

Center for Women Veterans Roundtable Nevada



Agenda

1:05pm Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd

Center for Women Veterans

1:20pm Beth Hemmila

State and VA Benefits

1:30pm Shurhonda Love & Aimee Johnson

Suicide Prevention

1:40pm Additional Q &A

Knowledge Experts

- Center for Women Veterans Staff
- VA Health Administration Staff
- Veterans Service Officers
- NDVS Staff

VA Healthcare

Janet R. Porter, Deputy Field Director

Women's Health Veterans Health Administration

Janet.Porter2@va.gov

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System (Reno)

Women Veterans Program Manager

Shana Schenck, 775-785-7225

VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System (Las Vegas)

Women's Health Center 702-791-9176

VA Salt Lake City Healthcare System (Utah)

Women's Clinic, 801-582-1565 Ext. 2685

Welcome



Fred Wagar
Deputy Director of Operations
Nevada Department of
Veterans Services

Center for Women Veterans



Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd
Executive Director
Center for Women Veterans

Center for Women Veterans



**Briefing presented to
National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators
Annual Training**

**Presented By Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd, Executive Director
Center for Women Veterans**



PUBLIC LAW 103-446

Center for Women Veterans established November 2, 1994 by Congress

Our Mission:

- **Monitor** and **coordinate** administration of health care, benefits, services and programs for Women Veterans.
- Serve as an **advocate** for **cultural transformation** in recognizing the service and contributions of women Veterans
- **Raise awareness** of the responsibility to treat women Veterans with dignity and respect.

Our Vision:

Modernize the Center to become the portal for all things women Veterans and extend **outreach** to all women Veterans, reaching women Veterans nationally and internationally, ensuring **equity** in access, eligibility, care, and service delivery.



CWV Strategic Approach and Operating Plan

CWV's Strategic Approach and Operating Plan identifies five critical areas in accordance with Public Law 103-446:

1. Outreach
2. Internal and External Advocacy
3. Research
4. Performance Management and Compliance
5. SECVA

Modernization and **Alignment** will ensure enterprise-wide performance management and compliance to ensure women Veterans receive equitable services and benefits.

Center for Women Veterans Executive Director
Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd gives a
November – Veterans Month

Veterans Month
CWV Women Veterans Mosaic



CWV 2019-2020 Ongoing and New Initiatives

1. #BringWomenVeteransHome2VA

- A. CWV and NASWVC Outreach Initiative
- B. I Am NOT INVISIBLE Campaign 2.0
- C. Monthly Partners Breakfast 2.0
- D. Women Veteran Trailblazers Initiative 2.0
- E. American Indian/Alaska Native Round Tables Initiative
- F. CWV and WIMSA Partnership Outreach Initiative
- G. CWV / OSDBU / Commerce Partnership Initiative (in development)
- H. Naming of VA Spaces After Women Veterans Initiative
- I. GoLive Webinar Initiative
- J. Women Veterans License Plate Program
- K. Women Veteran Book Authors Initiative (in development)



2. Women Veterans Summit (Postponed until 2021)

Special thanks to Veteran Canteen Service for their sponsorship of our initiatives



Choose **VA**

Center for Women Veterans

Contact Us

- 1) Phone: **1-855-VA-WOMEN** or 1-855-829-6636
- 2) Email: **00w@VA.Gov**
- 3) Find us online at **www.va.gov/womenvet**
- 4) Facebook and Twitter using **@VAWomenVets**
- 5) Women Veterans Call Center
- 6) Crisis Hotline:



Portal for All Things Women Veterans



Choose  VA

Center for Women Veterans

Other VA Resources

- Call 202-461-6193
- Other Resources from www.va.gov
- eBenefits: (<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal>)
- Caregiver Support: (<http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>)
- Make the Connection: (<http://maketheconnection.net/>)
- Homeless Veterans (<http://www.va.gov/homeless/index.asp>)
- Burials and Memorials: (<http://www.cem.va.gov>)
- MyHealthEVet: (<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/>)
- Office of Survivors Assistance: www.va.gov/survivors/
- Center for Minority Veterans (<https://www.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>)



How to Contact the Center

CWV Staff

- Executive Director, Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd
- Deputy Director, Elizabeth Estabrooks
- Program Analyst, Shannon Middleton
- Communications Manager, Missina Schallus
- International & National Outreach Manager, Ana Claudio
- Outreach Program Manager, Michelle Terry

Address:

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Center for Women Veterans (00W)
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420**

Phone: 202-461-6193

Fax: 202-273-7092



Website: www.va.gov/womenvet

Email: 00W@mail.va.gov

Social Media: @VAWomenVets on Facebook and Twitter
#BringWomenVeteransHome2VA

State and VA Benefits

Beth Hemmila - Reno

Women Veterans Service Officer

hemmilab@veterans.nv.gov

Veterans Service Officers

Nevada Department of Veterans Services

702-830-2000

Brandi Matheny – Pahrump

Kacie Ortiz – Elko

Beth Hemmila - Reno

Nation's Finest

775-284-8387

Starlyn Lara - Reno



Graduation Day

- Create a plan
- Communicate your plan

[Survivor Benefits Guide](#)

[Caregivers & Survivors Brochure](#)

FOR CAREGIVERS

As a caregiver, you play an important role in caring for a veteran at home or in the community. To learn about benefit information, please contact a Veterans Service Officer.

VA PROGRAMS

The VA has two programs for caregivers: General Caregiver Support Services for eligible veterans of all eras, and the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers for eligible post 9/11 veterans and veterans who served prior to May 7th, 1975 (eligibility to be expanded soon to all veterans as a result of the Mission Act of 2018).

GENERAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

Provides information/referral to in-home or support services, support groups and other resources. It also provides education and training, peer support, mental health counseling and programs that focus on caregiver self-care.

COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS PROGRAM

Provides monthly stipend, travel payments, training, education, mental health services, respite care and more. Under the VA MISSION Act, this program Expanded to veterans who served before May 7, 1975 and Post 9/11 and will open to veterans of all war eras in 2022.

VA Caregiver Support (855) 260-3274

VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System
Reno: (775) 326-5775

VA Southern Nevada Health Care System
Las Vegas: (702) 791-9000 ext. 13051

VA Salt Lake City Health Care System
Salt Lake City: 801-582-1565 Ext. 1520



CAREGIVER RESOURCE LIST

NEVADA RESOURCES

- Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Services Division (775) 687-4210
Senior Care Centers listed by county:
adssd.nv.gov/Resources/NevadaSeniorCenters/
- Access To Health Care Network (877) 861-1893 (Counties: Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Mineral, Pershing, Storey, Washoe and White Pine)
- Carson City Senior Center (775) 883-0703
- Jewish Family Service Agency (702) 933-1191 (Clark County)
- Lyon County Human Services (775) 577-5009
- Nevada Care Connection (877) 861-1893
- Nevada Lifespan Respite Care Coalition (NLRC) (725) 999-2245
- Nevada Senior Services (844) 850-5113 (Counties: Clark, Esmeralda, Lincoln and Nye) www.nevadaseniorservices.org

PROGRAMS FOR MILITARY CAREGIVERS

- Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Hidden Heroes (202) 249-7170
- Military and Veteran Caregiver Network, Red Cross (info.mvcn@redcross.org)
- Military One Source (800) 342-9647
- Operation Family Caregiver (229) 928-1234

OTHER RESOURCES

- AARP Family Caregiving (877) 333-5885; Spanish: (888) 971-2013
- Caregiver Action Network (855) 227-3640
- Eldercare Locator (800) 677-1116
- Family Caregiver Alliance (800) 445-8106
- National Alliance for Caregiving (202) 918-1013
- National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (202) 872-0888
- National Family Caregiver Support Program, Administration for Community Living (ACL), (202) 401-4634
- Rosalyn Carter Institute for Caregiving (229) 928-1234

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

Our Veterans Service Officer (VSO) can assist you with the following:

- 1 Eligibility
- 2 Support
- 3 Training
- 4 Aid & Attendance
(Additional financial help)
- 5 Assisted Living
- 6 Skilled Nursing Care
- 7 Hospice/Palliative Care
- 8 Adult Medical Day Care

CONTACT A VSO

- Las Vegas (702) 224-6025
- Reno (775) 321-4880
- Pahump (775) 751-6372
- Carson City (775) 300-6796
- Elko (775) 777-1000
- Fallon (775) 428-1177



www.veterans.nv.gov



CAREGIVERS & SURVIVORS GUIDE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Estate Planning

Office of Military Legal Assistance
Wills and Powers of Attorney

Nevada State Bar Referral Service
702-382-0504

Nevada Lockbox
Advance Directive Registry



Burial Benefits

Northern Nevada Veterans

Memorial Cemetery

775-575-4441

Southern Nevada Veterans

Memorial Cemetery

702-486-5920



VA Survivor Benefits

- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Survivors Pension
- VA Guaranteed Home Loan
- Education
- Healthcare Coverage (CHAMPVA)

Important Paperwork

- Military Discharge Documents
- Marriage Certificates
- Divorce Decrees
- Death Certificate
- VA Award Letter (helpful)



Other Resources

[Women Veterans Web Page](#)

[Online Women Veterans Survey](#)

[Women Veterans Events](#)

[Connect on Social Media](#)

[Signup for eNewsletter](#)

Get Involved

Women Veterans Advisory Committee

Next Meeting: **December 9 at 1pm**

[Agenda and Zoom link](#)

Nevada Veterans Advocate Program



Thank you for your service!

Suicide Prevention

Shurhonda Love

Community Relations Specialist

Partnerships Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Aimee Johnson

Program Analyst

VHA Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Preventing Suicide Through Lethal Means Safety

Nevada Department of Veterans Affairs & VA Center for Women Veterans Virtual Roundtable

December 1, 2020

Aimee Johnson, LCSW, Program Analyst, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP)

Shurhonda Love, Community Relations Specialist, OMHSP

Brief Review of Lethal Means Safety

Key Data Points

2017 Key Data Points



The rate of suicide was

2.2 *times higher*
among female Veterans

compared with non-Veteran adult women.

* after accounting for differences in age



The rate of suicide was

1.3 *times higher*
among male Veterans

compared with non-Veteran adult men.

* after accounting for differences in age



Male Veterans ages

18–34

experienced the **highest rates** of suicide.



Male Veterans ages

55 and older

experienced the **highest count** of suicide.

69% *of all Veteran suicide deaths resulted from a firearm injury.*

Method of Suicide Among Veteran and Non-Veteran Adults Who Died by Suicide (2017)

Method	Percentage of Non-Veteran Adult Suicide Deaths	Percentage of Veteran Suicide Deaths	Percentage of Male Non-Veteran Adult Suicide Deaths	Percentage of Male Veteran Suicide Deaths	Percentage of Female Non-Veteran Adult Suicide Deaths	Percentage of Female Veteran Suicide Deaths
Firearm	48.1%	69.4%	53.5%	70.7%	31.3%	43.2%
Poisoning	14.9%	9.9%	9.2%	8.9%	32.3%	28.7%
Suffocation	28.7%	15.8%	29.3%	15.6%	26.6%	19.9%
Other	8.4%	5.0%	7.9%	4.8%	9.8%	8.1%

In 2017, 69.4% of Veteran suicide deaths were due to a self-inflicted firearm injury.

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk

- Prior suicide attempt
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Access to lethal means
- Recent loss
- Legal or financial challenges
- Relationship issues
- Unemployment
- Homelessness

Protective

- Access to mental health care
- Sense of connectedness
- Problem-solving skills
- Sense of spirituality
- Mission or purpose
- Physical health
- Employment
- Social and emotional well-being



Goal: Minimize risk factors and boost protective factors

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact

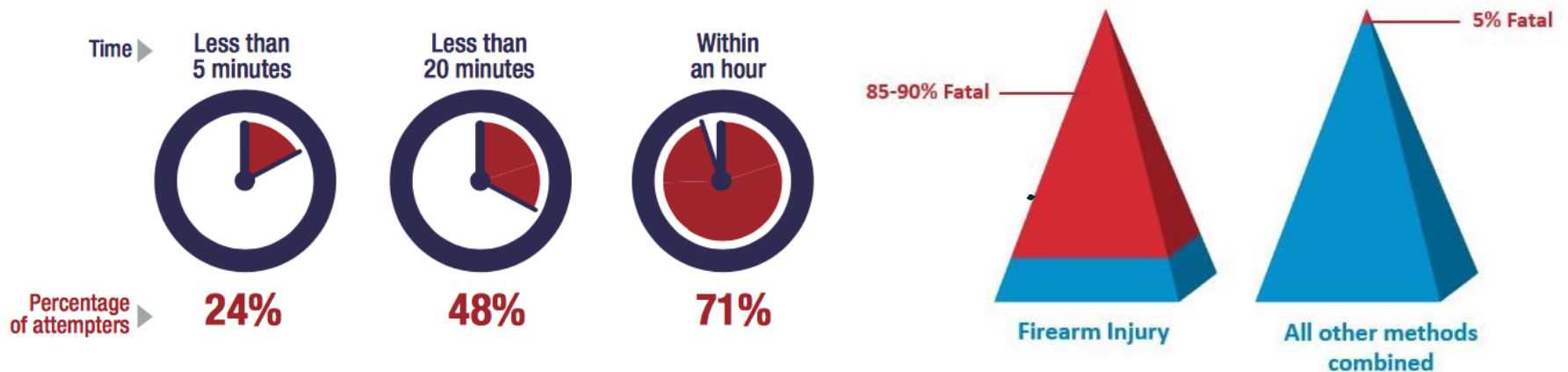
- The pandemic and its consequences are associated with job losses among Veterans.
 - In July 2020, the veteran unemployment rate was 8.0%, down from 11.8% in April 2020; non-veteran unemployment rate was 10.3% in July.
 - Women Veteran unemployment rate was 10.3%, up from 5% in July 2019 (11.3% for non-veteran women)
 - Male Veteran unemployment rate was 7.5%, compared to 3.2% in July 2019 (9.7% for non-veteran men)
- Another consequence is increased access to lethal means and behaviors that may increase risk for suicide or other adverse consequences.
 - Record numbers firearm background checks continue from March thru July 2020, including 8 of the top 10 weeks since recording began in Nov 1998.
 - Firearm sales continue to rise, with almost 3 million more firearms have sold since March 2020 compared to these months in previous years, with half of these sales in June 2020.
 - June 2020 recorded the highest firearm sales in June (since beginning data collection in 1998), with 3.9 million firearms sold.
 - Total alcohol sales were 26% higher from March through June 20, 2020 compared to 3.4% for the 52 weeks ending Feb 29, 2020.

Suicide Surveillance in the COVID-19 Era: Initial Findings

- Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on Veteran suicide requires cause-of-death data from national death records for 2020 (available in 2022).
- VHA facility reports provide a timely, though incomplete, source of information.
 - Current findings do not indicate an increase in facility-reported Veteran suicides since mid-March 2020.
 - This may be due to delayed notification and reduced information flow.
- Assessment of new indications of suicide attempts has identified fewer suicide attempts per week since mid-March 2020.
- The number of documented VHA On-Campus suicide attempts was lower in April and May than in earlier months.

Most Suicidal Crises are Brief

Time from Decision to Action < 1 hour



Source: Simon, T.R., Swann, A.C., Powell, K.E., Potter, L.B., Kresnow, M., and O'Carroll, P.W. Characteristics of Impulsive Suicide Attempts and Attempters. SLTB. 2001; 32(supp):49-59.

Source: CDC WISQARS and US Dept. of Veterans Affairs
<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeanssafety/facts/>

Population Level: Lethal Means Safety Works

- Reducing access to lethal suicide methods is one of the few population level interventions that has been shown to decrease suicide rates.
- About **90 percent** of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide.
- If we can collaborate with Veterans **ahead of time** to help them survive a suicidal crisis, we have likely prevented suicide for the **rest of their lives**.

VA Suicide Prevention Program Mission

Implementing a National Plan at Local Level

KEY TENETS

1

Suicide is preventable.

2

Suicide prevention requires a public health approach, combining clinical and community-based approaches.

3

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.

SHORT TERM PLAN

The NOW Plan outlines five prevention strategies to implement throughout 2020-2021.

LONG TERM PLAN

Clinical: Strategies grounded in evidence from the 2019 VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines.

Community: National call to reach the 11 Veterans who die by suicide each day who are outside VHA care.

Executive in Charge approved implementation to reach all Veterans.

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Firearms & Guns

New Lethal Means Safety Course TMS # 34560

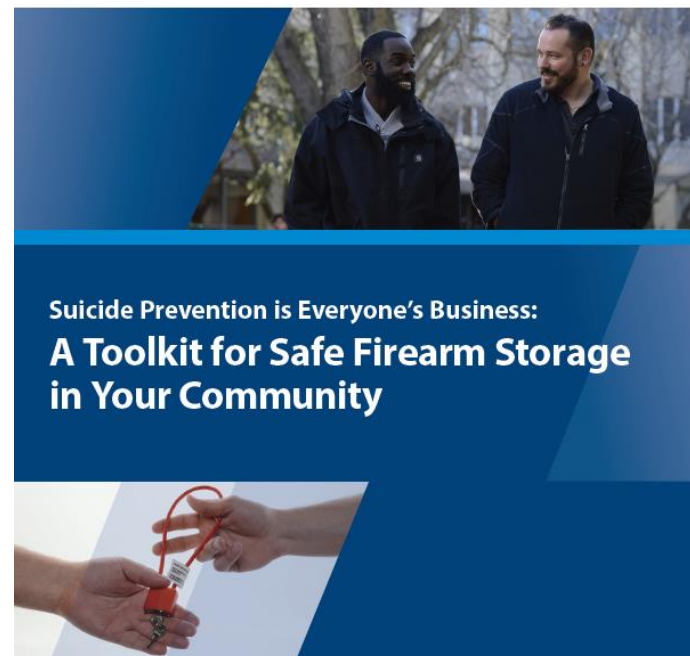
- Dr. Joe Simonetti & Dr. Bridget Matarazzo of the [VISN 19 Rocky Mountain MIRECC](#) lead the course about the key role all providers have in lethal means safety planning with Veterans
- Naloxone is another prevention strategy for those diagnosed with Opioid Use Disorder or with access to Opioids
- All providers will need to take the course by 12/31/2020 (upcoming memo)
- Course is available in [TRAIN](#) for non-VA employees in your networks and community care

Outline

- Epidemiology of Veteran suicide
- Veteran suicide methods
- What is Lethal Means Safety (LMS)?
- Why is LMS important?
- How can providers promote LMS?
 - Lethal Means Safety Counseling (LMSC)
- Who should receive LMSC?
- LMSC Specifics
 - Firearms & medications
- LMSC Examples and documentation

National Shooting Sports Foundation, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention & VA Partnership

- The partnership is a community-level program that delivers [a community toolkit and messaging](#) to Veterans, their families, and communities about putting “time and space” between a Veteran in crisis and a firearm
- [United States Concealed Carry Association webcast Protecting Mental Health and Preventing Veteran Suicide During COVID-19](#)
- Co-branding materials for use throughout the VHA and community
- [AFSP/NSSF Toolkit for gun shop outreach](#)



GUN STORAGE FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

A RANGE OF OPTIONS

As a gun owner, you can choose from multiple options for safely storing and protecting your firearms when they're not in use. Use this guide to determine which mechanism best suits your lifestyle, priorities and environment.



CABLE LOCK

Price Range: \$10-\$50

A cable lock can be used on most firearms, allows for quick access in an emergency and offers security from theft. The cable runs through the barrel or action of a firearm to prevent it from being accidentally fired, requiring either a key or combination to unlock it.

- \$ AFFORDABLE
- ✓ ACCESSIBLE
- ⚠ THEFT DETERRENT



GUN CASE

Price Range: \$10-\$150

For those looking to conceal, protect or legally transport a registered firearm, a gun case is an affordable solution available in a variety of materials including plastic, fabric or metal. Be sure to lock it with an external device for added security.

- \$ AFFORDABLE
- 👛 PORTABLE
- ⚠ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE



LOCK BOX

Price Range: \$25-\$350

With integrated locks, storage boxes provide reliable protection for firearms and allow gun owners to legally transport them outside of their home.

- 👛 PORTABLE
- ✓ ACCESSIBLE
- ⚠ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE



ELECTRONIC LOCK BOX

Price Range: \$50-\$350

Electronic lock boxes are an effective way to store or legally transport firearms, and they also prevent theft since only the person with the code can access the contents. Some electronic lock boxes are specially designed for quick access to stored firearms.

- 👛 PORTABLE
- ⚠ THEFT DETERRENT
- ⚠ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE



FULL SIZE AND BIOMETRIC GUN SAFES

Price Range: \$200-\$2,500

A gun safe protects its contents from the elements and allows owners to safely store multiple firearms in one place. Gun safes of all sizes are now available with biometric options to ensure only certain people have access.

- ⚠ THEFT DETERRENT
- ⚠ PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE

PLEASE HELP PREVENT ACCIDENTS. STORE FIREARMS RESPONSIBLY.

These are just a few of the storage options available to firearms owners. For the greatest level of security, consider using a combination of safety mechanisms and educate family members about handling firearms properly.

To learn more about firearms safety, visit ProjectChildSafe.org



Project ChildSafe
is a program of the
National Shooting
Sports Foundation®

NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association

VA



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Encourage Storage of Guns & Firearms

- Discuss securing firearms with Veterans, their friends and families, promote community-wide
- Increase in firearm sales (2.5M new gun owners in the first quarter of 2020 (reference NSSF)
- Firearms should be stored unloaded with ammunition separately
- Use a cable lock on the firearm
- Store behind a locking mechanism
- Consider out of home storage (refer to your state laws here)
- Place on the storage device:
 - Pictures of loved ones & reasons for living
 - Suicide Prevention Safety Plan
 - Veterans Crisis Line Sticker



Cable Lock
Price: \$10–\$50



Lockbox
Price: \$25–\$350



Gun Safe
Price: \$200–\$2,500



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Leading Community Messaging & Action



Lethal Means Safety Kits

- By the end of Suicide Prevention Month (September 2020) lethal means safety materials were shipped to:
 - All Vet Centers & VA Women's Health Clinics and the VA Mental Health Clinics and VA Primary Care Clinics who requested kits
- Materials are meant to be distributed through each location to providers, Caregivers, Veterans and their families
 - Kits included:
 - 1,000 Brochures
 - 1,000 Know the Warning Signs Postcards
 - 1,000 ProjectChildSafe.org Stickers
 - 1,000 Large Veterans Crisis Line Stickers
 - 100 Pocket Cards for Providers
 - 25 Large Posters (Firearm Storage)



KNOW WHERE TO GET SUPPORT

If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** or the **Veterans Crisis Line**. Responders at these hotlines provide immediate counseling and support and can connect you with local services.



HELP PREVENT SUICIDE:
Store Your Firearms Responsibly



#BeThere



ProjectChildSafe.org

Medications & Substances

New Lethal Means Safety Resources

Reducing Firearm & Other Household Safety Risks Brochure

provides best practices for safely storing firearms and medications along with advice for loved ones on how to talk to the Veteran in their life about safe storage.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Reducing Firearm & Other Household Safety Risks for Veterans and Their Families



Firearm safety is an important public health issue that can affect your health and your family's well-being.

If you own a firearm, or live in a household where there are firearms, the following information can help keep you and those around you safe. Similarly, reducing access to other household risks, like medications, can help ensure your family's safety.

Medication Storage & Safety

- Have a family member or friend help manage medication dosages
- Limit the amount of medication access (ask your doctor or pharmacist)
- Keep medications out of children's sight and reach
- Place Veterans Crisis Line & Safety Plan or other visual reminders where medications are stored
- Use a week-long medication box and store the remaining medications
- Dispose of medication that is:
 - Past expiration date
 - You haven't used in the past 12 months
 - If you no longer need it

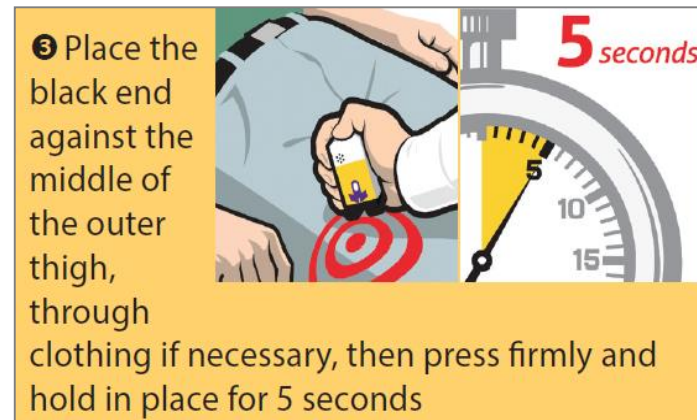
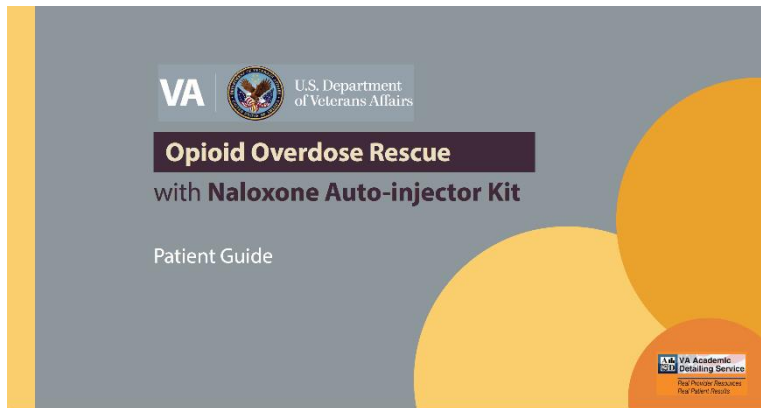


*image from Walmart.com



Lethal Means Safety Counseling for Patients Using Opioids

- Naloxone nasal spray and autoinjectors available via the VHA pharmacy
- Important to train patients, family & friends
- Trainings and patient materials available at PBM.VA.GOV



Suicide Prevention Resources

S.A.V.E. Training

- Suicide prevention training video that's available to everyone, 24/7
- Less than 25 minutes long
- Offered in collaboration with the PsychArmor Institute at <https://psycharmor.org/S.A.V.E.>



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



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New Lethal Means Safety Course TMS # 34560

- Dr. Joe Simonetti & Dr. Bridget Matarazzo of the [VISN 19 Rocky Mountain MIRECC](#) lead the course about the key role all providers have in lethal means safety planning with Veterans
- All providers will need to take the course by 12/31/2020 (upcoming memo)
- Course is available in [TRAIN](#) for non-VA employees in your networks and community care

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 - Firearms & medications
- LMSC Examples and documentation

New Lethal Means Safety Resources

Means Safety Messaging for Clinical Staff: This pocket card provides medical professionals with digestible information on ways to talk with Veteran patients about safe storage.

Means Safety Messaging for Clinical Staff

Use the **GROW** Framework to talk with Veteran patients about means safety and options for safe firearm and medication storage:

Get ready

Reason for the discussion

Offer brief advice

We're here to help

Get ready: Consider important factors before having the conversation.

- How well do you know this patient?
- Does the patient live with other people?
- What is the patient's level of suicide risk?

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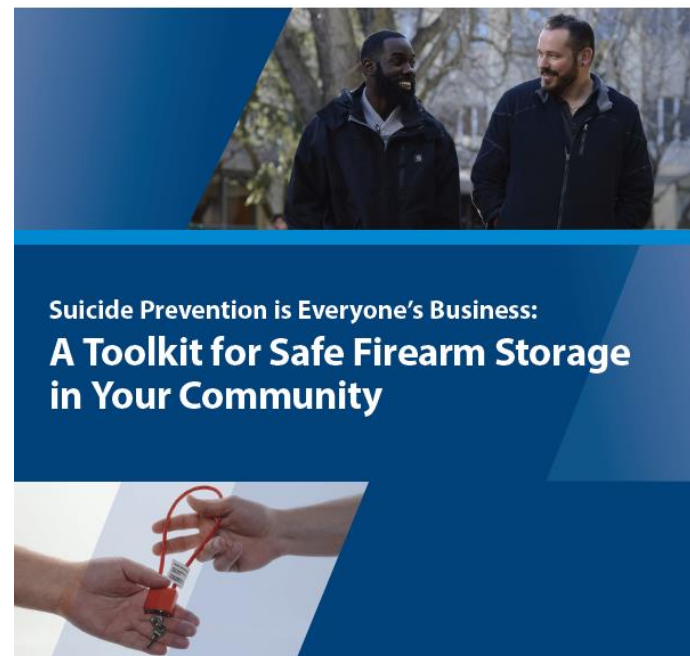
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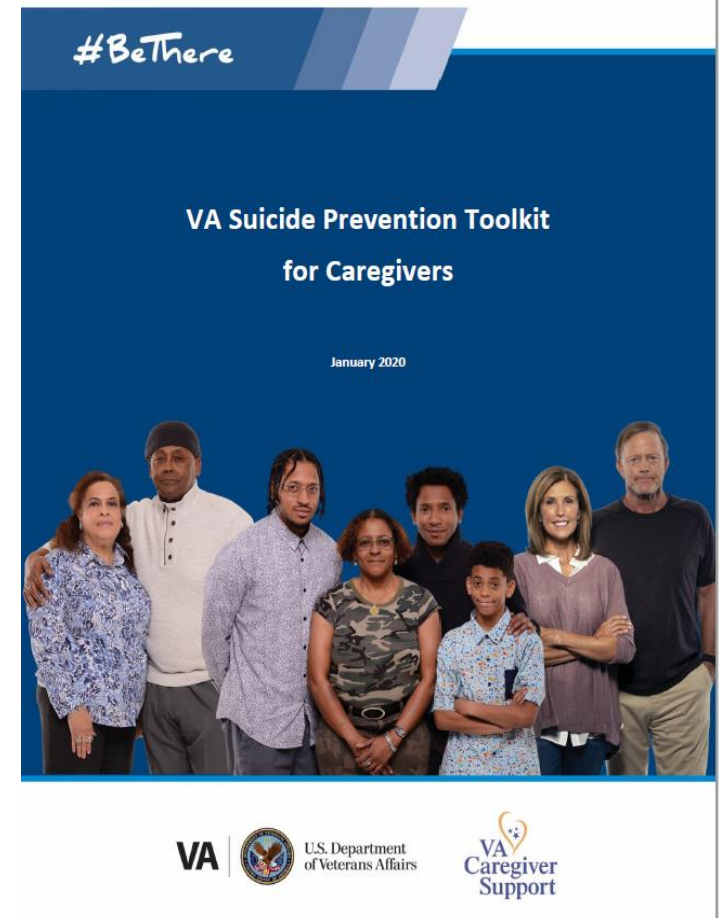
National Shooting Sports Foundation, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention & VA Partnership

- The partnership is a community-level program that delivers [a community toolkit and messaging](#) to Veterans, their families, and communities about putting “time and space” between a Veteran in crisis and a firearm
- [United States Concealed Carry Association webcast Protecting Mental Health and Preventing Veteran Suicide During COVID-19](#)
- Co-branding materials for use throughout the VHA and community
- [AFSP/NSSF Toolkit for gun shop outreach](#)



VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

- Includes important information about suicide prevention, as well as evidenced based mental and substance use disorder treatments that can help Veterans recover and meet their goals.
- Learn what you can do at home to make your environment safer for someone going through an emotional crisis.
- [The toolkit](#) offers practical examples of the life saving importance of storing firearms and other lethal means to prevent suicide.
- Explore the resource section to review VA and partner organizations and what they have to offer Caregivers
- Visit VA's Tips & Tools Website for Caregivers at https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Tips_Tools.asp

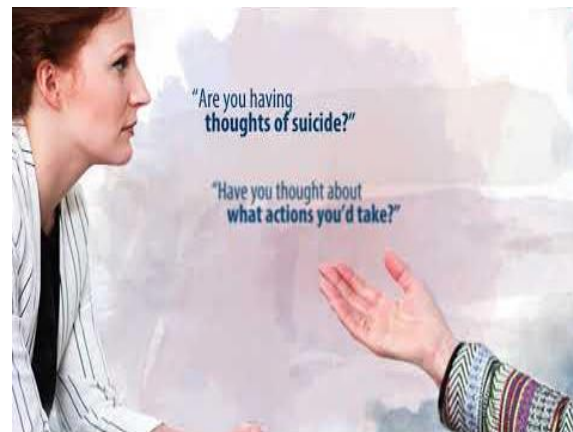


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Lethal Means Safety and Suicide Prevention

VA clinicians and community-based providers have a unique opportunity to prevent suicide through education on lethal means safety. This video offers guidance on talking to Veterans about the safe storage of lethal means, such as firearms and poisons.

- Learn more about lethal means safety at <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeanssafety/>



Firearm Storage Options

- 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, as shown below. 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



Cable Lock
Price: \$10–\$50

Lockbox
Price: \$25–\$350

Gun Safe
Price: \$200–\$2,500



Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365



• • • • Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to **838255** • • • •

- Veterans
- Family members
- Service members
- Friends

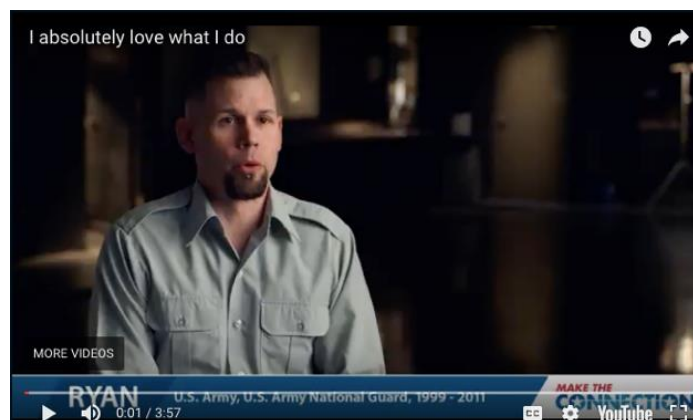


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Make the Connection

- Online resource featuring hundreds of Veterans telling their stories about overcoming mental health challenges.

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**
www.MakeTheConnection.net



<https://maketheconnection.net/conditions/suicide>



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



Community Provider Toolkit

- Free online training on Veteran issues, including military culture, for health care providers
- Includes tips for screening clients for military service
- Military culture training can count for continuing education credits (CEUs):
<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/military.asp>



Access the toolkit online: www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders



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Together We Can

- VA recently released a suicide prevention informational series for Veterans, their families, and caregivers about common suicide risks and protective factors.
- Families and caregivers can also learn about available resources and practical steps they can take to **Be There** for a Veteran in their lives.

https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/resources.asp

Connection and Sense of Purpose
Feeling connected and having a sense of purpose helps protect Veterans against suicide.

Together We Can.
Suicide Prevention Information for Veterans,
Their Families, and Caregivers

A Connection to Others and a Sense of Purpose is Essential to Well-Being
Feeling connected to others and having a sense of purpose are fundamental to our emotional and mental well-being. We find joy and satisfaction in having a heart-to-heart talk with a loved one, going on a picnic with friends, participating in a community volunteer event, achieving a long-sought goal, and other activities that bring us closer to others.

When you don't have — or believe you don't have — these experiences, it's natural to feel lonely, isolated, sad, angry, hurt, anxious, or depressed. You may also have trouble enjoying the things that once brought you pleasure and have feelings of hopelessness or emotional pain. If left unaddressed, these feelings may lead to suicidal thoughts.

It's common to experience loneliness after leaving the military, losing a loved one or close friend, or moving to a new job or community. A feeling of being all alone is sometimes a consequence of conflict or tension in a family. Loneliness can also result from a broader sense of disconnection from society or a sense of purpose. Sometimes, loneliness in others is easy to recognize — you may notice that someone keeps to themselves or doesn't seem to have many friends. It can be harder to recognize in ourselves and can be easily overlooked. It's not necessary to be alone to feel lonely. People who are surrounded by others and who have support, such as from family and friends, can still feel lonely.

Sometimes, it may be difficult to reach out to others, especially if the relationship has a lot of conflict and tension. Unfortunately, family conflict is also a risk factor for suicide, so working to improve relationships with one another can be one way to reduce suicide risk. VA offers family counseling options to help.

Strengthen Connections of Support to Combat Loneliness
Although at times it may seem unavoidable, loneliness can be overcome. With a variety of sources of loneliness, there are a number of ways to combat it. These include:

- Deepening and strengthening the relationships you already have
- Seeking out new connections
- Developing new interests, such as taking on a volunteer position, exploring your spirituality, or finding meaning in other ways

If you're concerned that someone you know may be feeling lonely, small gestures can start to make a difference. Examples include:

- Watching a movie together
- Inviting the person out to coffee
- Trying out a new activity together
- Sending an encouraging text message
- Telling the person how much they mean to you

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Suicide Postvention Podcasts

- The Rocky Mountain MIRECC recently released podcasts on postvention hosted by Dr. Sarra Nazem.
- The podcasts feature discussion from Dr. Nazem and experts in the field of suicide postvention on the following topics:
 - The experience of losing family or friends to suicide
 - The professional and personal impact of losing a patient to suicide
 - How to manage legal and ethical concerns after a suicide loss
 - Implementing postvention practices in medical, mental health, military, school, community and workplace settings.

Podcasts are available on the Rocky Mountain MIRECC Short Takes on Suicide Prevention Channel.

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/education/media/#PostventionPodcasts>



TRAIN Learning Network

- TRAIN is a national learning network that provides quality training opportunities to over 1.8 million professionals who protect and improve the public's health.
- Many of the trainings used for internal VA staff and clinicians are included on this public portal as an opportunity to train community providers.
- The Suicide Prevention Program wants to ensure the high level of training provided to VA employees is also accessible to those assisting Veterans in their communities.



www.train.org



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SUICIDE RISK MANAGEMENT Consultation Program FOR PROVIDERS WHO SERVE VETERANS

Why worry alone?

The Suicide Risk Management Consultation Program provides free consultation for any provider, community or VA, who serves Veterans at risk for suicide.

Common consultation topics include:

- Risk Assessment
- Conceptualization of Suicide Risk
- Lethal Means Safety Counseling
- Strategies for How to Engage Veterans at High Risk
- Best Practices for Documentation
- Provider Support after a Suicide Loss (Postvention)

#NeverWorryAlone

To initiate a consult email:
SRMconsult@va.gov

www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/consult



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Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Consultation Program

- Any provider who treats Veterans with PTSD can ask a question or request consultation about PTSD-related issues. Consultation is **free** and includes:
 - Expert Consultation
 - Treatment Questions
 - Continuing Education
 - Assessment and Screening Tools
 - PTSD Resources
- Periodic in-person trainings are additionally offered for providers.
- <https://www.ptsd.va.gov>

Contact PTSDconsult@va.gov or 866-948-7880



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