

CONTRACT FOR LIFE

Feeling suicidal is a very common experience for ritual abuse survivors. If they have left a cult they were raised in they have had to sever ties with family and friends. They must be constantly vigilant for others who may attempt to pull them back into a cult. The lives of ritual abuse survivors trying to break free can be filled with dread and fear. They may be plagued with loneliness and the feeling they don't belong anywhere. Suicide may appear to be the easiest and quickest solution.

Some violent cults program survivors to cut themselves or hurt themselves if they ever tell anyone about cult activity. Subliminal programming can be so strong that a suicide on a certain date or triggered by a word over the phone is possible. Some survivors have been victimized when they told about the cult activity. Survivors have been told they were possessed, blamed for the abuse, and not believed.

The injustices perpetrated against survivors by the cult and by society are so great that some survivors feel they have only one way to express their anger and frustration. The only person's behavior they can control is their own, so they turn their frustration inward and they cut their own bodies. They turn on themselves because other people do not hear their pain or accept the truth of what they say – no matter where abuse comes from.

Some survivors, as they validate the memories and begin the healing process can't stand the extreme grief and pain they feel. Often, they become plagued with self-destructive impulses because they are so furious and hurt by the past they cannot change. There may be times during the RET process that your client feels suicidal or exhibits self-mutilating behaviors. It is valuable to have an agreement with your client called a *Contract for Life*.

In this *Contract for Life*, the client agrees formally not to kill themselves for a set period of time (a week, a night, or until your next session), and they also agree to call their support person any time they feel the urge to kill or maim themselves in any way. The contract can also include reasons why

they should live. Have them write out the contract themselves. If they can't think of any, the Technician can assist. It is important that they have a plan in place to keep them alive and that their support system know about it.

Note: It is important that you recognize your limitations as a spiritual therapist and call for help if it becomes a matter of your client's life. You are a mandated reporter if a client has a plan and tells you about it. This is true for suicide, homicide, and abuse of children or the elderly.

EXAMPLE CONTRACT FOR LIFE

When I am feeling suicidal or want to hurt myself in any way, I will.....

I will not.....

I will call _____ at _____
(Name) (Phone)

If I can't get through, I will call _____ at _____,
as my back-up. (Name) (Phone)

The phone number for suicide prevention is _____

I deserve to live because.....

Client Signature

Technician Signature

Signature Date: _____