

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Community Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention: Community Engagement and Partnerships Program

Portland VA Suicide Prevention Program

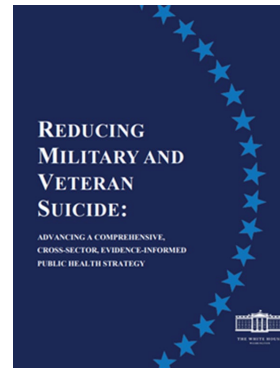
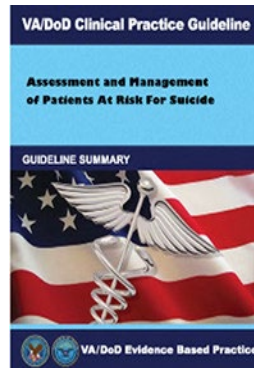
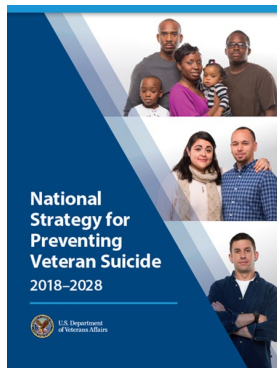
A Little Housekeeping Before We Start:

Suicide is an intense topic for some people.

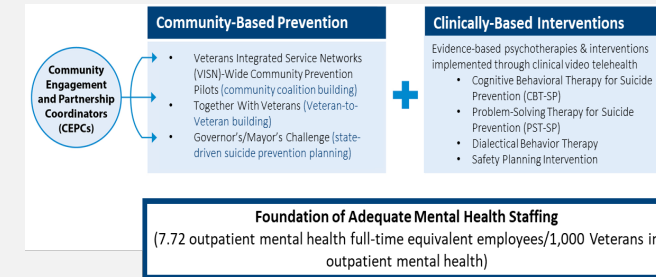
- There is often stigma and taboo associated with suicide.
- Data is complex and not complete.
- We honor each and every life lost and life that is affected by suicide.
- If you need to take a break, or step out, please do so. Take care of YOU.

VA's Top Clinical Priority: Suicide Prevention

Data from the [*National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*](#) informs VA's strategic efforts, which are guided by the [*National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide \(2018\)*](#), [*VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline \(2024\)*](#), and [*White House Strategy on Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide \(2021\)*](#).



SP 2.0



SP Now

- Plank 1: Lethal Means Safety
- Plank 2: Suicide Prevention in Medical Populations
- Plank 3: Outreach and Understanding of Prior VHA Users
- Plank 4: Suicide Prevention Program Enhancement
- Plank 5: Paid Media

Veterans
Crisis
Line



Suicide is a Complex Issue with No Single Cause

Veteran Suicide: An Evolving Focus

In the early 2000s, suicide among Veterans began to receive unprecedented public, legislative, and scientific attention.⁴ At that time, studies of Veteran suicide were few, limited in scope, varied in methods, and inconsistent in findings. Determining suicide rates for the Veteran population was “a challenging puzzle”⁵ and in 2008, the Blue Ribbon Work Group on Suicide Prevention in the Veteran Population called for further studies to clarify the “confusing picture of the risk of suicide among Veterans.”⁶

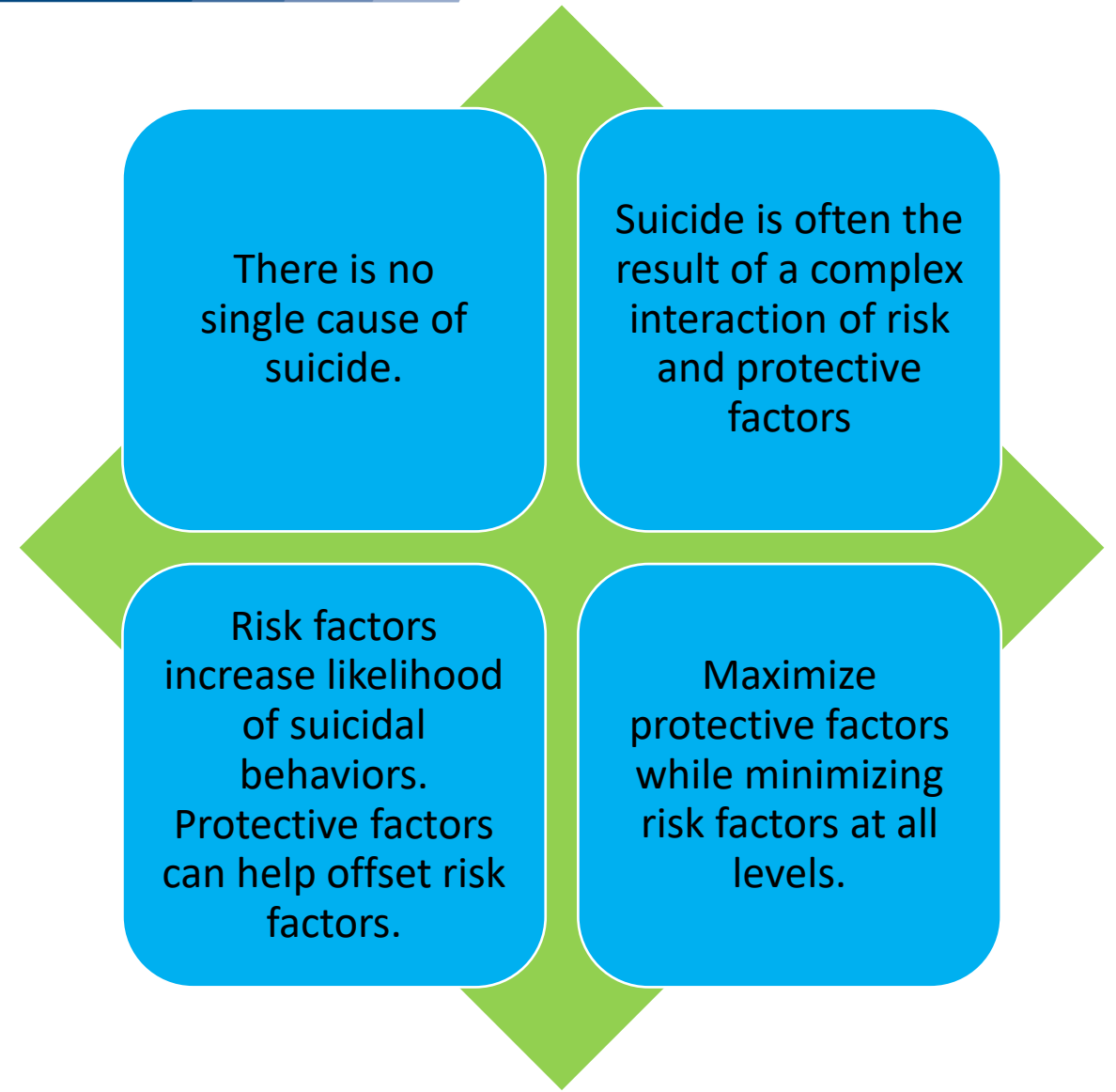
Comprehensive Data Collection

In response, VA developed robust systems for collecting, analyzing, and reporting national data on Veteran suicide. This ninth annual report provides the most recent data regarding suicide

among Veteran and non-Veteran U.S. adults, and about variation in suicide rates across Veteran populations.

Public Health Approach to Veteran Suicide Prevention

Concurrently, VA has advanced an expansive whole-of-nation approach to suicide prevention. This involves engagement with other federal agencies; public-private partnerships; government at the local, state and national levels; Veterans Service Organizations; and local communities to reach all Veterans to support the implementation of a full public health approach, as outlined in the White House Strategy Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide⁷ and VA’s National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.⁸ This public health approach includes both community-based prevention and clinical interventions to reduce suicide in the Veteran population.

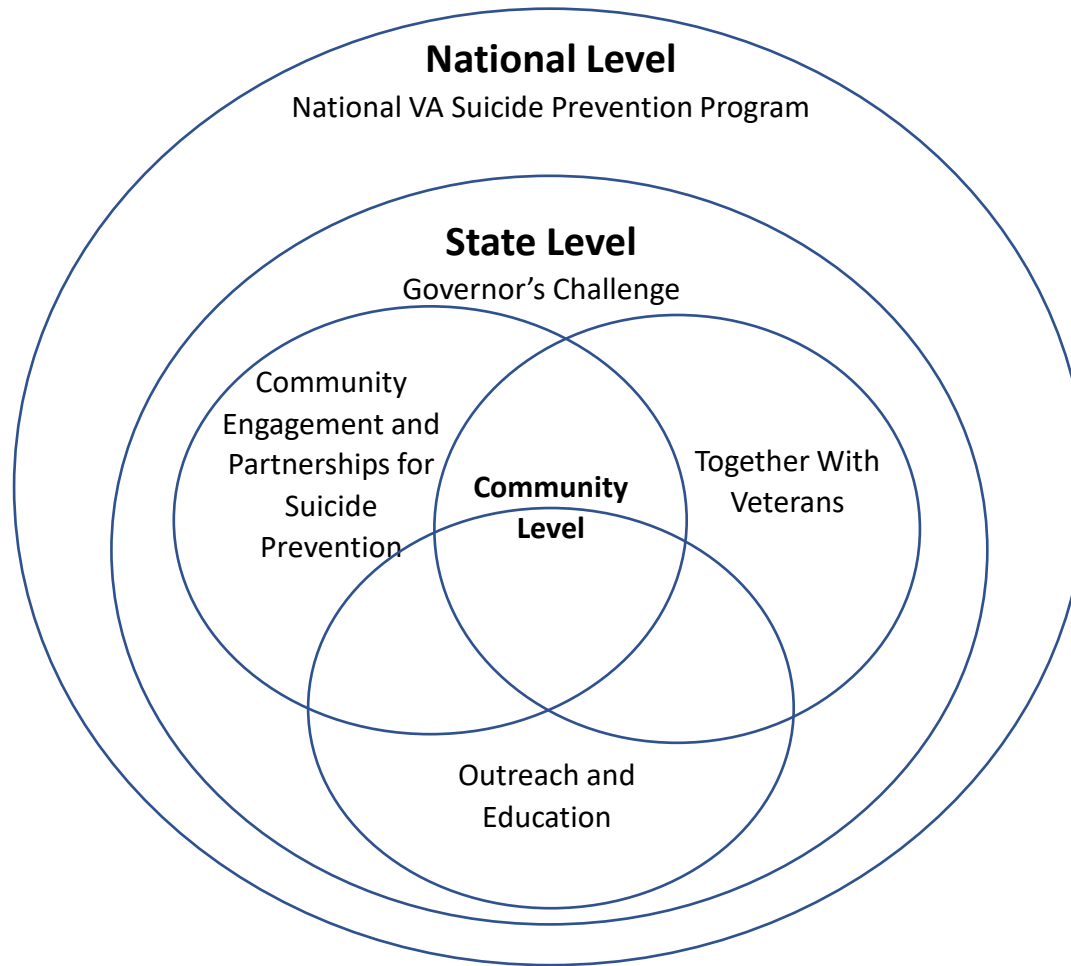


**Suicide
is preventable.**

Why Communities are Critical in Preventing Veteran Suicide

- Approximately half of Veterans receive care outside VA. VA is dedicated to reaching all Veterans where they live and connect. To do this, VA and communities are coming together to implement the public health approach, combining community and clinical interventions for suicide prevention. Together, VA and communities can work toward ending Veteran suicide.
- CEPCs collaborate closely with members of local suicide prevention teams to provide much needed expansion of the teams' capacity to develop and enhance community partnerships for suicide prevention through establishing coalition-based suicide prevention programs in local communities.
- Partnerships promoted by healthcare organizations with communities have been shown to improve patient outcomes (Clyne et al., 2012).
- Key Phrases for Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention: Full Public Health Model, National Strategy to End Veteran Suicide, Priority Areas, Lethal Means Safety.

Community-Based Interventions



Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention (CBI-SP) serves as unifying model, from national to community levels, for all community-based efforts to end Veteran suicide.

- ***The Governor's Challenge*** is a collaboration with VA and SAMHSA where state policy makers partner with local leaders to implement a comprehensive suicide prevention plan.
- ***Together with Veterans*** is focused on Veteran-to-Veteran coalition building and Veteran leadership development for suicide prevention.
- ***Community Engagement and Partnerships for Suicide Prevention (VISN Expansion)*** is focused on facilitating community coalition building for suicide prevention

Outreach and Education provides SAVE, VHA facility partnerships, events, etc. through local Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) and does not change their critical role.

Public Health Strategy

VA's public health strategy combines partnerships with communities to implement tailored, local prevention plans while also focusing on evidence-based clinical strategies for intervention. Our approach focuses on both what we can do now, in the short term, and over the long term, to implement VA's [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#).



KEY TENETS

1

Suicide is preventable.

2

Suicide prevention requires a public health approach, combining clinical and community-based approaches.

3

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention.

Focused Priority Areas Across CBI-SP Unifying Model



- Identify Service Members, Veterans, and their Families



- Screen for Suicide Risk
- Promote Connectedness
- Improve Care Transitions



- Increase Lethal Means Safety and
- Safety Planning

What does this look like in practice?

Coalitions:

- Collaborative projects to spread awareness and give support
- Creating social opportunities for Veterans to connect
- Collaborative learning sessions
- Lethal Means Safety training
- Safety Planning
- Creating a network of resources/providers

Events:

- Tabling to raise awareness
- Roundtables
- Summits
- Awareness walks
- Pride Festivals

Training

- SAVE Training
- CALM Training
- QPR Training
- Training on local suicide data

Coalition Examples

Stages: Engage, Plan, Implement, and Sustain

Collaborative Groups

Hobbies For Heroes

Priority Area 3

COMPACT Act Awareness Coalition

Priority Area 4

VA SAVE Training + CBI-SP Awareness

Priority Area 4



Collaborative Projects

Veteran Resource Website

Priority Area 4, 5

Veterans Business Council Window Sticker

Priority Area 1, 4

Monthly Socials for Women Veterans

Priority Area 2



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

We'd love to work with you!



- We'd love to work with you on any ideas you have for suicide prevention projects!
- Remember, September is Suicide Prevention month. This is our favorite month, but we are available all year too!
- You know your community best and we'd love to help!
- We can help provide information, coordination, collaboration opportunities.

VHA Suicide Prevention Resources

Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365

New number, same support.
| Dial 988 then Press 1.



• • • • Confidential chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net** or text to **838255** • • • •

- Veterans
- Family members
- Service members
- Friends

COMPACT Act, Section 201



Section 201 of COMPACT Act states VA will provide, pay for and reimburse for emergent suicide care for eligible individuals at VA medical facilities and at non-Department facilities.



Eligible individuals potentially include all Veterans regardless of eligibility for VHA health care benefits (includes OTH discharges, may be dependent upon adjudication process).



Emergent suicide care includes inpatient or crisis residential care for no more than 30 days and/or outpatient medical and mental healthcare for no more than 90 days. If the individual remains in acute suicidal crisis, extensions may be provided. Each new crisis is a new episode of eligibility.



VA will ensure eligible Veterans are not financially responsible for costs associated with emergent suicide care, including emergency transportation.

COMPACT Act, Section 201 Impact:

- VA providing cost-free mental health and medical emergent suicide care removes the cost barrier
- By extending eligibility and access to acute and follow up suicide care, the net of protection VA will provide to prevent suicide increases dramatically
- **COMPACT 201 benefit potentially increases eligibility to an additional 9 million unenrolled Veterans, potentially doubling the needed services**

VA SAVE Training

- Suicide prevention training video available to everyone, 24/7
- Less than 25 minutes long
- Offered in collaboration with the PsychArmor Institute



Available online for free: psycharmor.org/courses/s-a-v-e/

Don't Wait. Reach Out.

Don't wait. Reach out.

**Life has its challenges.
As a Veteran you don't
have to solve them
alone.**

Use this site to get support that is designed specifically for you. If you're a family member or a friend, you can also find resources that are designed specifically for the Veteran in your life.

[Get Support & Resources](#)



Social Media Safety Toolkit



- As discussed in the **National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide**, social media is an important intervention channel and a key piece of VA's comprehensive, community-based suicide prevention strategy.
- The Social Media Safety Toolkit for Veterans, their families, and friends equips everyone with the knowledge needed to respond to social media posts that indicate a Veteran may be having thoughts of suicide.
- The toolkit includes best practices, resources, and sample responses.



Download at https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/docs/OMH-074-Suicide-Prevention-Social-Media-Toolkit-1-8_508.pdf

<https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>

www.t2health.dcoe.mil/products/mobile-apps



Problem solving
skills for stress



Manage physical &
emotional stress



Safety plan &
support during crisis



Monitor & manage
PTSD symptoms.
Includes safety
planning feature



Tools for coping,
relaxation, distraction
& positive thinking



Enhance sleep
quality & duration

Coping and Symptom Management Apps

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA Tools and Resources for Veterans and Supporters

Veterans Crisis Line: A free, anonymous, confidential resource available to Veterans in crisis, as well as concerned family members and friends. **Dial 988 then Press 1**, chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text **838255**.

Reach Out: Get support designed specifically for you. Family members or friends can find resources that are designed for the Veterans in your life.

Safety Planning: Information on safety planning and a template for developing a safety plan. A safety plan is a written list of coping strategies and sources of support that at-risk Veterans can use before or during a suicidal crisis.

VA Mental Health: VA's repository of mental health resources, information, and data materials.

VA Tools and Resources for Veterans and Supporters

VA S.A.V.E. Training: Training designed to teach anyone who interacts with Veterans how to recognize warning signs of crisis and what to do to help a Veteran who may be at risk.

VA Suicide Prevention: Explore suicide prevention resources to build networks of support among community-based organizations, Veterans Service Organizations, health care providers, and other members of your community that strengthen protective factors for Veterans.

VA Resource Locator: This tool can help Veterans find local mental health and suicide prevention resources, including their local suicide prevention coordinator.

Resources Continued

- The VA conducts the largest national analysis of Veteran suicide rates each year. Findings are made available to the public in a report which is published annually.
 - [2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#)
- [RM MIRECC SuicideRisk Table.pdf \(va.gov\)](#)
- [Home | Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Veteran Suicide Prevention - MIRECC / CoE \(va.gov\)](#)
 - Research, education, trainings, tools
 - The mission of the Rocky Mountain MIRECC is to study suicide with the goal of reducing suicidal ideation and behaviors in the Veteran population.
- Contact the nearest VA medical facility using VA's Emergency Care Reporting portal
 - [Emergency Care Reporting – Portal](#)
 - Calling 844-72HRVHA (844-724-7842).
- General questions on community care (not related to COMPACT ACT)
 - [Fact Sheets for VHA Office of Integrated Veteran Care Programs - Community Care \(va.gov\)](#)

Stay Connected

Follow us on social media to stay up to date on our programs and initiatives.



[@deptvetaffairs](#)

[@veteransmtc](#)



[U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs](#)

[Veterans Health
Administration](#)

[Make the Connection](#)



[@deptvetaffairs](#)

[@veteranshealth](#)

VISN 20 Community Engagement & Partnerships Coordinators (CEPC)

Alaska:

Rebeca Pelaez:

- Email: rebeca.pelaez@va.gov
- Phone: (907) 201-6560

Boise, ID:

Travis Schmidt:

- Email: travis.schmidt2@va.gov
- Phone: (208)-353-8378

Portland, OR:

Kristine O'Brien

- Email: kristine.obrien@va.gov
- Phone: (360) 334-0257

Ashley Taylor

- Email: ashley.taylor18@va.gov
- Phone: (503) 939-7948

Roseburg, OR:

Will Wagner

- Email: william.wagner4@va.gov
- Phone: (541) 378-7503

Karen Wilhite

- Email: karen.wilhite@va.gov
- Phone: (541) 530-2852

Seattle/American Lake, WA:

Rachel Morgan:

- Email: rachel.morgan@va.gov
- Phone: (206) 495-8791

Heather Sanchez:

- Email: heather.sanchez@va.gov
- Phone: (253) 219-5459

Spokane, WA:

Daryl Cline

- Email: daryl.cline@va.gov
- Phone: (208) 665-1707

Walla Walla, WA:

Kimberley Alger:

- Email: kimberley.alger@va.gov
- Phone: (509) 200-7418

White City, OR:

Brion Pinkerton:

- Email: brion.pinkerton@va.gov
- Phone: (458) 800-6367

Mary Knight

- Email: mary.knight2@va.gov
- Phone: (458) 260-9557

Contact Information

Portland VA CEPC County Territories

Kristine:

Oregon: Clackamas, Clatsop, Gilliam, Hood River, Marion, Multnomah, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler, Yamhill

Washington: Clark, Cowlitz, Pacific, Wahkiakum

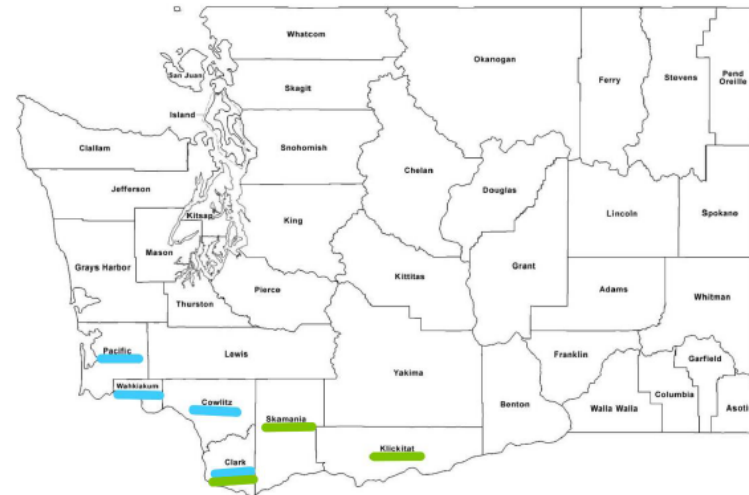
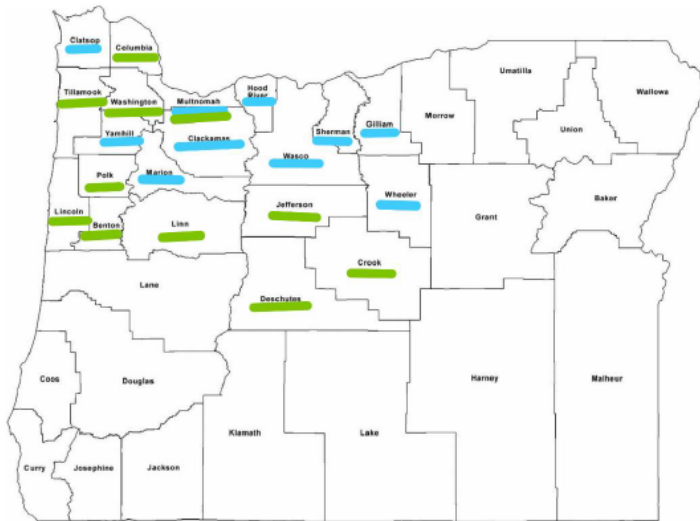
Ashley:

Oregon: Benton, Columbia, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Lincoln, Linn, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Washington

Washington: Clark, Klickitat, Skamania

Oregon

Washington



Community Engagement & Partnership Coordinators (CEPC)

Ashley Taylor, MS

Ashley.taylor18@va.gov

(503) 939-7948

Kristine O'Brien, Ed.S, M.S, LMHC

Kristine.OBrien@va.gov

(360) 334-0257



Suicide Prevention Coordinators

Martha Carlson, Program Manager

Michael Ogunsusi, LCSW (Hillsboro)

Matt Schmidt, LCSW (Vancouver)

Gayle Keller, LCSW (Fairview)

Joe Bertagnolli, LCSW (Portland)

Jeremiah Dutt, LCSW (West Linn)

Becky Kuhn, LCSW (Salem)

COMPACT ACT Coordinator

Cynthia Tanner, LCSW

Community Engagement Partnership Coordinators

Kristine O'Brien, LPMHC

Ashley Taylor, MS

Email: vhapor-mhdspc@va.gov

Team Line 503 402 2857 or 503 220 8202 ext. 52857

Suicide Prevention Team

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Questions?
