



September 10-16, 2017

National Suicide Prevention Week

The American Legion Information & Media Kit

“You Are Not Alone”

At the Fall 2017 National Executive Committee Meeting, Resolution 28, Suicide Prevention Program was approved, which called on The American Legion to establish a Suicide Prevention Program.

September 10 – 16, 2017, is National Suicide Prevention week. To this end, The National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is asking all Departments and Post to review the following proposed list of activities and identify one activity that they would be willing to sponsor at their post during Suicide Prevention week.

Proposed Activities

- 1. Community / Town Hall Meetings** at local venues (Local American Legion posts) where stakeholders are invited to meet and talk about available community resources and organizations that offer suicide prevention services, counseling, and other services.
- 2. Dissemination of Information** – American Legion departmental members, in cooperation with local commercial merchants and malls can volunteer to setup booths to disseminate information about suicide prevention. The members could also work with area colleges and universities with large veteran-student populations.
- 3. Media** – The American Legion can share general information and statistics about veteran suicide through Fact Sheets, Referenced Peer Reviewed Articles, etc. along with information about suicide hotlines for veterans and the general public.
 - a. TV / News interviews – Very important for all department but especially for departments with high rates of suicides.
 - b. Radio - Very important for all department and especially for departments where suicides among veterans is high.



4. Social Media – Banners, Fact Sheets, telephone numbers to the Suicide Hotline, featured articles, posts/comments, links to local, regional, and national suicide prevention, principles of evidenced-based prevention, resources to help everyone do something to prevent suicide, and promote suicide prevention meetings at local venues.

- a. Facebook
- b. Twitter
- c. LinkedIn
- d. Instagram
- e. Bebee
- f. Snapchat
- g. Etc.

5. Products/Materials created by the American Legion - Banners, Flyers, and other marketing communication materials.

Target Audience

VA&R views its target audience for the events as veterans, caregivers of veterans, and community stakeholders. The goal for this initiative is to raise awareness and provide access for resources that will help deter and slow the epidemic of veteran suicide.

Stakeholders include:

- The American Legion Department
 - Local Posts
- The American Legion National Staff
 - VA&R Health Policy Staff (Washington, D.C.)
 - Media (Washington, D.C., and Indianapolis, IN)
 - National Security
 - Employment and Education
 - Legislative



- Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facilities
- Department of Defense
- General Media
- Colleges and Universities where veterans attend in large percentages (i.e., Liberty University)
- National Student Veterans of America (Washington, D.C.)
- General Public
- Mental Health Professionals
- National Alliance on Mental Health Illness (NAMI)
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline
- Veterans Crisis Line
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)
- Congressional Staff

Inputs – Resources

Staff Time/Volunteer Hours: Volunteers will be needed to participate in all events such as media interviews, Information Dissemination activities, town hall meetings, etc. Volunteers will also need to develop banners for social media, flyers, and other branded materials.

Knowledge: Volunteers designated for public-facing activities and media interviews should possess subject matter expertise in veteran suicide or able to coordinate and facilitate large meetings.

Resources needed: Refreshments, copies of documents and flyers, local or regional travel, space for meetings (if necessary).

Materials: The American Legion can obtain materials from a variety of organizations including many of the stakeholder organizations listed above.

Space: For local community engagement meetings, TAL recommends using local posts as venues.

Equipment/Technology: Audio – Visual, chairs, tables, and table cover with banners.



The American Legion will provide downloadable resources on our website, including links to additional resources.

Anticipated Outcomes

Short-term- Goals

Awareness – The objective of the community engagement meetings are to create awareness about suicide prevention resources in the community and how to access those resources

- **Interest:** Create interest among veterans and caregivers in learning more about suicide prevention, education, and ways of becoming involved in helping veterans with mental health challenges.
- **Knowledge:** Increase knowledge through printed materials and media activity on how to recognize warning signs of suicidal ideation.

Intermediate Goals

Social Action – Participants /attendees/readers/listeners through awareness gained by attendance at meetings, media exposure, and printed materials take steps to attempt to ensure suicide among veterans and in the community, is prevented by referring persons at risk to organizations that can help with mental illnesses and emotional disturbances that trigger suicidal ideation.

- **Contributions:** More articles and information are circulated in communities promoting greater awareness of resources and support
- **Behaviors:** The stigma associated with seeking help is reduced in the veteran population.

Long-term Goal (>6 months post event)

Civic- Community engagement is increased by continued interest, more community meetings that involve Veterans Service Organizations, and referrals to suicide prevention organizations.

Proposed Evaluation Methods

The American Legion can measure the community engagement effort through qualitative and quantitative evaluations;*



- **Qualitative:** The American Legion can evaluate through direct observation of attendance at community meetings and through informal interviews of attendees.
- **Quantitative:** The American Legion can evaluate attendance by a number of attendees as evidenced through actual counts as persons enter or through sign-in sheets. Other quantitative efforts could include getting listener and viewer data from radio and television, respectively. Moreover, printed materials can be measured by how many were ordered versus the amount given out to people, which can be a percentage or hard number. The American Legion can also ask prevention suicide organizations to benchmark metrics such as the number of calls before the community engagement versus the number of calls post-event.