

More than 32,000 people die by suicide each year in the United States. **Approximately 20 percent** of those individuals — or one in five — **are veterans.**

**Male veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide** as male non-veterans.

The current Army suicide and attempted suicide rates are **at an all-time high.**

Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injury are **real medical conditions.**

**Seeking help** for mental health and substance abuse problems **is a sign of strength.**



## SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION NETWORK USA

*Opening Minds.  
Changing Policy.  
Saving Lives.*



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## Suicide Prevention for Military Families:

*What You Need to Know  
About Warning Signs  
and Getting Help*



SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION NETWORK USA

TRIWEST HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

This brochure was created by the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA with support from TriWest Healthcare Alliance.

## SUICIDE IN THE MILITARY

Suicide in the military is not just a mental health problem; it is a public health problem. Nearly 20 percent of suicides each year are completed by veterans, and the number of suicide attempts by Army personnel has increased six-fold since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began.

The keys to improving these statistics are reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, encouraging help-seeking behavior, and being aware of warning signs and treatment options.

I knew my son was sad ... but I didn't know you could die from being too sad. Untreated depression is as deadly as cancer or heart disease.

**Major General Mark Graham**

## KNOW THE FACTS

- Men account for 80 percent of all completed suicides in America.
- Twenty percent of all suicide deaths occur among veterans.
- A suicide occurs approximately every 16 minutes, totaling nearly 90 suicides each day.
- More than 32,000 Americans die by suicide each year.
- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death overall in America.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR: RISK FACTORS

- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Difficulties in an intimate relationship
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Anxiety over financial hardship
- Family discord, loss of a loved one
- Access to firearms

## PROTECTIVE FACTORS/INTERVENTIONS

- Regular consultation with primary care physician
- Effective clinical care for mental and physical health, and substance abuse
- Strong connections to family and community support
- Restricted access to lethal means of suicide

Suicide leaves a path of destruction and pain in its wake. If you or someone you know is hurting, reach out for help.

**David J. McIntyre, Jr.,**  
*President and CEO,*  
**TriWest Healthcare Alliance**

## SEEKING HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH

- Consulting a healthcare professional for a mental health condition does not in and of itself preclude an individual from obtaining a security clearance.
- In 2007, General David Petraeus wrote, "If you feel such stress, do not hesitate to talk to your chain of command, your chaplain, or a medical expert."

The loss of our son, Josh, still deeply affects us every single day. The guilt and pain of losing him never really goes away. Josh can never be replaced and we will always love him.

**Randy and Ellen Omgig,**  
*parents of SPC. Joshua L. Omgig,*  
**OIF Army Reserve - 339th MP Co.**

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

The Suicide Prevention Action Network USA and TriWest Healthcare Alliance have resources available to assist military personnel and their families with finding appropriate care:

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. To speak with a Veterans Affairs (VA) counselor, press "1" after being connected.
- To access TriWest Healthcare Alliance's Behavioral Health Portal, visit [www.triwest.com/beneficiary/](http://www.triwest.com/beneficiary/) and click on "Behavioral Health."
- For SPAN USA's local suicide prevention resources, visit [www.spanusa.org/states](http://www.spanusa.org/states).
- Conduct an online mental health screening assessment at <http://www.militarymentalhealth.org/>.
- Contact your local VA office, community mental health clinic, or religious institution.

Suicide Prevention