

VA



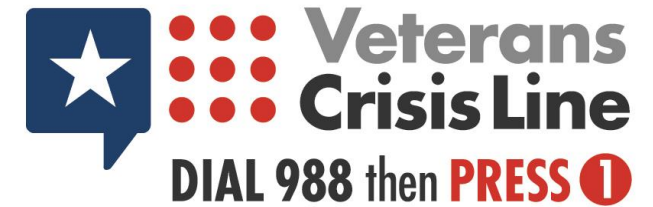
U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Veteran Suicide Prevention

LaShelle Burch, LCSW

*Community Based Interventions – Suicide Prevention Program
Office of Suicide Prevention
Department of Veterans Affairs*

Before We Begin:



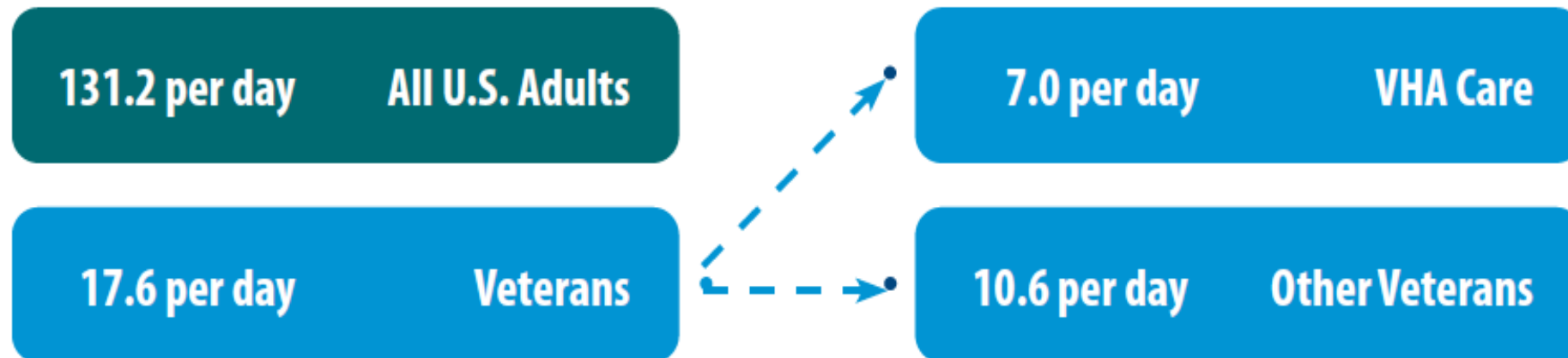
- Suicide can be an intense topic for some people.
 - If you need to take a break, or step out, please do so.
- Immediate Resources:
 - [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#)
 - Veterans and Service members: Dial 988 then Press 1 to connect with the **Veterans Crisis Line**.

Facts About Veteran Suicide

Veteran Suicide Statistics: Rates and Averages

In 2022, the unadjusted suicide rate for Veterans was 34.7 per 100,000. It was 13.5 per 100,000 for female Veterans and 37.3 per 100,000 for male Veterans. Among non-Veteran U.S. adults, the suicide rate in 2022 was 17.1 per 100,000, and it was 7.2 per 100,000 for female non-Veteran adults and 28.7 per 100,000 among male non-Veteran adults.

Average Number of Suicides Per Day



https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/data.asp

Risk and Protective Factors

Risk

- Prior suicide attempt
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Access to lethal means
- Recent loss
- Legal or financial challenges
- Relationship issues
- Unemployment
- Homelessness

Protective

- Access to mental health care
- Sense of connectedness
- Problem-solving skills
- Sense of spirituality
- Mission or purpose
- Physical health
- Employment
- Social and emotional well-being



Goal: Minimize risk factors and boost protective factors

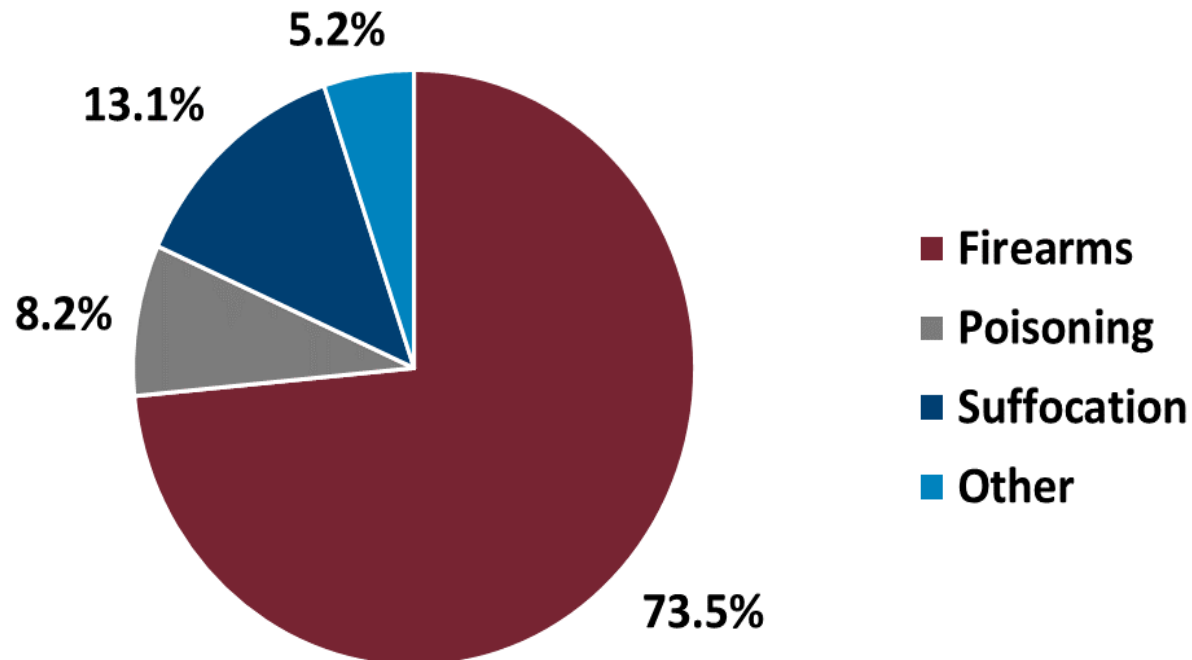
Access to Lethal Means is a Risk Factor

What are Lethal Means?

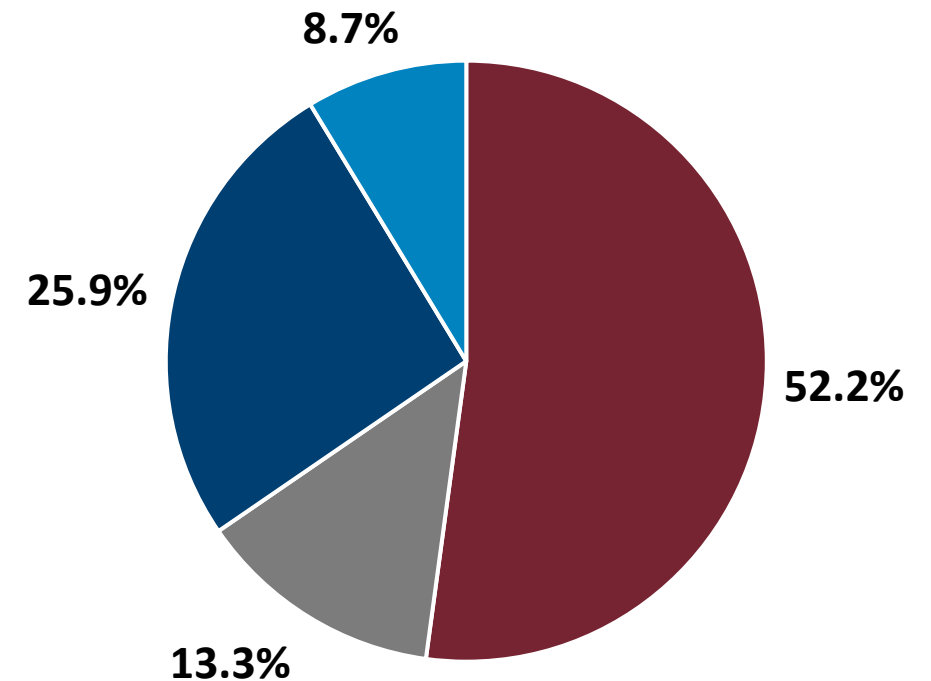
- **Lethal means** are objects that may be used by individuals experiencing a suicide crisis.
 - They include items like firearms, medications, alcohol, opioids, other substances, ropes, cords, or sharp objects.
 - These items can become deadly if easily accessible for someone experiencing crisis or having thoughts of suicide.

U.S. Veterans and Suicide Methods (2023)

Veterans



Non-Veteran U.S. Adults



[U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Suicide Prevention. 2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. 2024.](#)

Normalize the Discussion: Secure Storage Works

- Nearly half of all Veterans own a firearm and Veteran firearm owners are dedicated to firearm safety.
- The [Keep It Secure](#) (Lethal Means Safety) campaign promotes awareness about the simple steps Veterans and their support networks can take to increase safety.

Suicide is Preventable.

The Steps of VA S.A.V.E.

VA S.A.V.E.:

How to Help Veterans at Risk for Suicide

VA S.A.V.E. will help you act with care and compassion if you encounter a Veteran who is in suicidal crisis.

- **S**pot the signs a Veteran might be thinking about suicide.
- **A**sk the critical question.
- **V**alidate the Veteran's experience.
- **E**ncourage and support next steps with the Veteran.

VA S.A.V.E. Training for Caregivers

 For caregivers enrolled in the VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP)



VA S.A.V.E. Training for Caregivers:

- Expands the VA's flagship suicide prevention training program, [VA S.A.V.E.](#) to include:
 - Information on a caregiver's risk for experiencing suicidal thinking
 - Evidence-based treatments for caregivers
 - Resources and supports available for caregivers
- Supported time to practice skills needed to start conversations with Veterans about:
 - thoughts of suicide
 - secure storage of firearms
- Interactive, available in-person or virtually

Find your local CSP team here:

www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

More information about this course, visit:

<https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/docs/CSP-VA-SAVE-Training-Cargivers-Flyer-Final.pdf>

Caregiver Support Program

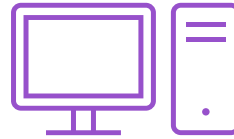
Caregiver Support Program (CSP) Mission:

Promote the health and well-being of Family Caregivers who care for our Nation's Veterans through education, resources, support and services.

CSP offers clinical, educational, and holistic services to individuals who care for Veterans enrolled in VA health care.

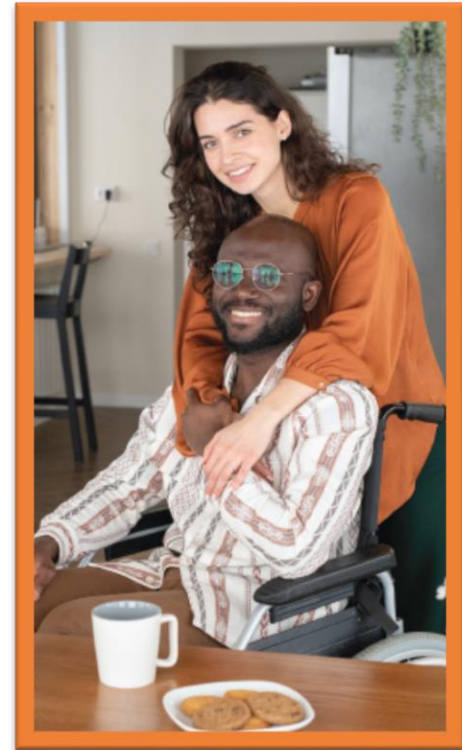
Every VA facility has a local team!

- Caregivers can access a variety of national resources while receiving tailored support from their local CSP Teams.



To learn more about CSP Programs visit:
<https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

Questions about enrollment?
Contact the VA Caregiver Support Line (CSL) at
1-855-260-3274

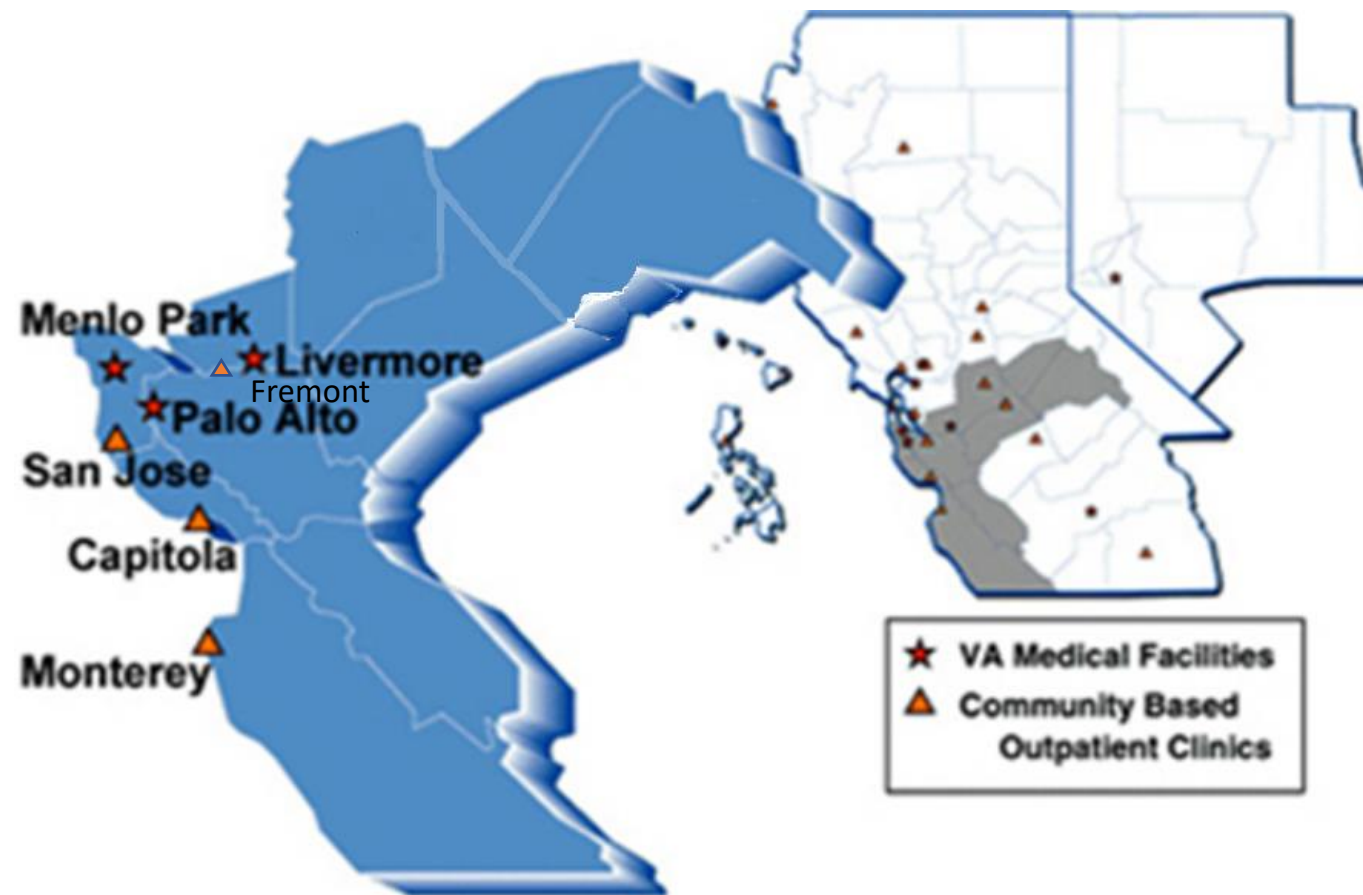


Resources

VA Services: Who is Eligible?

- A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for VA health care benefits.
- *Minimum Duty Requirements:* Veterans who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after Oct. 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible.
- Combat Veterans discharged from active duty on or after Jan. 28, 2003, are eligible for enhanced enrollment placement into Priority Group 6 for five years post discharge
- Starting January 17, 2023, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis can go to a VA or community health care facility to receive free emergency health care – including ambulance transportation costs – and be eligible for inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days, including social work. This change was made possible by the **Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020**.
 - Please reach out to [Member Services](#) if you have questions about COMPACT ACT

VAPAHCS



VA Palo Alto Medical Facilities

- Palo Alto Main Hospital Campus (PAD)
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304
- Main Number (650) 493- 5000 (all staff at all locations can be reached by name through operator)

VA Palo Alto Medical Facilities and Community Based Outpatient Clinic

Palo Alto VA Medical Center- Menlo Park (MPD)

795 Willow Road Menlo Park, CA
Phone: 650-614-9997 x22234

Palo Alto VA Medical Center- Livermore (LVD)

4951 Arroyo Road Livermore, CA 94550
Phone: 925-3734700 x35396

Major General William H. Gourley VA-DoD Outpatient Clinic (MON)

201 9th St, Marina, CA 93933
Phone: (831) 884-1000

Fremont VA Clinic (FRC)

39199 Liberty Street Building B Fremont, CA 94538
Phone: 510-791-4000 x84125

San Jose VA Clinic (SJ)

5855 Silver Creek Valley Place San Jose, CA
Phone: 408-547-9100

Finding the closest VA Clinic: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Vet Centers

[Peninsula Vet Center](#)

795 Willow Road
Building 324 Wing B
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Main number: [650-614-9825](tel:650-614-9825)

[San Jose Vet Center](#)

5855 Silver Creek Valley Place
Third Floor 3A
San Jose, CA 95138
Main number: [408-574-9200](tel:408-574-9200)

[Santa Cruz County Vet Center](#)

1350 41st Avenue
Suite 104
Capitola, CA 95010
Main number: [831-464-4575](tel:831-464-4575)

[Concord Vet Center](#)

1333 Willow Pass Road
Suite 106
Concord, CA 94520-7931
Main number: [925-680-4526](tel:925-680-4526)

[San Francisco Vet Center](#)

505 Polk Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
Main number: [415-441-5051](tel:415-441-5051)

[Oakland Vet Center](#)

7700 Edgewater Drive
Suite 125
Oakland, CA 94621
Main number: [510-562-7906](tel:510-562-7906)



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VHA Offers A Range of Services

- Three 20 Bed acute inpatient psychiatry units
- General Mental Health Care
- Addiction Treatment Services
- PTSD Clinical Teams (PCT)
- Veterans Recovery Center
- Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM)
- Compensated Work Therapy/Supportive Employment
- Woman's Counseling Center
- Suicide Prevention Coordinators
- Telemental Health

Outpatient Mental Health

- Outpatient Mental Health Services are available at Menlo Park, San Jose, Monterey, Fremont and Livermore clinics.
- Veteran is assigned a Mental Health Treatment Coordinator (MHTC) who can then refer Veteran to other services.

Addiction Treatment Services

- **Outpatient Treatment Options:**
 - There are outpatient groups available at the VA Palo Alto and VA Menlo Park as well as Livermore, Monterey and San Jose Clinics.
 - Self-referral line: (650) 493 5000 1-1-60050
- **Intensive Outpatient Treatment Options (Approximately 9 groups/week plus case management):**
 - Palo Alto VA: Requires ACT consult and assessment for consideration

Addiction Treatment Services

- **Residential Treatment Options:**
 - **Foundations of Recovery:**
 - 28-day program that helps newly recovering veterans and veterans with co-occurring psychiatric and medical disorders learn the basics of early recovery.
 - **Domiciliary**
 - Domiciliary RRTP at Menlo Park now operates as one joint program with two tracks. The previously named HVRP program now operates as the Dom Housing Track and the previously named First Step program now operates as the Dom Recovery Track. The joint program uses a “university model” with a core curriculum and electives depending on the track.
 - Veterans can self-refer through self-referral screening line by calling 800-848-7254

PTSD Clinical Team

- **Outpatient**

- **PTSD Clinical Team (PCT)**

- Every VHA has an associated PCT and they provide outpatient treatment for PTSD.

- **Inpatient**

- **Trauma Recovery Program (TRP)**

- The available inpatient TRP programs address trauma and PTSD issues for men and women and is located at the Menlo Park VA. If you are interested in any of these programs, contact the (MHC) or your local provider for more information and a referral.

Homeless Programs

24/7 National Call Center for Homeless Veterans:

1-877-424-3838- counselors provide immediate triage and shelter information.

Calls to the center produce a referral to local VA housing coordinators.

Grant Per Diem liaisons provide case-management and placement for Veterans in one of our shelters providing dedicated beds for this program.

Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) and Health Care For Reentry Veterans (HCRV)

- The purpose of the **Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO)** Initiative is to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible justice-involved Veterans have timely access to VA Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder services when clinically indicated, and other VA services and benefits as appropriate. VJO Specialists visit local Jails and courts in the VAPAHCS catchment area.
- The VA has developed **HCRV** to assist with a successful transition for Veterans leaving prison. A Reentry Specialist from HCRV goes to each correctional facility several times each year to meet with Veterans before their release. Once enrolled with the VA, the Reentry Specialist will meet Veterans individually when they are approximately six months away from their earliest possible release date.

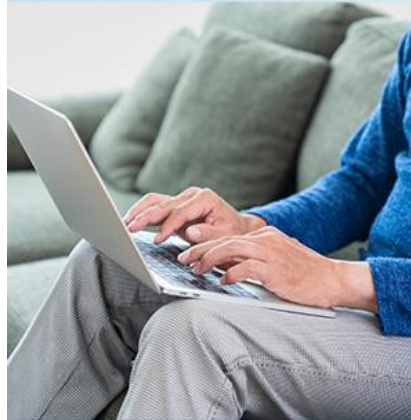
Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365

- Veterans
- Service members
- Family members
- Friends



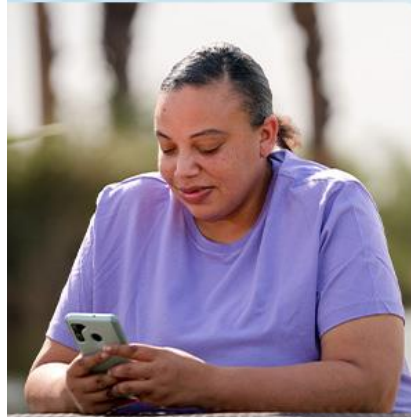
CALL

Dial 988 then Press 1



CHAT

VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat

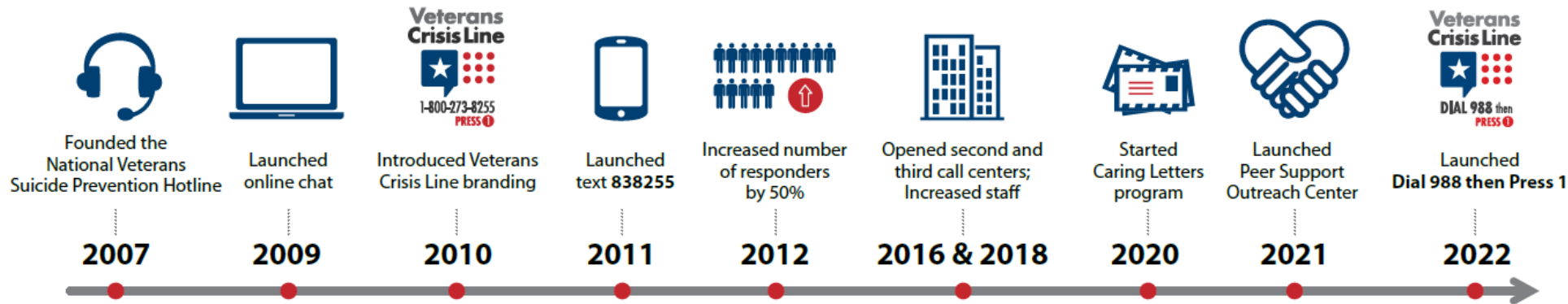


TEXT

838255



The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource available to any Veteran, even if they are not enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA. Care does not end when the conversation is over. The Veterans Crisis Line can connect Veterans to their local suicide prevention coordinators, who will follow up and coordinate care.



More than
8.4 million
calls



More than
447,000
texts



More than
1 million
chats



More than
1.6 million
referrals

to VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators

More than
369,000
dispatches of
emergency services

VCL Timeline Graphic

[Spread the Word
\(veteranscrisisline.net\)](https://veteranscrisisline.net)

01/2025

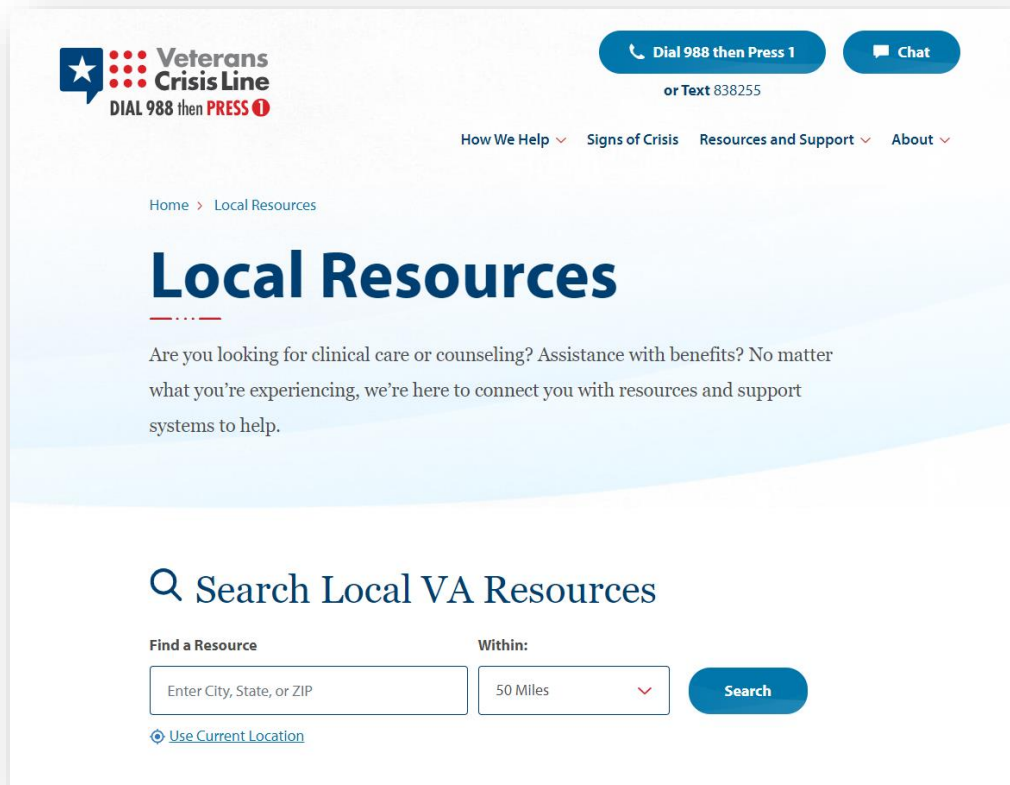
Find a Local VA SPC: VeteransCrisisLine.net/ResourceLocator



More than
400 SPCs
nationwide.

Local VA Resources:

VeteransCrisisLine.net/ResourceLocator



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Veterans Crisis Line. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the logo, contact information (Dial 988 then Press 1 or Text 838255), and a Chat button. Below the navigation bar, there are links for 'How We Help', 'Signs of Crisis', 'Resources and Support', and 'About'. The main heading is 'Local Resources'. Below this, there's a paragraph: 'Are you looking for clinical care or counseling? Assistance with benefits? No matter what you're experiencing, we're here to connect you with resources and support systems to help.' At the bottom, there's a search section titled 'Search Local VA Resources' with a 'Find a Resource' form. The form has a text input for 'Enter City, State, or ZIP', a 'Within:' dropdown set to '50 Miles', and a 'Search' button. There's also a link to 'Use Current Location'.

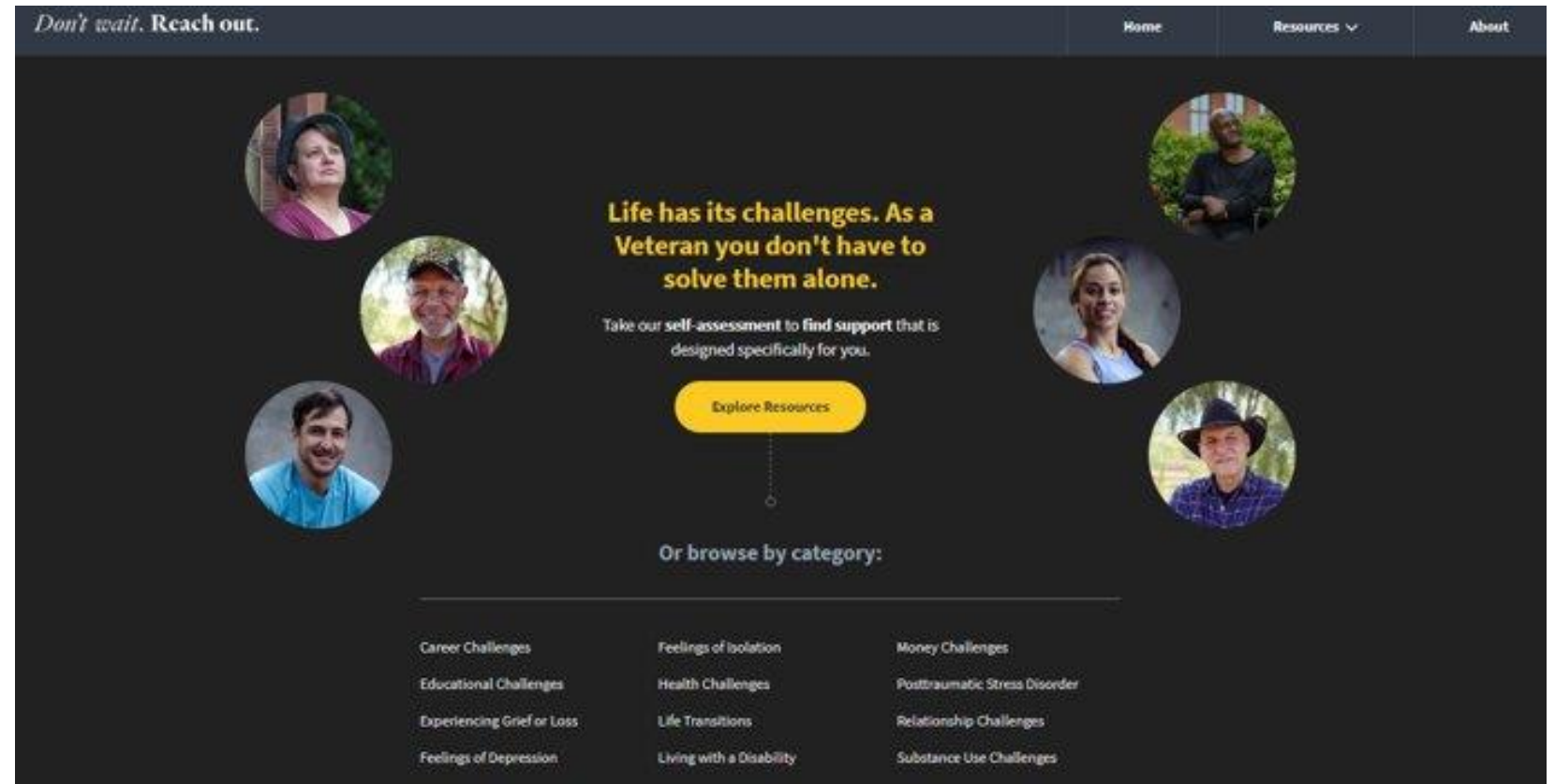


The screenshot shows the search results page for 'Search Local VA Resources'. It displays 'Showing 10 Results out of 11 for 14424'. The first result is 'Canandaigua VA Medical Center', which is a VA Medical Center located at 400 Fort Hill Avenue, Canandaigua, NY 14424-1159, 0 miles away, with a phone number 585-393-7100 and a link to 'Visit website'. The second result is 'Suicide Prevention, Team Canandaigua/Rochester', which is a Suicide Prevention Coordinator located at the same address. There's an 'Email' button next to this result. On the left side of the results, there's a 'Find a Resource' section with a 'Within' dropdown set to '50 Miles' and a list of resource types: 'Suicide Prevention Coordinators', 'VA Medical Centers', 'Outpatient Clinics', 'Vet Centers', and 'Veterans Benefits Administration Offices'. Each resource type has a checkbox and an information icon. A 'Search' button is at the bottom of this list.

Don't Wait. Reach Out.

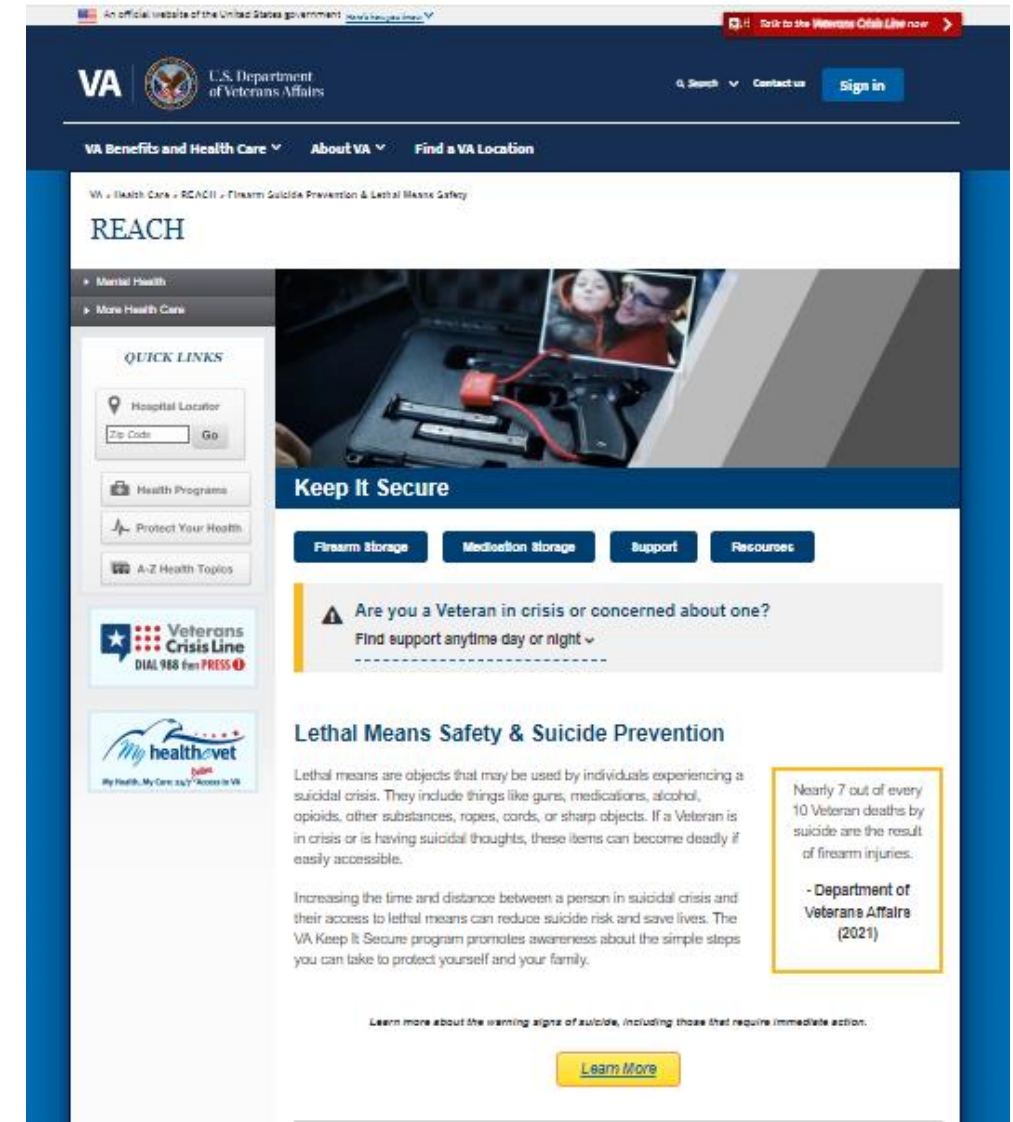
Find the right
Veteran Resources
Quickly and Easily

*Don't Wait. Reach
Out. (va.gov)*



Practice secure storage of firearms, medications and other lethal means

- Visit www.keepitsecure.net to learn more about the importance of firearm and other lethal means safety
- Nearly half of all Veterans own a firearm, and most Veteran firearm owners are dedicated to firearm safety
- Firearm injuries in the home can be prevented by making sure firearms are **unloaded**, **locked**, and **secured** when not in use, with ammunition stored in a separate location
- There are several effective ways to safely secure firearms. Learn more and find the option that works best for you and your family from the National Shooting Sports Foundation at www.nssf.org/safety



Mental Health Mobile Apps. Mobile Apps - PTSD: National Center for PTSD (va.gov)

Self-Help

These apps provide support and guidance in living with PTSD.



PTSD Coach



PTSD Family Coach



Beyond MST



Mindfulness Coach

Treatment Companions

These apps offer additional help for PTSD treatments.



CPT Coach



PE Coach



CBT-i Coach



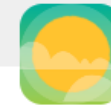
ACT Coach

Related

These apps help with related issues affecting people with PTSD.



Safety Plan



COVID Coach

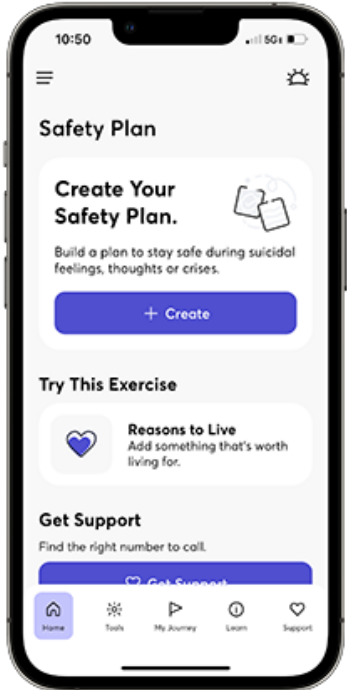


Couples Coach



Insomnia Coach

Check out the new Safety Plan app!



Safety Plan helps Veterans create a personalized step-by-step action plan to keep themselves safe during a crisis. It is highly customizable and provides access to coping tools, self-assessment measures, and crisis support resources like the Veterans Crisis Line.

Download the app today by using the QR code, or by visiting the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).



Note: Safety Plan is a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs app, developed by the National Center for PTSD Dissemination and Training Division and the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.



Supporting Providers Who Serve Veterans

Free consultation and resources for any provider in the community or VA who serves Veterans at risk for suicide.

To request a consult: srmconsult@va.gov

#NeverWorryAlone

www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/consult



Risk assessment



Lethal means safety counseling



Conceptualization of suicide risk



Best practices for documentation



Strategies for how to engage Veterans at high risk



Provider support after a suicide loss (Postvention)

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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

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Veterans Affairs](https://www.facebook.com/U.S.DepartmentofVeteransAffairs)

[Veterans Health
Administration](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransHealthAdministration)

X formerly Twitter



[@DeptVetAffairs](https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs)

[@veteranshealth](https://twitter.com/veteranshealth)

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Questions?

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