

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) National Grantee Webinar

Suicide Prevention 101: The Essentials of
Veteran Suicide Prevention & SSVF's New
Annual Training Requirements

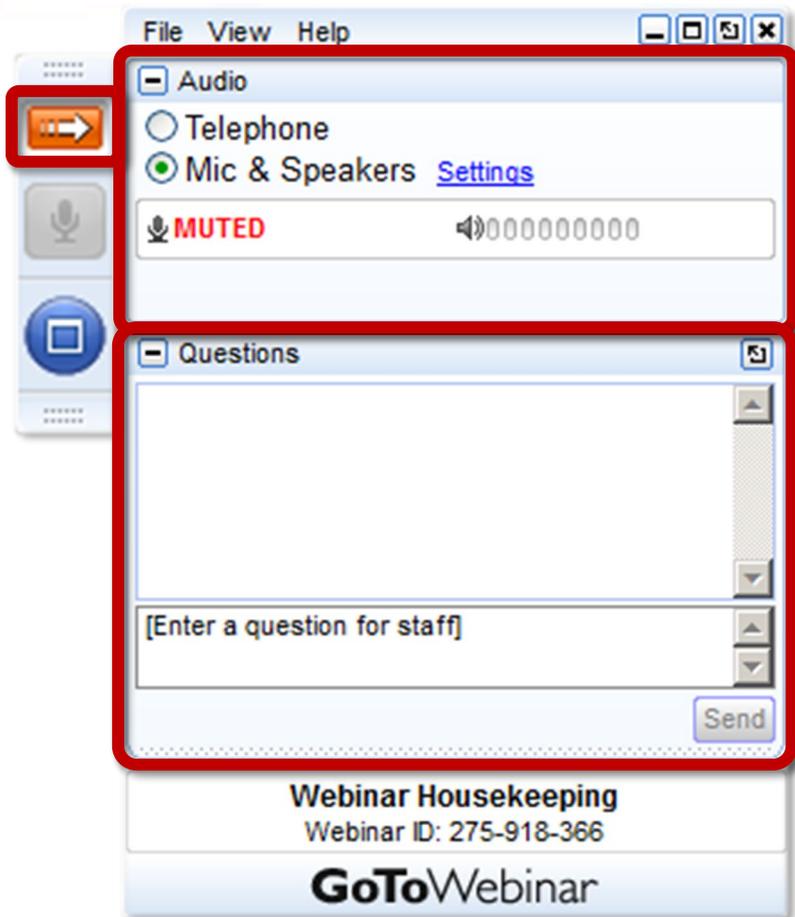
[Link to Audio Recording](#)

December 13, 2018

Webinar Format

- Webinar will last approximately 1.5 hours
- Participants' phone connections are “muted” due to the high number of callers
 - **Questions can be submitted during the webinar using the Q&A function**
- Questions can also be submitted anytime to SSVF@va.gov

Questions



Your Questions

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

Presenters & Agenda

- **SSVF's New Annual S.A.V.E. Training Requirement**
 - Mike Boyd, SSVF Regional Coordinator
- **VA's Suicide Prevention Program & Trainings**
 - Aimee Johnson, Program Analyst, Partnerships, VHA Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention
- **Q&A**

Veteran Suicide - Public Health Issue

- “VA is working hard to prevent suicide among all Veterans, including those who do not, and may not ever, use VA services and benefits.”
- Suicide is a complex public health issue requiring a broader community coordinated approach.
- The National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide reflects VA’s vision for a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention involving different sectors working together.
- “... To end Veteran suicide, we need organizations across sectors to adopt the strategy’s, framework and join us in delivering support to all Veterans.”

SSVF's Role in Preventing Veteran Suicide

All SSVF Supervisors & Frontline Staff are required to request and receive VA Suicide Prevention Training annually.

1 First Option: In-Person S.A.V.E. Training

- Contact your local VA Medical Center's Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC) and request an in-person training or
- Contact the Homeless Program designated POC Certified S.A.V.E Trainer

2 Second Option: Online S.A.V.E. Training

- View the S.A.V.E Training on the PsychArmor website
- View this recorded webinar



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VA Suicide Prevention Program

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Grantees

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

Suicide Prevention Program

December 13, 2018

Agenda

- The Public Health Approach
- Putting Strategy Into Action
- Suicide in the United States
- S.A.V.E. Training: Identifying and Supporting Those at Risk
- Suicide Prevention Resources





VA Suicide Prevention Strategy

The Public Health Approach

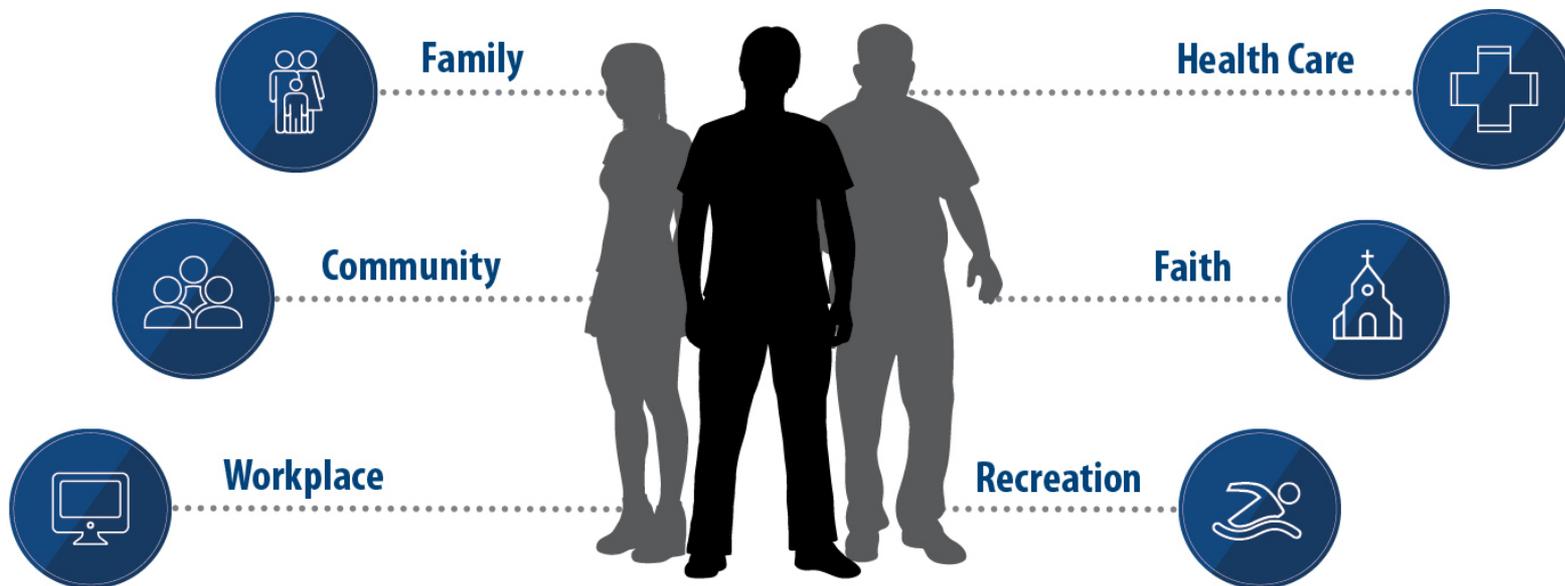


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Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business



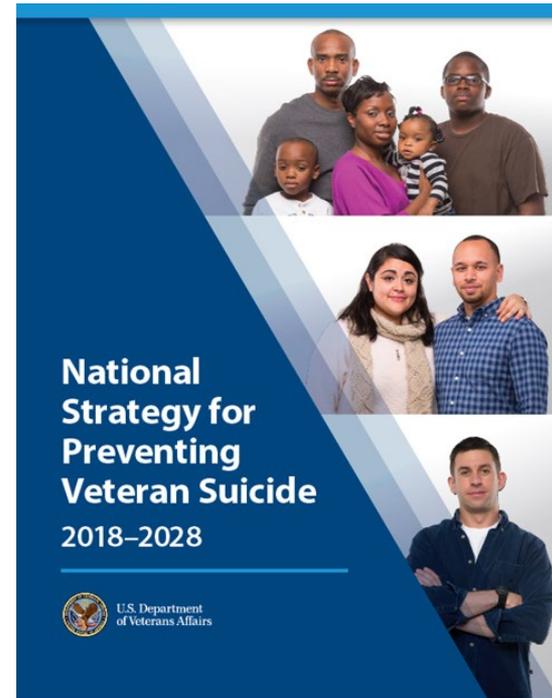
Leveraging the Public Health Approach



National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide

Goal: Provide a framework for identifying priorities, organizing efforts, and contributing to a national focus on Veteran suicide prevention over the next decade.

- Aligns with the 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.
- Consists of 4 strategic directions, 14 goals, 43 objectives.
- Leverages the public health approach to suicide prevention.
- Focuses on the importance of **collaboration** and **urgency**.



Download a copy at:
[Mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention)



Implementing Strategic Directions



Healthy and Empowered Veterans, Families, and Communities

Work with community partners and policymakers to promote resources for Veterans and to promote mental health awareness and treatment.



Clinical and Community Preventive Services

Share resources, training opportunities, interventions, and lethal means safety resources with providers outside VA and with clergy, first responders, law enforcement officials, and community partners.



Treatment, Recovery, and Support Services

Work with local emergency departments and hospitals to promote Veteran suicide prevention resources and to ensure continuity of care for all Veterans admitted to an inpatient mental health unit.



Surveillance, Research, and Evaluation

Share the [VA National Suicide Data Report](#) and [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) with community partners.





Issue Overview:

Suicide in the United States



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Important Figures

20 Veterans die by suicide each day.



14 *Of these Veterans are not under VHA care.*

6 *Are in VHA care.*

123

Americans die by suicide each day.

1-2

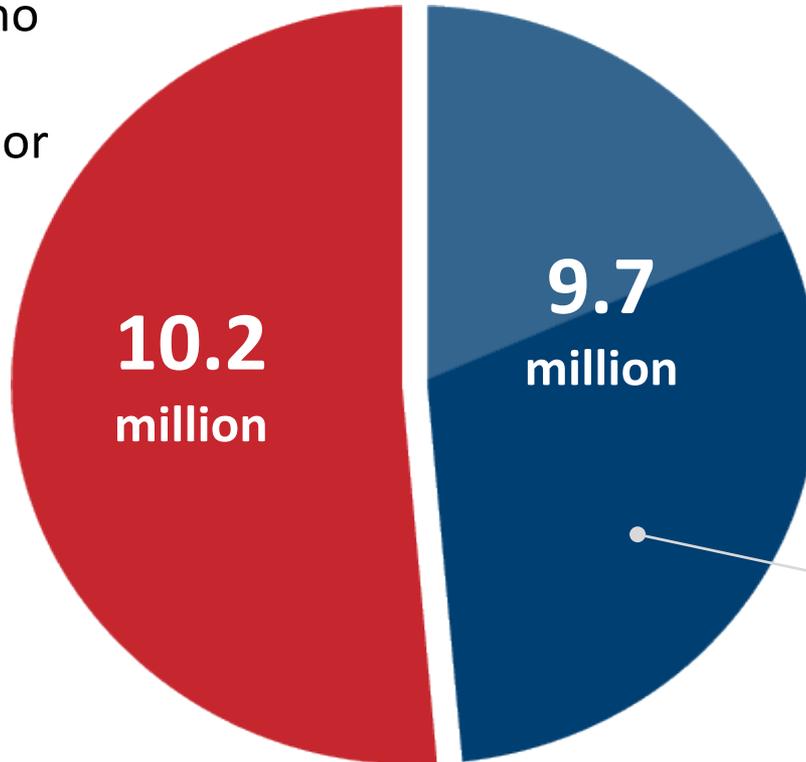
Active duty Service members die by suicide each day.



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50% of Veterans Do Not Use VA Benefits or Healthcare

Veterans who **do not use** VA benefits or healthcare.



Veterans who **use at least one** VA benefit or healthcare service.

Of this group, about **6 million Veterans** use VA health care (about **30 percent** of all Veterans).



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VA Suicide Data Reports

- **National Suicide Data Report**
 - Reports on trends in Veteran Suicide Deaths from 2005 – 2015
 - Examined more than 55 million civilian and Veteran death records
- **State Data Sheets**
 - Examined state level Veteran suicide deaths and compared to national and regional trends
 - Available for all 50 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico



Access the reports online:

<https://go.usa.gov/xnMDE>



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Risk Factors for Suicide

- **Health factors**
 - Mental health challenges
 - Substance abuse and addiction
 - Serious or chronic health conditions and/or pain
 - Traumatic brain injury
- **Environmental factors**
 - Access to lethal means (e.g., drugs, firearms)
 - Prolonged stress
 - Stressful life events
 - Exposure to another person's suicide or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide
- **Historical factors**
 - Previous suicide attempts
 - Family history of suicide
 - History of abuse, neglect, or trauma



Risk and Protective Factors

Risk

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

Protective

- Access to health and mental health care (including substance abuse treatment)
- Sense of connectedness and belonging
- Problem-solving skills
- Sense of spirituality
- Mission or purpose
- Physical health
- Social and emotional well-being



Goal: Minimize risk factors and boost protective factors



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How can I help?

Identifying and Supporting Those At Risk



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Those in Crisis Often Display Warning Signs

- Learn to recognize these warning signs:
 - Hopelessness, feeling like there's 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
- The presence of the following signs requires immediate attention:
 - Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
 - Looking for ways to kill yourself
 - Talking about death, dying, or suicide
 - Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, excessive drinking etc.



S.A.V.E.: Teaching Communities How to Help Veterans at Risk for Suicide

S.A.V.E. will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a Veteran who is in suicidal crisis.

- **S**igns of suicidal thinking should be recognized.
- **A**sk the most important question of all.
- **V**alidate the Veteran's experience.
- **E**ncourage treatment and Expedite getting help.





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





Asking the Question

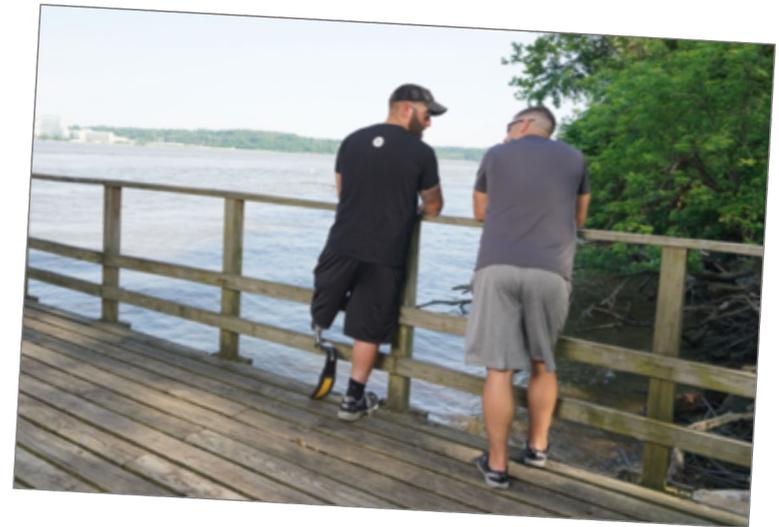
Do's	Don'ts
<p>DO ask the question if you've identified warning signs or symptoms.</p>	<p>DON'T ask the question as though you are looking for a "no" answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "You aren't thinking of killing yourself, are you?"
<p>DO ask the question in a natural way that flows with the conversation.</p>	<p>DON'T wait to ask the question when someone is halfway out the door.</p>



V

Validating 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 that help is available.



E

Encouraging Treatment and Expediting 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 at **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**.



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 PsychArmor Institute



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



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VA Suicide Prevention Resources



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Empowering Communities to Take Action

You don't need to have special training to support the Veterans in your life, and we can all do something to help a Veteran who is going through a difficult time. Even seemingly small actions can have a huge impact: Preventing suicide begins with the willingness to just **Be There**.



www.bethereforveterans.com

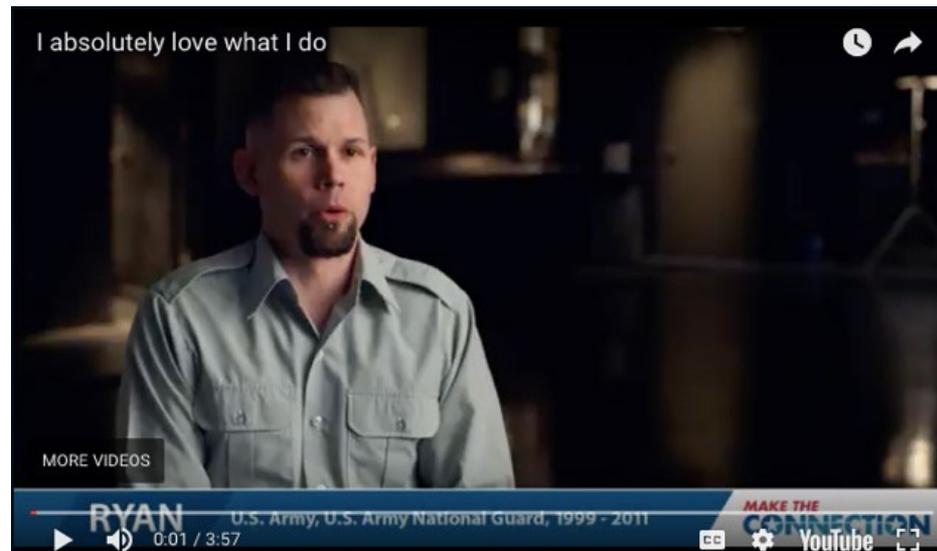


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Make the Connection

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

**MAKE THE
CONNECTION**



<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.



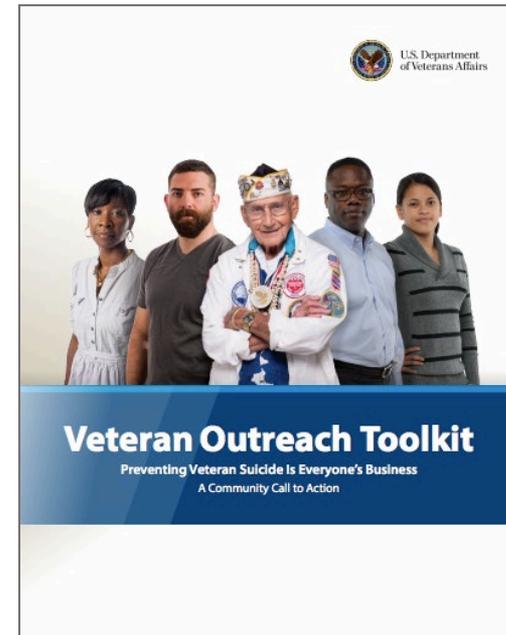
1-888-823-7458
8am – 8pm ET
Monday - Friday



Community Outreach Toolkit

Includes facts and myths about suicide, as well as information on:

- Establishing a suicide prevention council
- Talking to Veterans about their military service
- Assessing suicide risk
- Developing a suicide prevention safety plan
- Helping Veterans feel more connected to others
- Joining public-private partnerships



Access the toolkit online:

go.usa.gov/xnwbz



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VeteransCrisisLine.net/ResourceLocator

Resource Locator

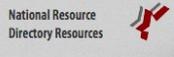
Locate Information and Resources

No matter what you are experiencing, there is support for getting your life on a better track. To find the Veteran resources most helpful for you, fill in your ZIP code or state below and check the boxes of the programs or topics you are interested in. You can also select the National Resource Directory or the SAMHSA Behavioral Health tab to find additional services.

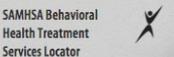




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National Resource Directory Resources



SAMHSA Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

1 Select a Resource

Suicide Prevention Coordinators
Specially trained Suicide Prevention Coordinators or teams are available at all VA Medical Centers across the country.

Crisis Centers
Search for community-based crisis centers in your area.

VA Medical Centers
VA Medical Centers offer a range of acute care and community-based outpatient services, including mental health care, diagnostics, homeless and alcohol/drug abuse programs, nursing home and respite care.

Outpatient Clinics
Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) are local VA locations that provide primary care, counseling, laboratory analysis, prescriptions and radiology services.

Veterans Benefits Administration Offices
Veterans Benefits Administration Offices provide services to Veterans seeking benefits related to compensation, pension, vocational rehabilitation, home loans, death benefits, employment, and disability.

Vet Centers
Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all Veterans who have served in any combat zone, as well as their family members.

All
See all VA and community-based services in your area.

2 Choose Location

Search by Zip Code OR Search by state



2 Choose Location

Search by Zip Code OR North Dakota

Results for **Suicide Prevention Coordinators** in state **ND**

Monsebroten, Tammy
 Fargo, ND 58102
 P: 701-239-3700x93556
 F: 701-237-2642
tammy.monsebroten@va.gov;
raae.bickett@va.gov

Results for **Crisis Centers** in state **ND**

FirstLink HotLine
 Fargo, ND 58103
 P: 701-293-6462
 F: 701-235-2476
[visit website](#)

--Standing Rock Line--
 Fargo, ND 58103

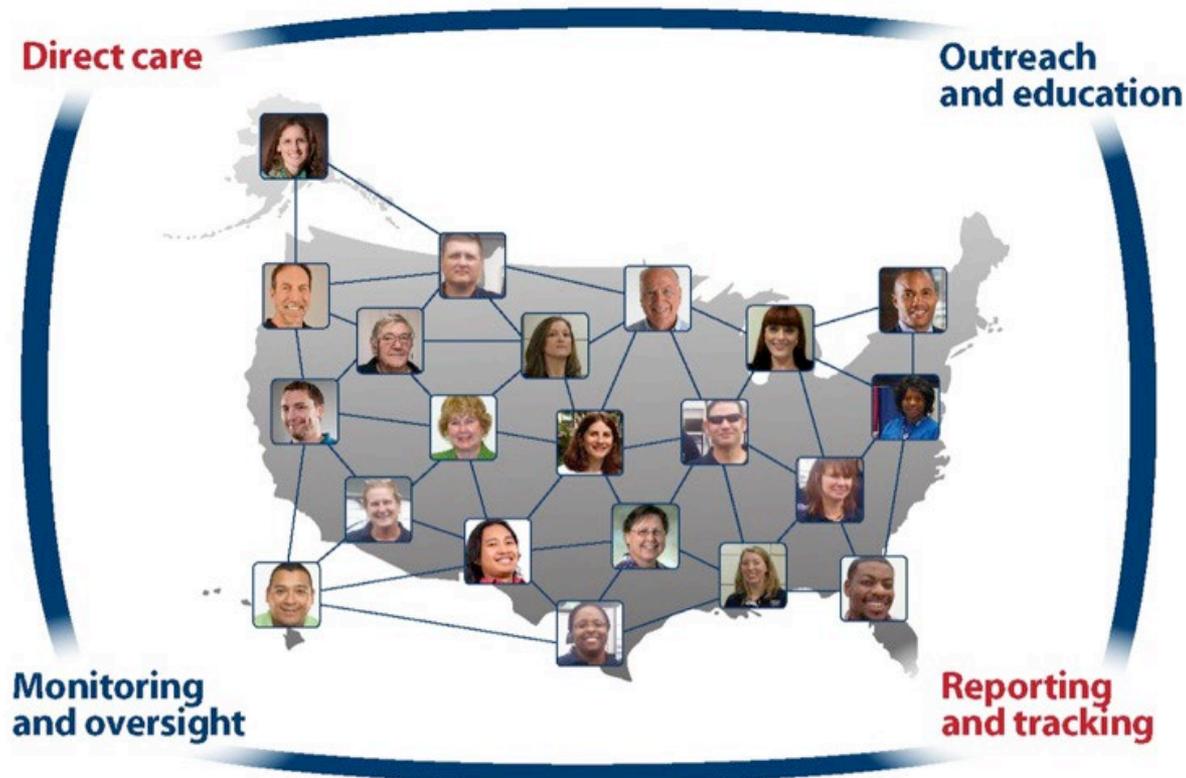
Results for **VA Medical Centers** in state **ND**

Fargo VA Health Care System
 2101 Elm Street N.
 Fargo, ND 58102
 P: 701-232-3241 Or 701-232-3241
[visit website](#)



Find a Local VA SPC at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/ResourceLocator](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ResourceLocator)

More than 400 SPCs nationwide.



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LGBTQ Suicide Prevention Resources

LGBTQ+
Suicide Prevention Resources

-  **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Veterans: Press 1
-  **Text TALK to 741741**
Text with a trained counselor from the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7
-  **The Trevor Project**
TrevorLifeline: Available 24/7 at 1-866-488-7386
TrevorText: Text TREVOR to 1-202-304-1200
TrevorChat: Via thetrevorproject.org
-  **Trans Lifeline**
Support for transgender people, by transgender people
1-877-565-8860
-  **SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline**
Peer-support and local resources for older adults
1-888-234-SAGE
-  **The LGBT National Hotline**
Peer-support and local resources for all ages
1-888-843-4564

afsp.org/lgbtq

 **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**



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VA Partners and Resources

- **CaringBridge.org:** Service members, Veterans, and their caregivers can create their own personal online health journey that can be shared at the user's discretion with family and friends to enhance connectedness and support. Learn more at: <https://www.caringbridge.org/military-service/>
- **Objective Zero:** Connects Service members and Veterans (as well as their families and caregivers) to peer support 24 hours a day via text, voice, and video chat and offers access to wellness resources. Learn more at: <http://www.objectivezero.org/>





Founded by Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen September 2005 with a mission to develop national networks of volunteers capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society.



Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen

<https://giveanhour.org/get-help/#providerSearch>

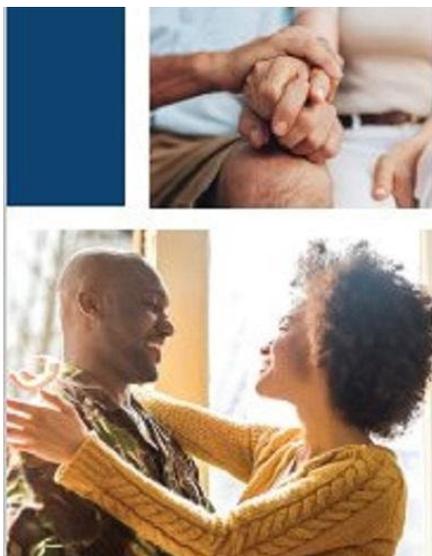
- ✓ **To identify at-risk populations and other groups in need** that can benefit from our model of delivering services through a network of volunteer professionals.
- ✓ **To identify professionals who have the skills to address specific needs** and are willing to donate their time and expertise.
- ✓ **To identify and address barriers that prevent those we serve** from receiving the support they deserve.
- ✓ **To improve community coordination and collaboration for populations we serve.**



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National Resource Directory

Highlighted Programs for our Military, Veterans and Families



<https://nrd.gov/>



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Military and Veteran Culture



<https://psycharmor.org/courses/15-things-veterans-want-you-to-know/>



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Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365



1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

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

- Veterans
- Service members
- Family members
- Friends



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We All Have a Role to Play



#BeThere for Veterans PSA:

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/support/be-there>



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Questions?

Thank you.



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Stay Connected

Follow us on social media!



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[@veteransmtc](#)



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#BeThere



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