



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Veterans face many unique challenges — from experiences of combat and deployments far from home to reintegration into civilian life. Some Veterans begin to feel overwhelmed by these challenges and may not know where to turn for support.

## Start the Conversation: *New Tools for Veteran Suicide Prevention*

Each of us can make a difference in the life of a Veteran who is feeling stressed, anxious, or hopeless. One conversation or connection can be a pivotal step in helping a Veteran in need. A toolkit from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) — *Start the Conversation: New Tools for Veteran Suicide Prevention* — can help you get started.

Having these discussions can be difficult, but the simple act of starting a conversation can be the turning point that helps a Veteran get the care they need — and can help save a life. Often, people worry that without special training they might say the wrong thing, but you don't have to be an expert to share your concern for a Veteran who is experiencing challenges.

Opening up a line of communication is the first step. This toolkit is designed to help you take that first step.

*The toolkit is available at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/starttheconversation](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/starttheconversation) and provides information about common issues that many Veterans face, as well as concrete steps to help you:*

- ▶ Talk to a Veteran about their emotional health, distress, or even thoughts of suicide
- ▶ Identify factors that may increase a Veteran's risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- ▶ Recognize warning signs or "red flags" that indicate a Veteran may be in crisis and need support
- ▶ Create a personalized plan to help a Veteran manage crises with a customizable Safety Planning Worksheet
- ▶ Access VA resources for Veterans in need and those who care about them

It's important that you talk to someone right away if you have thoughts of harming yourself, death, or suicide. You can always contact the **Veterans Crisis Line** by calling **1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1**, using the online chat, or **texting to 838255**. These services provide free, **confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.**

**For additional information and resources to help a Veteran you're concerned about, visit *Start the Conversation: New Tools for Veteran Suicide Prevention* at [www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/starttheconversation](http://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/starttheconversation)**