

VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY COUNCIL

PRESCOTT – NORTHERN AZ

PHOENIX – CENTRAL AZ

TUCSON – SOUTHERN AZ

What is a Veterans Mental Health Advocacy Council?

A Veterans Mental Health (MH) Advocacy Council is a group of made up of:

- ▶ Veterans and family members of Veterans who use or have used inpatient and/or outpatient mental health services (including substance use treatment & homeless program services)
- ▶ Representatives from community mental health agencies/organizations
- ▶ Representatives from the Veteran Service Organizations
- ▶ They are an independent voice, providing input into VA mental health services

How did this all start?

New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Act (2002) and states:

“Involve consumers and families fully in orienting the mental health system towards recovery.”

Consumer involvement is a good business model.

Uniform Mental Health Services Handbook and VMHCs

The Community Mental Health Section states:

“Facilities are strongly encouraged to implement and maintain a local mental health Consumer-Advocate Liaison Council to facilitate input from stakeholders on the structure & operations of mental health services.”

The calling of the VMHAC is to:

- ▶ Be the Voice of the Veteran
- ▶ Be Agents of change
- ▶ Advocacy for Veterans' Mental Health services
- ▶ Be the Voice of the community
- ▶ Educate Veterans and the VA
- ▶ Collaborate with the VA and the community
- ▶ Promote VA care

Key Partners: Who?

- ▶ Veterans
- ▶ Family members of Veterans
- ▶ Local Community Stakeholders
- ▶ Join your local VMHC

Key Element: Staff Liaison

VA staff member is the liaison to the VMHAC, assisting the Council as needed and playing a key role in the communication pathway between the Council and VA Mental Health leadership.

- ▶ Best resource
- ▶ Knowledgeable
- ▶ Guides & Consults
- ▶ Facilitates communication
- ▶ Assists understanding
- ▶ Promotes professionalism & leadership

Council Functions (1 of 2)

- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Provide input to Executive Mental Health Council
- ▶ Seeks input of Veteran Consumers for enhanced experience
- ▶ Reduce the stigma associated with mental illness
- ▶ Develop and execute a variety of mental health awareness projects

1. The diversity of members strengthens a Council
2. The success of a Council will depend in large part on how well it collaborates
3. The Council functions as a team with elected board members and members at large? Collaborate with VA and local community stakeholders to enhance Veteran experience

Council Functions (2 of 2)

- ▶ Increase the awareness of mental health resources
- ▶ “No Wrong Door” - Promote community and VA resources, including services that may not be provided by the VA but would benefit the veteran
- ▶ Voice of the Veteran

Southern Arizona Veterans Mental Health Advisory Council

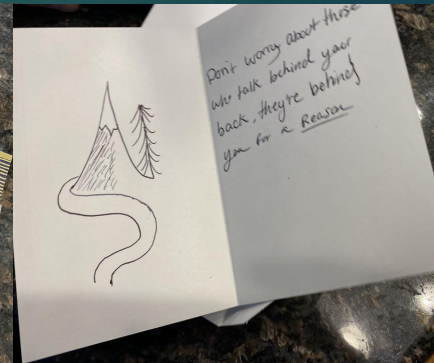
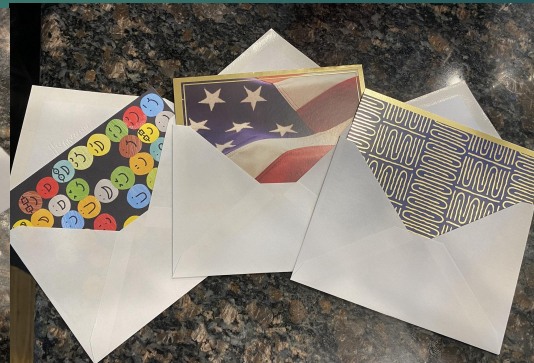
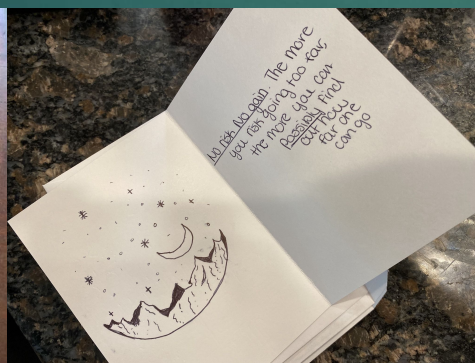
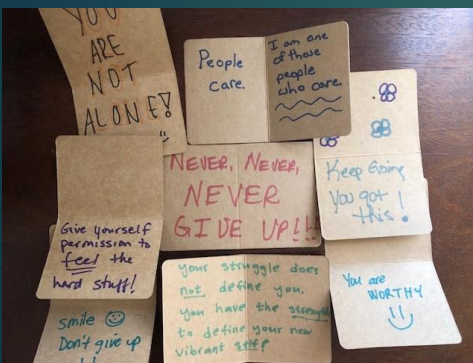
BOARD MEMBERS:

- RAMON ENCINAS, MVP FOUNDER, **BOARD CHAIR**
- DANA ALLMOND, LTC, ARMY RETIRED, **BOARD CO-CHAIR**
- KATIE CIVILETTO STENGER, MHA, TACTICAL RECOVERY, **SECRETARY**
- ANGELA LOPRESTI, LCSW, SAVAHCS LOCAL RECOVERY COORDINATOR, **COUNCIL LIAISON**

<https://www.facebook.com/VeteransMentalHealthAdvisoryCouncil/>

Completed Projects

- ▶ Caring Communication, May is Mental Health Awareness Month 2020, 2021
 - ▶ Caring Communication Cards are cards, notes, letters, etc. with messages of encouragement, validation, and caring.
- ▶ Mindfulness and the Helping Professions



Successes

- ▶ Established Communication and Collaboration with VA MH Leadership
- ▶ State of Affairs Rounds with Associate Chief of Staff MH, Dr. Vaughan (Monthly)
- ▶ Dan Cook, Deputy Associate Chief of Staff MH, Dan Cook (Quarterly)
- ▶ Share monthly updates from SAVAHCS MH Leadership with Council and Veterans
- ▶ VA and Community Presentations - Suicide Prevention/ PTSD/ Whole Health / Myth Busters, True vs. False of Veteran Care
- ▶ Facebook Page Development and Engagement | Brochure/Flyer Development
- ▶ 25+ Veterans and Community Partners as Members & 10+ Agencies Represented via the Council
- ▶ High Reliability Organization (HRO) Presentation
- ▶ Hiring/ Staffing Updates and Challenges from SAVAHCS MH Leadership
- ▶ Initiated Arizona Council Collaborative meeting: Veterans Mental Health Advisory Councils from Tucson, Prescott, and Phoenix meet monthly to share successes & solve challenges
- ▶ Attend meetings on behalf of Councils: National Meeting, Quarterly VISN Meeting, Monthly Executive Leadership Council Meeting

Completed Projects

- ▶ 30 Days of Self Care with Tips from COVID COACH® App

30 DAYS OF SELF-CARE

Make a Difference.

The 30 Days of Self-Care will walk you through 30 different suggestions for self care practices. Download the app.... COVID COACH (VA approved)

This graphic features a blue background with a white plus sign at the top and bottom. The text '30 DAYS OF SELF-CARE' is in large white letters on the left. On the right, a circular frame contains a photograph of a rocky cliff with the text 'Make a Difference.' overlaid in white.

Day 7:
Physical Activity in Staying Balance

From the Home Screen of your COVID COACH app, tap: Learn

Tap Staying Balanced

Take the trash out and lunge it back to your home! check out this YouTube video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c06ftgU1StM>

RUSTY ORVIK
PMP/CPT/PHR
Arizona Employer Outreach Coordinator
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

This block contains text on the left and a circular image on the right. The image shows a man in a white t-shirt and a hat, kneeling in a park-like setting with trees and a bench in the background. Below the image is the name 'RUSTY ORVIK' and his professional credentials.

COVID Coach

We will understand our own importance from the places we must stay. Communion moves beyond walls. We can still be together. --Mimi Zhu

Manage Stress

CHALLENGES TOOLS FAVORITES

What would you like help with right now?

- COPE WITH STRESS
- FEELING LONELY
- CREATING SPACE FOR MYSELF
- FEELING SAD OR HOPELESS
- HANDLING ANGER AND IRRITABILITY
- NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS
- SLEEP STRUGGLES

MANAGE STRESS LEARN MOOD CHECK FIND RESOURCES

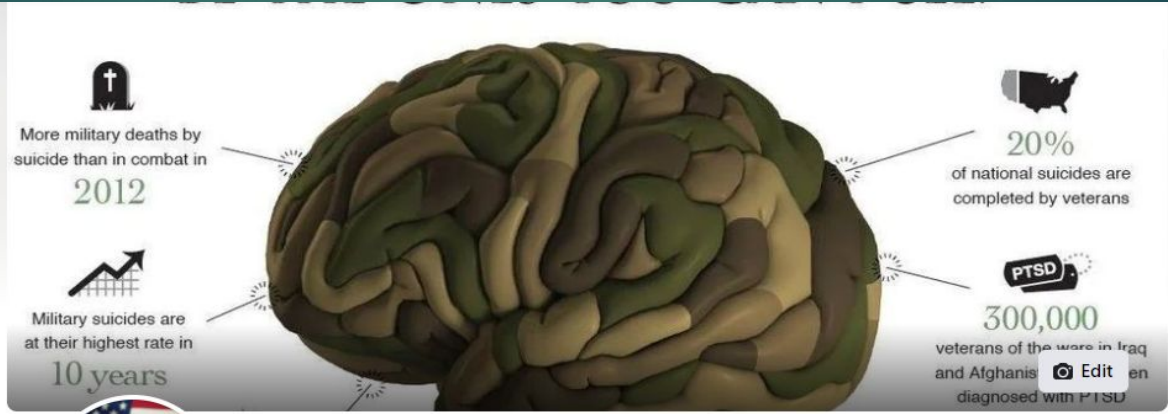
ADD A FAVORITE

Manage Check Learn Resources

This image shows two screenshots of the COVID Coach app. The left screenshot is the home screen, featuring a quote by Mimi Zhu and four main action buttons: 'MANAGE STRESS' (with a sun icon), 'LEARN' (with a tree icon), 'MOOD CHECK' (with a bench icon), and 'FIND RESOURCES' (with a tree icon). The right screenshot is the 'Manage Stress' screen, which has a list of challenges: 'COPE WITH STRESS', 'FEELING LONELY', 'CREATING SPACE FOR MYSELF', 'FEELING SAD OR HOPELESS', 'HANDLING ANGER AND IRRITABILITY', 'NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS', and 'SLEEP STRUGGLES'. At the bottom of both screens is a navigation bar with icons for 'Manage', 'Check', 'Learn', and 'Resources'.

Completed Projects


- ▶ F30 Days of Self Care with Tips from COVID COACH® App



The infographic features a central illustration of a human brain. Four callout boxes with icons provide statistics: a tombstone icon for 'More military deaths by suicide than in combat in 2012', a line graph icon for 'Military suicides are at their highest rate in 10 years', a map of the USA icon for '20% of national suicides are completed by veterans', and a PTSD icon for '300,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan diagnosed with PTSD'. A 'PTSD' label is also placed on the brain illustration.

Southern Arizona Veterans Mental Health Advisory Council
@VeteransMentalHealthAdvisoryCouncil · Health & Wellness Website

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Mission Statement

To establish a true partnership between the Veteran and their families, Veterans Affairs's mental health professionals, community partners, and Veteran service organizations to improve the quality of Veteran's Affairs mental health.



NORTHERN ARIZONA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY COUNCIL

Rocky Coronado – Co-Chair
Linda McMahon – Co-Chair
Valerie Crossman - Secretary
Nancy DeVine – Liaison

Highlights:



Established a family space at the Domiciliary



Explored capacity for a kiln on VA campus, based on veteran interest



Comment boxes set up in the community to increase access for veterans

Goals:

Recruitment and Retention (Specifically veterans and their family members, CBOC)

Increase presence in community outreach/awareness of council (internal and external to VA)

Discuss current events regarding Afghanistan and identify community veteran supports

Recruiting Needs:

Veterans

**Family
members**

Agencies/VSO

CBOC



COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Social Work
Month (March)

Mental Health
Summit

U.S.VETS Stand
Down
(September)

Prescott
Recovery Day
Celebration
(Sept)

Hope Fest
(September)

Mental Illness
Awareness
Week (October)

Global Peer
Support
Celebration
(October)

CONTACT US

Nancy DeVine – **VA liaison**, 928-445-4860 ext 5281

Nancy.devine@va.gov

Rocky Coronado – **Co-Chair**, 480-438-7193

RCoronado@cbridges.com

Phoenix/Central Arizona Veterans Mental Health Advisory Council

Council Leadership

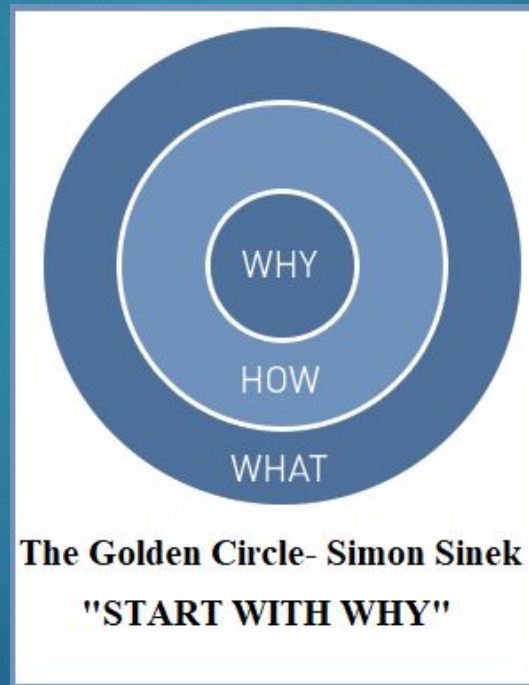
Geoff Davis, **Chair**

Travis Burns, **Co-Chair**

Spencer Beck, PhD. - Local Recovery Coordinator

VA Council Liaison

START WITH WHY YOU ADVOCATE



CONTEXT: What is Advocacy?

- 1:** the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal : the act or process of advocating for someone or something
- 2:** to support or argue for (a cause, policy, etc.)

Aristotle's Three Pillars of Advocacy

“Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word, there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker (ethos); the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (pathos); the third on the proof, or apparent proof provided by the words of the speech itself (logos).”

How do the Three Pillars of Advocacy apply to VA Mental Health Advocacy Councils?

- ▶ ETHOS: Lived Experience, conveyed with integrity
- ▶ PATHOS: Emotional Appeal: Passion & Commitment
- ▶ LOGOS: Logic & Rationality: AUTHENTICITY

HOW: Current Collaborations

- ▶ Unified Arizona Veterans
- ▶ Senator Sinema Veteran Advisory Council
- ▶ Alignment with Tucson and Prescott VMHACs
- ▶ Whole Health Steering Committee
- ▶ Veterans Experience Office
- ▶ Veteran and Family Council
- ▶ NAMI AZ Board
- ▶ NAMI Homefront Program
- ▶ ACMF and Be Connected
- ▶ AHCCCS Office of Individual and Family Affairs
- ▶ AHCCCS Health Plans Veteran Liaisons

What does a Mental Health Advocacy Council actually DO?

- ▶ Gathers information & insights regarding VA Mental Health Services from veterans, families and supportive individuals.
- ▶ Conveys this information and insight to VA staff & leadership
- ▶ Provides education about VA services

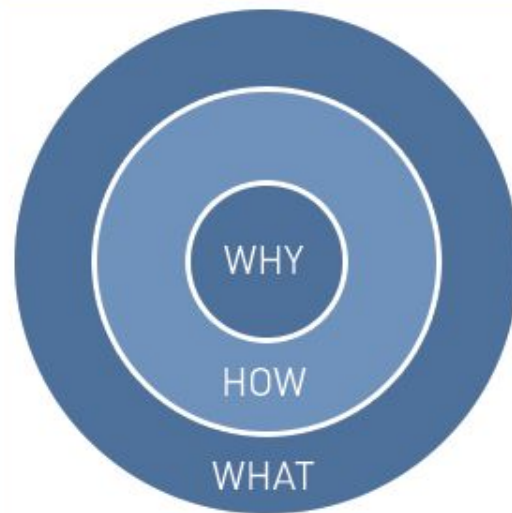
WHAT We've Done

- ▶ Suicide Prevention
- ▶ Veterans Agricultural Education Program
- ▶ Dr. Katherine Doyle- Intimate Partner Violence
- ▶ Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona
- ▶ Dr Adam McCray West Valley Vet Center
- ▶ Red Cross Veteran Program
- ▶ VA PRRC Program
- ▶ VA My Life, My Story Program
- ▶ Copper Springs Hospital

WHAT : Initiatives Going Forward

- ▶ Increase veteran enrollment into VA Mental Health Services
- ▶ Educate veterans in self-advocacy
- ▶ Recruiting more veterans into Mental Health Advocacy Council
- ▶ Educate veterans regarding leadership in Mental Health
- ▶ Call to Action: What does good mental health look like for you?

Back To WHY



The Golden Circle- Simon Sinek

"START WITH WHY"

Why is it important to
advocate for veteran
mental health?

WHY?

Advocacy is important because it reduces the chances of error and harm to patients. Increased understanding of the population served can also increase positive outcomes.

The veteran mental health space encompasses a spectrum of outcomes up to and including the death of veterans by suicide.

Given these conditions, opportunities for greater positive outcomes must be sought out and **ADVOCATED FOR**.