**PTSD Awareness**

For veterans, crises can be heightened by their experiences during military service. If you’re a veteran or service member and in crisis, these resources can help.

**How To Take Care Of Yourself**

Crisis feels different for everybody and can arise from a wide range of situations before, during, or after military service.

**Ask for help:**Don’t be afraid to let your friends know what you need when they ask; they want to help. You can also reach out to confidential 24/7 services like the [Veterans Crisis Line](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/). **1-800-273-8255 Press 1**

**Find a support group:**Talk to other veterans who have gone through the same kind of trauma that you have.

**Find custom services for your needs:**Access confidential [Homeless Veterans Chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx?account=Homeless%20Veterans%20Chat) and see [resources for homeless Veterans](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Resources/HomelessResources.aspx).

[**Make a safety plan**](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/): Have a step-by-step plan ready for if/when you feel depressed, suicidal, or in crisis, so you can start at step one and continue through the steps until you feel safe.

**How To Help**

**Ask and listen:** Be an active part of your loved ones’ support systems and check in with them often. If they show any [warning signs](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/how-we-can-all-prevent-suicide/) for suicide, be direct. Tell them it’s OK to talk about suicidal feelings. Practice [active listening techniques](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/how-we-can-all-prevent-suicide/) and let them talk without judgment.

**Get them help and take care of yourself**: Don’t be afraid to get your loved one the help they might need. The Lifeline and Veterans Crisis Line are always here to talk or chat, both for crisis intervention and to support friends and loved ones.

**Be there:**Everyone deals with pain differently. A simple act of kindness to the veteran or service member in your life can help that person feel less alone.

**We Can All Help Prevent Suicide**

***Understanding the issues concerning suicide and mental health is an important way to take part in suicide prevention, help others in crisis, and change the conversation around suicide.***

**Hope Can Happen**

Suicide is not inevitable for anyone. By starting the conversation, providing support, and directing help to those who need it, we can prevent suicides and save lives.

**We Can All Take Action**

Evidence shows that providing support services, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others.

**Crisis Centers are Critical**

By offering immediate counseling to everyone that may need it, local crisis centers provide invaluable support at critical times and connect individuals to local services.

**Know The Risk Factors**

Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely that someone will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. They can't cause or predict a suicide attempt, but they're important to be aware of.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * History of trauma or abuse * Major physical illnesses | * Loss of relationship(s) |
| * Hopelessness | * Easy access to lethal means |
| * Impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies | * Local clusters of suicide |
| * Alcohol and other substance use disorders | * Lack of social support and sense of isolation |
| * Family history of suicide | * Stigma associated with asking for help |
| * Previous suicide attempt(s) | * Lack of healthcare, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment |
| * Mental disorders, particularly mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and personality disorders | * Cultural and religious beliefs, such as the belief that suicide is a noble resolution of a personal dilemma |
| * Job or financial loss | * Exposure to others who have died by suicide (in real life or via the media and Internet) |

**Know The Warning Signs**

**Some warning signs may help you determine if a loved one is at risk for suicide, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss or change. If you or someone you know exhibits any of these, seek help by call**

**1-800-273-8255 Press 1**

* Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
* Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
* Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
* Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
* Talking about being a burden to others
* Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
* Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
* Sleeping too little or too much
* Withdrawing or isolating themselves
* Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
* Extreme mood swings