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2024

Statewide Symposium in Support of Service Members, Veterans & Their Families

April 17-18 | Phoenix, Arizona

arizona coalition
for military families





Risk Reduction

*Non-Clinical Community Based Effort

Session 1

VA Suicide Prevention 2.0



Facilitators



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RISK REDUCTION MANAGER

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VA



U.S. Department
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Working Together Toward Preventing Suicide: Community Engagement and Partnerships

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VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Working Together Toward Preventing Suicide: Community Engagement and Partnerships

VISN 22 VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network
Serving Southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico

Overview

- Suicide Prevention: A National Public Health Issue & Key Data
- Suicide Prevention 2.0: Community Based-Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) & 3 Priority Areas
- Community Engagement and Partnerships Program
- VISN 22 Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalitions
- Suicide Prevention Coalition Showcase & Panel Discussion
- VHA Suicide Prevention Resources

Suicide Prevention: A National Public Health Issue & Key Data

Suicide is a National Public Health Issue

- Suicide is a national public health issue, affecting both the Veteran and general population.
- Societal factors may also impact suicide risk, such as economic disparities, race, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, homelessness, social connection, isolation, health and well-being.
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has also placed additional strain on individuals and communities across the nation.
- One suicide is heartbreaking, notably affecting an estimated 135 surviving individuals for each death by suicide.

High-Level Data Points

Suicide mortality increased for Veterans and non-Veteran U.S. adults from 2020 to 2021

- The age- and sex-adjusted suicide rate for Veterans rose 11.6% from 2020 to 2021, and for non-Veteran U.S. adults, the adjusted rate rose 4.5%.

Count and rate

- There were 6,392 Veteran suicide deaths in 2021. This was 114 more than in 2020.
- There were 6,042 suicide deaths among Veteran men and 350 suicide deaths among Veteran women.
- In 2021, the unadjusted rate of suicide for Veterans was 33.9 per 100,000, up from 32.6 per 100,000 in 2020.

Leading cause of death and years of life lost

- In 2021, suicide was the 13th-leading cause of death for Veterans overall.
- Suicide was the fourth-leading cause of years of potential life lost (YPLL) in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, suicide was the fifth-leading cause of YPLL.

Method

- Among U.S. adults who died from suicide in 2021, firearms were more commonly involved among Veteran deaths (72.2%) than among non-Veteran deaths (52.2%).

Why?

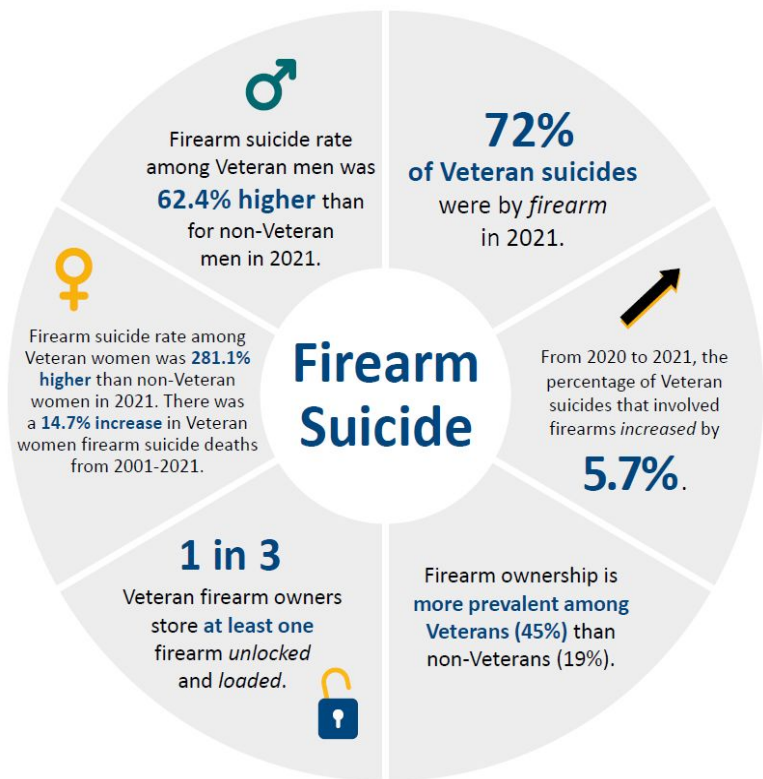


- COVID-19
- Veteran Mortality (All Cause, +13.7%)
- Financial Strain
- Housing Instability
- Sociopolitical Instability/Volatility
- Anxiety & Depression
- ETOH (ethyl alcohol) Misuse/Abuse
- Family Relationship Strain
- Firearm Access

- Health Care Use
- Social Support
- Community Integration
- Firearm Secure Storage



How?



Suicide Prevention 2.0: Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) & 3 Priority Areas

Public Health Strategy

VA's public health strategy combines partnerships with communities to implement tailored, local prevention plans while also focusing on evidence-based clinical strategies for intervention. Our approach focuses on both what we can do now, in the short term, and over the long term, to implement VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.



KEY TENETS

1

Suicide is preventable.

2

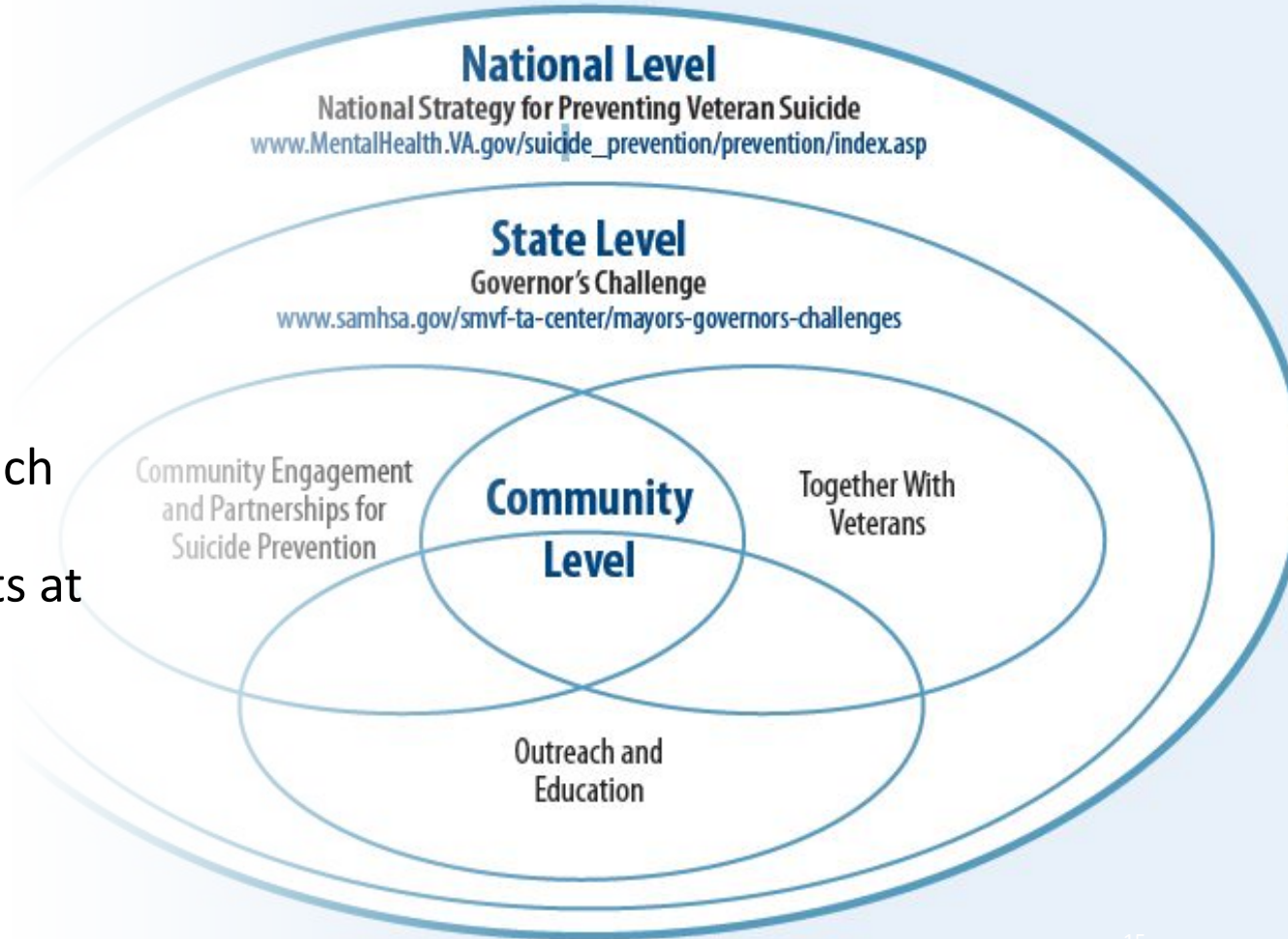
Suicide prevention requires a public health approach, combining clinical and community-based approaches.

3

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.

How It Works

•VA uses evidence-based interventions to reach Veterans through multiple touchpoints at the local, state, and national levels.



Priority Areas & CDC Strategies are Complementary



Suicide
Prevention
RESOURCE FOR ACTION



Identify Service Members, Veterans, and their Families and Screen for Suicide Risk

- Improve Access and Delivery of Suicide Care
- Identify and Support People at Risk



Promote Connectedness and Improve Care Transitions

- Improve Access and Delivery of Suicide Care
- Promote Healthy Connections
- Teach Coping and Problem-Solving Skills
- Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risk



Increase Lethal Means Safety and Safety Planning

- Improve Access and Delivery of Suicide Care
- Create Protective Environments

Community Engagement and Partnerships Program

Suicide Prevention Team Integration and Coordination

Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinators (CEPC)

- Establish New Community Coalitions / Support Existing Coalitions
- Facilitate Community, Regional, and State-Level Efforts to Implement Evidence-Informed Community-Based SP Practices
- Bolster the public health approach through:
Community engagement, coalition building, needs assessment and environmental scans, action planning, implementation of systems and community-level change initiatives, program evaluation, and sustainment of community efforts/coalitions



Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC)

- Enhanced Care Management of Veterans at High Risk of Suicide
- Facility Suicide Prevention Program Coordination and Implementation of Clinical Evidence-Based Practices for SP
- Veterans Crisis Line Facility Consultant
- Community Outreach and Education
- Facility Suicide Prevention Training

Both SPCs and CEPCs work together to fully implement the public health approach combining community and clinical interventions to reach all Veterans across the universal, selective and indicated populations.

Community Engagement and Partnership Coordinator (CEPC) Overview

Enhance & Expand

Current VA
Suicide
Prevention
efforts

Active Member

of the local VA
Suicide
Prevention team

Non-Clinical Role

100%
Administrative

Educate on Suicide Prevention

Strategies, crisis
management
and program
evaluation

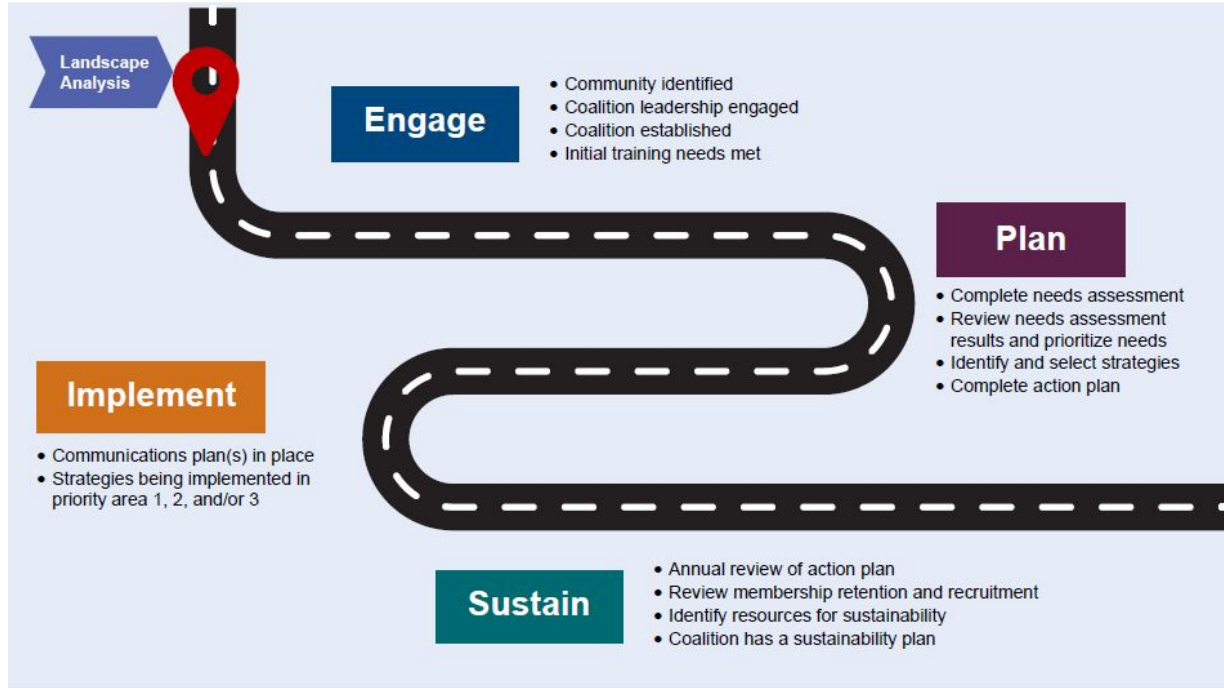
Coalition Building

Actively work
with key
partners at the
community,
state & VISN
levels

Public Health

Planning,
Partnership &
Collaboration
for suicide
prevention

CBI-SP Coalition Phases & Milestones



VISN 22 Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalitions

VISN 22 Arizona Suicide Prevention Coalitions Overview: 12

Prescott	Phoenix	Tucson
2 suicide prevention coalitions	4 suicide prevention coalitions	6 suicide prevention coalitions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. La Paz Homeless Coalition 2. Dinenaazbaa Partnership (Navajo Warrior) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City of Buckeye 2. City of Glendale 3. Universal Health Services 4. Phoenix Valley Clinical Coalition 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. End Veteran Suicide 2. Operation Mental Health: We Got Your 6 3. Alliance for Whole Health and Well-Being 4. Southern Arizona Hospital Alliance 5. Southern Arizona Veterans Healing Project 6. Governor's Challenge Arizona Veterans Supportive Employer

Suicide Prevention Coalition Showcase & Panel Discussion

End Veteran Suicide (Tucson)

Universal Health Services (Phoenix)



VHA Suicide Prevention Resources

Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365

Be prepared.
Save the number.
Dial 988 then Press 1



- **Veterans**
- **Service members**
- **Family members**
- **Friends**
- **Coworkers**

VA SAVE Training

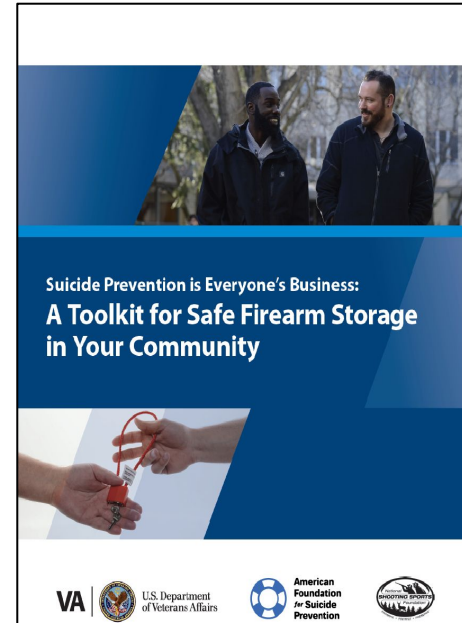
- Suicide prevention training video available to everyone, 24/7
- Less than 25 minutes long
- Offered in collaboration with the PsychArmor Institute



Available online for free: psycharmor.org/courses/s-a-v-e/

Lethal Means Safety Toolkit

- Developed in partnership with the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP) and the [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#) (NSSF), the trade association for the firearms industry.
- Toolkit guides communities through the process of building coalitions to raise awareness about safe storage and its connection to suicide prevention.
- Safe storage can put time and space between an individual and a firearm during suicidal crisis and shows promise for reducing rates of suicide.
- VA respects the important role firearms play in many Veterans' lives and is dedicated to providing safe storage options that are consistent with each Veteran's values and priorities. Help Veterans and their loved ones make their homes safer and share these resources with your network.



Access the toolkit online:
[Safe Firearm Storage Toolkit](#)

Thank You

If you're passionate about supporting Veterans, contact us. You can make a difference in a unified effort to prevent Veteran suicide.

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Questions?





Session Evaluation

We want to hear from you!

