



BE SAFE:

Prevent Self-harm



Did you know there are practical steps you can take to be safe? It is important to protect yourself and others from self-harm. Read more below about recognizing signs that you or someone you know may be in crisis.

What causes a crisis?

People can experience an emotional or mental health crisis in response to a wide range of situations.

- A crisis may be triggered by troubles such as problems in personal relationships or loss of a job.
- A crisis can lead people to think about hurting or even killing themselves (suicide).
- Veterans are at higher risk of suicide than the general population.
- It is important to understand what to look for and what to do if you feel that someone may be in crisis or feels like killing him- or herself.

How can I tell if I am or someone I care about is in crisis?

- Sometimes a crisis involves thoughts of suicide. Although the following warning signs may not mean that someone is suicidal, they may indicate that someone is in crisis and/or possibly suicidal:
 - Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
 - Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
 - Feeling like there is no reason to live
 - Rage or anger
 - Engaging in risky activities without thinking about possible harm
 - Increasing or excessive tobacco, alcohol, or drug abuse
 - Withdrawing from family and friends
 - Expressing feelings of being trapped with no way out
 - Expressing overwhelming guilt or shame

A Better Way to
LIVE

*Talk with your
health care team
about your goals.*



- The following signs are more serious and require **immediate** attention:
 - Thinking about killing yourself
 - Looking for ways to kill yourself
 - Talking about death, dying, or suicide
 - Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, reckless weapon use, etc.

What do I do if I am or someone I care about is in a serious crisis and feeling suicidal?

- Seek immediate help from your health care team or the nearest hospital emergency room
- Call 911
- Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
- Contact the Veterans Chat Service at www.veteranscrisisline.net
- During times of crisis or hopelessness, consider removing firearms from the home or using a gun lock or gun safe to make them less accessible.

FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- VHA Mental Health: Suicide Prevention: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention
- VHA National Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov. Go to the *Healthy Living* tab and choose “Be Safe”
- Veterans Health Library: www.veteranshealthlibrary.org, search “prevent suicide”

If you have questions about how to make healthy living changes, please talk with your health care team.