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

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