VETERAN SUICIDE RISK AND PREVENTION

Approximately 45,000 American adults commit suicide, and 18% of victims are Veterans.

MILITARY SERVICE IS A LIFELONG EXPERIENCE EVEN WHEN HOME

If you recognize the warning signs of suicidal ideation or attempts, your loved one may be at risk of committing suicide.

Learn how to safely intervene and support those at risk.
What should you know about Veteran Suicide?

Understanding the scope of suicide among veterans and recognizing risk factors to administer immediate clinical intervention is crucial to supporting veterans suffering with experience-related mental health challenges.

18% of Suicides in the US annually are committed by Veterans

69% of the suicides are completed using firearms. This is a higher percentage than the average usage of a firearm for a suicide attempt.

What are Veteran specific risk factors of suicide?

Suicide Ideation and attempts are at the end of a long road of mental health challenges and traumatic experiences. Recognizing contributing factors can help you intervene when a loved one is on at-risk.

Frequent Deployments
Repeatedly uprooting and serving can take its toll, if your loved on has been deployed multiple times and in close succession this could put them at-risk of mental health illness.

Exposure to Extreme Stress
Service is a high-stress experience, whether or not you are in a combat zone, including bootcamps/trainings. The responsibilities and pressure are extreme and continuous.

Physical and Sexual Assault During Service
Servicemen and women also experience traumatic assault during deployment which could have served as a result.

Length of Deployments
The longer a veteran is in a combat-zone or a high stress environment, they are at higher risk of traumatic experiences and contracting stress-related conditions.

Service-Related Injury
After suffering injury during deployment, veterans are at risk of enduring mental health challenges. This includes both mental and physical injury.

Validate Veteran's Experiences

Talk openly about suicide.
Be willing to listen and allow the Veteran to express their feelings.
Recognize that the situation is serious
Do not pass judgement
Reassure that help is available
**What are the warning signs of Veteran Suicide?**

**Common Signs**
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Anxiety, Agitation, sleeplessness or mood swings
- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Rage or Anger
- Engaging in risky behaviors or activities without thinking
- Increasing Alcohol or Drug Abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**High-Alert Signs**
- The following signs require immediate attention:
  - Thinking about hurting or killing themselves
  - Looking for ways to die (behavior)
  - Talking about death, dying, or suicide (intent)
  - Self-destructive or risk-taking behavior, especially when it involves alcohol, drugs or weapons

**What do you do if you think someone is suicidal?**

**Service Members transitioning into Veteran Status are at HIGHEST risk of suicide compared to current service members and current Veterans.**

- **S** Signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized
- **A** Ask the most important question of all
- **V** Validate the Veteran’s experience
- **E** Encourage treatment and Expedite getting help

**What do you do if you think someone is suicidal?**

- Don’t Keep the Veteran’s Suicidal Behavior a Secret
  - Do not leave them alone
- Access Risk Surrounding Both You and the Veteran
- Try to Get the Person to Seek Immediate Help
  - **Call 911 – Every Second Counts.**
  - Reassure the Veteran that help is available
- **Emergency Call Relay Center:** (267)-908-6605
  - Accessible in all counties around the state and country
For Immediate Access to Routine or Crisis Services
Georgia Crisis & Access Line
1-800-715-4225
mygcal.com

If You or a Loved One Need Someone to Talk To:
Veteran Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255
Press 1

This information was provided by the National Institute of Mental Health. For additional information, please visit www.nimh.gov