

# Suicide Prevention: Learn to Recognize the Signs

Many Veterans may not show any signs of intent to harm themselves before doing so, but some actions can be a sign that a Veteran needs help. Veterans in crisis may show behaviors that indicate a risk of harming themselves.

Veterans who are considering suicide often show signs of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and/or hopelessness, such as:

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Clinical depression: deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating—that doesn't go away or continues to get worse
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep
- Neglecting personal welfare, deteriorating physical appearance
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society, or sleeping all the time
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, school, or other things one used to care about
- Frequent and dramatic mood changes
- Expressing feelings of excessive guilt or shame
- Feelings of failure or decreased performance
- Feeling that life is not worth living, having no sense of purpose in life
- Talk about feeling trapped—like there is no way out of a situation
- Having feelings of desperation, and saying that there's no solution to their problems

Their behavior may be dramatically different from their normal behavior, or they may appear to be actively contemplating or preparing for a suicidal act through behaviors such as:

- Performing poorly at work or school
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities—seemingly without thinking
- Showing violent behavior such as punching holes in walls, getting into fights or self-destructive violence; feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Looking as though one has a “death wish,” tempting fate by taking risks that could lead to death, such as driving fast or running red lights
- Giving away prized possessions
- Putting affairs in order, tying up loose ends, and/or making out a will
- Seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means of harming oneself

If you are a Veteran or know a Veteran who is showing any of the above warning signs, please call the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive free, confidential support from an experienced, caring U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs responder.

## Resources

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/GetHelp/ResourceLocator.aspx>

Prepared by Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury

## VA is here for the people who support our Veterans.

Whether you're a Veteran's spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, friend, or caregiver, the Veterans Crisis Line is here for you. If you are concerned about the safety and well-being of a Veteran, stand by them. Call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to **838255** to receive free, confidential support from an experienced, caring U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs responder.

Family members, caregivers, and loved ones are often the first to realize a Veteran may be in crisis and need support. Responders at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained to help Veterans' families and friends make sure their loved ones get connected to care.

Crisis feels different for everybody and can arise from a wide range of situations before, during, or after military service. Some Veterans are coping with aging, stress, or similar challenges faced during civilian life while others may experience difficulties in their relationships or transitioning back to employment or education.

Whatever's got a Veteran down—chronic pain, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, anger, or even homelessness—a Veterans Crisis Line responder can provide support, day or night. If you know a Veteran in crisis, stand by them and make the call.

### Confidential Help for Veterans and their Families



### Veterans Text: 24/7 Confidential Support

If you're a Veteran in crisis or you're concerned about one, responders at the Veterans Crisis Line text-messaging service (text to 838255) offer help that can make a difference. Caring, qualified VA responders are standing by to provide free and confidential support — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year — even if you're not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. Responders will work with you to get through any personal crisis.

Get the support you've earned. Text to 838255.

### Texting Terms of Service

#### Privacy Policy

The Veterans Crisis Line text-messaging service does not store mobile phone numbers of users who access information via text message (SMS). We do not collect any personally identifiable information about users without their permission. Any personally identifiable information collected with the user's consent will never be shared with other users of the system nor will they be distributed outside the system, unless required by law.

#### Message Rates

The Veterans Crisis Line text-messaging service does not charge for texting to 838255. Message and data rates may apply.