



**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS  
**LIFELINE**

*You Are Not Alone*



**Suicide Prevention Guide for the  
Vietnamese American Community**



The **Vietnamese American Civic Association (VACA)** was founded with the mission to serve and empower Vietnamese immigrants and refugees in Boston, helping them navigate the challenges of resettlement and integration into American society. Since its establishment, VACA has provided crucial services such as language education, job training, and social services, fostering a sense of community and belonging among Vietnamese Americans. Over the years, VACA has expanded its scope to address the evolving needs of its community, including mental health support.

As the Vietnamese community continues to face unique cultural challenges—such as stigma around mental health, language barriers, and the pressures of intergenerational expectations—VACA has become a vital resource for addressing these issues. Recognizing the growing mental health crisis, VACA has developed programs focused on **suicide prevention**, offering culturally competent counseling, crisis intervention, and educational workshops. Through partnerships with local healthcare providers and mental health organizations, VACA provides a safe space for individuals and families to seek help, breaking down the cultural barriers that often prevent people from accessing mental health services.

By providing support that is sensitive to cultural values and traditions, VACA is playing a critical role in suicide prevention, promoting mental health awareness, and saving lives within the Vietnamese American community.



## ***A Note from the Executive Director of Vietnamese American Civic Association***



At VACA, we believe that every individual's life is valuable and deserves to be lived with hope and dignity. We recognize that discussing mental health and suicide can be difficult, especially within our culture, where topics of mental illness often carry deep-rooted stigma. However, it is through open conversations, compassionate support, and access to the right resources that we can make a difference.

This booklet is part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring that no one in our community feels alone in their struggles. Whether you are someone experiencing mental health challenges or a friend or family member looking for ways to support a loved one, this booklet serves as a guide to understanding, helping, and finding hope.

Together, we can create a compassionate, supportive community where individuals feel safe to express their emotions and seek help without fear of judgment. Please know that VACA is here for you, ready to provide culturally sensitive support, counseling, and resources to those in need.

With care and support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thuan Tran', written over a horizontal line.

**Thuan Tran**  
Executive Director

This publication represents the work of several national experts in suicide, mental health, corrections and correctional health care. The advice and suggestions offered here are in no way guaranteed to prevent all suicides. Some ideas may not be applicable or feasible at all facilities.



Let's Talk About  
**Suicide  
Prevention.**

**Share science.  
Share hope.**



National Institute  
of Mental Health

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[nimh.nih.gov/shareNIMH](https://nimh.nih.gov/shareNIMH)

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## *About This Booklet*

This booklet has been thoughtfully created to provide you with essential information, guidance, and resources for suicide prevention within the Vietnamese American community. It aims to:



### ***Educate***

Raise awareness about mental health, the risks of suicide, and the importance of seeking support.



### ***Guide***

Help individuals, families, and friends recognize warning signs and understand how to provide support to those who may be at risk.



### ***Connect***

Offer information about culturally sensitive services and support networks available through the Vietnamese American Civic Association (VACA) and other community resources.



## Why This Booklet is Tailored for the Vietnamese American Community

- Mental health is a vital aspect of well-being. Yet, it can often be a challenging topic to discuss, especially within the Vietnamese community, where cultural beliefs may create a stigma around seeking help.
- We understand that cultural values, language barriers, and unique life experiences shape how our community views and addresses mental health. Therefore, this booklet is designed with cultural sensitivity in mind, providing information that resonates with the experiences and needs of Vietnamese Americans.

### Focus Areas

The content covers mental health education, tips for recognizing signs of distress, self-care practices, and details about services catering to Vietnamese-speaking individuals in Boston.



# My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



## Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



## If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



## Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



## Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

For help finding treatment, visit [nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](https://nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you are in crisis, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).



# *Understanding Suicide: Breaking the Stigma*



## **1. Mental Health in the Vietnamese American Community**

Mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being, yet it often remains a complex topic to address, especially within the Vietnamese American community. Cultural values such as preserving family honor, avoiding public discussion of personal issues, and striving for academic and professional success can create pressures that negatively affect mental health. For many Vietnamese Americans, there may be additional challenges, such as:

**Language Barriers:** Difficulty accessing mental health services due to language differences, limited availability of Vietnamese-speaking healthcare providers, or a lack of culturally relevant educational materials.

**Cultural Stigma:** Mental health issues are often misunderstood and stigmatized within the community, leading to feelings of shame and isolation. Many believe that discussing mental health is a sign of weakness or that personal struggles should be kept private to avoid burdening others.

**Acculturation Stress:** The pressure to adapt to a new culture while preserving traditional values can create stress for immigrants, refugees, and their families.

This stress can result in intergenerational conflicts, identity struggles, and a sense of not fully belonging to either culture.

*It's okay to feel overwhelmed, sad, or anxious. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness; it's a step towards healing and caring for one's mental health.*

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# *Understanding Suicide: Breaking the Stigma*



## 2. Understanding Suicide: Breaking the Silence

Suicide is a severe and complex issue that can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, or background. It's essential to recognize that suicide is not a result of personal failure but often stems from mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, or trauma, social, economic, and cultural factors may compound that.

In the Vietnamese American community, suicide risk can be influenced by unique factors, including:

**Cultural Pressures:** High expectations for success, family obligations, and a focus on community reputation can create intense stress.

**Isolation:** Individuals may feel isolated due to a lack of social support or difficulty communicating their feelings, especially if they fear judgment or misunderstanding.

**Intergenerational Conflicts:** Differences in cultural values and beliefs between older and younger generations can lead to conflicts, misunderstanding, and feelings of isolation or rejection.

**Limited Access to Culturally Appropriate Services:** A lack of culturally sensitive mental health resources can prevent individuals from seeking or receiving the care they need.

*suicide is a death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die.*

*suicide attempt is defined as a nonfatal act when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life but does not die as a result of their actions. A suicide attempt may or may not result in injury.*

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# *Understanding Suicide: Breaking the Stigma*



## **3. Recognizing the Risk Factors for Suicide**

Recognizing the risk factors for suicide is the first step in prevention. While each person's situation is unique, there are common factors that may indicate an increased risk:

**Mental Health Conditions:** Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse are significant risk factors for suicide.

**Previous Suicide Attempts:** Individuals who have attempted suicide in the past are at a higher risk of attempting again.

**Family History:** A family history of suicide or mental illness can increase an individual's risk.

**Stressful Life Events:** Experiences such as job loss, financial strain, relationship problems, or academic pressure can contribute to feelings of hopelessness.

**Social Isolation:** Feeling disconnected from family, friends, or community can lead to loneliness and despair.

**Trauma or Loss:** Experiences of trauma, abuse, discrimination, or the loss of a loved one can significantly impact mental health.

*While risk factors can increase the likelihood of suicidal thoughts, they do not guarantee that someone will attempt suicide. However, understanding these factors can help identify individuals who may be struggling and need support.*

# *Understanding Suicide: Breaking the Stigma*



## **4. Cultural Considerations in Suicide Prevention**

In the Vietnamese American community, discussing mental health and suicide may be challenging due to cultural values and beliefs. It's essential to:

**Approach with Sensitivity:** Be mindful of cultural norms when discussing mental health, respecting traditional values, and avoiding judgment.

**Break the Silence:** Encourage open conversations about mental health and well-being. We can reduce stigma and help individuals feel more comfortable seeking support by discussing these topics.

**Acknowledge Strengths:** Highlight the strength and resilience within the community, such as the support of family and cultural pride, as sources of hope and healing.

## **5. Why Seeking Help Matters**

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, it's important to remember that help is available. Talking about mental health and seeking support can:

**Provide Relief:** Sharing one's feelings with a trusted friend, family member, or counselor can relieve and decrease feelings of isolation.

*Any single factor does not cause suicide and any single strategy or approach will not achieve suicide prevention.*

# *Understanding Suicide: Breaking the Stigma*



**Access Resources:** Engaging with mental health professionals and community services can offer strategies to cope with stress, manage mental health conditions, and build resilience.

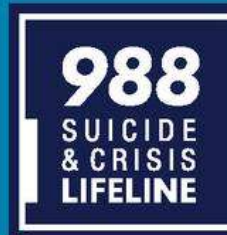
**Save Lives:** Early intervention and support can prevent a crisis from escalating to life-threatening.

## **6. A Message of Hope**

At VACA, we believe that every life is valuable. By breaking the silence around mental health and offering compassionate, culturally sensitive support, we can help individuals find hope and strength in times of difficulty. You are not alone; together, we can create a caring community where everyone feels safe to seek help when needed.

***Next Page:** Learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide and discover ways to offer support to someone in crisis.*

# Suicide **WARNING SIGNS** that may mean someone is *at risk* include:



- ▶ Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself
- ▶ Looking for a way to kill oneself
- ▶ 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 feeling isolated
- ▶ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- ▶ Displaying extreme mood swings



If you or a friend is in crisis, **call or text 988** or chat at **988Lifeline.org**



# *Recognizing the Signs of Suicide Risk*

## **1. Why Recognizing the Signs Matters**

Recognizing the signs of suicide risk can be life-saving. People who are experiencing suicidal thoughts often show changes in their behavior, mood, or communication. These signs can be subtle or direct, but identifying them early and offering support can make a significant difference. It's essential to be observant, compassionate, and ready to listen if someone may be in distress.

## **2. Common Warning Signs of Suicide**

While every person's experience is unique, there are some common warning signs that someone may be considering suicide. These include:

### **Behavioral Changes**

**Withdrawal:** The individual may withdraw from family, friends, social activities, or cultural events they once enjoyed. This could include avoiding gatherings, not returning calls or messages, or wanting to be alone.

**Changes in Routine:** Noticeable changes in sleep patterns (sleeping too much or too little), eating habits, or personal hygiene may be signs of distress.

**Risky Behaviors:** Engaging in risky behaviors, such as substance abuse, reckless driving, or sudden impulsiveness, can indicate underlying emotional turmoil.

# *Recognizing the Signs of Suicide Risk*

**Giving Away Possessions:** If a person suddenly starts giving away belongings or organizing personal affairs, it could signal they are contemplating suicide.

**Increased Use of Alcohol or Drugs:** Using substances as a coping mechanism may be a sign of deeper emotional pain or hopelessness.

## **Emotional Signs**

**Expressions of Hopelessness:** Statements like “What’s the point?”, “I feel trapped” or “Things will never get better” suggest a sense of hopelessness and a lack of belief in positive change.

**Extreme Mood Swings:** Dramatic mood swings, such as being extremely sad, agitated, or withdrawn one moment and suddenly appearing calm or at peace the next, can indicate that a decision has been made.

**Feelings of Guilt or Shame:** Expressing feelings of guilt, shame, or worthlessness may indicate that the person is struggling with their self-worth and considering self-harm.

# *Recognizing the Signs of Suicide Risk*

## Verbal Cues

**Talking About Wanting to Die:** Any mention of wanting to die, disappear, or end one's life should be taken seriously. Statements like “I wish I could just sleep and never wake up” or “Everyone would be better off without me” are direct indicators of suicidal thoughts.

**Expressing a Desire to Escape:** Phrases like “I just can’t take it anymore” or “I can’t see any way out” reflect a feeling of being overwhelmed and in crisis.

## 3. Risk Factors Specific to the Vietnamese Community

**Cultural Stigma:** The stigma around mental health may lead individuals to suppress their emotions and avoid seeking help, which can increase the risk of suicide.

**Intergenerational Conflicts:** Tensions between older and younger generations regarding cultural values, identity, and expectations can lead to feelings of isolation, shame, or hopelessness, especially for youth navigating between traditional Vietnamese culture and Western society.

**Language Barriers:** Difficulty expressing emotions in English or feeling misunderstood by non-Vietnamese speakers can intensify loneliness and despair.

# Recognizing the Signs of Suicide Risk



## 4. Immediate Warning Signs

If a person exhibits any of these immediate warning signs, seek help right away:

**Talking about killing themselves or having a specific plan.**

**Searching for ways to harm themselves**, such as looking up methods or acquiring tools (e.g., medications, weapons).

**Saying goodbye** to friends or family, or expressing final wishes.

## 5. How to Approach the Conversation

Talking about suicide can be difficult, but your willingness to listen and show support can be life-saving. Here are some ways to start the conversation:

**Use Open-Ended Questions:** Gently ask, “I’ve noticed you seem down lately. Do you want to talk about what’s going on?”

**Express Concern:** Let them know you care by saying, “I’m here for you, and I want to help. You don’t have to go through this alone.”

**Important:** If you recognize any of these signs, it is crucial to take them seriously. Offer support, show empathy, and encourage the individual to seek professional help. In cases of immediate danger, contact emergency services or the VACA Crisis Hotline for assistance.

# *Recognizing the Signs of Suicide Risk*



## **6. When to Seek Professional Help**

If the individual shows signs of being in immediate danger (e.g., they have a specific suicide plan, express intent to harm themselves, or seem at peace with the idea of dying), seek professional help right away:

Call VACA's Crisis Hotline at [Phone Number].

Contact emergency services.

Encourage them to talk to a mental health professional or join a support group.

**Next Page:** Discover how VACA can support you or your loved ones through counseling, workshops, and crisis intervention.

# 5

## Action Steps to Help Someone Having Thoughts of Suicide



### ASK

“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”



### BE THERE

Listen without judgment and acknowledge their feelings.



### HELP KEEP THEM SAFE

Reduce their access to lethal items or places.



### HELP THEM CONNECT

Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988).



### FOLLOW UP

Stay in touch to see how they're doing.



National Institute of Mental Health

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[nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](https://nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

# How to Offer Support



## 1. Start the Conversation with Care

It can be daunting to approach someone you think might be struggling with suicidal thoughts, but your concern and support can make a difference. Here's how to start the conversation:

**Choose a Safe, Private Setting:** Find a quiet place to speak openly without interruptions or distractions. Ensure the environment feels safe and comfortable.

**Be Direct Yet Gentle:** Use open and compassionate language. It's okay to ask direct questions like, "I've noticed you seem overwhelmed lately. Do you want to talk about what's been going on?"

**Express Your Concern:** Let them know you care by saying, "I'm here for you. You don't have to go through this alone." Offer a listening ear and avoid jumping to conclusions or giving unsolicited advice.

**Listen Without Judgment:** Allow them to share their feelings and thoughts. Avoid interrupting, dismissing their emotions, or making judgmental comments. Being present and listening is often one of the most powerful ways to show support.

**Remember:** Asking about suicide does not encourage suicidal thoughts; it can provide a much-needed opportunity for the person to express their feelings.

# How to Offer Support

## 2. What to Say and What Not to Say

Knowing what to say can be challenging, especially when emotions run high. Here are some do's and don'ts for this sensitive conversation:

### What to Say (Do's)

**Acknowledge Their Feelings:** “It sounds like you’re going through a tough time. I’m so sorry you’re feeling this way.”

**Express Empathy:** “I may not fully understand your feelings, but I want to help. You are important to me.”

**Encourage Professional Support:** “Would you be willing to talk to someone at VACA or a counselor who can help you through this?”

**Offer to Assist:** “I can go to a support group or help you find resources if you’d like.”

### What Not to Say (Don'ts)

**Avoid Minimizing Their Feelings:** Don't say, “It's not that bad,” or “You need to just get over it.” These phrases can make the person feel misunderstood or more isolated.

**Don't Argue or Debate:** Avoid saying, “You have so much to live for” or “Suicide is not the answer.” While well-intentioned, these comments can shut down the conversation and make the person feel more judged or invalidated.

**Don't Promise Secrecy:** If the person asks you to keep their feelings a secret, explain that their safety is your priority. Let them know you may need to reach out for additional help to support them effectively.



# *How to Offer Support*



### **3. Immediate Actions to Take if the Risk is High**

If the individual expresses an immediate plan to harm themselves, it's critical to take action right away:

**Stay With Them:** Do not leave the person alone. Stay with them to provide comfort and prevent self-harm.

**Remove Dangerous Items:** If possible, safely remove any objects that could be used for self-harm (e.g., medications, sharp objects) without escalating the situation.

**Contact Emergency Services:** Call VACA's Crisis Hotline at [Phone Number] or contact emergency services for immediate intervention.

**Involve a Trusted Person:** If the individual is willing, help them contact a family member, friend, or trusted person who can provide additional support.

*Belonging, safety, dignity, and hope can support resilience and healing for individuals and communities, and protect against suicide.*

# *How to Offer Support*



## **4. Encourage Professional Help**

When someone opens up about their struggles, gently guide them toward professional support:

**Offer to Help Find Resources:** Suggest contacting VACA’s counseling services, support groups, or another mental health professional. Offer to help them make the appointment or accompany them if they feel comfortable.

**Provide Resource Information:** Share contact information for VACA’s Suicide Prevention Program, crisis hotlines, and local mental health services. Emphasize that seeking help is a brave and positive step toward feeling better.

## **5. Long-Term Support: How to Be There Over Time**

Supporting someone in crisis is not a one-time effort. Continued support and follow-up are crucial for their recovery:

**Check-In Regularly:** Make it a point to check in with them regularly, either by phone, text, or in person. A simple “How are you feeling today?” can go a long way in showing that you care.

**Encourage Healthy Habits:** Gently encourage self-care practices like regular sleep, balanced nutrition, exercise, and engaging in activities they enjoy. Offer to join them in these activities to make it a shared experience.

**Remember:** Asking about suicide does not encourage suicidal thoughts; it can provide a much-needed opportunity for the person to express their feelings.

# *How to Offer Support*



**Stay Informed:** Educate yourself about mental health and suicide prevention to be a better source of support. Participate in VACA's mental health workshops to learn more about how you can help.

**Respect Their Journey:** Understand that recovery takes time. Be patient and provide consistent support, acknowledging both small and big steps forward.

## **6. What to Do for Your Own Well-Being**

Supporting someone who is struggling can be emotionally draining. It's important to take care of your own mental health too:

**Seek Support for Yourself:** Reach out to VACA's counseling services or support groups to talk about your feelings and experiences. Supporting someone at risk of suicide is challenging, and it's okay to seek guidance.

**Set Boundaries:** While being supportive is important, it's also crucial to set healthy boundaries to avoid burnout. Remember, you are not responsible for solving their problems alone.

**Practice Self-Care:** Engage in activities that help you relax and recharge, whether it's spending time with friends, exercising, or pursuing hobbies.

*Next Page: Learn about the various services VACA offers for suicide prevention, including counseling, workshops, and crisis support.*

# WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

## TALKING ABOUT:



- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

## FEELING:



- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

## CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:



- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

**If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.**

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**  
Call or text 988  
Chat at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

**Crisis Text Line**  
Text "HELLO" to 741741



[nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](https://nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)

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# How VACA Can Help



## 1. VACA's Culturally Sensitive Counseling Services

**Confidential Counseling:** We provide one-on-one counseling sessions tailored to the unique experiences of Vietnamese Americans. Our counselors are trained to offer culturally sensitive, non-judgmental support in both Vietnamese and English.

**Family and Group Counseling:** Understanding the importance of family in Vietnamese culture, VACA also offers family counseling to address intergenerational conflicts, communication issues, and collective stress. Group sessions are available to create a safe space for shared experiences and mutual support.

**Appointment Process:** To schedule a counseling session, please call our confidential hotline at [Phone Number]. Our staff will work with you to find a convenient time.

## 2. Crisis Intervention Services

**24/7 Crisis Hotline:** Our crisis hotline is available 24/7 for those in immediate need of support. If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis or contemplating suicide, call us anytime at [Phone Number].

**Immediate Response:** Our trained staff will listen, provide immediate support, and, if necessary, connect you with emergency services. We prioritize confidentiality, compassion, and cultural understanding in every conversation.

# *How VACA Can Help*



## 3. Educational Workshops and Support Groups

**Suicide Prevention Workshops:** We host regular workshops to educate the community about mental health, suicide prevention, and how to support those in need. These workshops are conducted in Vietnamese and English to ensure accessibility for all community members.

**Support Groups:** Joining a support group can be a valuable way to connect with others who are experiencing similar challenges. Our groups cover topics such as grief, depression, cultural adjustment, and family dynamics. These sessions are led by experienced facilitators in a safe, welcoming environment.

## 4. Referrals to Local Resources

**Connecting to Healthcare Providers:** We work with a network of Vietnamese-speaking healthcare providers, mental health specialists, and social services in the Boston area. If additional support is needed, we will refer you to trusted professionals who understand your cultural background.

**Assistance with Healthcare Access:** Our staff can help you navigate the healthcare system, apply for insurance, and connect with community programs that provide financial and medical support.

# *How VACA Can Help*



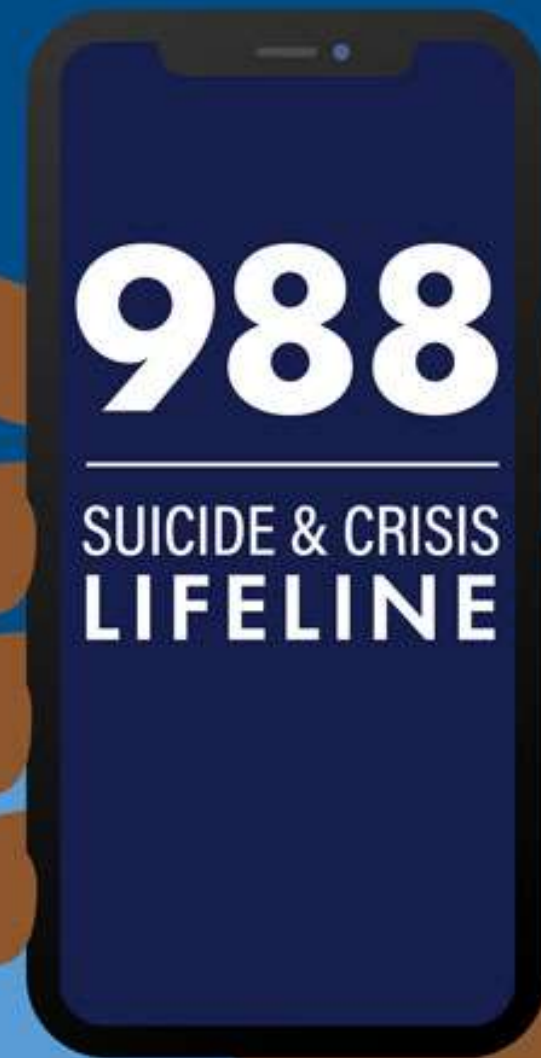
## 5. How to Access Our Services

**Contact Us:** To access VACA’s support services, call our main office at [Phone Number] or visit our website at [Website URL].

**Walk-In Hours:** Our office is open Monday to Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM for walk-in consultations. No appointment is necessary for initial support, and all conversations are confidential.

*Next Page: Explore additional community and national resources available for mental health support and crisis intervention.*

**SAVE THE NUMBER  
SAVE A LIFE  
CALL OR TEXT 988**



Add this number to your phone now.  
It could save a life later.



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of Mental Health

[nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention](https://nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention)



# ***Additional Resources***



## **1. National Crisis Hotlines**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Provides free, 24/7 support for people in distress, as well as prevention and crisis resources.

- **Phone:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Online Chat:** <https://988lifeline.org/>

**Crisis Text Line:** A confidential text-based support service available 24/7. Text "HELLO" to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

**Veterans Crisis Line:** Offers support for veterans experiencing mental health crises.

- **Phone:** 1-800-273-8255, Press 1

## **2. Local Resources in the Boston Area**

**Boston Asian Youth Essential Services (YES):** Provides mental health counseling, family support services, and youth development programs.

- **Contact:** (617) 482-4243

**Tip:** Save these numbers on your phone and share them with family members and friends to ensure help is always just a call or text away.

# *Additional Resources*



3. **Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW):** Promotes mental wellness through educational programs, cultural events, and community building activities.

- **Contact:** <https://www.aarw.org/>

## 4. **Accessing Multilingual Support**

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline:** Provides support and information in multiple languages, including Vietnamese.

- **Phone:** 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
- **Hours:** Monday to Friday, 10 AM - 6 PM EST

5. **Samaritans of Boston:** A confidential hotline providing emotional support. Volunteers are trained to offer non-judgmental listening in times of crisis.

- **Phone:** (617) 536-2460
- <https://samaritanshope.org/>

# *Addressing Mental Health in Our Culture*



## 1. Cultural Values and Mental Health

**Family and Community:** In Vietnamese culture, family and community are central to identity and support. Mental health challenges can affect not just the individual, but also the family dynamic.

**Honor and Reputation:** Concerns about family honor and societal reputation can make it difficult to openly discuss mental health struggles. It's important to understand that mental health is a common part of overall well-being, and seeking help does not diminish a person's worth.

## 2. Breaking the Stigma

**Starting Conversations:** Begin with discussions about stress and self-care as a way to introduce mental health topics gently. Understanding and addressing mental health openly can help break down cultural barriers and reduce stigma.

**Embracing Support:** Remind yourself and your loved ones that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Mental health struggles are human experiences, and addressing them is key to maintaining a healthy, happy community.

## 3. Respecting Traditions While Seeking Help

**Culturally Competent Care:** VACA's counseling services are tailored to honor Vietnamese traditions while providing mental health support. Our counselors understand the cultural context and will work with individuals and families to find solutions that respect cultural values.

# Tips for Talking With a Health Care Provider About Your Mental Health



**Talk to a primary care provider**



**Prepare ahead of your visit**



**Consider bringing a friend or relative**



**Be honest**



**Ask questions**



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[nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips](https://nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips)

# Selfcare for Mental Health



## 1. Daily Practices for Emotional Health

**Practice Mindfulness:** Spend a few minutes each day in quiet reflection, focusing on your breathing or surroundings. Mindfulness can reduce stress and help you feel more centered.

**Maintain Healthy Routines:** Regular sleep, balanced nutrition, and daily exercise are crucial for maintaining mental and physical health.

**Set Aside 'Me Time':** Engage in activities that you enjoy, such as reading, cooking, gardening, or listening to music. Taking time for yourself can improve your mood and boost resilience.

## 2. Connecting with Loved Ones

**Reach Out:** Stay connected with family and friends, even if it's just a phone call or a brief visit. Sharing your thoughts and feelings can strengthen your support network and reduce feelings of isolation.

**Join Community Activities:** Participate in cultural events, support groups, or social gatherings hosted by VACA to connect with others who share your experiences.

# *Selfcare for Mental Health*

## **3. Managing Stress and Negative Thoughts**

**Journal Your Feelings:** Writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you process emotions and gain perspective.

**Use Positive Affirmations:** Remind yourself of your strengths, accomplishments, and the things you are grateful for. Practicing gratitude can improve your outlook and mental well-being.

## **4. When to Seek Help**

If you are feeling overwhelmed, sad, anxious, or hopeless for an extended period, it may be time to seek professional support. Remember, seeking help is a brave and positive step toward healing.

# Anything you need to talk about?



**BE THE STRONG  
UNSILENT TYPE**

## Anything you need to talk about?

*Do you have someone in your life that you can have a honest conversation about your feelings?*

If you don't have someone you feel comfortable talking to;  
Or if they just don't understand what you are going through;  
You may need someone who is trained to listen and help navigate your emotions, call 833-773-2445.

*Or save this card to help someone else navigate their feelings/thoughts.*





**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS  
**LIFELINE**

