



CRISIS LINE FACILITATION COURSE BOOK

Connecting National Guard Soldiers through Education in
Crisis Line Facilitation Training

PROJECT CONNECT

COURSE BOOK GUIDE

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our research project!

Today you will be participating in an informational training session called
Crisis Line Facilitation.

This training session will provide you with information about a resource that is available in crisis situations – The Military and Veteran's Crisis Line.

This course book is meant as a resource for you – it contains extra resources that you will be able to access and review once the training is over. During the training today, your group leader will ask you to complete sections of this course book as you work through the material.

ABOUT OUR PROJECT



This manual was developed for use as part of Project CONNECT, a University of Michigan research project partnered with the Michigan Army National Guard.

The materials provided are available within the public domain and do not reflect the views of the Center for Disease Control or the United States government.

The project is funded by the Center For Disease Control (CDC) Award #AWD012790 and is registered on ClinicalTrials.gov (#NCT05405231).

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Michigan IRBMED (HUM00193639) and the Army Human Protections Research Office (AHRPO).



SOLDIERS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

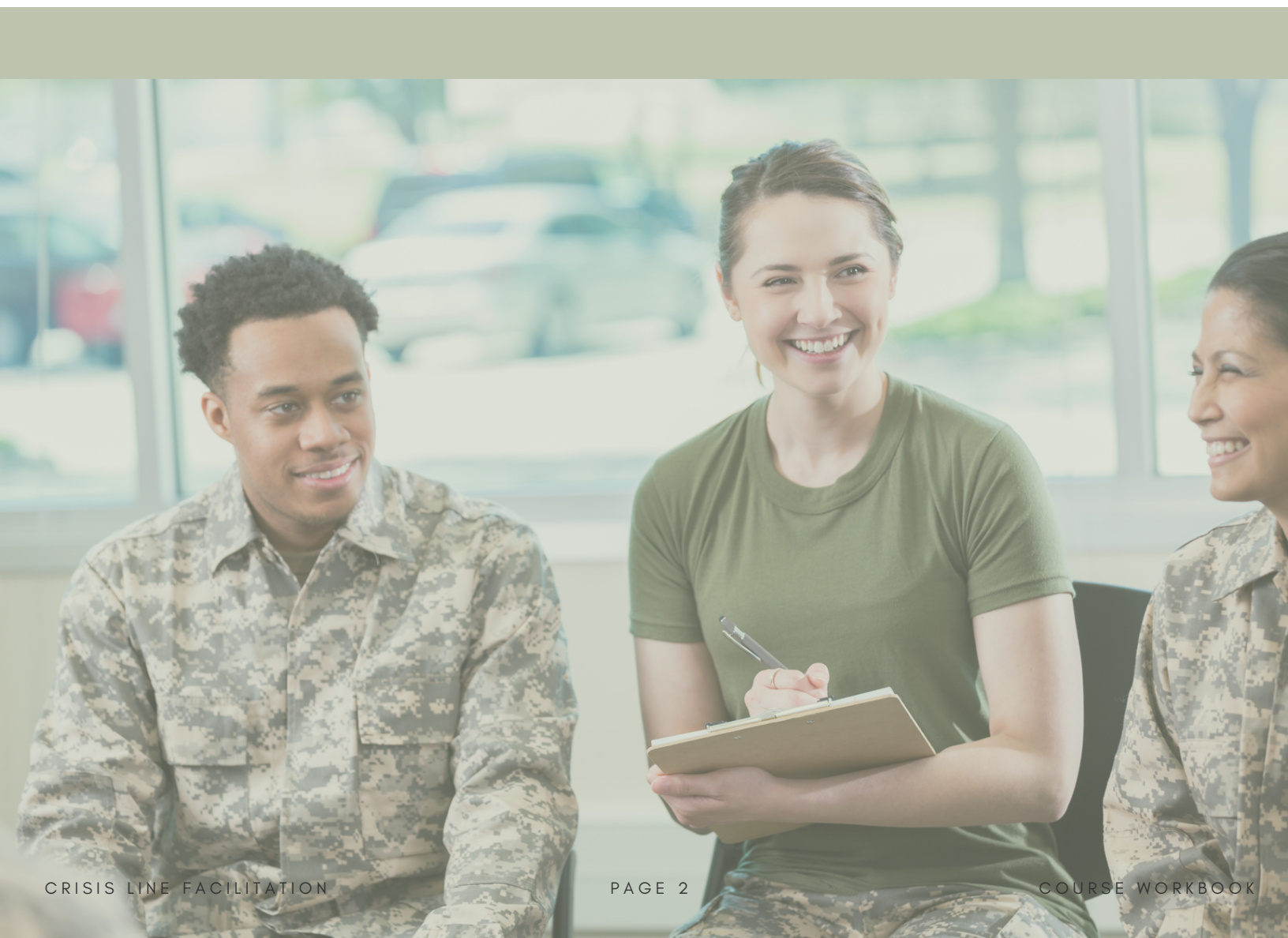
Talking about Mental Health is important.

- **Military personnel – including National Guard soldiers – are at heightened risk for suicide compared with the broader U.S. population.**
 - According to the Department of Defense Suicide Prevention Report for CY 2020, 119 National Guard members died by suicide, representing the 2nd highest total among active duty military.
- **For most of us, reaching out for help or talking about difficult feelings or situations is really hard.**
 - It can be hard to identify exactly what you're feeling, or sometimes problems can just seem like they won't ever get better.
 - Sometimes it's easy to feel like no one understands, and you might feel alone.
- **It can be hard to identify who can and is willing to help us when we need it most.**
 - It can also be hard to identify when and how to help your fellow soldier or a family member or friend.

Today, we're hoping to provide you with information and resources that will make the conversation easier.

AGENDA

- Explore shared values as Soldiers
- Explore ideas related to seeking help during tough times
- Learn about the Military and Veterans Crisis Line
- Practice ways to reach out for help or talk about crises



Loyalty

Respect

**Selfless
Service**

Duty

Honor

Integrity

**ALWAYS READY,
ALWAYS THERE**

**Personal
Courage**

What 3 values are important to you?

01

02

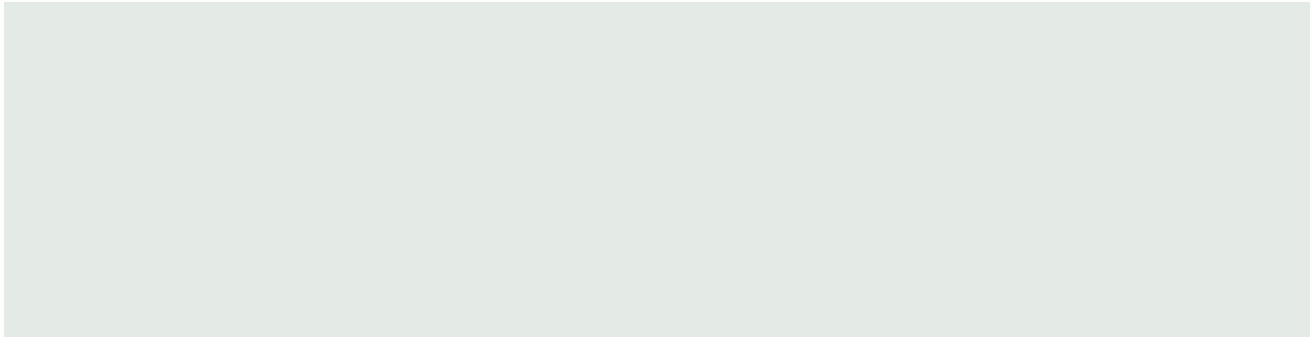
03

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

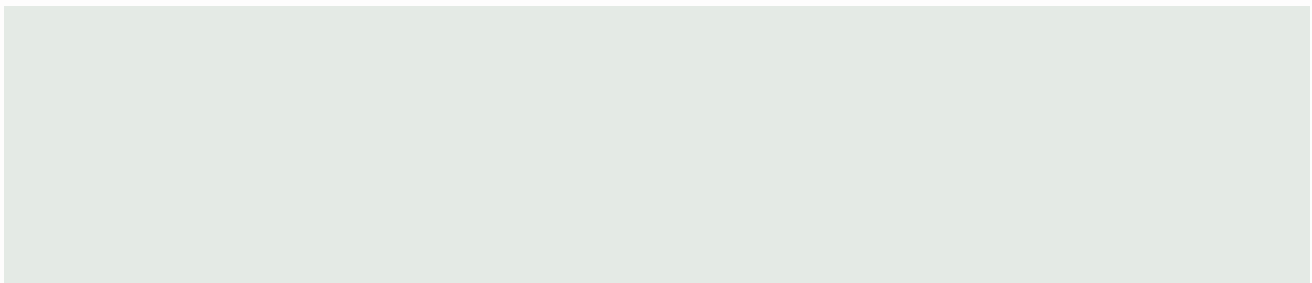
The word crisis can mean different things to different people.

Being a soldier requires you to balance a lot of personal and professional responsibilities

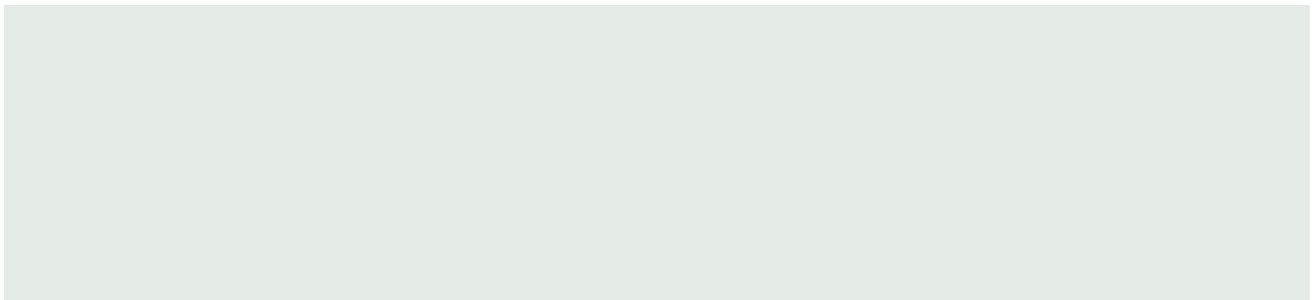
What kind of crisis might a Soldier experience?



What are some stressors in a Soldier's life?



What do Soldiers do when a personal issue starts to feel overwhelming?





SIGNS OF A CRISIS

The end of a personal relationship.
The loss of a job.

Everybody faces difficult times in life, and people cope with stressful situations in different ways.

These signs may indicate that a Soldier needs help.

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling as if there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug misuse
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, or school
- Neglecting personal welfare and appearance
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Showing violent behavior, like punching a hole in the wall or getting into fights
- Giving away prized possessions
- Getting affairs in order, typing up loose ends, or writing a will
- Risky use of weapons

**Remember, some Soldiers may be in a crisis,
and you might never know.**

SELF-AWARENESS

TOUGH TIMES

Think about a time in your life when you or a friend experienced stress or a crisis.

What was going on?	
What were you feeling?	
What were you thinking?	
What support did you have or use?	
What did you learn?	





WHAT MIGHT YOU DO?

Imagine a situation in which a fellow soldier, close friend, or family member told you they were thinking about suicide, or that their life had no meaning.

What might your reaction be? How might you feel?

What might prevent this person from seeking help?

What values might help you in this situation?

**What might you do if someone you knew
(a fellow National Guard soldier, family member, or friend) was having thoughts
of suicide or experiencing a crisis?**

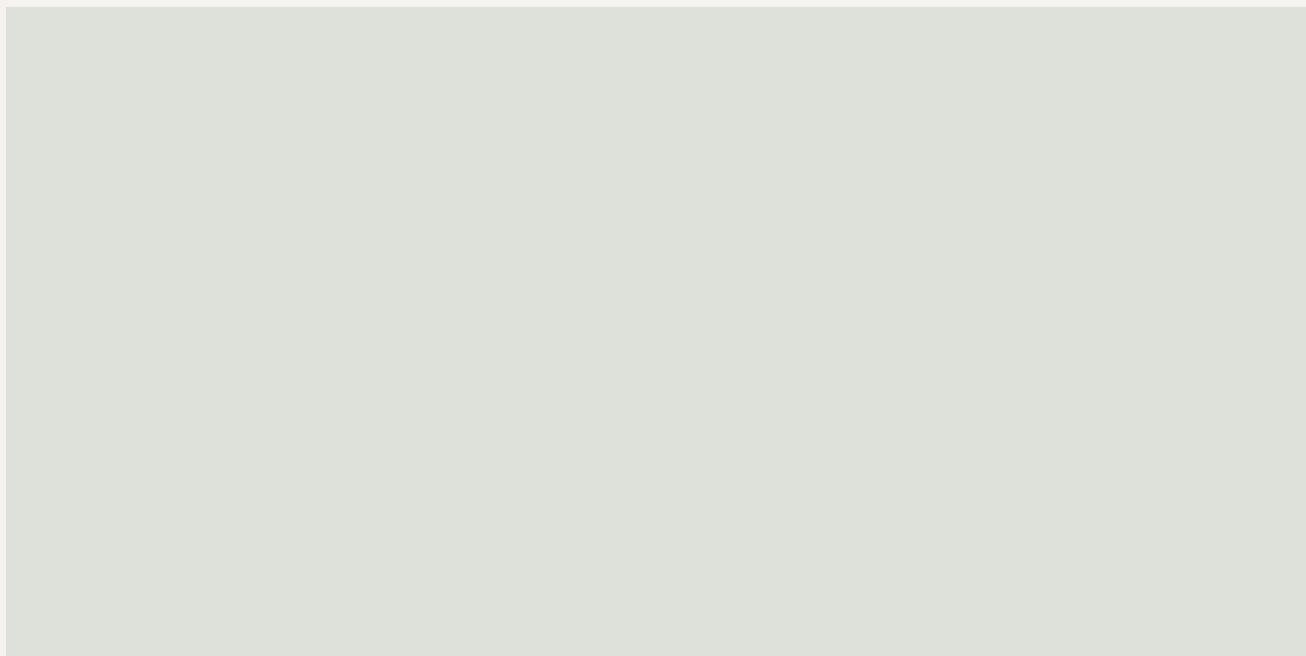
Tell them you are worried about them	Offer to help them with everyday tasks to support them while they manage the crisis	Give them the number for the Veterans Crisis Line
Tell them everything will be okay	Take them to a hospital or Emergency Room	Call the Veterans Crisis Line with them
Visit a website for information	Help them make or take them to an appointment	Call 911
Encourage them to seek help from a mental health professional, doctor, or military chaplain	Talk with their friends or family about your concerns	
Offer to listen to their concerns	Stay with them until they could get help	



Sometimes we want to help those we care about through difficult times, but we don't know how.



What might prevent you from talking about suicide with fellow soldiers, family, or friends?



Have you heard?

What do you know
about the Military
and Veterans Crisis
Line?

Share your
thoughts.



**You don't have to go
through a crisis alone.**

Dial 988 then Press 1 to reach the
Veterans Crisis Line day or night.

You never know when
a crisis could happen.



The Military Crisis Line is Here for You



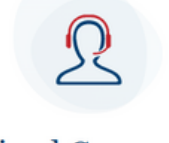
Free & Confidential

There's no charge and you decide how much information to share.



Always Available

Accessible 24/7/365.



Trained Counselors

Many are Veterans who understand the challenges service members and their loved ones face.



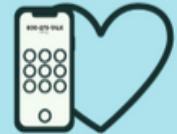
Crises are typically de-escalated on the call.

Less than two percent of Lifeline calls involve emergency services. When emergency services are involved, over half of these emergency dispatches occur with the caller's consent. Many suicidal callers report that their call prevented them from killing themselves.



It's not just for managing suicidal crisis.

34% of Lifeline calls are about mental health concerns other than suicide.



People feel better after calling.

Numerous studies of Lifeline calls have shown that the majority of callers were significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking with a Lifeline counselor.



Follow-up keeps callers safe.

90.6% of callers reported that follow-up kept them safe.



Callers connect quickly to a trained counselor.

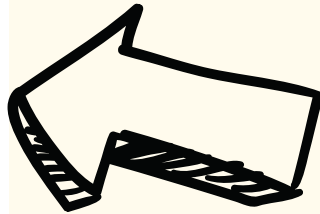
The average speed of answer for Lifeline calls is approximately 45 seconds.

CALL

There are many ways to reach out to
the Military and Veterans Crisis
Line

CHAT

TEXT



Scan the QR code for more information on
each of these different contact types!



How to save the Veterans Crisis Line number in your phone

You never know when a crisis may happen. There are simple steps you can take to be prepared. Find instructions below to save the new Veterans Crisis Line number—Dial 988 then Press 1— as a contact in your iOS or Android phone.

iOS

- 1 Navigate to the Phone app.
- 2 Tap the “Contacts” button at the bottom, and then tap the “+” button in the top-right corner to add a new
- 3 contact. Name the contact Veterans Crisis Line.
- 4 Tap the “add phone” button.
- 5 Type 988 on the keypad, then tap “+*#” in the lower left corner of the keypad.
- 6 Tap the “pause” button on the keypad and then type 1.
- 7 Tap the “Done” button in the top-right corner to save the contact.
- 8 When you use this contact, your phone will automatically route you to the Veterans Crisis Line.

ANDROID

- 1 Navigate to the Contacts app.
- 2 Use the “+” to add a contact.
- 3 Name the contact Veterans Crisis Line.
- 4 Type 988 in the phone number input.
- 5 Add a pause and then type 1. Adding a pause may appear differently on different phones. Options include:
 - Typing in a comma
 - Clicking on a pause button directly on the phone number input (this may be displayed as “two-second pause”)
 - Opening a menu by clicking three vertical dots to find the pause button
- 6 Click “Save” to save your contact.
- 7 When you use this contact, your phone will automatically route you to the Veterans Crisis Line.

Note: Manufacturer settings can cause slight variations in your phone’s contacts app. The above instructions should work for most cell phones. If further assistance is needed, contact your phone manufacturer’s customer support.



Questions that you could ask the Veterans Crisis Line

- How concerned do I need to be about my safety before I call the Lifeline?
- Can I call if I just need someone to talk to?
- How do I know if I am in a 'crisis'?
- Is it inconvenient if I call during the overnight hours?
- How many people do you talk to during a typical shift?
- What do most people talk about?
- What's the best/worst part of your job?
- How do you respond when someone reports that they are suicidal?
- How long can we talk?
- What do I do if I lose your number?
- Is it OK to call the Lifeline more than once in a single week?
- Is there anything else I should know about the Lifeline?

What might you want to know?



The situation

Your friend hasn't been answering their phone for a few days, and you want to check on them.

You stop by their home and notice they look upset, with dark circles under their eyes. They mention they just lost their job.

Pair up (or work in small groups) to role play a conversation with someone who might be in a crisis. Your goal should be to help connect them to the Military and Veterans Crisis Line.

The next few pages will provide you with some phrases to say if you are struggling to think of any!

Person A:
Friend in Crisis

Person B:
Friend Helping

Role play

Person A:
Friend in Crisis

Potential things to say

- Everything is just falling apart.
- I don't want to burden anyone with my problems, they aren't that bad.
- Nothing seems to be going right. I just can't catch a break.
- I've been feeling really down since I lost my job.
- I don't know how things will get better.
- My family will be so disappointed in me.
- Everything's fine. I can figure things out on my own.
- No one understands what I am going through.
- I don't know where I can go for help.
- **What else might you say?**



Role play

Person B: Friend Helping

Potential things to say

Hey, I haven't seen you in awhile and wanted to see how you are doing.

Is everything okay?

I notice you seem upset.

Do you want to talk about how you're feeling?

I'm here to listen if you want to talk.

I might not know exactly how you feel, but I'm here for you.

Have you heard about the Military and Veterans Crisis Line? I can help you connect with them.

This is this great resource that is confidential and you can call when you need help. It's called the Military and Veterans Crisis Line.

Crisis Line workers are there to listen and help.

I'd like to give you the number for the Military and Veterans Crisis Line. It's easy to remember!

What else might you say?





**ALWAYS READY,
ALWAYS THERE**

What 3 things did you learn from today?

01

02

03

TAKE HOME RESOURCES

Even though you may not need them now, it is always good to have information about crisis resources that are available, just in case.

A fellow soldier, family member, or friend might benefit from hearing about these resources, how they work, and why you should use them.



Behind the Scenes

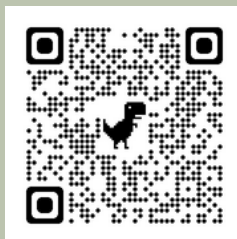
Take a look into one of the three Veterans Crisis Line call centers.

In the video, VA responders, some of them Veterans themselves, share their stories and experiences in providing vital support and referrals for Veterans and their loved ones.

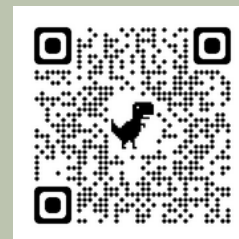
Scan the QR codes to watch some additional video clips about the Military and Veterans Crisis Line.



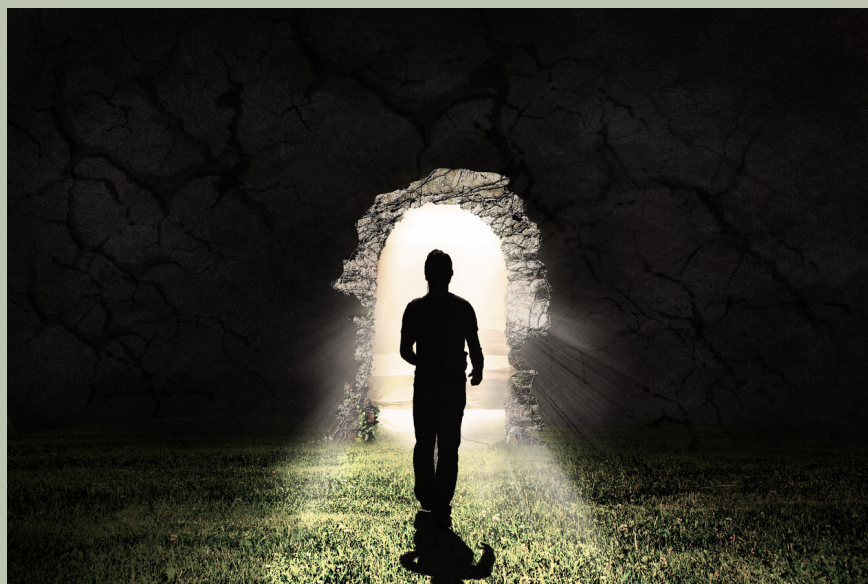
Decisions



You are not alone



Reasons



Michigan and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 2020

What's the Lifeline?



24/7

free and confidential support
 to people in suicidal crisis or
 emotional distress

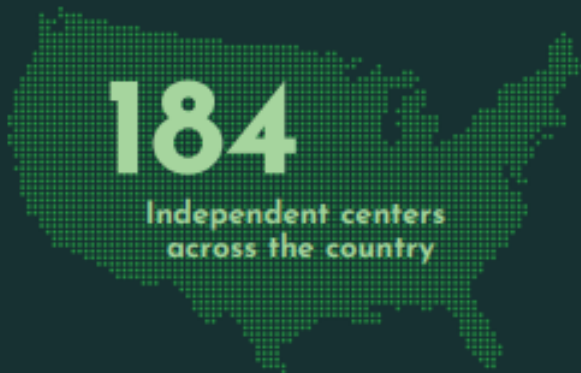


The Lifeline connects
 more than 80% of callers
 to a call center on the
 first routing attempt
 (within 30 seconds after the greeting)

and around 95% on
 subsequent attempts
 (within 60-90 seconds
 after the greeting)



If a local center is unable to answer, the call is
 rerouted to one of our national backup centers.



Administered by **Vibrant**
 through a grant from **SAMHSA**

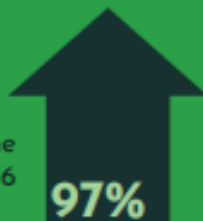


Lifeline calls in Michigan



Lifeline-affiliated
 centers currently
 in Michigan

Michigan Lifeline Call volume
 has increased **97%** since 2016



In 2020, the Lifeline received
 nearly **2.4 million** crisis calls
 across the United States

70,058 calls were from
 Michigan

30,046 calls were connected to
 crisis centers in state



Of the 70,058 callers, 14,350
 pressed "1" to be transferred to
 the **Veterans Crisis Line**

and 360 pressed "2" for
 the **Spanish Language Line**



How to Talk With a Veteran in Crisis

If a Veteran you care about is going through a difficult time or having thoughts of suicide, you're probably worried and confused. You want to help but may be scared you could make things worse—the only wrong thing to do is to do nothing. Now is the time to act. You can begin by learning the signs of crisis and how to start a conversation with the Veteran.

REMEMBER: Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention. Small actions, like starting a conversation, can make a big difference.



Signs of crisis

Every Veteran is different, and many may not show any obvious signs of intent to kill themselves. But some actions and behaviors can be a sign they need help.

Crisis signs

These signs require immediate attention. If a Veteran you know needs medical attention, **call 911** now. For immediate help in dealing with a mental health or suicide crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line: **Dial 988 then Press 1.**

- Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
- Looking for ways to kill themselves
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
 - Self-destructive behavior, such as drug abuse, risky use of weapons, etc.

REMEMBER: If you believe a Veteran is at high risk of suicide and has already taken pills or harmed themselves in some way, **call 911.** And keep yourself safe—**never** negotiate with someone who has a firearm. **Get to safety and call 911, noting the Veteran is armed.**

Warning signs

These signs may indicate that a Veteran needs help. Contact the Veterans Crisis Line now—**Dial 988 then Press 1**—if a Veteran you know is exhibiting any of these:

- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Hopelessness
 - Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling as if there is no reason to live
 - Feeling excessive guilt, shame, or sense of failure
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug misuse
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, or school
- Neglecting personal welfare and appearance
- Withdrawing from family and friends
 - Showing violent behavior, like punching a hole in the wall or getting into fights
 - Giving away prized possessions
 - Getting affairs in order, tying up loose ends, or writing a will



How to start the conversation

For a Veteran in crisis—whose emotional struggles and health challenges may lead to thoughts of suicide—conversations and connections can mean the difference between keeping them safe and a tragic outcome.

If you and/or the Veteran are not in immediate danger, start a conversation by asking questions like:

- *“It sounds like you’re feeling so incredibly (insert appropriate feeling here—trapped, overwhelmed, betrayed, etc.). Sometimes when people feel this way, they think about suicide. Is this something you’re thinking about?”*
- *“When did you first start feeling like killing yourself?”*
- *“Did something happen that made you begin to feel like taking your life?”*

When responding to answers from a Veteran, remember simple, encouraging feedback goes a long way in showing support and encouraging help-seeking:

- *“I’m here for you. How do you hurt and how can I help?”*
- *“Can we talk for a while and see if we can find a way to keep you safe right now?”*
- *“I might not be able to understand exactly what you’re going through or how you feel, but I care about you and want to help.”*

You don’t have to be an expert to talk to a Veteran facing challenges. You just need to show genuine care and concern.



Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Make supportive and encouraging comments, don’t ask invasive personal questions.
 - Don’t inject judgment or emotion in the conversation. Stay calm.
- Listen more than you speak—don’t dominate the conversation.
- Remind them you are there for them.
- Let them decide how much to share.
 - It’s okay to ask directly: “Are you thinking about taking your own life?” If the Veteran answers yes, follow the steps below:

1. Inform them they can **Dial 988 then Press 1** to reach the Veterans Crisis Line or ask if they’d like to do this with you.
2. Assess whether the Veteran is in crisis and determine if he or she has already initiated a plan to kill themselves or injured others or has an immediate plan to do so, with access to means.
3. Try to find out where the Veteran is located and whether anyone else is nearby.
 4. For immediate emergency or medical assistance, **call 911.**

Asking if someone is having thoughts of suicide will not give them the idea or increase their risk. It may seem daunting, but it could save their life. Although many people may not show clear signs of intent to kill themselves, they’ll likely answer direct questions about their intentions when asked.

REMEMBER: Even if the Veteran doesn’t ask for support, they may need it. Make sure they know the Veterans Crisis Line is available **24/7** to help during a crisis. You can even call together.

Learn more with these resources:

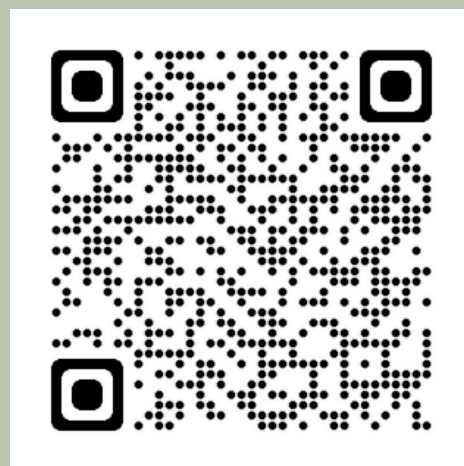
Veterans Crisis Line: A free, anonymous, confidential resource available to Veterans in crisis, as well as their family members and friends. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or text **838255**.

VA Mental Health: VA’s repository of mental health resources, information, and data materials.

Make the Connection: VA’s premier mental health literacy and anti-stigma website highlights Veterans’ real, inspiring stories of recovery and connects Veterans and their supporters with local resources.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Scan the QR codes to visit the resource websites.



www.Veteranscrisisline.net provides information about The Veterans Crisis Line.

Reaching out can be hard,

but you've never been interested in easy.

Don't wait. Reach out.

VA.GOV/REACH

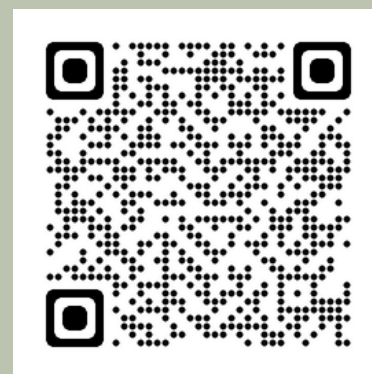


Soldiers are trained to endure challenging situations, but stigma can make it difficult to reach out for help.

No mission should be fought alone.

This site was designed for Veterans to proactively seek support and resources.

#BeThe1To



#BeThe1To is the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's message for National Suicide Prevention Month and beyond, which helps spread the word about actions we can all take to prevent suicide.



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