



Be Safe: Prevent Self-Harm

Healthy Living Message

What's Important to Know?

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 consider hurting or even killing themselves (suicide). In general, Veterans are at a higher risk of suicide than civilians.

These warning signs **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

These signs 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.

If you or someone else 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

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to prevent self-harm, talk with your VA health care team. For more information, go to the VHA Suicide prevention Web site: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention

Resources

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov. Go to the Healthy Living tab and choose "Be Safe" and "Manage Stress"
- Veterans Health Library: www.veteranshealthlibrary.va.gov, search "Prevent suicide"