



LIVING OUR LIVES A Forum on Suicide Awareness & Prevention Grinnell, IA 12/14/19

Common reasons why suicide is so prevalent among US Military and First Responders and throughout our communities:

- * Frequent exposure to real and vicarious trauma; feelings of isolation; feeling that others cannot relate to their experiences.
- * Veterans at greater risk for suicide because of combat exposure, they are accustomed to violence and death, higher rates of Traumatic Brain Injury, and deployment related stressors
- * The stress and trauma of the jobs. Being on the scene of dangerous and emotionally draining situations leads to conscious and subconscious psychological damage that can linger for years.
- * The Ruderman Family Foundation estimates police officers witness about 188 critical incidents during their careers, leading to depression and PTSD rates that are five times higher than the general public.

Who to call if you have feelings of isolation, hopelessness, or thoughts of suicide to the extent that it concerns or pains you in any way:

- * Stop Soldier Suicide (844)889-5610
- * VA Crisis Line (800)273-8255 (1.800.273-TALK) *PRESS 1
- * Civilians (800)332-4224
- * National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800)784-2433 (1.800.SUICIDE)

What to do if you are concerned about a friend's mental condition or about them possibly approaching suicide from things you've seen or things you've heard them say

- * Express support, encourage friend or family member to seek help from a professional, ask direct questions about their thoughts and feelings
- * Ask them about it and suggest they seek help. Continue to follow up with them

How we can all help in this effort to spread awareness and prevent suicide even if we aren't or haven't been directly impacted by it.

- * Work to decrease stigma surrounding mental health concerns;
- * Contribute to non-profit organizations designed to raise awareness; continue discussions without judgment
- * Continue open discussions about it free of shame