

## NH Suicide Prevention Council—Military & Veterans June 2, 2021

### **In attendance:**

Co-Chairs: Amy Cook, DMAVS; (Beth Alves, VA absent)

Members & Guests: Seth Gahr, NH State Police; Dale Garrow, NHNG; Kate Sullivan, Servicelink/Community Partners; Sheena Bice, Forge VFR; Tye Thompson, NEP; Sarah Morrissey, NHES; Ruth Ann Fabrizio, Survivors of Suicide Loss Group; Jennifer Sabin, DHHS

\*If you were logged on to this meeting, but your name did not get recorded in the attendance, please notify Amy Cook for a correction to be made.\*

### **SPC Full/Leadership Update**

Jennifer Sabin, the new SP Coordinator, will join our committee meetings when she's available. She introduced herself to group members and described how her position will operate to help SPC operations. Planning continues for the fall Suicide Prevention Conference. It will be a hybrid model this year, CEUs will be offered for the more in-depth workshops. In person workshops will be held at Grappone Center on 11/4—register early when it opens as space will be extra limited due to COVID restrictions.

The SPC is adopting and expanding DHHS's I Care NH Campaign. DHHS has a webpage dedicated to this suicide prevention campaign-- [www.dhhs.nh.gov/icare](http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/icare) --and we can add Veteran resources to the page.

On 6/9 the SPC Communications Committee will be having a meeting to discuss planning for Suicide Prevention Month and also marketing/messaging for the year. If anyone is available to attend to represent our committee, please let Amy or Beth know as neither are able to attend.

### **Postvention**

*Moving forward, we will include Postvention as an agenda item in our monthly meeting encouraging further discussion. As a result of regular discussion and sharing experiences, appropriate action items will be developed in this area as-needed.*  
No discussion.

### **Peer Support Services** (Expand access to peer support services for SMVF.)

*This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda.*

Senator Hassan's office contacted Amy Cook to ask her to attend a meeting with Dr. Joseph Geraci, the Director of the ETS Sponsorship Program. Dr. Geraci is looking to develop some connections in New Hampshire to find volunteer mentors who can support transitioning service members moving to New Hampshire. No date set yet. Various organizations were invited to attend meeting (VA, VSOs, etc). More info to come.

### **Military Cultural Competency Training** (Increase number of general healthcare and behavioral healthcare providers trained in military culture. Increase confidence of Veterans in the military cultural competence of their providers. Expand access to military cultural competency training to other sectors outside healthcare.)

*This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda.*

**Star Behavioral Health Providers** (Sheena B., Forge VFR)—Star Behavioral Health Providers has multiple trainings coming up—additional dates were recently added. You can register by logging onto their website. All trainings are still virtual at this time. To identify members interested in helping work on the promotion of this, it will be included in the survey that will be sent out to members. (See note in New Business For Discussion). The NH Providers Association meeting is coming up and Sheena will be promoting SBHP there. She recently also pushed out the training information to CMHCs.

### **Other Military Cultural Competency Trainings**

Amy C., DMAVS--The online, Governor's Challenge PsychArmor training portal containing military culture trainings, suicide prevention trainings and direct links to recommended external trainings will be launching this month! 6/3 2PM-3PM webinar on the portal launch hosted by SMVF TA Center. Amy sent out link to all members in case anyone interested in attending. More info will be available following the webinar.

The Portal will allow us to provide a training resource to specific populations (mental/behavioral health and other clinicians + employers) and also track who is completing the training.

Amy C., DMAVS--The NH Veteran-Friendly Business applications are now available and the application has been revised. It now has more of an emphasis on training for businesses and the application contains a recommended curriculum for businesses that includes MCC trainings as well as suicide prevention trainings. In the coming year, the program will also be developing a branch called NH Veteran-Friendly Service Providers and the committee can provide input as to what should be included in the definition and criteria. All organizations represented on this committee are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to apply for recognition! Get the application at: [www.dmavs.nh.gov/veteran-friendly-businesses-0/apply](http://www.dmavs.nh.gov/veteran-friendly-businesses-0/apply)

Dale G., NHNG—ASIST will be held at the National Guard on August 16-17. Contact Dale if you have someone who wants to attend as he has a few slots available.

**Social Connectedness** (*Increase social connectedness of rural Veterans. Increase social connectedness of military-Veteran spouses & families.*)

*This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda.*

**Veteran Wellness Series, Lakes Region** (Tye T., NEP)—Activities continue in Laconia and attendance is up, cycling, salt water fishing. Additional activities will be added in summer. NEP is trying to build connections in the Lakes Region. If hear that something is not working, please connect with Tye directly. And, remember NEP can work 1:1 with people in the community. Check out NEP's website calendar for an up-to-date listing of what is occurring in the Lakes Region and around the state. NEP Veteran activities were also added to DMAVS calendar.

**Together With Veterans**—No report available.

#### **Other Related Initiative Updates**

**Zero Suicide Academy**—Academy was held virtually May 11-13, 2021. Jennifer S. (DHHS) shared about her experience attending and reported that it was very well done. She found it well-coordinated, informative, educational, useful and inspiring. A wide variety of professionals attended.

**Military Spouse & Family Supports** (Amy C., DMAVS)—Amy and a member of the NH Military Leadership Team (Ginger Munson) continue to work on this project. A Military & Veteran Family survey was sent out for distribution through networks. The survey closed 5/31. Thank you to those individuals and organizations that promoted and shared the survey. 180 respondents answered. The highest number of respondents were from Hillsborough County. The survey identified what military & Veteran families feel they need and how/where they access services and supports. Amy will be putting together a brief presentation that compiles results for the NH Military Leadership Team and will share that the next meeting for informational awareness.

**Ask the Question: Ask, Link, Collaborate Technical Assistance Program** (Amy C., DMAVS)—This program is the result of work conducted by the Joint Military Task Force under the Governor's Commission on Alcohol & Other Drugs. Applications are being accepted now for participation; however, the program start date is still pending and will be determine by when the state is authorized to spend the funds. Estimated start date is around 9/1. Eligible organizations are those that identify, refer, assess and/or treat risk for SUDs in military & Veterans. Up to 40 organizations will be able to participate in the pilot program. Organizations will be able to access up to \$1,500 to offset the cost of participating and implementing the program. The participants in this project will be granted access to the PsychArmor Training Portal. This project will also serve to create materials and procedures that can be used in a future phase and rolled out to additional organizations. There is a good possibility that a Year 2 and 3 will be added to the program and there will be many opportunities for expansion during those years.

For more information and the application: <https://www.dmavs.nh.gov/community-based-military-programs/ask-link-collaborate-technical-assistance-program>

It was previously reported that applications would be due by 8/6; however, it is being changed so that applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all slots are filled or the authorized funding expires.

**Partnership With Servicelinks** (Amy C. & Beth A.)—We will be moving this report to be one of the committee's Focus Areas for all future meetings. Beth is in process of coordinating a date to meet with the Servicelink agencies that will be doing a VA SQUARES pilot. It's been difficult to find mutually available times for the parties that need to attend.

#### **New Business For Discussion**

**Committee Goals/Objectives**—Amy shared a set of slides to facilitate this discussion. Each slide showed the goal identified previously by the committee and any ideas for steps to reach the goal. Discussion took place regarding each one; however, due

to low attendance at today's meeting, we will solicit the feedback and input of other committee members as well before finalizing and submitting to SPC. Amy will create a SurveyMonkey that will be sent out to all committee members and will solicit feedback and ideas. Slides and resulting notes from the discussion on each are attached to these minutes. Each slide notes if the goal is a short-term one or a long-term goal. Some will be accomplished sooner than others. The new SPC Plan is a 4-5 year work plan, so these goals and their estimated timelines reflect that same length of time. Jennifer S. suggested that the committee prioritize the goals as well so it can help the committee manage its time. Survey will ask committee members which goal they are interested on working with so members can get involved with something that interests them and is worth their time and involvement. This will also allow the committee to work on several areas simultaneously without all members having to devote time to all goals.

### **Member Updates**

**Amy Cook, DMAVS**—The state is in the final stages of approving a state budget. At this time, it appears that DMAVS may be receiving \$1.5 million to support mental health services for Veterans and reduce isolation. Additionally, if the budget passes as it is today, 3 new positions will be added to the Division of Community Based Military Programs. They'll be posted over the summer and probably hired in early fall.

**Sarah Morrissey, NHES**—NHES re-opened their offices to a limited capacity recently. They are doing 1:1 in person appointments and also still doing phone and virtual appts. Federal unemployment programs are ending 6/19, so NHES expects to see more job seekers after that. Virtual job fairs will continue for now through the summer.

### **Next Meeting**

**No meeting in July!!**

August 4, 2021; 2PM – 3:30PM

Theme: we forgot to pick one again!! ☹️

Location: **We will return to in person meetings!** Hooksett FMS, Classroom 124, 1227 Hooksett Road, Hooksett, NH 03106. A virtual or call-in option will be available. Details forthcoming.

# 2021-2024 Goals & Priorities Suicide Prevention Council Military & Veterans Committee

The following slides outline the areas in which committee members identified a need and interest to focus efforts in the coming years. The outline is in ROUGH DRAFT form and is a work in progress. The committee will proceed with discussing and identifying action steps for each priority area/strategy.

## Goal Planning

- What is the goal that focuses on changing behaviors?
- List possible strategies to address the goal.
- Does the plan for achieving the goal include best practices?
- Is the plan include a comprehensive approach (9 areas)?
- Does the plan maximize impact (publicize, piggyback, and partner)?

## Goals of Suicide Prevention Council

1. Promote awareness that suicide is preventable.
2. Reduce stigma regarding asking for and seeking help.

## Military & Veteran Committee Goal

*To reduce deaths by suicide among the greatest number of Service Members and Veterans possible.*

### **Proposed Focus areas**

Peer Support Services

Training

Social Connectedness

Reducing Barriers for In-Patient Services and Homelessness/Housing Services

Preparing a network of information/referral providers to be readily available for Veterans who need assistance, information or referral.

Collaborating with established groups to develop components of a NH Veteran-Friendly Service Provider program as it relates to reducing Veteran suicide.

## Goal: To reduce deaths by suicide among the greatest number of Service Members and Veterans possible

**Means:** Through a public health approach using four key components outlined by the CDC and supported in the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs

1. **Population Approach:** Public health uses a population approach to improve health on a large scale. A population approach means focusing on prevention approaches that impact groups or populations of people, as opposed to treatment of individuals.
2. **Primary Prevention:** Public health focuses on preventing suicidal behavior before it occurs and addresses a broad range of risk and protective factors.
3. **Commitment to Science:** Public health uses science to increase our understanding of suicide prevention so we can develop new and better solutions.
4. **Multidisciplinary Strategies:** Public health advocates for multidisciplinary collaboration, bringing together many different perspectives to engineer solutions for diverse communities.

## Area of Focus: Peer Support Services

- Expand access to peer support services
  - Support the expansion of ETS Sponsorship program in NH?
    - 1) Recruit mentors?
    - 2) Coordination in NH?
    - 3) Meeting with Dr. Geraci in June 2021 to determine ETS Sponsorship needs

Timeframe: Summer 2021 – Summer 2024

Committee members also identified need for trained peer counselors, qualified supervisors...

Interested committee members and others we should invite to the table:

## Area of Focus: Training (Military Cultural Competency and SP trainings)

- Increase number of general healthcare and behavioral healthcare providers trained in military culture
  - Through support and promotion of SBHP
  - Through promotion of PsychArmor Gov Challenge portal
- Increase confidence of Veterans in the military cultural competence of their providers
- Expand access to military cultural competency training to other sectors outside healthcare
  - SUD providers
  - Private sector businesses/HR professionals
  - Colleges/universities?

Interested committee members and others we should invite to the table:

Timeframe: Summer 2021 – Summer 2024

## Area of Focus: Social Connectedness

- Increase social connectedness of rural Veterans
  - Through support of LRVC (how specifically?)
  - Through support and promotion of NEP Veteran Wellness Series
- Increase social connectedness of military/Veteran spouses & families
  - How can committee specifically support family initiatives via MLT?

Interested committee members and others we should invite to the table:

Timeframe: Ongoing

## Area of Focus: Reducing Barriers for Veterans In Need of In-Patient Services and Homelessness/Housing Services

- Pet Respite
  - Promote/support existing services?
  - Expand a national service?
  - Collaborate with groups to develop a new network?
  - Data re: benefits to having pets (contact Jennifer for more info)

Timeframe: Fall 2021 – Fall 2024

### Interested committee members and others we should invite to the table:

Rescue organizations (foster network)  
Sheena Bice

## Area of Focus: Preparing a network of information/referral providers to be available for Veterans who need assistance, information or referral.

- Increase # of Servicelink staff trained in military cultural competencies.
  - SBHP
  - PsychArmor portal
- Develop practices that support collaboration between Servicelink and military/Veteran partners (DMAVS, VA, SPC Committee, others as identified)
- Increase # of referrals to VA
  - Use of VA SQUARES
  - Educate Servicelink staff about services at VA
  - Identify a seamless referral process for VA services

Timeframe: Summer 2021 – Fall 2022

### Interested committee members and others we should invite to the table:

Servicelink Managers & staff  
DHHS Servicelink Administrator  
VA—Suicide Prevention, Veteran Directed Care, SQUARES rep  
Division of Veteran Services?

**Area of Focus: Collaborate with other established groups to develop components of a NH Veteran-Friendly Service Provider program as it relates to reducing Veteran suicide.**

- Identify best practices in suicide prevention that should be utilized by a NH Veteran-Friendly Service Provider.
- Promote participation in program.
- Support a Community of Practice for the NH Veteran-Friendly Businesses and Service Providers.

Timeframe: September 2021 – Fall 2022/Winter 2023

Interested committee members and others we should invite to the table:

**This area of focus will be removed as a result of committee discussion. A space on the agenda, however, will remain for members to share experiences and concerns.**

**Area of Focus: Postvention protocols**

- Continue and improve collaboration between the VA, state agencies and the NH National Guard in order to ensure productive postvention protocols are in place that can lead to effective evaluations.

1. ~~To further assess and identify action steps accordingly, "Postvention Protocols" will be added to the monthly agenda as a standing discussion item.~~ (completed)

**This area of focus will be removed as a result of committee discussion. However, committee members agreed it will be important to continue advocating for virtual accessibility to healthcare appointments and professional meetings as a normal practice.**

**Area of Focus: Virtual Care Services**

- Increase access for SMVF population to virtual care services
  - Some way to partner with Hassan's office to advocate for expanded broadband?
  - Virtual Living Room work?