

#BeThere Suicide Prevention Communications Toolkit

March 2019 – Community Engagement Models

Principle Message for Community Engagement Models: Each month, the theme of this toolkit aligns with the monthly Suicide Prevention Public Health Educational Series webinar. This month, this toolkit is designed to expose leadership, PAOs, and SPCs to a variety of evidence-based community health programs. Use this toolkit to articulate the various ways a community can be defined, demonstrate an understanding of community health models, and identify the steps needed to turn community engagement into action.

Billboard Kick-Off – National Advertising Campaign and [Blog Post](#). OMHSP recently promoted the #BeThere campaign through a weeklong advertising campaign in Times Square in New York City. Additionally, you can [read a brief summary](#) for more information about VA’s national billboard advertising campaign to promote suicide prevention resources in markets across the country.



Tools for Leadership

Share these useful suicide prevention resources and VA-approved links with your facility.

Useful Resources

Tool	Description	Link/Resource
Executive Order: National Initiative to Empower Veterans and End Veteran Suicide	This Executive Order is a <u>national call to action</u> to end Veteran suicide. Through the Executive Order, the federal government and Veteran-serving communities are able to connect Veterans with resources and support quickly, regardless of whether or not they come to VA for care. The roadmap empowers Veterans to pursue an improved quality of life, prioritizes related research activities, and prompts collaboration across the public and private sectors.	Read the Executive Order news release on the VA website: http://bit.ly/EONewsRelease Read the Executive Order on the White House website: http://bit.ly/EOWhiteHouse View the VA talking points for the Executive Order: http://bit.ly/EOTalkingPointsMarch19
Save the Date: 2019 VA/DoD Suicide Prevention Conference	The 2019 VA/DoD Suicide Prevention Conference hopes to emphasize that <u>everyone</u> has a part to play in preventing suicide. <i>The conference will take place on August 26-29, 2019</i> at a location to be determined. Please consider sending representation from your facility to this conference in August.	http://bit.ly/2019VADODConference

<p>2019 VA/DoD Suicide Prevention Conference Abstract Submissions</p>	<p>As part of their shared mission of preventing service member and Veteran suicide, VA and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) will host the 2019 VA/DoD Suicide Prevention Conference, held Aug. 26–29. We are currently accepting abstract submissions that creatively and innovatively address the public health approach outlined in the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and the Department of Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention. Click here for more information and to submit your abstract.</p>	<p>The deadline to submit abstracts is March 29 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern time.</p> <p>To submit your abstract, click the link below and then click the blue Register icon at the top of the page: http://bit.ly/2019VADODConference</p>
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Stay up-to-date on the latest news!

Check out [VAntage Point](#), VA's official blog, to stay up-to-date on the latest mental health and suicide prevention news. The Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention submits content on a regular basis, so make sure to [click here to subscribe](#).



Tools for Public Affairs Officers (PAOs)

Suicide Prevention Program Updates

Share these suicide prevention program highlights and positive news stories with your fellow stakeholders.

Social Media Safety Toolkit

Social media networks represent an important tool for identifying and preventing Veteran suicide by enabling family members and friends to notice changes in an individual's words and actions. This toolkit outlines the steps you can take to provide support to the Veterans in your life if ever they express emotional distress, feelings of crisis, or thoughts of suicide on social media — helping to keep them safe and providing and encouraging them to connect with resources. Read the toolkit here: <http://bit.ly/VASocialSafety>

Community Outreach Toolkit

This toolkit for community groups who host events to raise awareness about mental health wellness and suicide prevention programs. This can also be used by professionals who need to showcase best practices in health care and substance use disorder treatment for Veterans. Read the toolkit here: <http://bit.ly/CommunityOutreachToolkit>

Community Provider Toolkit

The Community Provider Toolkit supports the behavioral health and wellness of Veterans receiving services outside of the VA health care system. Read the toolkit here: <http://bit.ly/CommunityProvider>

POSITIVE NEWS STORY: VA and Health and Human Services partner for Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Veteran Suicide

In March 2018, VA and SAMHSA introduced the Mayor’s Challenge with a community-level focus. The Governor’s Challenge takes that effort to the state level, allowing VA to work with governors to develop plans to prevent Veteran suicide. Read about the Governor’s Challenge here:

<http://bit.ly/GovernorsChallengeBlog>

VA Pulse Community of Practice Website Coming Soon

VA is pleased to announce a new VA Pulse Community of Practice site that will serve as a one-stop-shop for resources, collaboration, and discussion for suicide prevention teams as they work to advance the public health approach at the local level. Stay tuned for more information and an invitation to the site in the coming months!

Suggested Social Media Posts

Use these VA-approved messages on your social media channels.

ID	Facebook Copy	Link
1	Community providers are essential to the health of Veterans outside the VA health care system. This toolkit will equip you with important information and resources to promote Veterans’ well-being.	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/
2	Suicide is a national public health issue that affects everyone. VA is working to prevent suicide among all Veterans, including those who do not — and may never — seek care within our system.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5woA7SLj4uo

ID	Twitter Copy 117 characters max, unless otherwise noted	Link
1	Community providers are essential to the health of Veterans outside @VeteransHealth. This toolkit will equip you with important information and resources to promote Veterans’ well-being.	https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/communityproviders/

2	Suicide is a national public health issue that affects everyone. VA is working to prevent suicide among all Veterans, including those who do not — and may never — seek care within our system.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5woA7SLj4uo
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Tools for Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs)

Putting Knowledge Into Action

Use these exercises to brainstorm ways to put new strategies and knowledge into action at the local level.

Community Engagement Models Exercises

The EES Community Engagement Models Presentation exposes SPCs to a variety of evidence-based community health programs. At the end of this session, SPCs and their teams will be able to articulate the various ways a community can be defined, demonstrate an understanding of community health models, and identify the steps needed to turn community engagement into action.

Exercise: Take a look at the various community engagement models — **Advisory Committee, Coalitions, Community Mobilization for Change, Social Network Development, Community Action Model, Community Readiness for Change** — described in the [presentation here](#). Since every community is unique, not every model will be right for you and your community. Which model(s) works best for your community?

Exercise: There are several tools that can be of guidance for establishing collaboration to bring about change in your communities. The Collective Impact Forum offers various tools and trainings. It's a place where individuals can come together to share experiences and knowledge, accelerating the collective impact approach. The Partner Tool is a network mapping and analysis tool that helps to identify social networks between interest groups, stakeholders, and community coalitions. Check out both [The Collective Impact Forum](#) and [The Partner Tool](#) to see how they can help you implement the public health approach for suicide prevention in your field and create lasting change.



Community Engagement Models Talking Points

Use these talking points when communicating about VA's suicide prevention efforts and programs. You can also print the toolkit and cut out this section to keep a pocket guide of these talking points handy. Additional talking points can be found here: <http://bit.ly/ToolkitTalkingPoints>.

Community Engagement and the Public Health Approach

- Community engagement is an integral part of the public health approach. Communities have a shared sense of commitment and provides the who, where, and when for change.
- Communities can be defined in many ways. They can be broken down by geographical boundaries and can also be formed by a shared identity of mutual support or psychological identity.
- There are several models that organizations can use to foster community engagement, but not every model is necessary for every community. It is important to understand the needs of your community and in what areas you need additional support. For instance, is your community awareness high regarding readiness for change? If so, the approach for your community may look different than in a community that is not quite ready for the same level of change.

Turning Engagement into Action

- There are many steps needed to turn engagement into action.
 - Knowing your community, building your team, planning for action, implementing the action, and measuring your results help to best create change in your community.
- Collaboration and action can happen when partners in the community understand the issue and are willing to combine efforts to step up and initiate change.

Suicide Prevention Public Health Educational Series

Use these resources to expand your knowledge about VA's public health approach to suicide prevention.

Tool	Description	Link/Resource
Community Engagement Models	This presentation explains how to articulate the various ways a community can be defined, demonstrate an understanding of community health models, and identify the steps needed to turn community engagement into action.	http://bit.ly/CommunityEngagementSlides

Upcoming Webinar

Lethal Means Safety | March 26, 2019 | 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. EST

The purpose behind this one-hour virtual training session is to expose SPCs to lethal means safety measures and increase their confidence when having discussions relating to lethal means. At the end of this session, SPCs and their teams will have a tactical understanding of how to talk about lethal means, including firearms and gun lock safety, as well as detailed information on how to provide upstream interventions for Veterans.

Previous Webinars (Full Recorded Presentation)

- [Introducing VA's Public Health Approach to Preventing Veteran Suicide](#) (Dec. 2018)
- [Data 101](#) (Dec. 2018)
- [Safe Messaging and Media Training](#) (Jan. 2019)
- [Partnerships 101](#) (Feb. 2019)
- [Community Engagement Models](#) (March 2019)

SPC Highlight of the Month

This month's featured SPC is [STACY HOLYBEE, VISN 21](#). Visit our blog on the [Suicide Prevention space on VA Pulse](#) to learn more.

STAY CONNECTED TO US

VA's employee collaboration platform, [VA Pulse](#), is a great way to stay connected to the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Check out the [Suicide Prevention space on VA Pulse](#) to join in on a discussion or get more content, useful materials, and helpful links. Previous *#BeThere Suicide Prevention Communications Toolkits* are also housed on VA Pulse [here](#).

You can now access VA Pulse using single sign-on (SSO) designed to help you get to VA Pulse quickly and conveniently — without using a password. Access VA Pulse with your PIV card by clicking this link: <https://www.vapulse.net>.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Your opinion is valuable to us! Please check out our *#BeThere Suicide Prevention Communications Toolkit* [feedback page](#) to share your thoughts on the format, content, or other aspects of the toolkit. You can share your own idea or vote on ideas submitted by others.

Please join us to discuss all things *#BeThere Suicide Prevention Communications Toolkit*. This is your chance to ask us your questions, as well as discuss the format, content, or other aspects of the toolkit. We want to know how we can help you make the most of this product. If you're interested in joining a call about the toolkit, [please click here](#).

For more information regarding any of these topics or resources, please email Bobbi Hauptmann at Bobbi.Hauptmann@va.gov.