

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE MILITARY-CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Conversations for Everyone

Suicide is a public health emergency in the United States. Data tells us that those in the military-connected community are at increased risk to die by suicide, which has been the case for many years. To put this in perspective, military Veterans make up 7% of the population of the United States, but account for almost 14% of its deaths by suicide.

There are several theorized reasons for these higher rates, including age and occupation, significant stressors related to military service, and stigma keeping those at risk from seeking critical treatment. But perhaps most important, the people of this culture have access to, and familiarity with, firearms. In fact, of Americans who died by suicide, both male and female Veterans used firearms at significantly higher rates than their non-military counterparts.

This is a public health emergency. We know that, while owning a firearm does not increase suicidal thoughts, it greatly increases the chance of dying by suicide. The reasons are clear. Suicide attempts involving a firearm are fatal 90% of the time. There is clear evidence that actively putting time and space between a person at risk and their chosen method for suicide saves lives. How do we do that? We talk to each other. And these conversations are not just for doctors, nurses and psychologists. They are for everyone.

Over 13% of San Diego county residents are military Veterans, making it the third highest concentration of any county in the nation. Psych/Armor has partnered with the Cigna Foundation to provide evidence-based live and on-demand training for San Diegans who want to be part of the solution to end suicide in our local military-connected community.

RESOURCES FOR EVERYONE

Active Duty Resources For Suicide Prevention

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) www.dspo.mil publishes the official annual suicide report for the active duty military forces.

➤ [DSPO CY 2020 report](#)

DSPO has launched the campaign “Simple Things Save Lives.”

We encourage Service members, family members, veterans, and civilians to take the necessary steps to prevent suicide in their community – whether it’s in-person or online. If you see a concerning post from someone on social media going through relationship, financial, work-related, or other life challenges, there are “Simple Things” you can do to offer support, as well as messages of hope and resilience. DSPO’s “Simple Things Save Lives” page gives you the tools to effectively assist those who are experiencing tough times and guide them to the appropriate care and resources. (www.dspo.mil)

▶ [Simple Things Save Lives website and high-resolution video](#)

➤ [Research note about video](#)

Moore, Rose & Neely (2021). OPA Report 2021-055.

Gatekeeper Training

Gatekeepers are those who have face-to-face contact with members of a community who are at risk (VETERANS and their families). They are thought to be vital pieces of any effort to reduce suicide. **ANYONE CAN BE A GATEKEEPER.**

GATEKEEPER TRAINING

A model proposed by the RAND Corporation in 2015 states that studies have shown us there are 4 factors that influence a gatekeeper’s decision to intervene with someone at risk for suicide:

- Knowledge about suicide
- Beliefs and attitude about prevention
- Reluctance to intervene (stigma)
- Self-efficacy to intervene

EDUCATION affects all four of these. And leads directly to life-saving intervention.

Burnette, C., Ramchand, R., and Ayer, L. (2015). Gatekeeper training for suicide prevention: A theoretical model and review of the empirical literature. RAND Health Quarterly: 5(1): 16.

BEHAVIORAL REHEARSAL FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER GATEKEEPERS

FOUR FACTORS influence whether we step in when we are worried about someone in a possible suicidal crisis:

1. Knowledge about suicide
2. Beliefs and attitude about prevention of suicide
3. Stigma about whether you should intervene
4. The belief you can make a difference

Burnette, C., Ramchand, R. & Ayer, L (2015). Gatekeeper training for suicide prevention: A theoretical model and review of the empirical literature. Rand Health Quarterly (5): 1. 16.

HOW DO WE CHANGE THESE FOUR FACTORS? WE PRACTICE.

Studies have shown that gatekeepers of all types, both community members and professionals, benefit greatly from practicing the skills they learn during training for suicide prevention.

Cross, W.F., Seabur, D., Biggs, D., Schmeelk-Cone, K., White, A., & Caine, E.D. (2010). Does practice make perfect? A randomized controlled trial of behavioral rehearsal on suicide prevention gatekeeper skills. The Journal of Primary Prevention; 31(1-2).

GATEKEEPER INTERVENTION

Psych/Armor has partnered with experts in the suicide prevention field to create short, on-demand EDUCATION to increase knowledge about suicide, change beliefs about suicide prevention, and increase self-efficacy as gatekeepers.

Crisis Response Plan (CRP)

- Evidence-based treatment for suicide prevention
- Index card developed collaboratively with any patient you are concerned about
- Used as a tool for individuals who are struggling with suicidal thoughts

SECTIONS OF THE CRP INDEX CARD

Warning signs	
Strategies for managing stress	
Sources of social support	
Reasons for living**	
Crisis/professional assistance	

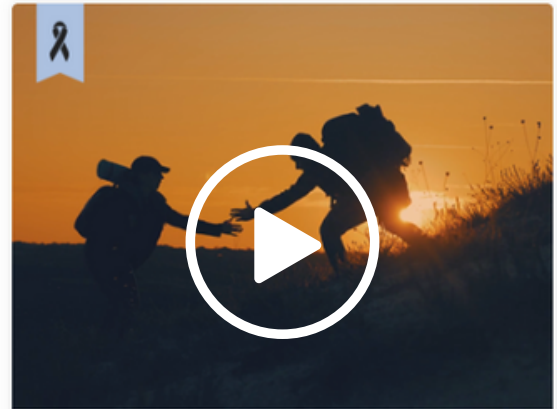
PSYCH/ARMOR'S ON DEMAND COURSES



What Is the Crisis Response Plan: An Introductory Course for People Who Support Veterans

Those who have served, as well as their families, are at a greater risk of suicide than people without...

👤 Craig Bryan, Psy.D., ABPP



How to Use the Crisis Response Plan: An Introductory Course for People Who Support...

In this course, Dr. Craig Bryan discusses the details of the Crisis Response Plan. He then goes through...

👤 Craig Bryan, Psy.D., ABPP

VA S.A.V.E.

VA and Psych/Armor in partnership

- Everyone has a role to play in preventing Veteran suicide
- Know S-A-V-E
 - Signs of crisis
 - Ask the question
 - Validate the person
 - Encourage and expedite seeking help
- Every one of us can save a life



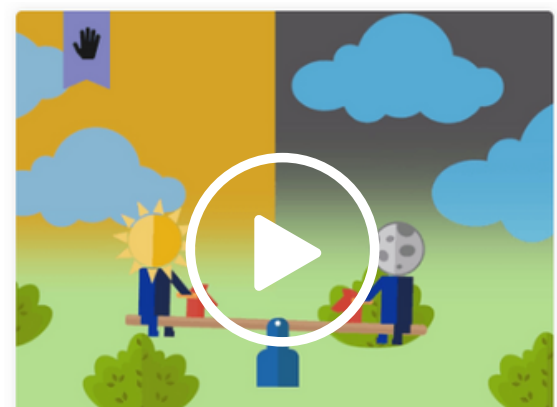
S.A.V.E.

By taking this course you will develop a general understanding of the problem of suicide in the...

👤 Megan McCarthy, Ph.D.

HELPING OTHERS HOLD ON

- Practical tips for everyone regarding how we all have a part to play to influence others
- Ambivalence about wishing to end the pain
- Social support
- Optimism, belonging, meaning



Helping Others Hold On

Compared to the civilian population, suicide rates among the military and Veterans is very high. This...

👤 Craig Bryan, Psy.D., ABPP