

Texas Suicide Prevention Symposium 2023

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TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



Shared Goal

Coordinated Mental Health Resources for Service Members,
Veterans and their Families



Center for Disease Control: Prevention Strategies

- Strengthening Economic Supports
- Create Protective Environments
- Improve Access & Delivery of Suicide Care
- Promote Healthy Connections
- Teach Coping & Problem-Solving



TXSPC State Plan 2023-2028: Key Performance Areas

- Capacity Building
- Mental Health Workforce
- Communication & Outreach
- Research
- Data
- Postvention



History of War Trauma

- Nostalgia
- Wind of a cannonball
- Soldiers heart
- Shell shock
- Battle fatigue
- Combat stress reaction
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



“The Deadly Gap”

The first year after a service member leaves the military and transitions into civilian life. This first year of transition has been identified as high risk for suicide.



“The Deadly Gap”

Factors that contribute to this high-risk period.



Moral Injury

- An act of serious transgression that leads to serious inner conflict because the experience is at odds with core ethical and moral beliefs is called moral injury.

- Jonathan Shay, Ph.D.



Moral Injury

- Perceived Betrayal (by peers, leadership, or self)
- Witnessed acts of disproportionate violence perpetrated on others
- Engaging in, or witnessing acts that violate personal moral beliefs
- Regretting inaction that may have prevented harm



Common Symptoms of PTSD

- Negative thoughts/feelings:
 - Inability to recall key features of the trauma
 - Overly negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world
 - Exaggerated blame of self or others for causing the trauma
 - Negative affect
 - Decreased interest in activities
 - Feeling isolated
 - Difficulty experiencing positive affect
- Trauma-related arousal and reactivity that began or worsened after the trauma:
 - Irritability or aggression



PTSD affects family relationships

Trauma survivors with PTSD may have trouble with their close family relationships or friendships. The symptoms of PTSD can cause problems with trust, closeness, communication, and problem solving which, in turn, may impact the way a loved one responds to the trauma survivor.



Interagency Cooperation

Texas Coordinating Council for Veterans Services (TCCVS) is comprised of 22 state agencies and community stakeholders.

TCCVS Workgroups:

- Health • Mental Health • Employment • Higher Education
- Criminal Justice • Housing • Transportation • Women Veterans
- Pro Bono Legal Services • Communications and Outreach



Interagency Cooperation

- Monthly Coordination
- Legislative Testimony
- State Reports
- Conferences/Symposiums
- Community Engagements
- Other Events



Interagency Cooperation

All three agencies support one another on any special initiatives, such as:

- Buddy Check Day
- Ask the Question: Did You Serve?
- Hiring Red, White and You
- 988 Crisis Line
- MentalHealth.org



Texas Health & Human Services

George McEntyre
Director,
Veterans Mental Health Services
Health and Human Services Commission



Veterans Mental Health Services

- Texas Veterans + Family Alliance (TV+FA) Grant Program
- Mental Health Program for Veterans (MHPV)
- Veteran Suicide Prevention efforts

Veterans Mental Health Services

TV + FA Grant Program



Veterans Mental Health Services

Mental Health Program for Veterans (MHPV)



Veterans Mental Health Services
TexVet Website

Texas A&M University Health Science Center
administers the TexVet website

<https://www.texvet.org/>

Texas Veterans Commission

Dr. Blake Harris
Director,
Veterans Mental Health Department
Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)



TVC Veterans Mental Health Department

Across all programming, VMHD has the broadest definition of veteran.
Regardless of:

- Discharge status
- Branch of service
- Length of service
- Active-duty status



The same broad definition applies to veteran family.

All services provided across VMHD programming are offered at no cost.



TVC Veterans Mental Health Department



- Justice Involved Veteran (JIV) Program
- Homeless Veteran Program
- Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN)
- Veteran Provider Training Program
- Community & Faith-Based Partnerships
- Veteran Suicide Prevention Program



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VMHD & TXSPC State Plan 2023-2028

- Capacity Building (CB)

- CB 1.2: Develop & Deploy Faith-Based Participation (e.g. Faith & Allegiance Initiative)
- CB 1.3: Continue/Grow Collaborations Among Suicide Prevention Coalitions & VMHD to Support Upstream Suicide Prevention.
- CB 2.1: Work with Local Coalitions to Expand Community Partner Base.

- CB 4.2: Social Media Position to Support Local Coalitions in Outreach and Awareness.
- CB 5.1 Support Acrilife Extension Program AcriSafe Network Promotoras to Support



VMHD & TXSPC State Plan 2023-2028

• Mental Health Workforce (WF)

- WF 3.3: Train Law Enforcement & Other Supervisory Roles in Suicide Gatekeeping Skills.
- WF 5.2: Ensure Training Requirements for Peer Specialists & Recovery Specialists Contain Evidence-Based Suicide Prevention Skills.
- WF 6.1: Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN) to Disseminate Military Cultural Competency to Broad Set of SMVF Partners in Communities.

- WF 9.1: Conduct Safety Planning Training at Local Coalition Level.
- WF 9.2: Ensure All Relevant LMHA/LBHA Staff are Trained in Evidence-Based Safety Planning & Lethal Means Protocols.



VMHD & TXSPC State Plan 2023-2028

- Communication & Outreach (CO)

- CO 4.1: Create Outreach & Engagement Mechanisms to Develop Necessary Partnerships in High-Needs Areas & Populations.

- Research (RE)

- RE 2.2: Ensure Key Stakeholders Attend Top-Tier National & International Conferences.

- Postvention (PV)

- PV 1.1: Create Awareness of Postvention Best Practices for Legal Communities



VMHD Veteran Suicide Prevention Efforts

- Gatekeeping: AS+K
- Lethal Means Restriction: CALM
- Columbia C-SSRS
- Mental Health First Aid
- Buddy Check Day: 11th of every month
- Texas Suicide Prevention Council
- Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (SBHCC)
- Texas Coordinating Council for Veteran Services (TCCVS)
- Statewide Planning & Legislative Reports
- Legislative Testimony
- 988 Rollout
- Mayors' Challenges
- Collaboration with VA, SAMHSA, and national efforts
- Suicide Prevention Coordinator



VMHD Training

- Military Cultural Competency
- Military Informed-Care
- Military Traumas
 - PTSD
 - Moral Injury
 - Military Sexual Trauma
 - Traumatic Brain injury
- Evidence-Based Practices
- Motivational Interviewing Skills with SMVF
- SMVF & Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Veteran Treatment Court Training



Texas Workforce Commission

Gabriel Lopez
Assistant Director,
Texas Veterans Leadership Program
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)



Texas Veterans Leadership Program

The Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) is a resource and referral network connecting veterans to the community resources that can best assist them.



Texas Veterans Leadership Program

TVLP's Veteran Resource and Referral Specialist (VRRS) have two main missions:

- Outreach veterans; and
- Outreach and build quality lasting relationships



Texas Veterans Leadership Program

TVLP staff coordinate services with agencies that serve veterans, such as the Texas Veterans Commission's Veteran Employment Service Program (JVSG), Texas Health and Human Services Commission, other state agencies, and military transition center staff



Texas Veterans Leadership Program Peer to Peer Mentoring and Referrals

TVLP staff Provide peer to peer mentoring to transitioning service members and to veterans seeking employment, education and training, Veterans Administration healthcare/compensation, mental health care, etc.



Leveraging Partners

- Disabled Veteran Outreach program (DVOP)
- Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER)
- Resource and Referral Specialists (RRS)
- Veteran County Service Officers (VCSOs)
- Veteran Service organizations (e.g., VFW, AL, DAV, etc.)
- Other State Agencies & Community Partners



Mental Health Awareness

How do we integrate mental health and suicide prevention awareness into the different programs that serve service members, veterans, and their families?



Center for Disease Control: Prevention Strategies

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Questions?



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Thank You!