This Journey Map highlights nine ‘life stages’ Survivors may encounter, from preparing with their Veteran to the end of their own life. The ‘moments that matter’ that are aligned to the life stages are experiences Survivors have that stand out to them and others. Similar to Veterans, not all Survivors are the same but there are a broad set of shared moments many Survivors will encounter. Different Survivor personas based on cause of death, relationship, and life experience will all alter the way a Survivor experiences and navigates these moments in their own raised and disparate ways. Using this journey as a guide to organize and align around, VA can plan for and design better experiences for our Veteran’s Survivors.

**Legend**

- **Life Stage**
- **MOMENT THAT MATTERS**
- **MOMENT THAT MATTERS**
- **LEGEND**
- **Survivor Journey Map**
- **PREPARING**
- **MOMENTS DIRECTLY AFTER DEATH**
- **APPLYING FOR AND UTILIZING BENEFITS**
- **THE NEW NORMAL**

### Preparing

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- Caring for their loved one
- Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO)
- Chaplain
- Police
- EMT

**Moment that matters**
- In the time immediately following the death of a Service Member or Veteran, Survivors need to make big life decisions regarding finances, living situations, etc. Having help from an informed professional when making these decisions may allotype some small piece of stress and allow the Survivor to process their grief.

**Finds support**
- Counseling
- Survivor Organizations
- VSO's

**Moment that matters**
- Being informed and connected is a key influence in the overall experience of a Survivor. While many hear about benefits available to them through other Survivors or VSOs, those who are isolated from such communities might not have the opportunities to engage with benefits owed to them.

**Becomes aware of benefits**
- DIC
- CHAMPVA
- Home Loans
- Education
- Burial Benefits
- Survivors Pension
- Life Insurance Benefits
  - 866-427-1600

### Adjusting

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

**Prepares burial and funeral arrangements**
- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance

**Hosts funeral or memorial service and military honors**

### Memorializing

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- In the time immediately following the death of a Service Member or Veteran, Survivors need to make big life decisions regarding finances, living situations, etc. Having help from an informed professional when making these decisions may allotype some small piece of stress and allow the Survivor to process their grief.

**Finds support**
- Counseling
- Survivor Organizations
- VSO's

**Moment that matters**
- Being informed and connected is a key influence in the overall experience of a Survivor. While many hear about benefits available to them through other Survivors or VSOs, those who are isolated from such communities might not have the opportunities to engage with benefits owed to them.

**Becomes aware of benefits**
- DIC
- CHAMPVA
- Home Loans
- Education
- Burial Benefits
- Survivors Pension
- Life Insurance Benefits
  - 866-427-1600

### Engaging

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

**Prepares burial and funeral arrangements**
- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance

**Hosts funeral or memorial service and military honors**

### Applying

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

**Prepares burial and funeral arrangements**
- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance

**Hosts funeral or memorial service and military honors**

**Pursues and applies for benefits**
- NCA
- VSOs

**Waits for decision**

**Claim is approved or denied**

### Remembering

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- In the time immediately following the death of a Service Member or Veteran, Survivors need to make big life decisions regarding finances, living situations, etc. Having help from an informed professional when making these decisions may allotype some small piece of stress and allow the Survivor to process their grief.

**Prepares burial and funeral arrangements**
- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance

**Hosts funeral or memorial service and military honors**

**Finds support**
- Counseling
- Survivor Organizations
- VSO's

**Moment that matters**
- Making connections and building relationships with individuals who share in the same grief or loss allows Survivors to better navigate the emotional journey they are experiencing due to the death of their Service Member. The grief never goes away but, through a shared experience it becomes easier to cope and manage life.

### Continuing

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

**Prepares burial and funeral arrangements**
- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance

**Hosts funeral or memorial service and military honors**

**Find a new connection with their loved one**

**Makes new traditions**

**Finds support**
- Counseling
- Survivor Organizations
- VSO's

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

### Dying

**Loved one passes away**
- Caring for their loved one
- VA Healthcare
- Counseling

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

**Prepares burial and funeral arrangements**
- Burial Benefits
- Burial Allowance

**Hosts funeral or memorial service and military honors**

**Finds support**
- Counseling
- Survivor Organizations
- VSO's

**Moment that matters**
- Many factors play into how a Survivor is prepared for the next phase in life once their loved one passes, but having some connection with the military or a Veteran organization sets them up for more success when it comes to navigating benefits, coping with the loss, and being able to carry on through the grief.

### Acronyms

- VSO: Veteran Service Organization
- CVSO: County Veteran Service Office
- CAO: Casualty Assistance Officer
- DIC: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

### ACRONYMS