drinkline 0300 123 1110 · NHS 111. US: call or text 988. In an emergency call 999 (UK) or 911 (US).

Free to print, copy and share · Not medical advice · Samaritans 116 123 (UK and Ireland) · 988 (US)

A Plan for Hard Nights

> *"Let not future things disturb thee, for thou wilt come to them, if it shall be necessary, having with thee the same reason which now thou usest for present things."*
>
> Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 7.8 (tr. Long)

Write this on a good day, so it is ready on a bad one. Work down the page in order: start with what you can do alone, and move on to people and services if you need them. Keep it by your bed or on your phone.

My warning signs

Thoughts, feelings, times or situations that tell me a hard night is coming.

Things I can do on my own

Urge Timer, a shower, food, a walk, music, breathing, bed.

People and places that take my mind off it

People I can ask for help

Names and numbers.

Making my space safer

Removing alcohol from the house, staying away from the shop, giving my card to someone.

If I feel unsafe

Samaritans 116 123 (UK and Ireland, free, 24 hours) · Call or text 988 (US) · Emergency 999 (UK) or 911 (US)

My GP or mental health team: _____

If you drink heavily every day, do not stop suddenly without medical advice. Alcohol withdrawal can be dangerous.

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Pocket Cards

> *"Each day acquire something that will fortify you against poverty, against death, indeed against other misfortunes as well."*
>
> Seneca, Letters 2 (tr. Gummere)

Fill in each card, cut along the dashed lines and fold in half if you like. Keep one where the urge usually finds you. Reading a card takes ten seconds, which is often enough to change what happens next.

Why I stopped

When the urge comes

1. Wait fifteen minutes. Do not decide anything yet.
2. Hungry, angry, lonely or tired? Fix that first.
3. Move: leave the room, go outside, drink water.
4. Message someone on my other card.
5. My own step:

My people

If I feel unsafe

Samaritans 116 123
UK and Ireland, free, 24 hours

988 call or text
US

999 / 911 emergency

My GP:

Free to print, copy and share · Not medical advice · Samaritans 116 123 (UK and Ireland) · 988 (US)

My Relapse Prevention Plan

> *"No longer talk at all about the kind of man that a good man ought to be, but be such."*
>
> Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 10.16 (tr. Long)

Pull together what you know from your other sheets. Keep it short enough to read in two minutes. Review it once a month, and after any slip.

Why I am doing this

MY RISKIEST SITUATIONS	MY PLAN FOR EACH

My early warning signs

What keeps me well, day to day

Sleep, food, meetings, people, movement.

My people

Names and numbers.

If I slip: my first 24 hours

Stop, tell someone, eat, sleep, review.

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When I Feel Lonely

> *"Adapt thyself to the things with which thy lot has been cast: and the men among whom thou hast received thy portion, love them, but do it truly."*
>
> Marcus Aurelius, Meditations 6.39 (tr. Long)

Start small. A text counts; so does sitting in a cafe or library among other people. Fill in each box with real names and places, so that on a lonely evening you do not have to think - only choose.

When loneliness tends to hit me

Times, days, places, after certain events.

EASY CONTACT (A TEXT, A VOICE NOTE)	A CALL	SEEING SOMEONE

Places I can be around people without drinking

Cafe, library, gym, class, meeting, volunteering, a walk in the park.

A good evening on my own looks like...

A small kindness I could do for someone else this week

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A Hard Day Ahead

> *"Let not the eyes be dry when we have lost a friend, nor let them overflow. We may weep, but we must not wail."*
>
> Seneca, Letters 63 (tr. Gummere)

Seneca did not ask people to hide their grief. He asked them to let it be felt without being swept away. Plan the day gently. It is fine for it to be sad. The aim is only that it is not also a day you drink.

The day: _____ Date: _____

What makes this day hard

A way to mark it or remember

A visit, a photo, a walk, a letter, saying their name, lighting a candle.

Who I will be with, or contact

My plan for the hardest hour

Something comforting for the evening

If grief is overwhelming, talk to your GP or a bereavement service (in the UK, Cruse Bereavement Support). Samaritans 116 123 (UK and Ireland) · 988 (US).

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