Suicide Prevention for Veterans, Service Members, Families and Communities

VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP)

Suicide Prevention Program
Presented by

Lillie Mells
Education & Training Program Coordinator

Shurhonda Love
Community Relations Specialist, Partnerships & Community Relations

VA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP)
Objectives

By participating in this training, you will:

• Learn steps of Suicide Prevention Information (VA S.A.V.E.)
• Learn about Military Culture
• Learn how to access Veteran resources
Steps of Suicide Prevention
Signs of Suicidal Thinking

Learn to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends
Signs of Suicidal Thinking

The presence of any of the following signs requires immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
- Looking for ways to die
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive or risk-taking behavior, especially when it involves alcohol, drugs, or weapons
Asking the Question

Know how to ask
the most important question of all...
“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
Validate the Veteran’s Experience

• Talk openly about suicide. Be willing to listen and allow the Veteran to express his or her feelings.
• Recognize that the situation is serious.
• Do not pass judgment.
• Reassure the Veteran that help is available.
Encourage Treatment and Expedite Getting Help

• What should I do if I think someone is suicidal?
  • Don’t keep the Veteran’s suicidal behavior a secret.
  • Do not leave him or her alone.
  • Try to get the person to seek immediate help from his or her doctor or the nearest hospital emergency room.
  • Call 911.

• Reassure the Veteran that help is available.
• Call the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) at 988 then press 1
When Talking with a Veteran at Risk for Suicide

- Remain calm.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Act with confidence.
- Do not argue.
- Use open body language.
- Limit questions — let the Veteran do the talking.
- Use supportive, encouraging comments.
- Be honest — let the Veteran know that there are no quick solutions, but help is available.
What to Do if a Veteran Expresses Suicidal Ideation During a Phone Call

• Keep the caller on the line (do not hang up or transfer).
• Remain calm.
• Obtain identifying information on the caller (name, phone number, and current location).
• Conference call to Veterans Crisis Line (don’t hang up until VCL responder has the call).
• Enlist co-workers for assistance via Instant Messaging in Teams.
• If caller disconnects, call back immediately.

If no answer, dial 911 and VCL **Dial 988 then Press 1**
Military Courtesy
Military Courtesy

Common statements that can be aggravating to Veterans

• Everyone in the service has PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder)

• Everyone in the military is a soldier

• Did you kill someone

• You don’t look like a Veteran

• Do you have MST (Military Sexual Trauma)

• You are not a Veteran if you did not go to combat

• Treat them delicately, or they might snap

• I'm glad you made it back in one piece

• If you didn’t go to combat your service isn't important
Understanding Military Terms & Definitions

• How do you define Veteran
• What does MOS mean
• Explain each status: Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard
• What does AWOL mean
• Explain the terms: Deployed/Deployment/Tour/OCONUS-CONUS, TDY
• What does MIA, KIA, stands for
• What does watch your Six mean
• AAFES, Class Six, Shoppette, Commissary, MWR
• Latrine, Head

http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/903494031
What Are the Branches Of Service

- Army: Soldiers
- Air Force: Airman
- Navy: Sailor
- Marine Corps: Marine
- Coast Guard: Coast Guardian
- Space Force: Guardian

Image: U.S. Dept of Veterans Affairs
Basic Training & Advance Individual Training

Basic Combat Training, the instilling Values (BCT)

• Lasting for 10 wks.
• Consisting of In-processing at the Reception Station where vaccination, record building, issue of equipment, ID tags & Card, Medical examination happens.
• 3 phases Red-White-Blue

Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

• Training focused on the individual Military Occupational Specialization (MOS) Length of time varies by the occupation.
• First 7 weeks dedicated to becoming a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician
• 8 weeks learning to treat injuries commonly seen in war
• Final 2 weeks, Soldier Medic Training Site, Combat environment that induces stress like an actual combat scenario.
Understanding Rank

- Junior Enlisted E1-E4
- Non-Commissioned Officer E5-E9
- Commissioned Officer 01-010
- Warrant Officer W01-CW5

https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Insignia/
Links to the Military Branches
Resources
Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365

Be prepared. Save the number. Dial 988 then Press 1

• Veterans
• Service members
• Family members
• Friends
The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource available to any Veteran, even if they are not enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA. Care does not end when the conversation is over. The Veterans Crisis Line can connect Veterans to their local suicide prevention coordinators, who will follow up and coordinate care.

Founded the National Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline
Launched online chat
Introduced Veterans Crisis Line branding
Launched text 838255
Increased number of responders by 50%
Opened second and third call centers; increased staff
Started Caring Letters program
Launched Peer Support Outreach Center
Launched Dial 988 then Press 1


More than 6.2 million calls
More than 253,000 texts
More than 739,000 chats
More than 1.1 million referrals to VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

More than 233,000 dispatches of emergency services

https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/media/0ctixhhy/veterans-crisis-line-timeline-graphic.pdf
Are you looking for clinical care or counseling? Assistance with benefits? No matter what you’re experiencing, we’re here to connect you with resources and support systems to help.

Local Resources (veteranscrisisline.net)
### Mental Health Mobile Apps

#### Mobile Apps - PTSD: National Center for PTSD

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Help</th>
<th>PTSD Coach</th>
<th>PTSD Family Coach</th>
<th>Beyond MST</th>
<th>Mindfulness Coach</th>
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<td>These apps provide support and guidance in living with PTSD.</td>
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<th>Treatment Companions</th>
<th>CPT Coach</th>
<th>PE Coach</th>
<th>CBT-i Coach</th>
<th>ACT Coach</th>
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<td>These apps offer additional help for PTSD treatments.</td>
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<th>Related</th>
<th>COVID Coach</th>
<th>Couples Coach</th>
<th>Insomnia Coach</th>
<th>StayQuit Coach</th>
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<td>These apps help with related issues affecting people with PTSD.</td>
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Don't Wait. Reach out. #VetsReachOut

No mission should be fought alone.

Life has its challenges. You don’t have to solve them alone. That’s true whether it’s an everyday struggle, or something more complicated.

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

You’re not alone. You’ve got this. Don’t wait. Reach out.

Watch: Boil :60 | Veterans Crisis Prevention - YouTube
Coaching into Care

Program for families and loved ones of Veterans, helping them encourage the Veteran in their lives to seek support.

CALL 888-823-7458

https://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/
Practice safe storage of firearms, medications and other lethal means

- Visit www.keepitsecure.net to learn more about the importance of firearm and other lethal means safety.
- Nearly half of all Veterans own a firearm, and most Veteran firearm owners are dedicated to firearm safety.
- Firearm injuries in the home can be prevented by making sure firearms are unloaded, locked, and secured when not in use, with ammunition stored in a separate location.
- There are several effective ways to safely secure firearms. Learn more and find the option that works best for you and your family from the National Shooting Sports Foundation at www.nssf.org/safety
VA S.A.V.E. Training

This free suicide prevention training video is less than 25 minutes long and available to everyone, 24/7. It's offered in collaboration with the PsychArmor Institute.

Available online for free: https://psycharmor.org/courses/s-a-v-e/
Questions?