

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

August 2025



Support for Veterans. Support for You.

Dear Caregiver,

VA understands that caregivers are our partners in providing care for the nation's Veterans. We also know that it can be challenging to manage both the care of a Veteran and the everyday responsibilities of work and family. We are grateful for the role you play, and we are here to support you.

We recognize that you are the unsung heroes at home, guiding Veterans through their journeys to healthy, fulfilling lives, and helping them cope with both visible and invisible injuries. Invisible injuries, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), can cause emotional distress, feelings of loneliness, and thoughts of suicide. These injuries may also be harder to recognize than visible injuries. As a caregiver to a Veteran, you may be the first to notice the signs of these invisible injuries. You may also be the first to notice any problems with alcohol or substance use.

The VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers includes important information about suicide prevention, as well as evidence-based mental health and substance use disorder treatments that can help Veterans recover and meet their goals. This toolkit also offers resources that anyone can access in the event of a crisis. Please visit MentalHealth.VA.gov/mentalhealth/about and MentalHealth.VA.gov/substance-abuse/treatment to read more about evidence-based treatments.

We also want to help you take care of yourself. Though you may be focused on caring for a Veteran, your own well-being is equally important. This toolkit equips you with information on self-care so that you can get additional support when you need it—helping you remain healthy and strong as you provide care.

The responsibility of caring for a Veteran does not have to be yours alone. The VA Caregiver Support Program provides support and services, including skill-building courses, peer mentoring, coaching, and other resources. A Caregiver Support Program team is available at every VA medical center to provide support to you in your role.

Mental health, treatment of substance use disorders, and suicide prevention are top priorities at VA. Ensuring that you have the resources you need to help the Veterans in your care while maintaining your own well-being is important to us.

We thank you for all you do every day, and we hope that these resources are helpful to you and the Veteran in your care.

Sincerely,

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Prevention

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This toolkit provides caregivers with information about suicide prevention, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment for Veterans. It also addresses caregiver risk for experiencing thoughts of suicide and support resources for caregivers, including self-care resources. A comprehensive resource list for Veterans, caregivers, and their families is included at the end of this toolkit.

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Information for Caregivers About Veteran Suicide

VA aims to prevent suicide among all Veterans, including those who may never seek care within the VA health care system. Every death by suicide is a tragedy, and we remain committed in our efforts to connect Veterans who are experiencing a suicide crisis with lifesaving support. VA realizes no single organization, agency, or person can prevent suicide alone. However, by involving Veterans' family members, peers, and communities, we can work together to reach Veterans before a crisis occurs.

VA knows that a caregiver is a keen observer of a Veteran's physical and mental health and is often a trusted confidant. That is why we want caregivers to have this important information about suicide prevention, including the warning signs for suicide risk and where to get help when it is needed.

Our Approach to Suicide Prevention

VA's comprehensive approach to suicide prevention considers the many factors that contribute to suicide risk and looks beyond the individual—to family members, caregivers, peers, and communities—for support in preventing it. We use the latest available research to develop evidence-based approaches to promote health, prevent disease, and help people lead longer lives.

Evidence-based mental health and substance use disorder treatments focus on helping Veterans recover and meet their goals. To read more about these treatments, visit [MentalHealth.VA.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov) and [MentalHealth.VA.gov/substance-use](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/substance-use).

VA's broad approach is based on the following key areas:

- Promoting secure firearm storage
- Building and sustaining community collaborations
- Expanding crisis intervention services
- Tailoring prevention and intervention services
- Enhancing mental health care access across a full continuum of care
- Integrating suicide prevention within medical settings
- Preventing suicide-related behavior.

[The Veterans COMPACT \(Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment\) Act](#)

A Veteran experiencing an acute suicide crisis can receive no-cost emergency care at any VA or non-VA health care facility. This includes inpatient care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA health care system to use this benefit. The VA COMPACT ACT provides this emergent mental health care for eligible Veterans and certain former service members under 38 U.S.C. 1720J.

Role of Caregivers in Suicide Prevention

Caregivers play an important role in a Veteran's life, sometimes a lifesaving one. Whether you are the spouse, another family member, or a friend of a Veteran, you may be the first to recognize changes in mood and behavior, such as expressions of anger or emotional pain or increasing use of alcohol or drugs. To learn more, visit the "Don't wait. Reach out." website: va.gov/REACH/family-friends.

No matter your relationship with the Veteran, as a caregiver you have a vital role in supporting them and preventing a crisis. Here are some steps that can help:

- Learn about risk factors and how to recognize suicide warning signs.
- Take VA S.A.V.E. Training, which is a free, brief online or in-person course that will help you act with care and compassion if you come across a Veteran who is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide (see the box to the right for more information).
- Attend medical appointments with the Veteran. Talk with their health care team to better understand their care needs and advocate to be involved in their care.
- Encourage the Veteran to pursue mental health treatment, including treatment of substance use disorders.
 - Help reduce barriers to the Veteran seeking treatment when possible (i.e., provide transportation or technology support for appointments).
- Support adherence to medication and to treatment plans.
- Participate in the completion of a safety plan with the Veteran. Be familiar with the Veteran's safety plan so you can reinforce coping strategies. (See **Support A Safety Plan** below on page 7).
- Support the Veteran's sense of connectedness in the community, increasing social support and a sense of belonging to Veteran peer groups or other groups that provide a sense of purpose to the Veteran.
- Discuss lethal means safety, which is secure storage of potentially lethal objects like firearms, medications, and sharp objects that can be used during a suicide attempt. Securing storage of potentially harmful items can help make the home safe and save lives.
- Because many suicide crises are brief, secure storage practices can save a life by increasing the amount of time and space between someone having a suicide crisis and access to a firearm or medication.
- VA's Keep It Secure program ([KeepItSecure.net](https://www.KeepItSecure.net)) promotes awareness about secure firearm and medication storage, the warning signs of suicide, and how to find the support you or a Veteran loved one needs.

VA S.A.V.E. Training

VA's S.A.V.E. training video was designed in partnership with PsychArmor Institute to help viewers learn how to identify when a Veteran may be at risk for suicide and to empower them to play a vital role in suicide prevention.

To watch the video, visit learn.psycharmor.org/courses/va-s-a-v-e.

Caregivers: Partners in Care

Caregivers are advocates and partners in the care of the Veteran. Maintaining communication with members of the Veteran's health care team is an important part of providing the Veteran the best care possible.

- Attend appointments
- Ask questions
- Track medications
- Share concerns with providers

Risk Factors and Protective Factors

Knowing about risk factors and protective factors is key to providing Veterans with support and preventing a crisis.

The presence of any of these risk or protective factors, or warning signs, does not mean a Veteran will necessarily attempt to die by suicide. This is why it is so critical to check in with them when these behaviors are exhibited or these factors are present.

Veterans and non-Veteran adults share many important risk and protective factors when it comes to suicide:

- Risk factors are characteristics associated with an increased likelihood of suicide behaviors. Risk factors for suicide include prior suicide attempts (the period immediately following a suicide attempt is one of high risk); certain mental health conditions or substance use disorders; certain medical conditions; access to lethal means, such as firearms or certain medications; stressful life events, such as divorce, job loss, or the death of a loved one; and environmental factors, such as homelessness, relationship stress, financial strain, food insecurity, and contact with the criminal justice system. For more information and support for family members coping with thoughts of suicide, read VA's resource guide: mirecc.va.gov/visn19/treatmentworksforvets.
- Protective factors, which are characteristics associated with a decreased likelihood of suicide behaviors, can help offset risk factors. Factors that reduce suicide risk include access to mental health care, financial security, access to care for substance use disorders, feeling connected to others, good physical health, access to medical care, stable employment, a sense of spirituality, problem-solving skills, positive coping skills, and social and emotional well-being.

Veterans have unique characteristics and experiences related to their military service that may increase their suicide risk or protect them against it:

- Veteran risk factors include transition-related challenges, PTSD, TBI, and experience with firearms.
- Veteran protective factors include resilience, a sense of belonging and purpose through military service, access to VA mental health care and care for substance use disorders, and positive coping skills learned in high-stress settings.

To prevent Veteran suicide, we must work together in communities across the nation to increase protective factors while decreasing risk factors.

Are you a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one?

- Contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text **838255**.
- Call 911 for emergency assistance.
- Go to the nearest emergency room.
- Find the VA resources nearest to you at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Local-Resources.

Warning Signs

Recognizing the warning signs for suicide risk and knowing how to respond to them are important. Ensure you know how to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness—feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family members and friends

The presence of the following signs requires immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing oneself immediately
- Looking for ways to kill oneself right now
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide in an immediate sense
- Self-destructive behavior, such as problems with alcohol or drug use or carelessly handling weapons

How Caregivers Can Support Veterans

From managing a household and attending health care visits to providing emotional support or hands-on care, a caregiver's list of responsibilities is endless. However, taking a few extra steps with the Veteran you care for can be critical in preventing a crisis or keeping a crisis from escalating.

Support a Safety Plan

A safety plan is important when someone is having thoughts of suicide. As a caregiver, you can help the Veteran create this plan to provide them with a list of coping strategies, sources of support, and resources they can turn to in times of distress.

Veterans who are at risk for suicide, or who have survived a suicide attempt, should have a safety plan in place that they have formulated with their mental health provider. As a caregiver, you can help the Veteran you care for by supporting their safety plan.

The safety plan should be brief, easy to read, and written in the Veteran's own words. Safety plans should be easily accessible to the Veteran and select family members, friends, and caregivers at all times.

A Safety Plan should include six steps:

- 1. Recognizing warning signs:** "These are my warning signs that things are starting to feel out of control."
- 2. Using internal coping strategies:** "When I notice these warning signs, these are things that I can do on my own to help make sure I do not act on my suicide thoughts or urges."
 - Examples
 - Take a walk or engage in some other form of exercise.
 - Develop a healthy hobby, such as dancing.
 - Journal thoughts and feelings.
 - Relax with meditation or yoga.

- Find peaceful focus through spirituality and prayer.
- 3. People and social settings that provide distraction:** “When my initial coping strategies do not fully resolve the situation, I will reach out to others.”
- Examples
 - Go to the gym.
 - Visit a coffee shop.
 - Take a walk in the park.
 - Check on a friend or neighbor.
- 4. People whom I can ask for help if distraction alone doesn’t fully work:** “When I need to talk about how I am feeling, I will contact the people in my life who care about me, are supportive, and want to help.”
- Examples
 - Call a trusted friend or family member.
 - Speak with a spiritual or religious adviser (priest, pastor, rabbi, imam).
- 5. Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:** “When I need to talk to a mental health professional or other provider, I will call one.”
- Examples
 - Call a therapist.
 - Call the Veterans Crisis Line (Dial 988 then Press 1).
 - Call a doctor’s office.
- 6. Making the environment safe:** “To help keep myself safe, I will remove or safely store things I could use to hurt myself.”
- Examples
 - Check the environment for unused medications that can be safely discarded or secured.
 - Secure firearms separate from ammunition.
 - Give potentially self-harming object(s) to a trusted adult for safekeeping.
 - Remove alcohol or other substances that may pose a risk.
 - Post a completed safety plan where it is easy to find and share it with trusted family, friends, or neighbors.

To learn more about how you can support your Veteran’s Safety Plan, view this video: mogovchallenge.com/what-can-i-do.

VA has a Safety Plan mobile app you can download here: mobile.va.gov/app/safety-plan.

To learn more about the importance of creating a Safety Plan that is tailored to individual or family needs and can support Veterans and loved ones in the home who may be in crisis, view this video: <https://youtu.be/pJnMM7Bp72Q>.

Practice Secure Firearm Storage

If you or the Veteran you care for owns a firearm, discussing ways to securely store firearms may help prevent a crisis or accident in the home.

VA respects the important role firearms play in many Veterans' lives and is dedicated to educating Veterans and their families about securely storing firearms in a way that is consistent with each Veteran's values and priorities. Practicing secure firearm storage is important for creating safer homes and preventing suicide.

Securely storing firearms (i.e., locked and unloaded) puts **time and space** between an individual in distress and a firearm. Increasing the time and distance between someone in a suicide crisis and access to lethal means can reduce suicide risk and **save lives**. While some suicide crises last a long time, most last minutes to hours, and a securely stored firearm can buy you or the person you're concerned about time to get professional help.

People who are having a suicide crisis generally do not seek other ways to attempt suicide if they do not have immediate access to the method they planned to use or if safeguards make using that method more difficult. For example, if someone in crisis plans to use a firearm to attempt suicide, they are not likely to try to use other methods if their firearm is securely stored or removed from the home.

Secure firearm storage practices involve using cable or trigger locks and making sure firearms are unloaded and secured, with ammunition stored separately. More information about firearm storage options can be found at the National Shooting Sports Foundation's Project ChildSafe website: projectchildsafe.org.

Veterans and their families, caregivers, and loved ones can request a cable gun lock from any VA suicide prevention coordinator (SPC). Find your local SPC at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Local-Resources. In addition, the National Shooting Sports Foundation website (nssf.org/safety) can help you learn more about effective ways to secure firearms and find storage options that work best for you and your family.

Talking about suicide and securely handling and storing firearms can be difficult, but having the conversation could save a Veteran's life. Here are some key talking points to help you get started: MentalHealth.VA.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/Lethal-Means-Brochure.

Safely Store and Discard Medications

Taking medications is part of a healthy life for some Veterans and their family members. Medications should be safely and securely stored when they are not in use. Caregivers can prevent intentional or unintentional overdoses by managing the Veteran's medication dosages and safely discarding unused or expired medications.

Key Points for Talking About Firearm Safety

The best way to find out if a Veteran you're concerned about has access to firearms is to ask. If the Veteran has access to a firearm, suggest they take the following steps to keep themselves and their family safe:

- Keep guns locked and unloaded so they cannot be accessed by children and unauthorized adults.
- Store ammunition separately from firearms and out of the reach of children and unauthorized adults.
- Regularly reassess steps to ensure secure storage and use of firearms, especially during periods of increased stress or emotional crisis.
- Request a cable gunlock from your local VA suicide prevention coordinator (SPC). Find your SPC using the VA Resource Locator: VeteransCrisisLine.net/Local-Resources.

Caregivers and patients should consult with local VA facilities that can provide information on safe means of medication disposal (i.e., disposal receptacles at VA locations or postage-free return envelopes). More information on medication safety can be found at: pbm.va.gov/PBM/vacenterformedicationsafety/vacenterformedicationsafetyprescriptionsafety. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) website can also help you locate an on-site receptacle in your community: apps2.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e2s1.

Learn About Naloxone Use for Opioid-Related Overdoses

The use of opioids, prescribed or not, comes with significant risks. In the U.S., opioid overdose remains a leading cause of accidental death and accounts for more than half of all overdose deaths, according to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People who use recreational drugs—including cocaine and methamphetamine—or prescription pills not directly obtained from a pharmacy also face an increased risk for opioid overdose as these may be contaminated with unknown amounts of potentially deadly opioids, such as fentanyl.

Naloxone can be lifesaving during an opioid overdose, but many people don't know how to use it. Learn more about naloxone and how it can save a Veteran's life. If there are opioids in your home or a loved one uses recreational drugs or prescription pills that are not from a pharmacy, knowing the signs/symptoms of overdose and keeping naloxone on hand can help save a life.

Naloxone is free to any Veteran who needs it and is enrolled in VA. When used immediately after an overdose, it can temporarily restore breathing and help prevent death. The effects are only temporary, so it is critical to seek medical assistance immediately after giving naloxone.

VA has documented more than 6,200 successful opioid overdose reversals with naloxone. To learn more about opioid overdose and how naloxone can save the life of your loved one, visit MentalHealth.VA.gov/substance-use/overdose.

Encourage Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Substance use disorders (SUDs) can have a major impact on the lives of Veterans and their families. While these conditions are relatively common, many people are not aware that they are associated with increased suicide risk. There are effective, evidence-based treatments that reduce the risk of suicide and premature death from all causes, including those related to SUD.

Effective SUD treatments available through VA include counseling; other behavioral treatment approaches; and medications for alcohol, tobacco, and opioid use disorders. Caregivers can provide information about the effectiveness of SUD treatment and encourage the Veteran to get treatment. Information on SUD treatments can be found at MentalHealth.VA.gov/substance-abuse/treatment.

VA SUD treatment is tailored to individual needs and preferences, including assessment and treatment of common co-occurring conditions, such as PTSD and depression.

Caregivers can find locations for VA SUD treatment at: va.gov/directory/guide/sud.

VA also has specific resources (e.g., quit line, texts) to support Veterans during tobacco quit attempts at: veterans.smokefree.gov.

Assist in Pain Management

Pain can affect sleep, mood, stress levels, and level of activity. Living with chronic pain can also increase the risk for suicide. Caregivers of Veterans experiencing pain can help the Veteran manage the pain and its related effects. Visit va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public for tools, resources, and information on how to manage pain.

Caregivers can find additional information about pain management and resources for complementary therapies, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, and physical therapy, at va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public/Complementary_Treatments.

Access Communities of Support

Caregivers can help Veterans develop a support system and a sense of connection with their community that reinforces safety and comfort by letting Veterans know that someone is there for them. Research shows Veterans with a strong support system tend to have more positive mental health outcomes, including lower rates of suicidal ideation.¹ Communities of support—whether in-person (i.e., families, friends, and neighbors) or virtual (i.e., online or social media networks)—are critical to one’s mental well-being.

Seek Peer Support

During military service, many Veterans had built-in social support and developed unit cohesion, along with a sense of belonging, purpose, and connection. When a Veteran is back home, it may be challenging to find peers who understand their background, military experiences, and how to reintegrate into the civilian community. Caregivers will be among the first to notice Veterans who are missing their peers and can help connect them with peer support.

One source of this support is the peer specialists at VA who work closely with clinical staff, including suicide prevention coordinators, who provide direct support to Veterans. As Veterans themselves, peer specialists can help Veterans identify their own skills and strengths. They may also help the Veteran feel more comfortable talking about topics related to their military experience. Learn more at va.gov/health-care/health-needs-conditions/mental-health.

Find Social Media Support

It is common to find sources of support online, especially through mobile apps and social media. Caregivers are often connected with Veterans in online communities and can provide and promote additional support and connectedness for Veterans through technology.

That is why VA has collaborated with technology organizations—CaringBridge (caringbridge.org), Objective Zero Foundation (objectivezero.org), Code of Support Foundation (codeofsupport.org), and RallyPoint (rallypoint.com)—that share our commitment to preventing Veteran suicide. These organizations are working with VA to promote social connectedness and expand the reach of lifesaving resources through mobile apps and online platforms. Caregivers can use these technologies to stay connected to the Veterans in their lives and to connect with other caregivers and military families. These social media platforms or apps are easy to use and are available at your fingertips. Learn more with VA’s Social Media Safety Toolkit at MentalHealth.VA.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/Social-Media-Safety-Toolkit-FINAL-508-5-24-23.pdf. Find additional information about these VA partners in the resources section at the end of this toolkit.

¹ Adams, R. E., Urosevich, T. G., Hoffman, S. N., et al. 2017. Social Support, Help-Seeking, and Mental Health Outcomes Among Veterans in Non-VA Facilities: Results from the Veterans’ Health Study. *Military Behavioral Health* 5, no. 4:393–405.

Consider Chaplain Support

In times of stress, turning to religious or spiritual care may help relieve emotional distress, foster hope, strengthen faith or spiritual connections, and provide social interaction and support. Daily spiritual practices and engagement in a church or other type of faith-based community have been reported to be generally protective against suicide.

VA chaplains are available as a resource, refuge, or referral point for Veterans and their families and caregivers.

Whether you or the Veteran you care for belongs to a faith community, practices meditation, or simply wishes to seek guidance, VA chaplains provide support and care and can connect you with resources within VA or in the community, including connection to a local spiritual community.

VA chaplains serve in a variety of roles including as a member of the Veteran's clinical care team. They can assist you with decision-making and with communication between you, the Veteran, and health care providers. VA chaplains can also mediate conflicts between Veteran patients, their families, and VA staff members.

In addition, VA chaplains can help interpret multifaith and multicultural traditions and lead observances, worship, prayers, blessings, and more. For more information on Chaplain Services, visit patientcare.va.gov/chaplain. To contact your local VA medical center Chaplain Services, visit [patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/Chaplain Directory](https://patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/Chaplain_Directory).

To help the Veteran you care for access support and connection outside the home, see the information about VA's programs in the resources section at the end of this toolkit.



Information for Caregivers About Caregiver Suicide

VA knows that you as a caregiver—or other caregivers you know—may be feeling highly burdened or distressed by grief, financial strain, neglect of self-care, loneliness, feelings of isolation, multiple caregiving roles and anxiety and/or depressive symptoms. That is why we want you to know about caregiver suicide prevention, the warning signs for suicide risk, and where to get help when it is needed.

Warning Signs

It is not unusual for caregivers to be struggling with thoughts of suicide, so recognizing the warning signs for suicide risk and knowing how to respond to them are important. If you or a caregiver you know is feeling or exhibiting the following warning signs, call or text the 988 Lifeline (see the text box to the right for more information).

Ensure that you know how to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness
- Anxiety, agitation, insomnia, or mood changes
- Feeling there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from family or friends

Any caregiver exhibiting one of the following signs should not be left alone until help is obtained. Dial 911 for immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing oneself immediately
- Looking for ways to kill oneself right now
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide in an immediate sense
- Self-destructive behavior, such as problems with alcohol or drug use or carelessly handling weapons

How Caregivers Can Support Caregivers

The information and recommendations to support Veterans listed on pages 6-12 in this toolkit also apply to helping a caregiver, including you or a fellow caregiver.

Consider these three important truths

1. Asking a caregiver directly about thoughts of suicide does not cause them to start thinking about suicide.
2. Creating a Safety Plan can help keep a caregiver alive (see page 7).
3. Securing firearms and other “lethal means” like medications matters (see page 8).

Are you a caregiver in crisis or concerned about one?

Help is available.

- Connect with a trained counselor at any time by **calling or texting 988**.
- You can also chat at 988lifeline.org.
- Confidential intervention and support are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- Call 911 for emergency help.
- Go to the nearest emergency room.

For more detailed information on helping prevent suicide among caregivers, go to learn.psycharmor.org/courses/va-save-preventing-caregiver-suicide (see the text box to the right for more information).

Evidence-Based Treatments for Caregivers

Evidence-based mental health and substance use disorder treatments focus on helping caregivers recover and meet their goals. Your local Caregiver Support Program (CSP) team can talk with you about mental health care available within VA or your local community to support your recovery and to facilitate your success in connecting to mental health care. Reach out to your VA CSP team if you are already enrolled in the program or visit caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page to identify and contact your local VA CSP team. To learn more about the services your local CSP team can provide, view this two-minute video: youtu.be/CPzrZN5c-zrY.

Take the VA S.A.V.E. “Preventing Caregiver Suicide” Course

This free online video was designed in partnership with PsychArmor Institute to help viewers develop an understanding of the increased risk for suicide in caregivers of Veterans, to identify signs of an at-risk caregiver, and to know the steps you can take to help a caregiver.

Visit learn.psycharmor.org/courses/va-save-preventing-caregiver-suicide.



Valuable Self-Care Information for Caregivers

VA serves more than nine million enrolled Veterans annually. About 25% of these enrollees have reported needing the support of a caregiver. At VA, we know that for caregivers, the stress of managing responsibilities, tasks, and other needs may take a toll—physically, emotionally, and mentally.

With the number of roles and responsibilities caregivers take on, it can be difficult to care for one’s own well-being. Knowing how and when to seek support can be challenging, and life events, careers, families, and other responsibilities or stressors can distract caregivers from seeking their own care. It is imperative to know how to easily find and access resources that may help.

VA offers many services to support caregivers, and staff are available to help them connect to the available resources that best fit their needs. These services are available both in and out of the home to provide the best care.

VA Caregiver Support Program

The mission of the VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is to promote the health and well-being—through education, resources, support, and services—of family caregivers who care for the nation’s Veterans. The CSP is comprised of two programs: Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS).

Caregivers enrolled in the VA CSP can participate in sessions of VA S.A.V.E. Training for Caregivers. To learn more about VA S.A.V.E. Training for Caregivers, visit caregiver.va.gov/support/docs/CSP-VA-SAVE-Training-Cargivers-Flyer-Final.pdf.

Contact your local CSP team for information about how to enroll. Find your local CSP team using the locator tool at caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.

You don’t have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to take VA S.A.V.E. Training. Visit learn.psycharmor.org/courses/va-s-a-v-e to take the course online or contact your local suicide prevention coordinator to schedule in-person training: VeteransCrisisLine.net/Local-Resources.

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) supports caregivers of eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury (including serious illness) in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service. PCAFC is a clinical program that provides enhanced services, including a monthly stipend, counseling and mental health services, respite care, legal and financial services, and certain beneficiary travel benefits, to eligible family caregivers. Some caregivers may also be eligible for health care through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of VA (CHAMPVA). To read more about CHAMPVA, visit va.gov/health-care/family-caregiver-benefits/champva. To learn more about PCAFC, visit va.gov/health-care/family-caregiver-benefits/comprehensive-assistance. For fact sheets and to apply, visit caregiver.va.gov.

Program of General Caregiver Support Services

The Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) supports caregivers providing care to Veterans of all eras who are enrolled in VA health care. No application is required. PGCSS provides coaching and skills training to caregivers, including strategies and techniques in caring for the Veteran's specific needs. Self-care courses focusing on supporting and meeting the needs of caregivers are also available. Topics include Managing Stress, Problem-Solving, Taking Care of Yourself, Handling Emotions, Lowering Stress, and Improving Mood. PGCSS offers an online workshop and caregiver text support, as well as support groups and individual support from clinical staff. VA's Caregiver Support Program (CSP) website offers tips, tools, and other information and services to family members and friends who care for Veterans. To access support and resources for caregivers of Veterans of all service eras or to connect with a CSP team, available at every VA medical center, visit caregiver.va.gov or call VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274.

Maintaining Your Mental Wellness

As a caregiver to a Veteran, it is important to maintain your own mental health. Checking in with your health care provider, seeking support from your friends and community, and finding time to exercise, meditate, or relax are important strategies to consider for increasing and maintaining your well-being. Several VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) resources are available to support you:

- VA's Caregiver Support Line is staffed by caring licensed professionals who can connect you with VA services or a local CSP team at your nearest VA medical center—or they can just listen, if that is what you need right now. Call 1-855-260-3274.
- Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers' Health (REACH) Intervention provides individual support to overwhelmed caregivers of Veterans with dementia, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, PTSD, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Caregivers of Veterans can learn to take better care of themselves and their loved ones by building their skills in stress management, mood management, and problem-solving.
- Building Better Caregivers (BBC) is a six-week online workshop for caregivers who are caring for someone with dementia, memory problems, PTSD, serious brain injury, or any other serious injury or illness. This workshop is geared toward both caregivers of Veterans and Veterans who are themselves serving as caregivers. BBC trains caregivers in providing better care and managing their own emotions, stress, and physical health. For more information about BBC, contact your CSP team.
- VA's CSP Peer Support Mentoring (PSM) Program enables caregivers to receive guidance from VA-trained peers and to share their experiences, wisdom, skills, and passion with other caregivers. Developed to strengthen relationships between caregivers, PSM provides an opportunity for networking and empowers caregivers to help each other.

- Caregivers Finding Important Resources, Support, and Training (FIRST) is an evidence-based group training program for friends and families who help care for Veterans. This program teaches caregivers how to navigate the VA health care system, discover new strategies for caregiving, and connect with other caregivers. Caregivers FIRST is offered nationwide by CSP teams.
- Annie Caregiver Text Program is part of Annie, VA's text messaging service, and it has several text programs for caregivers. Caregivers can receive messages to help them manage stress, take better care of themselves, manage dementia behaviors, and cope with bereavement. Messages may be educational, motivational, or consist of an activity. You may stop the service at any time. Caregivers need a phone capable of text messaging to enroll. Talk to your CSP team to receive Annie text messages.
- Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coaching is a cutting-edge approach to care and supports your health and wellbeing. It centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. A Caregiver Health & Wellbeing coach is your personal guide who works with you to develop a health plan based on your values, needs, and goals. The Caregiver Health & Wellbeing coach uses Circle of Health, a visual tool to help explore connections between important aspects of your life, and Personal Health Inventory, a self-assessment tool to help you create your Personal Health Plan. Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coaches are trained to draw on your strengths and values to optimize your efforts toward achieving your aspirations.

For more information or to access these resources, contact your local Caregiver Support Program team at caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.



Additional Resources

Financial Support Services

VA understands that providing caregiving can affect one's financial stability. Balancing a budget may be challenging, given changes in income or benefits, as well as additional costs. The National Veterans Financial Resource Center (FINVET) provides financial tools in a one-stop website that includes information for Veterans on topics such as paying for essentials, saving money, increasing income, managing debt, and protecting money from scams. For more information on FINVET, visit mirecc.va.gov/visn19/finvet.

The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) website has several videos on legal and financial planning you can view at caregiver.va.gov/support/Caring_for_your_Finances. The CSP site also offers a budget sheet you can download at caregiver.va.gov/docs/VA_Budget_Worksheet.pdf. Along with the USAA Educational Foundation, CSP has developed a series of videos on financial and other relevant topics. To view this series, visit ruralhealth.va.gov/vets/resources.asp#dem (scroll down to see all the offerings in the caregiver video series).

VA Mobile Apps

The VA App Store— <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>—can help Veterans manage their care and stay in touch with their VA care team. There are several apps that can also assist caregivers and families.

PTSD Family Coach

Living with a family member who has PTSD can be stressful. The [PTSD Family Coach app](#) provides support for concerned family members of those with PTSD. The app can help caregivers learn about PTSD, how to take care of oneself, and how to manage the relationship with a loved one. PTSD Family Coach also has information on how to help Veterans get the treatment they deserve.

Mindfulness Coach

Mindfulness Coach was developed to help Veterans, service members, and others learn how to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness has been shown to be effective for reducing stress, improving emotional balance, increasing self-awareness, helping with anxiety and depression, and coping more effectively with chronic pain. The app provides a gradual, self-guided training program that helps users to understand and adopt a simple mindfulness practice. Mindfulness Coach also offers a library of information about mindfulness, 12 audio-guided mindfulness exercises, a growing catalog of additional exercises available for free download, goal setting and tracking, a mindfulness mastery assessment to help track your progress over time, customizable reminders, and access to other support and crisis resources. mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach

Couples Coach

Couples Coach is designed for partners who want to improve their relationship and discover new ways to connect. The app takes users through five levels of expert-written education and engaging behavioral exercises informed by science. Popular exercises, like Using I Messages and Active Listening, are brought to life in a dynamic and interactive format.

Couples Coach pairs up partners as they explore assessments and share results, learn about different approaches to common relationship issues, and review available resources in their communities. It also includes comprehensive relationship information for couples living with PTSD.

Although Couples Coach can help improve communication and satisfaction in relationships, it is not a replacement for face-to-face couples counseling. The app features a couples counseling locator for finding a professional counselor, along with several other local and national resources.

mobile.va.gov/app/couples-coach

Insomnia Coach

The Insomnia Coach app was created to help manage insomnia. The app is based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I). Guided training and tips help track insomnia and improve sleep.

mobile.va.gov/app/insomnia-coach

MHA for Veterans

The MHA for Veterans app was created to allow Veterans to take a variety of mental health assessments from the comfort and convenience of their home. Veterans can complete assessments assigned by their provider and receive scores and feedback in real time on a smartphone, tablet, or computer. MHA for Veterans is not intended to be a replacement for traditional therapy. mobile.va.gov/app/mha-veterans

Live Whole Health

Learn skills to help you reach whole health goals. VA's Live Whole Health app is a free, easy-to-use tool created for Veterans and others who are ready to take the next step in their whole health journey.

Whole health is VA's holistic approach to care that supports health and well-being. Whole health centers care around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. With this app, one can create a personal health inventory, set goals, and learn more about whole health. The Live Whole Health app is not meant to replace professional care. mobile.va.gov/app/live-whole-health

VA Video Connect

Veterans can quickly and easily meet with their VA care team over a secure and private video connection using their smartphone, tablet, or computer. And with the Caregiver Connect scheduling option, you can invite up to five guests, such as your caregiver or family member, to attend your VA video telehealth visits. mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect#features

Respite

Respite is a period of rest or a break from caregiving. Whether it is for a few hours or a few days, respite can help caregivers take time for themselves. The Caregiver Support Program encourages every caregiver to incorporate respite into their lives and created the Caregiver Respite Tool you can download at caregiver.va.gov/support/docs/docs2024/Caregiver-Respite-Tool-2022.pdf#. Respite can help relieve stress, restore energy, and promote a sense of balance in life. It is important for caregivers to take a break from providing care by accepting the support of available family or friends who can care for the Veteran and/or scheduling care through a professional agency.

Self-Guided Respite

Self-guided respite is the practice of building a self-focused activity into your normal day. An example of this could be waking up before the Veteran you provide care for to engage in an activity that attends to your spiritual or physical health. It could be as simple as taking a few moments to meditate or pray, do yoga, take a walk, or read a book.

Informal Respite

Informal respite is non-paid help from friends or loved ones who may visit with a Veteran on a regular basis while a caregiver leaves the home to engage in hobbies or interests. Some examples include an adult child providing care for a Veteran while the caregiver attends their own medical appointments, or a neighbor who assists with chores, such as grocery shopping or mowing your lawn.

Formal Respite

Formal respite care is short-term paid assistance from a professional.

VA Respite Care

VA's Respite Care program pays for care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a few days. Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages and their caregiver.

There are two types of VA respite:

- Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a person to come to a Veteran's home or for a Veteran to go to an adult day health care program while their family caregiver takes a break or runs errands.
- Nursing Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a Veteran to go to a nursing home for several days to give a caregiver an extended break from caregiving. Nursing home respite may take place in a VA Community Living Center or a community nursing home and is available for a maximum of 30 days each calendar year. This type of respite should be scheduled in advance. Services may vary by location.

The Respite Care program is for Veterans who need help with activities of daily living. Examples include help with bathing, dressing, or fixing meals. This program is also for Veterans who are isolated or whose caregiver is experiencing burden. Respite Care can be used in combination with other home- and community-based services.

Respite Care can help lower the stress that Veterans and their family caregiver may feel when managing a Veteran's short-term or long-term care needs at home. To learn more, visit caregiver.va.gov/support/Respite.

VA Resources

Resource	Description	URL
VA Suicide Prevention	VA's top clinical priority is preventing suicide among all Veterans—including those who do not, and may never, seek care within the VA health care system. You can explore suicide prevention resources to build networks of support among community-based organizations, Veterans Service Organizations, health care providers, and other members of your community to strengthen protective factors for Veterans.	MentalHealth.VA.gov/suicide_prevention
Veterans Crisis Line	If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, Dial 988 then Press 1 , chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat , or text 838255 .	VeteransCrisisLine.net
Compassionate Contact Corps	The Compassionate Contact Corps provides phone and video visits between trained volunteers and Veterans referred to the program through one of their VA clinicians (e.g., physician, social worker). This program primarily benefits lonely and socially isolated Veterans but does offer some caregiver respite as well. The program matches volunteers and Veterans through shared interests. The training guide was designed through a partnership between Center for Development and Civic Engagement (formerly VA Voluntary Service) and numerous internal VA partners. It is also an American Red Cross "Signature Program." The goal is to accommodate all Veterans who have been referred and would benefit from this social prescription program. If a referral is made for a Veteran and the facility does not have a program, Center for Development and Civic Engagement will place the Veteran with another virtual volunteer through one of our implementation mentors.	blogs.va.gov/VAntage/81831/vas-compassionate-contact-corps
<i>Don't wait.</i> Reach out.	The " <i>Don't wait.</i> Reach out." campaign encourages Veterans to seek support before their challenges become overwhelming. By connecting Veterans with resources for employment, housing, mental health, and more, the campaign ensures Veterans know help is available—whenever and however they need it.	va.gov/REACH va.gov/REACH/family-friends

VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

Resource	Description	URL
National Veterans Financial Resource Center (FINVET)	FINVET provides financial tools in a one-stop website that includes information for Veterans on topics such as paying for essentials, saving money, increasing income, managing debt, and protecting money from scams.	mirecc.va.gov/visn19/finvet
Make the Connection	This online resource connects Veterans, their family members and friends, and other supporters with information and solutions to issues affecting their lives.	MakeTheConnection.net
Secure Firearm Storage for Children of Veterans	This fact sheet provides important information on the risks of firearms in the home to children and the community, to include firearms accessed by children involved in school shootings. It includes secure firearm storage options for consideration.	mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/docs/STO RES-children-flyer.pdf
Secure Firearm Storage for Families of Veterans	This fact sheet provides essential information on the risks of firearms in the home to all family members, to include risk of self-harm for teenagers. It provides secure firearm storage options and questions you can ask if you are concerned a family member may be experiencing thoughts of suicide.	mirecc.va.gov/VISN16/docs/STO RES-family-flyer.pdf
The PACT Act	The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. This law helps provide generations of Veterans and their survivors with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve.	va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits
VA Caregiver Support Program	<p>The VA Caregiver Support Program offers a wide array of services to support caregivers. Caregivers of Veterans of all service eras can find tips, tools, videos, and links to resources on the website or call VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274. Every VA facility has a Caregiver Support Program team coordinator to assist family caregivers with support and services.</p> <p>The online directory of VA Caregiver Support Program team coordinators is searchable by state and U.S. territory: caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.</p>	caregiver.va.gov
VA Chaplain Support	<p>VA chaplains assist in meeting the spiritual health care needs of Veterans. Chaplains provide support and care and can connect Veterans and families with resources within VA or in the community.</p> <p>Every VA medical center has chaplain coverage 24 hours a day and spaces for prayer and meditation.</p>	patientcare.va.gov/chaplain

VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

Resource	Description	URL
VA Mental Health	VA has a variety of mental health resources, information, treatment options, and more—all accessible to Veterans, Veterans' supporters, and the general public.	MentalHealth.VA.gov
VA National Center for PTSD	The VA National Center for PTSD is the world's leading research and education center of excellence on PTSD and traumatic stress. Visitors can sign up to receive research updates, find a provider, get tips and tools, and more. Information on evidence-based treatments is provided in the video "'Evidence-Based' Treatment: What Does It Mean?" and other brief videos about evidence-based treatments for posttraumatic stress disorder.	ptsd.va.gov ptsd.va.gov/appvid/video
VA Pain Management	VA provides links to resources on pain management, including complementary pain management treatments such as physical therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, whole health, and mindfulness.	va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public/Complementary Treatments
VA Resource Locator	This tool can help you find your local VA suicide prevention coordinator (SPC), from whom you can request free cable gun locks and VA S.A.V.E. Training. This tool will also help you locate your local VA crisis centers, VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, Vet Centers, Veterans benefits offices, and other community-based services in your area. In addition, the resource locator connects you with local support available through VA, the National Resource Directory, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.	VeteransCrisisLine.net/Local-Resources
VA Resources for Substance Misuse, Opioid Overdose Education, and Naloxone Distribution	This site provides information on how to reduce harm and the risk of life-threatening opioid-related overdoses and deaths among Veterans through opioid education and naloxone training.	MentalHealth.VA.gov/mentalhealth/substance-abuse pbm.va.gov/PBM/academicdetailingservice/Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution
VA Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Locator and Services	There are proven ways to help Veterans recover from alcohol or drug use disorders. VA has many resources to help Veterans and their loved ones get answers to their questions, find support, access treatment, and recover. These links connect you with information about effective substance use disorder (SUD) treatments available through VA and locations for VA SUD treatment.	MentalHealth.VA.gov/substance-abuse/treatment va.gov/directory/guide/sud

Resource	Description	URL
Veterans COMPACT Act (Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment)	The VA COMPACT Act expands Veteran access to emergency suicide care for an acute suicide crisis at a non-VA facility (Veteran eligibility and medical criteria apply). Veterans in suicide crisis can go to any health care facility—a VA or community facility—for emergency health care. This includes ambulance transportation and related prescriptions, as well as inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days. A Veteran can also obtain crisis-related outpatient care for up to 90 days at no out-of-pocket cost.	va.gov/files/2024-03/COMPACT%20201%20-%20VAMC%20Veteran%20and%20Eligible%20Individual%20FAQs_v5%20%28002%29.pdf

Additional Resources

Resource	Description	URL
AARP	AARP’s “Military Caregiving Guide: For Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families” addresses five key issues that family caregivers face.	aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/caregiving/2019/05/military-caregiving-guide-aarp.pdf
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)	VA, the U.S. Department of Defense, and AFSP are working together to prevent service member and Veteran suicide by building a nationwide community empowered by research and education. AFSP has chapters across the country with volunteers that provide support and services in their communities.	afsp.org
CaringBridge	VA works with global nonprofit social network CaringBridge to strengthen Veterans’ connections and communication with their support networks. CaringBridge provides free and secure personal websites as dedicated platforms for families and friends to communicate with and support loved ones during their health care journeys.	caringbridge.org
Centerstone	Centerstone’s Military Services network includes more than 1,000 health care providers who serve all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Centerstone connects active military, Veterans, and their families with counseling, housing assistance, employment guidance, therapeutic retreats, and more.	centerstone.org/locations/military-services
Code of Support Foundation PATRIOTlink®	Code of Support Foundation’s PATRIOTlink® helps ensure service members, Veterans, and their families get the holistic support they need to successfully transition back into civilian life.	patriotlink.org
Cohen Veterans Network	Cohen Veterans Network Inc., a not-for-profit philanthropic organization, was created to serve Veterans and their families by providing high-quality, accessible, and integrated mental health care. Through client-centered, customized outpatient care, the organization supports Veterans and their families as they begin their next mission: healthy and happy lives.	cohenveteransnetwork.org
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	DAV provides services and support for caregivers of severely disabled Veterans. The Veterans Service Organization provides advocacy for caregiver benefits, as well as education and other caregiver resources.	dav.org/caregiver

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Easterseals	Easterseals supports family caregivers, including caregivers to the nation's Veterans. Support and resources for military caregivers include free caregiving webinars, military caregiver training, and respite care.	easterseals.com/get-support/areas-of-support/caregiving-services
Elizabeth Dole Foundation	Founded by Sen. Elizabeth Dole in 2012, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation adopts a comprehensive approach to advocacy, working with leaders in the public, private, nonprofit, and faith communities to recognize military caregivers' service and promote their well-being.	elizabethdolefoundation.org
Firearm Life Plan	The Firearm Life Plan site and its associated resources was developed to help people think about important questions related to their firearms and protect their families from the burden of making difficult decisions without guidance. A Firearm Life Plan is a voluntary, personal plan made between a firearm owner and those they trust. A Firearm Life Plan will help a firearm owner be prepared. The Firearm Inventory worksheet outlines what someone wants done with their firearms and when. The Legacy Map lets someone share the importance of firearms in their life and preserve their memories.	firearmlifeplan.org
FORGE VFR (Veterans & First Responders)	FORGE VFR is a Veteran-owned and -operated organization that provides dual treatment for service members, Veterans, first responders, and their families dealing with substance use and behavioral health issues.	forgehealth.com/vfr
George W. Bush Presidential Center: Veteran Wellness Alliance	Veterans often have a specific set of needs in searching for a health care provider. National or community-based providers in the Veteran Wellness Alliance are trusted sources of information and resources for addressing the invisible wounds of war.	bushcenter.org/publications/veteran-wellness-alliance-best-in-class-peer-based-networks-and-care-providers-addressing-veterans-mental-health-barriers
Hidden Heroes (Elizabeth Dole Foundation)	Hidden Heroes seeks to raise awareness of the issues military caregivers can face every day. This seeks to inspire individuals, businesses, communities, and civic, faith, and government leaders to act in supporting military caregivers in their community.	elizabethdolefoundation.org/hidden-heroes

VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

Hiring Our Heroes	The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation’s Hiring Our Heroes initiative is a nationwide effort to connect Veterans, service members, and military spouses with meaningful employment opportunities.	hiringourheroes.org
Lock to Live	Lock to Live is a web-based tool that can help you make decisions about temporarily reducing access to potentially dangerous things, like firearms, sharp objects, or other household items.	lock2live.org
Military & Veteran Caregiver Experience Map (Elizabeth Dole Foundation)	VA partnered with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Philips to develop the Caregiver Journey Map for military and Veteran caregivers. The map provides a way to document the caregiver journey and provides guidance on how caregivers’ evolving experiences affect their lives. It also provides information at key points in a caregiver’s journey and details opportunities for intervention through different levels of care and support.	caregiverjourney.elizabethdolefoundation.org
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)	NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI Family Support Group is a support group for family members, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions. Groups meet weekly, every other week, or monthly, depending on location. Find a local group here: nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups .	nami.org
National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF)	VA and NSSF are working together to educate Veterans and their families about ways to prevent suicide by firearm. VA’s partnership with NSSF helps educate communities and the firearm industry about the warning signs related to suicide, the secure storage of firearms, and where to go for suicide prevention resources.	nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention
Objective Zero Foundation	The Objective Zero app connects service members, Veterans, and their family members and caregivers with peer support through videoconferencing, voice calls, and text messaging. Users also get free access to resources on mental health and wellness.	objectivezero.org/app

VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

Paralyzed Veterans of America	Paralyzed Veterans of America provides caregiver resources and offers support to Veterans and their families through employment services, legal services, assistance with benefits, and more.	pva.org/find-support/caregiver-support
PsychArmor	VA S.A.V.E. Training is a free, brief online or in-person course that will help you act with care and compassion if you come across a Veteran who is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to take VA S.A.V.E. Training.	learn.psycharmor.org/courses/va-s-a-v-e
PsychArmor – VA S.A.V.E. Preventing Caregiver Suicide	After taking this PsychArmor course, you will develop an understanding of the increased risk for suicide in military and Veteran caregivers, identify the signs of an at-risk Veteran caregiver, and know steps you can take to help a Veteran caregiver.	learn.psycharmor.org/courses/va-save-preventing-caregiver-suicide
RallyPoint	RallyPoint is a social network that connects service members and Veterans to discuss military life, share information, and exchange stories. RallyPoint is a niche military platform with content curated by the military, for the military. The RallyPoint community uses its shared experiences to create a diverse online culture rooted in support and trust, regardless of branch, generation, or rank.	rallypoint.com
Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC) for Veteran Suicide Prevention	Rocky Mountain MIRECC offers free, online resources for Veterans and their families and caregivers, including “Suicide Prevention: A Guide for Military and Veteran Families.”	mirecc.va.gov/visn19/education/media
Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers	<p>The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers' programs include Dealing with Dementia, Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging Care Consultation, Rosalynn Carter Institute REACH (Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health), and Operation Family Caregiver.</p> <p>Operation Family Caregiver is a free program for anyone caring for a family member or friend with an injury due to military service from any era. It includes not only visible injuries but also invisible injuries, such as PTSD, major depression, or a traumatic brain injury.</p>	rosalynncarter.org

VA Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

Semper Fi & America's Fund	Semper Fi & America's Fund provides direct financial assistance and vital programming for combat-wounded, critically ill, and catastrophically injured service members and their families during hospitalization.	thefund.org
The Independence Fund	The Independence Fund assists severely wounded Veterans of any era, their caregivers, and the entire family of the wounded Veteran. The whole-family approach provides the best chance for sustained success in the Veteran's recovery.	independencefund.org/pages/caregiver-program
Veteran Spouse Network (VSN)	VSN facilitates a community of peer support for military and Veteran spouses and committed partners, providing opportunities to engage and connect to helpful resources and a community of support. VSN offers training in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM). These trainings provide attendees with tangible skills needed to identify, understand, and be involved in safety planning, as well as respond to signs of suicide risk and mental health challenges.	Veteranspousenetwork.org
What Can I do?	This brief seven-minute training video is to help individuals support someone they know who may be struggling with a suicide crisis and has safety plan. A safety plan is a brief intervention to help those experiencing self-harm and thoughts of suicide. It is a set of coping strategies and resources an individual can use to decrease their risk of suicide-related behavior.	mogovchallenge.com/what-can-i-do
Worried About a Veteran	Worried About a Veteran is a website that contains videos of loved ones starting the conversation with a Veteran about secure storage of firearms, information on the warning signs of suicide, and support resources on safeguarding your home and loved ones.	worriedaboutaveteran.org/startin-g-the-conversation/
Wounded Warrior Project® Warrior Care Network®	Wounded Warrior Project® has partnered with four world-renowned academic medical centers to form the Warrior Care Network® to heal invisible wounds of service and improve the psychological healing of the nation's Veterans. The Warrior Care Network® program provides Veterans who are living with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and related conditions with a year's worth of mental health care during a two- to three-week intensive outpatient program that combines evidence-based treatments with alternative therapies.	woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/warrior-care-network

Notes



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs