Suicide Prevention and Crisis Intervention with Veterans

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Veterans Crisis Line
Veterans Chat Service
Facts about Veteran Suicide

• 20% of all suicides are Veterans
  – National Violent Death Reporting System

• Veterans are more likely than the general population to use firearms
  – National Violent Death Reporting System

• 950 suicide attempts per month among Veterans receiving VHA services
  – VA National Suicide Prevention Coordinators
    (October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2010)
VA Suicide Prevention Strategy

- Suicide can be prevented by providing ready access to high quality mental health care and other services as needed.
  - Ready access can be achieved through:
    - Crisis Line
    - Veterans Chat
    - Veterans Text
    - Walk-in and ER visits
    - Referrals to Suicide Prevention Coordinators
    - Word of mouth referrals
    - Outreach efforts and community training
Specific Initiatives Established for Suicide Prevention

• Hubs of expertise
  – Center of Excellence (CoE)
  – Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center (MIRECC)
• National programs for education and awareness
  – Operation S.A.V.E (Know the Signs, Ask the question, Validate the feelings, Expedite help)
  – Suicide Risk Management Training for Clinicians
  – Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Suicide
  – Women Veterans and Suicide
  – Older Veterans and Suicide
  – Primary Care Provider
• Veterans Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press “1” for Veterans
  – Veterans Chat
  – Veterans Text
• Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPC)
• Federal partnerships
Veterans Crisis Line

• A toll-free, confidential resource that connects Veterans and Service Members in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) responders.

• Responders are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances

• 1-800-273-8255, press 1.
Veterans Crisis Line

- July 25, 2007 – Hotline went live; first call was at 11:20 AM

- Based in Canandaigua VA Medical Center in upstate New York

- Partnership with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) / LIFELINE

- Current staff size: 180 (adding 100 more by 1/13)
Veterans Crisis Line

- 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, the Veterans Crisis Line added an anonymous online chat service, which has helped more than 61,000 people.

- In November 2011, the Veterans Crisis Line added a texting service, which has helped more than 2,300 people.
### Veterans Crisis Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Calls</th>
<th>Veterans</th>
<th>Family/Friend</th>
<th>SPC Referrals</th>
<th>Rescue</th>
<th>Active Duty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>June, 2012</strong></td>
<td>14,802</td>
<td>11,209</td>
<td>1,346</td>
<td>3,362</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>144</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total (through 6/12)</strong></td>
<td><strong>641,450</strong></td>
<td><strong>383,983</strong></td>
<td><strong>47,232</strong></td>
<td><strong>99,168</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,013</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FY 11</strong></td>
<td>164,101</td>
<td>102,446</td>
<td>12,221</td>
<td>29,334</td>
<td>6,670</td>
<td>2,290</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FY 10</strong></td>
<td>134,528</td>
<td>81,805</td>
<td>9,925</td>
<td>19,970</td>
<td>5,732</td>
<td>1,744</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FY 09</strong></td>
<td>118,984</td>
<td>63,934</td>
<td>7,553</td>
<td>13,960</td>
<td>3,709</td>
<td>1,589</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FY 08</strong></td>
<td>67,350</td>
<td>29,879</td>
<td>4,517</td>
<td>6,264</td>
<td>1,749</td>
<td>780</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FY 07</strong></td>
<td>9,379</td>
<td>2,918</td>
<td>No avail.</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>93</td>
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</table>

*From: Veterans Crisis Line database*
Veterans Chat Service

- Anonymous, online chats occur with trained VA counselor
- Potential to transfer the visitor to the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline, where further counseling and referral services are provided and crisis intervention steps can be taken.
- Intended to reach out to all Veterans and Service Members
- Launched in July 2009
# Veterans Chat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Chats</th>
<th>Transfer to Crisis Line</th>
<th>Transfer to Back-up Center</th>
<th>Suicide Mentioned</th>
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<td>3,665</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>1,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total (through 6/12)</td>
<td>61,338</td>
<td>6,607</td>
<td>7,626</td>
<td>22,565</td>
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<td>2,445</td>
<td>2,182</td>
<td>7,265</td>
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<td>FY 10</td>
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<td>878</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>3,433</td>
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<td>FY 09</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>328</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From: Veterans Crisis Line database
Veterans Chat

Hello, your Vets representative is JasonG

Sometimes technical issues cause a chat to end unexpectedly. If this happens, please come back to chat again or call us at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and press 1.

Welcome to VeteransChat, JasonG will be right with you.

Hi Jason
Veterans Text

- 838255 (VETALK)
- Free!
- Same clinical skills as Chat
- Primary differences between Chat and Text
  - Text is limited to 160 characters
  - Performance of Texting software is dependent on Visitor’s cell phone and cell phone provider.
### Veterans Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Texts</th>
<th>Veterans</th>
<th>Family/Friend</th>
<th>SPC Referrals</th>
<th>Transfer to phone</th>
<th>Active Duty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>151</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Feb 12</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>Mar 12</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Apr 12</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
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<td>236</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,353</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>61</td>
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</table>

From: Veterans Crisis Line database
WWW.VETERANSCRISISLINE.NET
Crisis Line Materials

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

“I AM A VETERAN.
Calling the confidential Veterans Crisis Line can help. I know.”
Resources

• Mental Health
  – VHA provides specialty inpatient and outpatient mental health services at its medical centers and community-based outpatient clinics. All mental health care provided by VHA supports recovery, striving to enable a person with mental health problems to live a meaningful life in their community and achieve full potential.
  – For more information on VA Mental Health Services visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov.

• Vet Centers
  – Vet Centers are VA community based centers that provide a range of counseling, outreach and referral services.
  – For more information about Vet Centers and to find the closest Vet Center to you visit www.vetcenter.va.gov.
Resources

• Make the Connection
  – MakeTheConnection.net is a one-stop resource where Veterans and their families and friends can privately explore information about physical and mental health symptoms, challenging life events, and mental health conditions. On this site, Veterans and their families and friends can learn about available resources and support. Visit www.MakeTheConnection.net to learn more.

• PTSD
  – Each VA medical centers have PTSD specialists who provide treatment for Veterans with PTSD. For more information about PTSD and to locate the VA PTSD program nearest you visit www.ptsd.va.gov.
  – PTSD Coach App The PTSD Coach application, allows phone users to manage their symptoms, links them with local sources of support and provides information on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Visit www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp
Resources

- Veterans Crisis Line/Chat/Text
  - 1-800-273-8255 press 1
  - [http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/)
  - VETALK (838255)

- VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators
  - Each VA Medical Center has a suicide prevention coordinator to make sure Veterans receive needed counseling and services.
QUESTIONS?

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