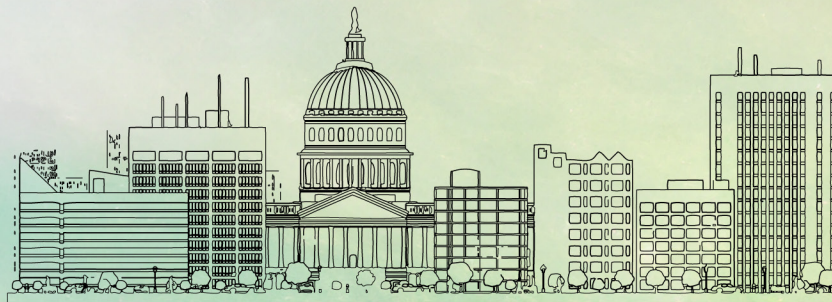


THE  
**BOISE**



APRIL 2024

**FRONT**

★ The official newsletter of the Boise VA Medical Center ★



**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center

MAY IS  
NATIONAL  
**MENTAL  
HEALTH**  
AWARENESS  
MONTH

 **MAKE  
YOUR**  
*Mental Health*  
**A PRIORITY**



**BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER**

**VETERAN APPRECIATION**

★ **FAIR** ★

**Friday, June 28, 2024 ★ 11AM - 1PM**

**BOISE VA PARADE GROUNDS 500 W. FORT ST. BOISE, ID 873702**

*Event is free to attend and family friendly. Event will include:  
representatives of veterans organizations, dunk tank, live  
music, lawn games, BBQ food, prizes, and MORE!*

**For questions, to volunteer, or to have a booth contact Tammy at (208) 422-1175**



**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center





Riding a bike can be very enjoyable experience while helping you achieve your health and fitness objectives. There is, however, risk involved. For instance, you can get in an accident, or you can get a flat tire. The steps that you take to avoid or mitigate those risks are called internal controls.

As America's largest health care organization, VA needs internal controls across our operations. We can all assist with simple activities already put in place by managers, like following a checklist or complying with standard operating procedures (SOP) and ensuring that multiple people confirm key details.

#### **Why do we need Internal Controls?**

"Effective controls allow us to maximize resources and protect the health and quality of care for every patient we serve," says Natalie Bulger, VHA's Director of Risk Management.

While having no controls isn't an answer, too many controls can create roadblocks or even increase risk in the process. When riding a bike, you don't wrap yourself in layers of bubble wrap to minimize all risk of injury because then you can't pedal correctly.

#### **Who is responsible for internal controls and where are they documented?**

Everyone is responsible for implementing internal controls in their own area of responsibility. It usually isn't difficult, but it does require intentional effort. Documentation is key even if it is a practice that is well known and already in place.

Documentation makes processes repeatable, communicates expectations and supports employee success in following procedures. It also provides necessary documentation for external reviews and audits.

Does your workspace have a risk that hasn't been addressed with internal controls? Talk to your supervisor about it first. Contact your [Integrity & Compliance Officer](#) if you feel the risk hasn't been addressed sufficiently.



# COMPLIANCE CORNER



**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center



Congratulations to one of our Clinical Pharmacy Specialist supervisors—Dr. Sarah Naidoo.

She was selected by the makers of the All-Employee Survey (AES)—National Center for Organizational Development—as one of the successful 24 leaders across the entire VHA to be interviewed to learn about best practices when leading a virtual hybrid team. Her workgroup met their inclusion criteria for 1) having between 10% to 90% telework staff; and 2) having positive scores on the 2023 AES in four areas: employee engagement, psychological safety, accountability, and communication. The Virtual Hybrid Teams PDF contain tips and advice gleaned from the interviews. This recognition is a great honor for Dr. Naidoo and for the Boise VA. Leaders like her are helping to improve our employee experience.



Please consider taking the  
survey May 6-28, 2024...

You Speak.  
VA Listens.  
Together We Grow.

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# VA All Employee Survey (AES)

**May 6-28, 2024**

For more information, contact your AES Coordinators:

Alan Hines, MD, x7256; [alan.hines@va.gov](mailto:alan.hines@va.gov);  
Brienne Dyer, PsyD, x7243; [brienne.dyer@va.gov](mailto:brienne.dyer@va.gov)  
Sherry Picotte, Dir Sec; x1100; [sherry.picotte@va.gov](mailto:sherry.picotte@va.gov)

- ✓ Voluntary, anonymous, confidential
- ✓ Look for your workgroup code
- ✓ Make your voice heard
- ✓ Shape your workplace



# BOISE is HIGHLY RELIABLE

High Reliability Organization (HRO)

## PRINCIPLES & VALUES

THEME OF THE MONTH

Deference to Expertise

May 2024 | National Safety Poster

### Engaging Experts to Provide Exceptional Care

C

#### CONTEXT

A Veteran arrived at Lebanon VA Medical Center with severe back pain and very low blood pressure. The Veteran declined help, and when Bridgette Schultz, LPN, inquired about his reluctance to receive care, the Veteran said he had to pick up his autistic grandson from work and his wife from the hospital.

A

#### ACTION

With the Veteran's approval, Ms. Schultz deferred to the expertise of Cheyenne Betancourt, a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) social worker, who quickly arranged transportation for the Veteran's grandson and wife. After the Veteran knew his loved ones were cared for, he agreed to go to the emergency room. Shortly after arriving, doctors discovered he was septic with a kidney stone, and he was transferred to the operating room for surgery.

R

#### RESULTS

Deference to Expertise empowered Ms. Schultz to collaborate with Ms. Betancourt and find a solution that alleviated the Veteran's fears. Ms. Betancourt identified the root cause of the Veteran's hesitation to access the care he needed and arranged safe transportation for his family members to address the issue. This enabled him to receive the care he critically needed.



Bridgette Schultz, LPN  
PACT Licensed Practical Nurse



Cheyenne Betancourt, LCSW  
PACT Clinical Social Worker

“By collaborating across the Patient Aligned Care Team, the Veteran received exceptional care during a dangerous event.”

Bridgette Schultz, LPN  
Patient Aligned Care Team Licensed Practical Nurse  
Lebanon VA Medical Center  
Lebanon, Pennsylvania



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

For more information, visit: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhahrojourny>

Internal VA Use Only

VHA'S JOURNEY TO  
**HIGH**  
RELIABILITY

Your Care is Our Mission.



★ ★ ★

# MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

Monday, May 27th 2024, 10:00 am  
10100 N. Horseshoe Bend Rd Boise, ID 83714

Public Parking & Bus Services will be at  
Optimist Park 8:30am-11:45am



Visit [www.veterans.idaho.gov/cemeteries](http://www.veterans.idaho.gov/cemeteries) for more information





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Julie  
**Stoddard**

Employee of  
the Month  
**MARCH**

I'm nominating Julie for employee of the month for helping save the eye clinic! The call volume has been 60-80 calls a day with Veterans getting discouraged because they have been having a hard time reaching the clinic. Without hesitation, Julie jumped right in to help with the work overload and getting our Veterans called back within a timely manner. The extra help has been more than appreciated!



**Kelsey  
Cosdon**

**Supervisor of  
the Quarter  
QTR 2**



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Medical Center

I would like to nominate Kelsey Cosdon for Supervisor of the quarter.

Kelsey is currently the Nurse Manager for float pool staff and the RNOD's. In addition to those duties, she also organizes the sitter pool for inpatient needs. This in itself is a tremendous amount of work. She works busily but efficiently as an RNOD during the week, running around to all the units to ensure patients are placed timely and accurately on the unit they need to be on.

On one of many extremely busy days when we had patient's boarding in the ER, staff knew that as soon as there was a discharge we needed to get beds cleaned to place these boarding patients in an inpatient room. To expedite the placement of the boarding patients and help the bed makers, Kelsey took it upon herself to clean rooms on the unit. This assured comfort for those patients that had spent all night in the ER awaiting a room.

Kelsey is always looking for ways to improve the care provided to our patients. She also puts together and runs the wound care workgroup, which is working to standardize the inpatient wound care carts and education for staff. She holds quarterly meetings with staff from each inpatient area to receive input and ensure a smooth process for staff. To add on to all her duties Kelsey is now the Interim Manager of the ER, taking on even more responsibility but ensuring the ED staff are supported in their workgroup. Through all of this, she is able to keep a smile on her face and keeps looking for ways to improve care to our veterans and increase staff satisfaction. She truly embraces our Boise VA's ICARE values in everything she does for our veterans and staff.



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## Inpatient Case Manager Group

Unit of the  
Quarter  
**QTR 2**

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**Trisha  
Rogers**

**Employee of  
the Month  
MARCH**



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Trish Rogers has been working as a night shift CNA on 2MS for over a year. Since day one, she has consistently gone above and beyond for both our veterans and our staff on the unit. She demonstrates the ICARE values every shift and is always thinking of ways to elevate our unit to make 2MS warm and accommodating for our veterans. Within the first month of hiring into the VA, Trisha started decorating the unit for the end of the year holidays. She purchased stockings for all staff on the unit and personalized them with their names. Trisha even included our MSA's so they felt like part of our unit.

Trish has also been a member of our newly implemented Shared Governance Council, US Teams. Because of her creativity, she volunteered to decorate the US Teams bulletin board on the unit. The board has evolved throughout the year as the team came up with theme ideas. Trish created a summer vacation board, where staff could post their Summer vacation pictures. This created conversation and camaraderie on the unit as staff got to know each other on a more personal level. She also created a Halloween board where staff could post their favorite recipes. When this was taken down, she sent the unit an email including the recipes that were posted. She also created a board with the theme of recognizing our employee veterans for Veteran's Day. This creation allowed staff across the hospital to post their military service pictures along with the dates they served. Most recently, she participated in the safety board competition for Patient Safety week. She collaborated with other employees to create a fun theme board for this competition. These creative boards have really provided our veteran patients with something interesting and uplifting to look at while they recover on our unit. It also has really brought our unit together and inspired trust and cohesiveness on our team.



Leanne  
**Ertle**

Employee of  
the Month  
**MARCH**



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Medical Center

I would like to nominate Leanne Ertle for employee of the month.

She is a PACT Clinical Pharmacist Practitioner on the Gold Team. She maintains integrity in her work, has a commitment to provide excellent patient care to all veterans and works to earn the respect of her patients. Dr. Ertle often gets praised by her patients. But one patient in particular took the time to describe their experience with

Dr. Ertle. I would like to highlight their words here:

“Leanne Assisted me while changing my diabetic pump. Leanne carefully set up the new device for my personal use and integrated my cell phone with the new insulin pump. I had several issues with the new pump but Leanne made herself available via phone and by previously unscheduled visits. Leanne called me on several occasions to ensure my proper use of the new insulin pump. She quickly returned by phone calls when I had insulin pump issues. I thank the clinic and Leanne for her dedication, professionalism, and expert knowledge of insulin pump technology.”

In addition to providing exceptional patient care, Dr. Ertle is a dedicated preceptor for the Pharmacy Residency Program. She is the ideal pharmacist to model how a PACT CPP should work on a team.



# VA

Boise VA  
Medical Center

## HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



**The Boise VAMC would  
like to welcome our new  
employees who joined  
the team in  
April 2024:**

Alexa Price, Nursing  
Anne Russell, Mental Health  
Austin Beatty, Laboratory  
Emma Bidwell, Health Administration  
Jonathan Miller, Emergency Medicine  
Julie Anthony, Mental Health  
Mary Huntington, Specialty Care  
Michael Fall, Specialty Care  
Shania Hobbs, Nutrition  
Stephen Dunn, Specialty Care  
Tamara Holmes, Canteen  
Vaughn Hyde, Primary Care  
Gavin Kellar, Laboratory  
Alyssa Bell, Mental Health  
Amanda Russell, Nursing  
Ashley Anderson, Nursing  
Ashley Weiss, Mental Health  
Elsbeth Kruger, Pharmacy  
Jessica Bresnahan, Nursing  
Joshua Anaya, Nursing  
Keri Earl, Nursing  
Matthew Olson, Health Administration  
Mindi Gibbens, Primary Care  
Victoria Byrne, Specialty Care  
Paul Lindquist, Supply  
Patrick Bird, Facilities Management  
William Herold, Facilities Management  
Carmen Castillo, Laboratory  
Andrea Douglas, Primary Care  
Carey Osborne, Connected Care  
Sareeta Beeram, Clinical Resource Hub  
Kellie Benjamin, Health Administration



**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center

## HELLO'S & GOODBYE'S



**The Boise VAMC would  
like to say farewell to the  
employees who left the  
team in April 2024:**

**Nimisha Gokaldas, Connected Care**  
**Gavin Kellar, Laboratory**  
**Kathleen Kocur, Nursing**  
**David Wollman, Facilities Management**  
**Gwen Hernandez, Nursing**  
**Lindsay Solfelt, Mental Health**  
**Liliana Alvarado, Mental Health**  
**Alexandra Fesperman, Mental Health**  
**Leah Jackson, Mental Health**  
**Angelia Jones, Mental Health**  
**Marianna Rich, Mental Health**  
**Lawrence Shapiro, Mental Health**  
**Paige Wooten, Mental Health**



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Medical Center

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# 2024 VETERANS LEGAL CLINICS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FREE TO ATTEND  
FOR VETS & SPOUSES

Legal  
Clinics are  
held from 2PM  
to 4PM in Bldg. 54 at the  
Boise VA Medical Center 500 W.  
Fort St. Boise, ID 83702.

Assistance with Estate Planning & Wills are not  
included at these Legal Clinics.

Please contact the Veterans Justice Outreach  
team at (208) 422-1064 to register.

*Space is limited.  
You must register to attend!*

**July 18, 2024**

**Aug 15, 2024**

**Sep 19, 2024**

**Oct 17, 2024**

**Nov 21, 2024**

**Dec 19, 2024**



**PLEASE HELP US SHARE  
THIS OPPORTUNITY  
WITH VETS**



# You have the power to save a life.

Please RSVP before  
April 30th by emailing  
[kelly.corley@va.gov](mailto:kelly.corley@va.gov)  
Space is limited.

## VA S.A.V.E. Training

How to talk to someone in crisis.

**May 6, 2024**

**9:30AM - 12:00PM**

### Boise VA Medical Center

500 W. Fort Street Boise, ID 83702, Bldg. T-111

Caregivers are invited to participate in VA presentation to discuss how we can all be a part in suicide prevention. This will be an in-person, interactive presentation where Caregivers are given tools and resources on how to help your loved ones through any crisis.

S.A.V.E. Training will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter someone who is in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts. The acronym S.A.V.E. helps you remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention.

- S** Signs of suicidal thinking are recognized
- A** Ask the important question - *are you thinking about suicide*
- V** Validate the persons experience
- E** Encourage and expedite getting help



**VA**

Boise VA  
Medical Center





**Save the Date: May 15, 2024**

**14TH ANNUAL NATIONAL VA 2K WALK AND ROLL**  
ENCOURAGING HEALTHY LIVING & SUPPORTING HOMELESS VETERANS

More info:  [va.gov/wholehealth/va2k](https://va.gov/wholehealth/va2k)

# VA2K - May 15<sup>th</sup>

Times pending

VA2K is an annual event to promote VA employees to get out and walk or roll and support our homeless Veterans with donations. Did you know a 2K is 1.24 miles?

Donations for the event are optional and directly benefit homeless Veterans. We'll share more information on upcoming townhalls and staff emails.

Each year we award the biggest team that donates. Last year was the first time in nearly a decade we had a new champion!

**Will your team be the grand champ this year?!**

## 2023 Top Donors:

#1 - 2M Inpatient/RNOD Nursing - 740 Rolls

#2 - Education- 653 Rolls

#3 - Woman's Wellness Center – 410 Rolls

## Biggest walking group - VBA

Last year we had **2,146 rolls of toilet paper** and several other toiletries donated, including from Ride for 22!

# Boise VA

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## WEEK OF WONDER

*Celebrating the Spirit of Inquiry*

WOW Poster Expo - June 5, 2024

LRC 9am-3pm (judging & awards 1130-1pm)

SHOWCASE YOUR HARD WORK & TALENT!

### HOW TO SUBMIT A POSTER

Submit your intent by May 1, 2024

Submit your poster by May 17, 2024

Questions?

Email: [boiweekofwonder@va.gov](mailto:boiweekofwonder@va.gov)

PRIZES  
AWARDED  
FOR TOP  
POSTERS!

### CREATE YOUR POSTER

Traditional posters or other formats (multiple printed power point slides)

### WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

- Healthcare improvement projects
- Unit or department process improvement projects
- Quality Improvement projects
- Evidence-based practice projects
- Research projects
- And more!



## WHEN RIVERS RISE, BE WISE

Rising river flows along the Boise River can increase the risk to public safety, especially for those who recreate near or on the river. The public should use extreme caution or even avoid activity altogether near the river banks.

- Currently the Boise River is **deep, cold**, and **fast** and the river banks may be **slick** and **unstable**.
- It only takes **6 inches** of moving water to knock someone down, and only **12 inches** to sweep a vehicle away.
- Fast water flows can **push debris** downriver, which can **cause injury** or even **trap** an individual.
- Some areas along the Greenbelt may become **submerged** as river levels rise. **Do not** walk, swim, ride, or drive through flood waters. **Turn Around. Don't Drown!**
- **Never** go through barricades, these have been put up to **prevent** individuals from **flooding hazards** that may or may not be apparent.
- Check if you live within the **floodplain** by calling your city or county flood plain administrator. If you live within the flood plain, consider buying **flood insurance**. Typical waiting times for insurance can be up to **30 days**.

For more information regarding flood preparedness, please visit:  
[adacounty.id.gov/emergencymanagement/how-to-prepare-resources/flood/](http://adacounty.id.gov/emergencymanagement/how-to-prepare-resources/flood/)

### References

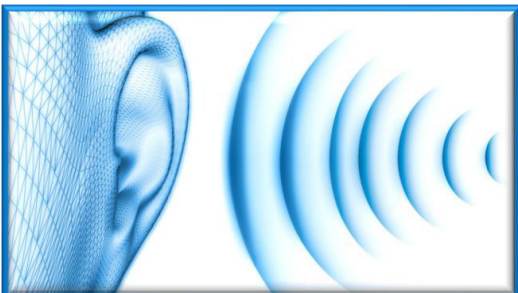
- Ready.gov (2021) Floods. Retrieved from: <https://www.ready.gov/floods>
- USBR (2017) Canal Safety Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/about/otto/facts.pdf>

### CANAL SAFETY

Canals are **NOT** for public use:

- During irrigation season, water in canal systems can be deep, cold, and fast.
- The sides of canals can be very slick, which can make it impossible to climb out of. Never swim, fish, or recreate in any way in canals. Adults, children, and pets drown in canals annually.
- Chutes and siphons in the canal system should not be used as slides to play on or tunnels to explore. They can have hidden hazards such as concrete blocks and other objects that can seriously hurt you.
- The US Bureau of Reclamation provides a canal safety coloring book as part of their canal safety program. Download it here: <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/about/otto/graphics/coloringbook.pdf>





# Boise VA Medical Center

## AUDITORY PRIVACY AWARENESS

All facility employees are required to safeguard and ensure patient confidentiality regarding  
**AUDITORY INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION per VHA'S PRIVACY DIRECTIVE 1605.01**

- ☐ **SOUND TRAVELS.** Use an appropriate tone of voice when speaking with a Veteran in a public area or during check-ins.
- ☐ **DON'T** ask for the full (SSN) when the last 4 or DOB is sufficient.
- ☐ **ONLY** discuss the information necessary to accomplish your task.
- ☐ **DON'T** be afraid to ask other Veteran's in line for clinic check-in to wait a short distance away from the desk until called.
- ☐ **ONLY** call Veterans back to an exam room, pharmacy window or other treatment areas by name.
- ☐ **GO** behind closed doors to have discussions involving personal information of the Veteran.
- ☐ **ALL** staff should refrain from discussing ongoing clinical care in public areas including both Passenger and Service elevators, canteens, lobbies and hallways.

**You cannot guarantee a patient's privacy even when names are not being discussed.**

### How to report an Auditory Privacy Violation

Send an *encrypted* email to:

**[BOISEPRIVACYOFFICERS@va.gov](mailto:BOISEPRIVACYOFFICERS@va.gov)**

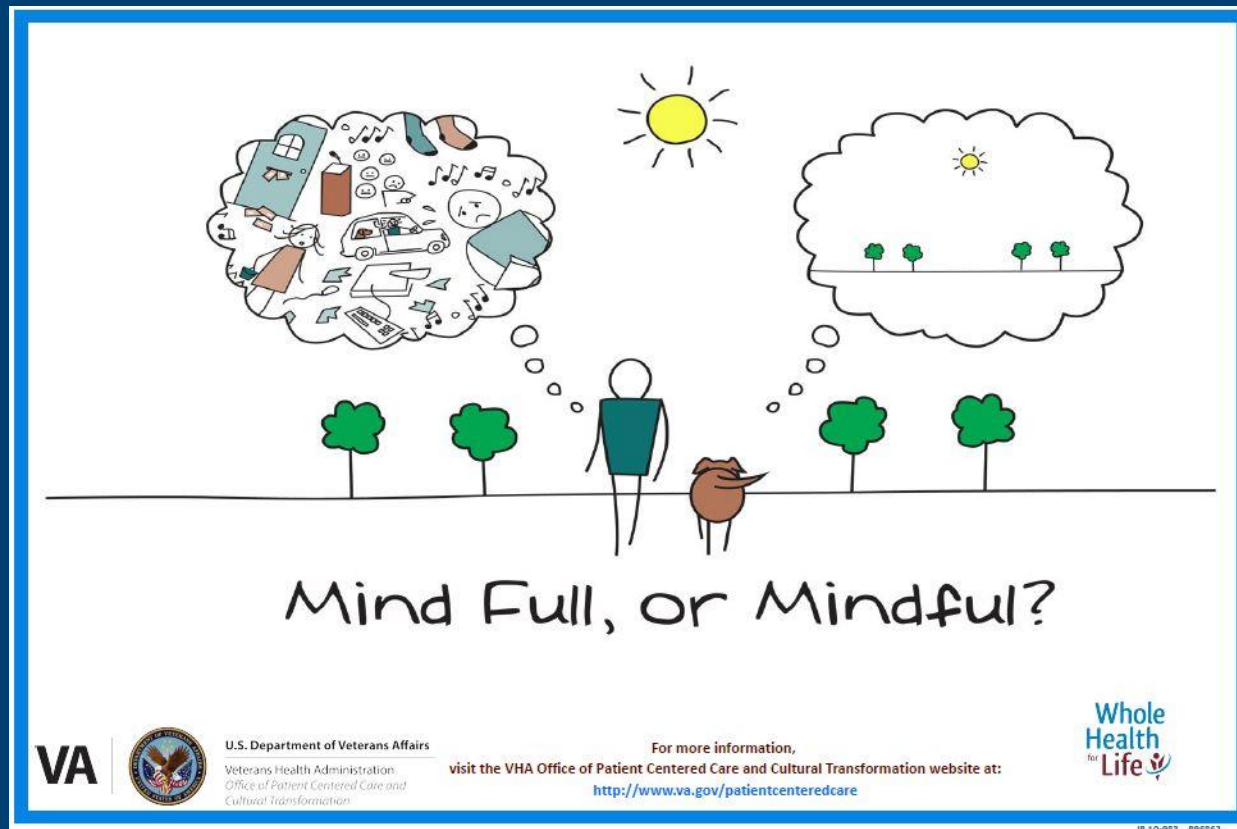
- ☐ Be sure to include the date, time, and location of the violation, who was involved with the conversation, and what was being discussed. Please include as much detail as possible.

**Gina Thruston**  
Boise VAMC Privacy/FOIA Officer

**PRIVACY IS PRICELESS**

# Be Here Now Class

First Thursday Monthly from 12 – 12:30 PM MT



Teams



Meeting Online for VA employees

**Join us for a short mindfulness practice and learn about mindfulness through experience and conversation. Led by Drs. Watford & Brotman.**

DISCOVER  
WHAT MATTERS  
Live Whole Health.

# IDAHO *Women Veterans*

## CONFERENCE



### COMMUNITY, CAMARADERIE AND CONNECTION

Join us for a day of connection and inspiration.  
Registration is free and Lunch is included!



June 8th, 2024



9:00AM - 3:30PM



Warhawk Air Museum  
Nampa Idaho

#### with Keynote Speaker:

Chief of Staff-  
ID Army National Guard

*Col. Nicole Washington*



To Register,  
scan the QR code

or visit

[www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-idaho-women-veterans-conference-tickets-851907547407](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-idaho-women-veterans-conference-tickets-851907547407)

#### Questions, Contact:



Marisa.McCarter@  
veterans.idaho.gov

