Thriving or Barely Surviving?
How to Help Yourself in Crisis
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We’re struggling through the second year of COVID-19 and it might be a good time to look in the mirror and ask yourself truthfully, how am I really doing? While some of us think we have adapted to pandemic life, it’s helpful to have some guidelines to review that make us self reflect and answer the tough questions.

- Am I sleeping OK?
- Am I feeling overwhelmed and irritated?
- Am I feeling exhausted?
- Am I avoiding co-workers, family and friends?
- Am I drinking too much right now?
- Are things so bad I’m thinking of ending my own life?

The answers may surprise you. Because the truth is, many of us are not thriving. Many of us are barely surviving, struggling, and feeling like we are in total crisis. And once we are in crisis mode, it might not take long to experience suicidal thoughts.

National Suicide Prevention Week is September 9-11. Nearly 48,000 people died by suicide in 2019 and current pandemic suicide data suggests that while the rate has decreased in white populations, it has nearly doubled among the black population. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people under age 34. Do not take thoughts of suicide lightly. Instead, we should check in with ourselves and our loved ones to ask the tough questions, and understand how to handle the answers. Be aware that it’s normal for us to minimize our symptoms and hide how we really feel.

Take the Next Steps
Most people don’t want to kill themselves, they just want to feel better. Remind yourself that most people DO get better after reaching out for help. For immediate telephonic support with a counselor, the EAP is available 24/7 at 800-777-4114. We can also help you find a face to face counselor, or make other recommendations as needed. If you don’t feel that you can keep yourself safe, it’s time to head to the emergency room. Call someone you trust to take you, or call 911 and emergency services will pick you up. The bottom line is that you don’t have to go through this alone. Get someone involved and seek the guidance of professionals. You can get through this!
Thriving
“I got this.”
- Calm and steady with minor mood fluctuations
- Able to take things in stride
- Consistent performance
- Able to take feedback and to adjust to changes of plans
- Able to focus
- Able to communicate effectively
- Normal sleep patterns and appetite

Surviving
“Something isn’t right.”
- Nervousness, sadness, increased mood fluctuations
- Inconsistent performance
- More easily overwhelmed or irritated
- Increased need for control and difficulty adjusting to changes
- Trouble sleeping or eating
- Activities and relationships you used to enjoy seem less interesting or even stressful
- Muscle tension, low energy, headaches

Struggling
“I can’t keep this up.”
- Persistent fear, panic, anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness
- Exhaustion
- Poor performance and difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Avoiding interaction with coworkers, family, and friends
- Fatigue, aches and pains
- Restless, disturbed sleep
- Self-medicating with substances, food, or other numbing activities

In Crisis
“I can’t survive this.”
- Disabling distress and loss of function
- Panic attacks
- Nightmares or flashbacks
- Unable to fall or stay asleep
- Intrusive thoughts
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Easily enraged or aggressive
- Careless mistakes and inability to focus
- Feeling numb, lost, or out of control
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Dependence on substances, food, or other numbing activities to cope