

# Veteran Suicide

## PREVENTION

### WHO IS AT RISK?



Suicide can affect any veteran, but those who have experienced combat trauma or are transitioning to civilian life, and individuals with service-connected disabilities, are particularly vulnerable.

REACHING OUT  
FOR HELP IS  
A SIGN OF  
STRENGTH

### Additional challenges can increase the risk:



Feeling disconnected from the community  
Struggles with employment



Housing instability  
Relationship problems

### RISK FACTORS

- » **Mental health conditions:** Post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD), depression, anxiety, and traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- » **Substance use:** Alcohol and drug use often co-occur with mental health struggles and compound the risk of suicide.
- » **Chronic pain and physical injuries:** Persistent pain can lead to feelings of hopelessness and desire to escape suffering.
- » **Social isolation:** Loss of military camaraderie and disconnection from community leave veterans feeling alone and without support.

### Multiple factors can increase suicide risk among veterans:

- » **Access to lethal means:** Access to firearms increases lethality when combined with suicidal thoughts.
- » **Recent losses:** Relationship breakdowns, job loss, or loss of purpose can trigger crisis moments requiring immediate intervention.
- » **Previous attempts or family history:** A previous suicide attempt or family history of suicide increases vulnerability and risk.



### SYMPTOMS



- ★ Direct statements about wanting to die, feeling like a burden, or having no reason to live.
- ★ Behavioral changes: withdrawing from family and friends, giving away prized possessions, or saying goodbye as if it's the last time.
- ★ Mood changes: extreme sadness, rage, anxiety, or sudden calmness after depression.

### WHEN SHOULD A VETERAN SEEK HELP?

### IMMEDIATELY!



### GETTING HELP

- » **Veterans Crisis Line:** Call 9-8-8, then press 1 or text 838255. Available 24/7 with specially trained responders who understand military culture and experience.
- » **Vet Centers:** Community-based counseling centers offer free readjustment counseling to veterans and their families. Find locations at [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov).
- » **Military OneSource:** Free 24/7 support for service members, veterans, and families at 1-800-342-9647.
- » **Local Emergency Services:** Call 9-1-1 if you think you may commit suicide or harm yourself.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE