

NATIONAL **BUDDY CHECK WEEK**

Communications Kit





U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Experience Office



Overview

The inaugural Buddy Check Week, which takes place October 16-20, 2023, is a national campaign that encourages Veterans to connect or reconnect with their Veteran friends – just to check in. A <u>STRONG</u> <u>Veterans Act of 2022</u> initiative, Buddy Check Week builds on the success of the American Legion's <u>Buddy</u> <u>Check program</u> and the Veteran Wellness Alliance's <u>Get Involved program</u>.

Buddy Check Week resources can be found at: <u>https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/</u>

Buddy Check Week's goal is to enhance peer-to-peer connections, improve mental health, and increase access to VA resources. Veterans and their families are encouraged take the pledge to **Talk to 10** buddies during Buddy Check Week.

We need your help to raise awareness about Buddy Check Week! This communications kit includes key messages, draft posts, key resources, and scripts that you can use to help spread the word. Thank you, as always, for your partnership and support.

Key message:

- Take the pledge to Talk to 10 Veteran buddies during Buddy Check Week October 16-20, 2023. Check-in, catch up, be a buddy. Learn more at: <u>https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/</u>
- Take the training before talking recognize the signs of distress and learn about resources you can recommend to your buddy if needed. Take S.A.V.E. training at: <u>VA S.A.V.E. (psycharmor.org)</u>
- No one can replace the trust built between Veterans who served together. Don't let that bond fade, reconnect. If you need help finding buddies from your unit, try <u>https://togetherweserved.com/findpeople</u>

Draft Social Media Copy

General options:

- Take the pledge, #TalkToTen! Reconnect with your battle buddies, make sure they're okay. October 16-20 is Buddy Check Week – be a buddy. <u>https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/</u>
- 2. When was the last time you talked to your battle buddy from boot camp? You may be doing great, but are they? Take the pledge to **#TalkToTen** buddies from October 16-20. Learn more

about Buddy Check Week at https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/

- 3. All Veterans know "that guy." He was the one who always lost his cover, always showed up late with the best excuse, but always made you laugh. When was the last time you talked to him? Be a buddy, check in. From October 16-20, we're asking all Veterans to #TalkToTen buddies. Learn more at: <u>https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/</u>
- 4. Many of your friends may be doing well, but others may need help from the community or VA in some way. Check in on your buddies and connect them to useful resources, such as VA.gov or 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411).
- 5. When's the last time you spoke with your military crew from back in the day? National Buddy Check Week is Oct 16-20, pledge to **#TalkToTen** fellow Vets let's make a difference together.
- Do you ever wonder how that Airman, Marine, Soldier, Guardian, or Sailor that you served with is doing today? It's National Buddy Check Week – the perfect time to find out! Take the pledge, #TalkToTen! Learn more: <u>https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10veterans/</u>
- I took the pledge to #TalkToTen Veterans during National Buddy Check Week (October 16-20, 2023) because reaching out makes a difference. Learn more at: https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/

Key Resources and Fact Sheets:

- <u>https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/</u> the best place for Veterans and their families to learn about all things Buddy Check Week.
- <u>VA S.A.V.E. Training</u> will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a Veteran who may be in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts. Take the training <u>here</u>.
- VA's Health Care Application Website.
- Find Veterans you served with at https://togetherweserved.com/findpeople.
- Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, <u>Chat Online</u>, or Text 838255.

Newsletter Sample Copy

I Pledge to Talk to 10 Veterans this Buddy Check Week

In the military, we learned to rely on each other. Now that we're out, that hasn't changed. We all need help sometimes, but do you know when your buddies need help?

From October 16-20, 2023, were joining the Veteran community in National Buddy Check week to encourage everyone to check in with their battle buddies or rekindle old friendships.

Will you check-in?

Take the Pledge to Talk to 10

Reach out to your Veteran friends, check in. Talk about your family, where you live now, how life has changed since you were back on base together.

Know How to Help

If you think that your buddy could use some help, tell them about the resources available to him or her.

- 1. 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) is always the right number to call and a great place to get started with VA.
- 2. Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7. Dial 988 then Press 1, Chat Online, or Text 838255.
- Print the <u>VA Welcome Kit</u> to learn more about what VA offers, how we can help, and how to get started.

Take the Training

Do you know the signs of distress? Take this <u>30-minute online training</u> and you'll be an even better advocate for your friends.

Many of your friends may be doing well, but others may need help from the community or VA in some way. Be a buddy.

Learn more about Buddy Check Week at https://www.va.gov/initiatives/national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/

Blog/Article Sample Copy

Buddy Check Week – Talk to 10!

As part of the STRONG Veterans Act of 2022, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is conducting an inaugural Buddy Check Week October 16 – 20, 2023. During Buddy Check Week, we invite all Veterans to complete peer wellness, resiliency, and <u>VA S.A.V.E.</u> training with a pledge to contact or **Talk to 10** Veterans. Our goal is to support peer networking, increase access to Veteran resources, improve mental health, promote suicide prevention, and build connections. VA and partners will provide training tools, resources, and other forums to ask questions and share stories about Veterans connecting with peers and battle buddies.

Everyone can be part of the solution by checking in with the Veterans in their life and encouraging them to reach out if they need help. Many of your friends may be doing well, while others may need assistance from the community or VA in some way. Share the 1-800-**MyVA411** (1-800-698-2411) phone number, VA.gov/REACH website, and VA Welcome Kit as gateways for needed resources.

1-800-**MyVA411** (1-800-698-2411) can help your friends with health care, community care, memorial affairs, crisis, debt management, facility locator, benefits assistance, homelessness, and PACT Act information. Sharing the VA Welcome Kit may also prove helpful for your buddies who need more information on VA services and benefits.

Get Prepared Now

Start by accessing the <u>VA S.A.V.E.</u> training here: <u>VA S.A.V.E.</u> (psycharmor.org). In just 30 minutes, you'll be better equipped to reach your buddies and friends offering the support they may need.

Find Friends

Explore new ways to find your battle buddies and friends using <u>Together We Served</u> and <u>RallyPoint</u>. Check out other Veteran serving organizations efforts such as <u>Buddy Check | The American Legion</u> and the <u>Veteran Wellness Alliance Check In</u> to get involved.

Veterans Crisis Line

Your battle buddies and friends from service may be experiencing a variety of stressors in their life. It's

important to have the right resources handy when talking about life--past, present, and future. The Veterans Crisis Line is the fastest way to get help if your buddy is in crisis or at risk of killing themselves. **Dial 988 then Press 1** if you encounter a friend needing help now.

Social Graphics and Flyers

Below you'll find the primary event flyer and social media graphics:

BEABUDDY NATIONAL BUDDY CHECK WEEK OCTOBER 16 - 20, 2023

TAKE THE PLEDGE! CHECK IN WITH 10 VETS



National Buddy Check Week encourages Veterans to connect or reconnect with their Veteran friends – just to check in.

Take the pledge to **#TalkToTen Veterans** at: <u>VA.gov/initiatives/</u> <u>national-buddy-check-week-talk-to-10-veterans/</u>

If you think that your Veteran buddy could use some help, tell them about the resources available to him or her.



1-800-MyVA411 is a great place to get started with VA, it's always the right number to call.

Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7. Dial 988 then Press 1, Chat Online, or Text 838255.



Get the VA Welcome Kit to learn what VA offers and how to get started. <u>VA.gov/welcome-kit</u>





Scan this code for valuable training to recognize the signs of distress and learn about resources you can recommend to your buddy if needed.



When was the last time you talked to your battle buddy from basic training?

YOU MIGHT BE DOING GREAT, BUT ARE THEY?





KNOW HOW TO HELP.

If you think that a Veteran could use some help, resources are available.



GET TRAINING TO KNOW THE SIGNS OF A CRISIS.

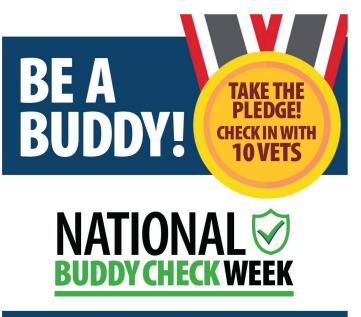
Check-in with 10 of your Veteran friends.











OCTOBER 16 - 20, 2023

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BUDDY CHECK WEEK





OCTOBER 16 - 20, 2023

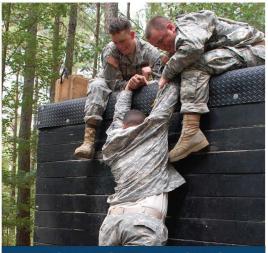
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GET TRAINING TO KNOW THE SIGNS OF A CRISIS.



Check-in with 10 of your Veteran friends.



RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF DISTRESS.



Get training to know the signs of a crisis.



When was the last time you talked to your battle buddy from boot camp?



YOU MIGHT BE DOING GREAT, BUT ARE THEY?



BE A BUDDY!









