



## **LIVING OUR LIVES** *Facts, Recommendations & Resources on Suicide Awareness & Prevention*

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

- \* They experience frequent exposure to real and vicarious trauma; feelings of isolation; feeling that others cannot relate to their experiences.
- \* Veterans are 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.

### **If you have feelings of isolation, hopelessness, or thoughts of suicide that concerns or pains you in any way, call:**

- \* VA Crisis Line (800)273-8255 (1.800.273-TALK) \*Veterans 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 health or about them considering 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
- \* Provide information for resources; offer to address barriers to attending mental health appointments (assistance with scheduling, childcare, transportation)
- \* Continue to follow up with them and let them know how much they mean to you

### **There are many ways that we can all help in the effort to spread awareness and prevent suicide, even if we aren't or haven't been directly impacted by it:**

- \* Work to decrease the stigma surrounding mental health concerns and reaching out for help to address them
- \* Contribute to non-profit organizations which are designed to raise awareness and prevention of suicide
- \* Start and continue open discussions about suicide without judgement or shame