

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month!

Suicide risk is of particular concern among military Veterans and service members and is increased by any history of TBI and/or PTSD.

According to the VA's 2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Report in 2021:

- Suicide was the 13th leading cause of death for Veterans overall and the 2nd leading cause of death among Veterans under the age of 45.
- An average of 17.5 Veterans died from suicide each day
- The age-adjusted suicide rate of Veteran men was 43.4% greater than that of non-Veteran US adult males and the age-adjusted suicide rate of Veteran women was 166.1% higher than that of non-Veteran US adult women.

Take 5 to Save Lives! is a public awareness campaign run by the National Council for Suicide Prevention. The goal of the campaign is to encourage everyone to take five action steps that focus on preventing the tragedy of suicide.

Check out take5tosavelives.org to learn more. The five steps are:

1. **LEARN** the warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors of suicide.
2. **KNOW** how to help yourself and others who may be struggling.
3. **DO** raise awareness, advocate for change, volunteer, and practice self-care
1. **TALK** about suicide, dispel myths, and reduce stigma.
2. **SHARE** Take 5 to Save Lives with others.

There are many useful tools on their website that can be used to share information about suicide awareness and prevention.

VETERANS CRISIS LINE

In 2020, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act authorized 988 as the new three digit number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. All telephone providers had to activate the number no later than July 16, 2022. The old, longer number is still available but 988 is so much easier to remember and share!!!



A Veteran living overseas may contact the Veterans Crisis Line via the chat modality at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat. If the Veteran prefers a phone call, they can request this within the chat venue. A Veterans Crisis Line responder will call them at the number they provide at no charge to the Veteran.

For active-duty personnel (VeteransCrisisLine.net/ActiveDuty.aspx), the Veterans Crisis Line is available:

- In Europe, call [00800 1273 8255](tel:0080012738255) or DSN 118.
- In Korea, call [080-855-5118](tel:080-855-5118) or DSN 118.
- In Afghanistan, call [00 1 800 273 8255](tel:0018002738255) or DSN 111.
- In the Philippines, call #MYVA or [02-8550-3888](tel:02-8550-3888) and press 7.

HOW ELSE CAN WE RAISE AWARENESS?

- The blue teardrop is the VFW Auxiliary's symbol to give Veteran and Military Suicide the attention it deserves. Wear the teardrop to open a conversation; when asked what the teardrop is, share that it's to create awareness for veteran and military suicide.
- You can download a Teardrop template from MALTA

