



Yakima Town Hall

Suicide Prevention



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- Introductions
- Programmatic overview of the WDVA and intro to Suicide Prevention Team
- Quick Suicide Data
- Thomas Joiner's Interpersonal theory of suicide
- Battlemind to Homemind
- Identity
- Protective Factors
- Establishing a culture of help seeking behavior

Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs
Suicide Prevention
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Today's Presenter:
Mike Badgley, CPC
Suicide Prevention Peer
Specialist



Marine Corps Veterans 3rd BTN/5th Marines
Officer Candidate
Deputy Sheriff: Former SWAT Sniper and
Ground Defense Instructor
Private Sector-Commercial Insurance
Executive Director of Vanir Foundation Suicide
Prevention and Lethal Means Safety
WDVA- Suicide Prevention



WDVA Suicide Prevention Peer Specialist Unit



Jen Prewitt – Region 1: Clallam, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom (jennifer.prewitt@dva.wa.gov)



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WDVA Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Team



Codie Garza – Suicide Prevention Program Manager (codie.garza@dva.wa.gov)



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Suicide Data

- Among all U.S. adults—including Veterans—the average number of suicides per day **rose** from **81.0** per day in 2001 to **121.0** in 2020. The average number of suicides per day among U.S. adults was highest in 2018 (127.4 per day).
- The average number of Veteran suicides per day rose from 16.4 in 2001 to 16.8 in 2020. It was highest in 2018 (18.6 per day). Of the on average **16.8 Veteran suicides per day in 2020**, approximately 39.7% (6.7 per day) were among Recent Veteran VHA Users¹⁶ and 60.3% (10.1 per day) were among Other Veterans.
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. 2022. Retrieved {insert date} from https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/data.asp



Suicide Myths

Myth: Talking about “it” makes it happen

Reality: Talking about suicide can bring about an understanding of the trauma. And also talking about suicide can lower the amount of distress someone is experiencing

Myth: One single cause

Reality: Many stories of suicide tend to focus on one cause; however, most suicides are due to multiple factors, sometimes going back many years.

Myth: People who want to die will

Reality: For most, the crisis is a limited-time period and creating time and distance between lethal means and the person in crisis may be enough to change the course of action.

Facts

- Talking about it can help normalize the conversation
 - Allowing someone to think out loud helps them process what they are going through
- People show signs, often very subtle, but there are some signs
 - Talk: Not wanting to be around, it is over, nothing can fix this...
 - Behavior: Withdrawing from activities, isolating from community, increase in reckless activity...
 - Mood: Angry, happy, irritable, calm, depressed, at peace
- Springtime is the peak
 - Contrary to popular belief, winter/holiday time is not when most occur



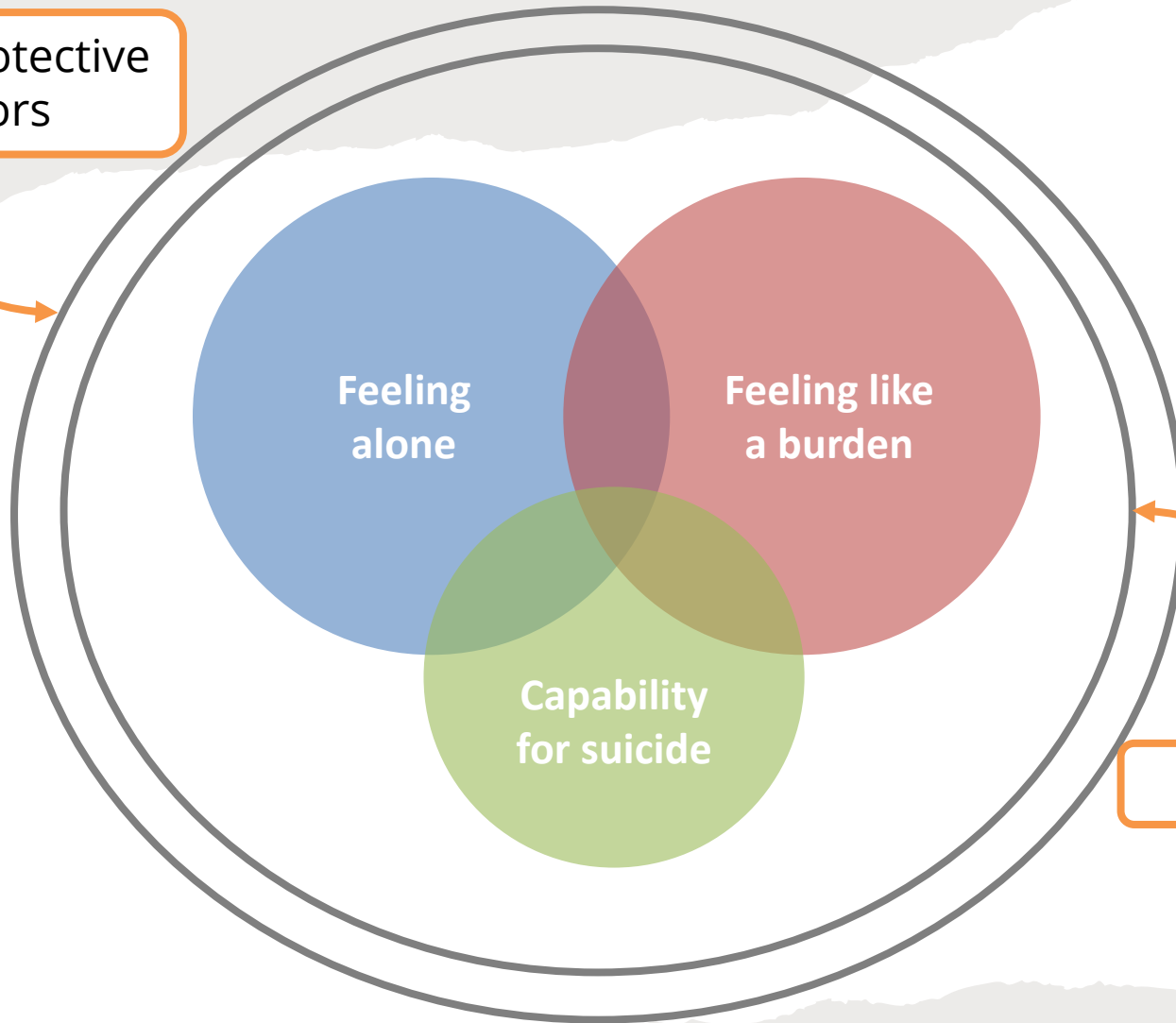


Veteran Suicide Data

- Veterans 65 and older account for 48% of suicides, the highest rate of suicides per demographic
- Majority of these are via firearm
- So how can we combat this?
- Lethal means safety
- Help seeking behavior and stigma- why does stigma exist within suicidality?
- How can we encourage help seeking behavior?

Why People Die by Suicide

Risk & Protective
Factors



Experiences

Battemind










Battlemind: “Inner strength to face fear & and adversity in combat with courage.”

In the civilian world, “battlemind” doesn’t always translate to helpful behaviors.

Source: “Battlemind Training: Transitioning Home from Combat.” Castro et al., 2006.



Battlemind to Homemind

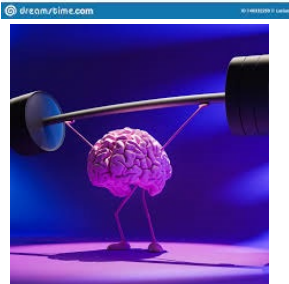
<u>"Battlemind"</u>		<u>"Homemind"</u>
Trust buddies		Withdrawal, isolation
Accountability		Need for control
Targeted aggression		Quick reactions, frustration
Tactical awareness		Hypervigilance
Lethally armed		Dangerous to be armed
Emotional control		Anger, detachment
Individual responsibility		Guilt, loss
Discipline, order		Inflexible interactions

4 Dimensions of Identity

- Biological



- Psychological



- Social



- Cultural



Military Identity

- How does identity impact career service members?
- How many of you identify as your rank or branch of service?
- How does this affect you when you are no longer serving?
- What groups or associations outside of the military do you identify or connect with?



Protective Factors

- Human connection¹
- Good/trusting relationships
- Mission
- Purpose
- Lethal means safety

¹ Source: "What makes a good life": Robert Waldinger



Establish a culture of help seeking behavior

- Stigma
 - Reduce professional consequences
 - Model the behavior we want to see in others

LEARN Model for Suicide Prevention

Look for signs
Empathize & listen
Ask about suicide
Reduce the danger
Next steps

THANK YOU

- 988 option 1
- WDVA Suicide Prevention contact:
connect@dva.wa.gov

INTERVIEWER: SO TELL ME ABOUT WHAT YOU DID IN THE MILITARY.

ME: I'D RATHER NOT, I KINDA NEED THIS JOB.

