

# Suicide Prevention and Crisis Intervention with Veterans

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**VA**  
HEALTH  
CARE | Defining  
**EXCELLENCE**  
in the 21st Century

# Facts about Veteran Suicide

- 20% of all suicides are Veterans
  - National Violent Death Reporting System
- Veterans are more likely than the general population to use firearms
  - National Violent Death Reporting System
- 950 suicide attempts per month among Veterans receiving VHA services
  - VA National Suicide Prevention Coordinators  
(October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010)

# VA Suicide Prevention Strategy

- Suicide can be prevented by providing ready access to high quality mental health care and other services as needed.
  - Ready access can be achieved through:
    - Crisis Line
    - Veterans Chat
    - Veterans Text
    - Walk-in and ER visits
    - Referrals to Suicide Prevention Coordinators
    - Word of mouth referrals
    - Outreach efforts and community training

# Specific Initiatives Established for Suicide Prevention

- Hubs of expertise
  - Center of Excellence (CoE)
  - Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC)
- National programs for education and awareness
  - Operation S.A.V.E (Know the Signs, Ask the question, Validate the feelings, Expedite help)
  - Suicide Risk Management Training for Clinicians
  - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Suicide
  - Women Veterans and Suicide
  - Older Veterans and Suicide
  - Primary Care Provider
- Veterans Crisis Line **1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press “1” for Veterans**
  - **Veterans Chat**
  - **Veterans Text**
- Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC)
- Federal partnerships

## Veterans Crisis Line

- A toll-free, confidential resource that connects Veterans and Service Members in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) responders.
- Responders are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances
- 1-800-273-8255, press 1.

## Veterans Crisis Line

- July 25, 2007 – Hotline went live; first call was at 11:20 AM
- Based in Canandaigua VA Medical Center in upstate New York
- Partnership with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) / LIFELINE
- Current staff size: 180 (adding 100 more by 1/13)



## Veterans Crisis Line

- Since its launch in 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered more than 640,000 calls and made more than 23,000 life-saving rescues.
- In 2009, the Veterans Crisis Line added an anonymous online chat service, which has helped more than 61,000 people.
- In November 2011, the Veterans Crisis Line added a texting service, which has helped more than 2,300 people.

# Veterans Crisis Line

	Total Calls	Veterans	Family/ Friend	SPC Referrals	Rescue	Active Duty
<i>June, 2012</i>	14,802	11,209	1,346	3,362	479	144
<b><i>Total (through 6/12)</i></b>	<b>641,450</b>	<b>383,983</b>	<b>47,232</b>	<b>99,168</b>	<b>23,013</b>	<b>8,385</b>
<i>FY 11</i>	164,101	102,446	12,221	29,334	6,670	2,290
<i>FY 10</i>	134,528	81,805	9,925	19,970	5,732	1,744
<i>FY 09</i>	118,984	63,934	7,553	13,960	3,709	1,589
<i>FY 08</i>	67,350	29,879	4,517	6,264	1,749	780
<i>FY 07</i> From: Veterans Crisis Line database	9,379	2,918	No avail.	739	139	93



## Veterans Chat Service

- Anonymous, online chats occur with trained VA counselor
- Potential to transfer the visitor to the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline, where further counseling and referral services are provided and crisis intervention steps can be taken.
- Intended to reach out to all Veterans and Service Members
- Launched in July 2009

# Veterans Chat

	Total Chats	Transfer to Crisis Line	Transfer to Back-up Center	Suicide Mentioned
<i>June, 2012</i>	3,665	340	426	1,260
<b><i>Total (through 6/12)</i></b>	<b>61,338</b>	<b>6,607</b>	<b>7,626</b>	<b>22,565</b>
<i>FY 11</i>	18,438	2,445	2,182	7,265
<i>FY 10</i>	8,471	878	1,036	3,433
<i>FY 09</i>	864	73	29	328

From: Veterans Crisis Line database

# WWW.VETERANSCRISISLINE.NET

Website header: SuicidePreventionLifeline.org Get Help Materials Get Involved Crisis Centers Newsroom About

Veterans Crisis Line  
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

Dial 1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1** | Text to 838255 | Confidential Veterans Chat

I am a **Veteran** | I am **Family/Friend**

Confidential Help for Veterans and Their Families | Signs of Crisis | Resources | Get Help | About

**"I AM A VETERAN."**  
The road is hard, but there's help out there, all you have to do is ask. Start by calling the Veterans Crisis Line."  
Orville Longhorn,  
U.S. Army, 1964-1967

Welcome to the **Veterans Crisis Line Website**  
The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1, chat online**, or send a text message to **838255** to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.  
[More about the Veterans Crisis Line](#)

1 2 3 4 5

**Are You a Veteran or Concerned About One?**

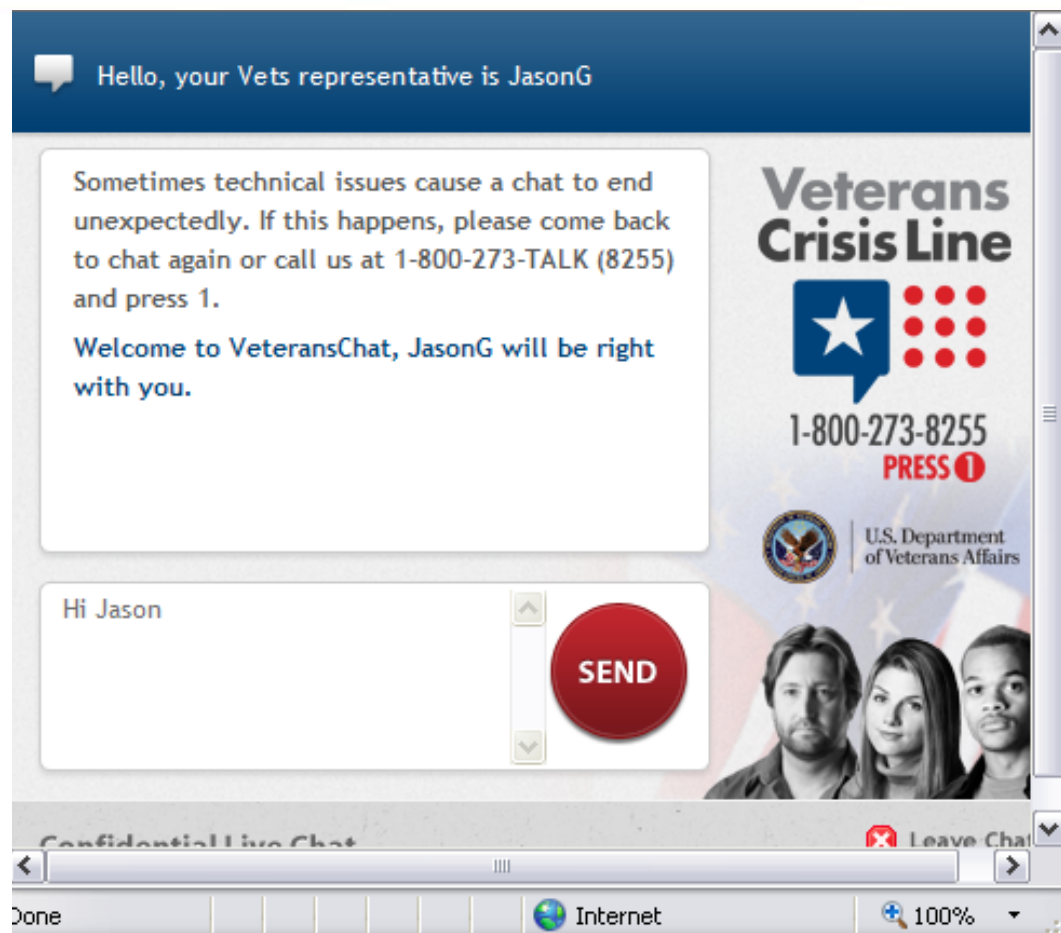
**Act Now** | Dial 1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1** to talk to someone NOW

- Confidential Veterans Chat
- Text to 838255 to Get Help NOW
- Take a Self-Check Quiz
- Confidential Homeless Veterans Chat

**Learn Now**

- Identify the Warning Signs
- Concerned About a Veteran? You Can Help
- Suicide and Crisis Resources
- About the Veterans Crisis Line

# Veterans Chat



## Veterans Text

- 838255 (VETALK)
- Free!
- Same clinical skills as Chat
- Primary differences between Chat and Text
  - Text is limited to 160 characters
  - Performance of Texting software is dependent on Visitor's cell phone and cell phone provider.

# Veterans Text

	Total Texts	Veterans	Family/ Friend	SPC Referrals	Transfer to phone	Active Duty
<i>Nov 11</i>	117	69	3	7	8	4
<i>Dec 11</i>	207	117	9	14	11	4
<i>Jan 12</i>	290	151	17	20	11	7
<i>Feb 12</i>	337	188	13	27	12	14
<i>Mar 12</i>	356	189	14	25	20	13
<i>Apr 12</i>	375	204	34	27	10	7
<i>May 12</i>	374	236	19	43	35	4
<i>June 12</i>	297	176	22	36	16	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,353</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>61</b>

From: Veterans Crisis Line database

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION



# WWW.VETERANSCRISISLINE.NET

The screenshot displays the homepage of the Veterans Crisis Line website. At the top, there are two columns of quick links. The left column includes 'Confidential Veterans Chat', 'Text to 838255 to Get Help NOW', 'Take a Self-Check Quiz', and 'Confidential Homeless Veterans Chat'. The right column includes 'Identify the Warning Signs', 'Concerned About a Veteran? You Can Help', 'Suicide and Crisis Resources', and 'About the Veterans Crisis Line'. Below these, there are three main sections: 'Suicide Prevention PSA' with a video player showing two men in a hallway, 'Resource Locator' with a map of the United States marked with stars, and 'Spread the Word' with a graphic of the Veterans Crisis Line logo and a hand cursor. At the bottom, a dark blue navigation bar contains five categories: 'I am' (A Veteran, Family/Friend), 'Signs of Crisis' (Identifying, Take a Self-Check Quiz), 'Resources' (Spread the Word, Videos, Homeless Resources, Additional Information, Make The Connection), 'Get Help' (Resource Locator, Veterans Live Chat, Homeless Veterans Live Chat, Contact Us), and 'About' (About the Veterans Crisis Line, FAQs, Veteran Suicide).

**Confidential Veterans Chat**

- Text to 838255 to Get Help NOW
- Take a Self-Check Quiz
- Confidential Homeless Veterans Chat

**Identify the Warning Signs**

- Concerned About a Veteran? You Can Help
- Suicide and Crisis Resources
- About the Veterans Crisis Line

**Suicide Prevention PSA** [More Videos](#)

Perspectives

0:00 / 1:03 YouTube

**Resource Locator**

If you or a Veteran you know is in crisis, find a facility near you.

**Spread the Word**

Download logos, web ads, and materials and help get the word out

**I am**

- A Veteran
- Family/Friend

**Signs of Crisis**

- Identifying
- Take a Self-Check Quiz

**Resources**

- Spread the Word
- Videos
- Homeless Resources
- Additional Information
- Make The Connection

**Get Help**

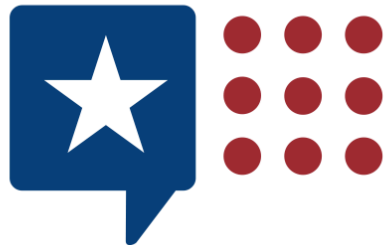
- Resource Locator
- Veterans Live Chat
- Homeless Veterans Live Chat
- Contact Us

**About**

- About the Veterans Crisis Line
- FAQs
- Veteran Suicide

# Crisis Line Materials

## Veterans Crisis Line



1-800-273-8255  
**PRESS 1**



**"I AM A VETERAN.**

Calling the confidential Veterans  
Crisis Line can help. I know."



# Resources

- Mental Health
  - VHA provides specialty inpatient and outpatient mental health services at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics. All mental health care provided by VHA supports recovery, striving to enable a person with mental health problems to live a meaningful life in their community and achieve full potential.
  - For more information on VA Mental Health Services visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov).
- Vet Centers
  - Vet Centers are VA community based centers that provide a range of counseling, outreach and referral services.
  - For more information about Vet Centers and to find the closest Vet Center to you visit [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov)

# Resources

- Make the Connection
  - MakeTheConnection.net is a one-stop resource where Veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information about physical and mental health symptoms, challenging life events, and mental health conditions. On this site, Veterans and their families and friends can learn about available resources and support. Visit [www.MakeTheConnection.net](http://www.MakeTheConnection.net) to learn more.
- PTSD
  - Each VA medical centers have PTSD specialists who provide treatment for Veterans with PTSD. For more information about PTSD and to locate the VA PTSD program nearest you visit [www.ptsd.va.gov](http://www.ptsd.va.gov).
  - PTSD Coach App The PTSD Coach application, allows phone users to manage their symptoms, links them with local sources of support and provides information on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Visit [www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp)

# Resources

- Veterans Crisis Line/Chat/Text
  - 1-800-273-8255 press 1
  - <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>
  - VETALK (838255)
- VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators
  - Each VA Medical Center has a suicide prevention coordinator to make sure Veterans receive needed counseling and services.
  - Resource locator - <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

# QUESTIONS?

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