

The American Legion Department of New Jersey **BE THE ONE** Campaign

The American Legion, Dept. of NJ, is diving to greater depths in support of the Be the One campaign, initiated by 2021-2022 National Commander Paul E. Dillard. NJ Dept. Commander Steven Fisher kicked off the first quarter of his leadership year with an awareness campaign and a plea to NJ Legionnaires to lead by example. The Be the One campaign is a direct message to American Legion members, veterans and the public to reach out to veterans to see how they are doing.

"We must make an impact in our communities to minimize the number of suicides by veterans. One suicide is too many," he said. Fisher is being proactive by pledging to directly contact NJ Legionnaires and other veterans living in the state. He is making phone calls, sending emails, texting messages and creating public service announcements to directly contact all veterans who reside in NJ, and he is asking fellow NJ Legionnaires and veterans to do the same.

The NJ American Legion Be the One campaign would like all members who have served and who are currently serving in the US Armed Services to reach out to their comrades. One phone call, text message, email or in-person communication can make all of the difference in a veteran's life. It could mean life or death. The Be the One campaign asks you to Be the One to:

- **Ask** veterans in your life how they are doing.
- **Listen** when a veteran needs to talk.
- **Reach out** when a veteran is struggling.

For more information on The American Legion Be the One campaign visit legion.org/betheone.



Background

- The American Legion is the nation's largest veterans service organization with more than 1.8 million members in more than 12,000 posts across the country and has its National Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- The American Legion's mission is to enhance the well-being of America's veterans, their families, our military and our communities by their devotion to mutual helpfulness.
- Throughout its more than 100-year history, members of The American Legion have tackled the most important issues and challenges facing our nation's veterans with each generation focused on solving the challenges faced before the ones that preceded them.
- The American Legion is racing to the future. New Era. New Look. Same Mission.
 - o New Era.
 - As the military changes, so does The American Legion. Today's service members and veterans come from diverse communities, have had different experiences and enjoy wide-ranging interests.
 - o New Look.
 - New logo is embodiment of where The Legion has been, where it is now and most importantly, where it is racing to in the future.
 - o Same Mission.
 - Continue to address the toughest challenges facing our nation's veterans and their families.
- Today, the #1 issue facing those who served is veteran suicide.
 - o According to the [National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#). 17 veterans still die by suicide each day, or more than 6,000 each year.
 - o Rate of suicide for veterans is more than 50% higher than that of non-veteran adults.
- The American Legion is activating a national platform to end veteran suicide.
- The **Be the One** campaign will:
 - o Destigmatize asking for mental health support, creating opportunity for those with mental health issues to speak freely and get the support they need.
 - o Provide peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities.
 - o Deploy FDA-approved therapeutics for veterans to identify issues and find resources for support.

What To Know

1. The stigma associated with mental health issues is a barrier to veterans seeking assistance. They fear loss of their job, think they can handle their situation themselves, or don't think others can understand their situation.
2. Family members may be the first to recognize the signs that their veteran needs help, but they may lack the knowledge of how to approach the situation.
3. There are several innovative programs either funded by the government or private non-governmental organizations that help veterans in crisis, but they often lack funding or broad-based visibility.

4. Veteran service organizations, like The American Legion, provide a well-established peer support network that is ready, willing, and able to help in local communities.
5. The Legion is also willing to explore partnerships with other like-minded organizations where the opportunity exists to amplify and/or complements one another's strengths.

Messages

Public

The American Legion needs your help in ending veteran suicide.

Be the One to:

- **Ask** veterans in your life how they are doing.
- **Listen** when a veteran needs to talk.
- **Reach out** when a veteran is struggling.

Pledge to Be the One at betheone.org by signing up for email updates.

Veteran

Be the One to:

- Talk with others about how you are feeling.
- Ask for help when you know you need it.
- Know there are millions of people ready to help you.
- Remember your family and friend's care.

If you are a veteran in crisis:

- Call 988 and Press 1
- <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>
- Know there are millions of people ready to help you.