

Stand by Them

Show your support for veterans during suicide prevention month

Sep 10, 2012

September is national Suicide Prevention Month, an important reminder that you can make a difference in the life of a Veteran every month and every day. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) needs organizations and individuals across the country to educate their communities about the signs of suicide risk and raise awareness about the free, confidential support available from the Veterans Crisis Line. To accomplish this mission, VA encourages Veterans' communities, friends, and family members to get involved, learn more, and help spread the word to promote mental health and prevent Veteran suicide.

A critical step in preventing suicide is learning to recognize warning signs. Although many at-risk Veterans may not show any signs of intent to harm themselves, there are behaviors that could indicate that a Veteran needs support. In addition to talking about suicide or hurting oneself, some signs that a Veteran may be at risk for suicide include engaging in risky behaviors, withdrawing from family and friends, and feeling hopeless, anxious, and angry. To learn about additional signs that someone may be at risk, go to www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/SignsOfCrisis.

If a Veteran you know exhibits any of these signs, trained professionals—many of them Veterans themselves—at the Veterans Crisis Line can help. Just call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text to 838255 for free, confidential support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Since its launch in 2007, the Veterans Crisis Line has answered more than 640,000 calls and made more than 23,000 life-saving rescues. In 2009, an anonymous online chat service was added, which has helped more than 50,000 people. In November 2011, the Veterans Crisis Line introduced a text messaging service to provide another way for Veterans to connect with round-the-clock support. Qualified and caring VA responders are also able to

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

provide referrals to local VA services and aid Veterans in getting fast-tracked mental health care within VA.

Every American can help prevent Veteran suicide. During Suicide Prevention Month, stand by our Veterans and their loved ones. Spread the word about the Veterans Crisis Line and help make sure that all Veterans know that confidential support is only a call, click, or text away. Go to www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Pledge to take the Suicide Prevention Month pledge and learn how you can educate yourself and those around you about suicide risk and the Veterans Crisis Line.

You can also visit www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/SPMSupport to download free Suicide Prevention Month materials, including posters and flyers that you can print and distribute in your community; online ads in a variety of sizes and formats to display on your website; and, free, ready-to-go content for your Facebook page, Twitter feed, newsletters, or other print materials.

Our Veterans stood by us. Now let's stand by them. Together, we can make sure they get the support they earned and deserve.

Visit www.VeteransCrisisLine.net to learn more.

To learn about additional warning signs of crisis, go to www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/SignsOfCrisis.