



TALKING POINTS

OUR MISSION

Stop Soldier Suicide provides free, confidential mental health and wellness care to veterans and service members via telehealth solutions available in all 50 states. Our team of mental health professionals works one-on-one with our clients to reduce their suicide risk and improve their overall wellbeing.

- Our goal is a **40%** reduction in the military suicide rate by 2030, effectively saving more than **2,400** lives per year.
- Our vision is a nation where service members and veterans have **no** greater risk of suicide than any other American.
- Our mission is to **reduce** service member and veteran suicide by using enhanced data insights, focused client acquisition, and trauma-informed suicide intervention services.
- We believe that **no one** who has served our country should ever feel alone.
- We serve **all** veterans and service members, from every branch and every generation, regardless of discharge status.
- Our services are **100%** free and confidential.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Suicide is a public health issue that disproportionately impacts the military community. The numbers are staggering*.

- Veterans and service members are **53%** more likely to die by suicide than their civilian peers.
- The military suicide rate is approximately **1.5x** the national average.
- Since 2001, more than **120,000** veterans and service members have died by suicide.
- Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death among post-9/11 veterans.
- Military suicide deaths are projected to be **23x** higher than the number of post-9/11 combat deaths by 2030.
- Less than **50%** of veterans and service members in need receive any mental health treatment.



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- Approximately **6,400** U.S. veterans kill themselves each year, almost **20** per day.
- Between 2019 and 2020, military suicides increased **15%**.
- Since 2006, suicide rates among male veterans ages 18–34 have increased **86%**.
- Unless we act, military suicide will claim another **55,000+** lives by 2030.

**Sources: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Veterans Health Administration; National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics; Pew Research Center*

“Leading research indicates each suicide affects 135 lives, meaning these untimely deaths have affected more than 16 million Americans in the last two decades... It’s easy to focus on this problem in terms of numbers, percentages, and statistics, but these are real people who had friends, family members, and loved ones.”

Chris Ford, USAF (Ret.)

CEO, Stop Soldier Suicide

WHO WE ARE

- Stop Soldier Suicide was **founded** in 2010 **by** three U.S. Army combat **veterans**.
- We’re **not affiliated** with the Department of Defense (DoD) or Veterans Affairs (VA).
- We’ve earned the **Platinum Seal of Transparency** from GuideStar™.
- We’re the **only national nonprofit** organization focused solely on reducing the military suicide rate.
- Our **veteran-led team** includes service members, veterans, military family members, non-veterans, and behavioral health specialists.
- We serve clients in **all 50 states**, and we’re headquartered in Durham, North Carolina.



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WHAT WE DO

Stop Soldier Suicide connects at-risk veterans and service members with Wellness Coordinators and provides one-on-one care to reduce and stabilize their suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Our wellness services are:

- **Holistic**
- **Personalized**
- **Confidential**
- **Free**
- **Proactive**
- **Consistent**
- **Long-term**
- **Trauma-informed**
- **Data-driven**
- **Effective**

We've collaborated with the creators of leading-edge suicide prevention tools and adapted them for telehealth. Our services include suicide risk assessments, crisis response planning, therapy options, resource referrals and quality checks, advocacy, life coaching, and more.

There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to this problem. We tailor care to meet our clients' unique needs and continue working with them for as long as it takes.

OUR IMPACT

At SSS, we don't just "help veterans." **We save lives.**

- Since 2010, we've served more than **3,500** veterans and service members.
- The average duration of care our clients receive is **8.5** months.
- To date, **ZERO** active clients have died by suicide.
- **97%** of our program graduates experience reduced and stable suicide risk.
- In 2021, we delivered over **17,000** hours of evidence-based care to our clients.
- Our clients experience **20-25%** reductions in suicide risk, hopelessness, stress, and/or self-hate in their first 90-days.
- The average 90-day increase in our clients' Personal Wellbeing Index, including their standard of living, relationships, future security, and/or sense of community, is **+72%**.
- In 2021, we saved **147** lives – the equivalent of an entire Army infantry company.



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HOW TO SAFELY TALK ABOUT SUICIDE: A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Speaking about suicide presents numerous opportunities to individuals and organizations, including increasing safety, reducing stigma, establishing credibility on the topic, or just educating the public. If we are going to succeed in lowering military and veteran suicide rates, it's important to talk about suicide openly, knowledgeably, respectfully, and safely. The following guidelines will help.

Before you speak, **know your audience** and messaging goals.

Key Audiences

Messaging Goals

At-risk persons	→	Keep safe
Survivors	→	Destigmatize
Professionals	→	Burnish credibility
General public	→	Educate

Safety is, above all, the most important concern when talking about suicide.

- Anyone you speak to could be at risk.
- When in doubt, remember to treat others with dignity and respect.
- Expect unexpected conversations to occur. Be ready.

SOME BASIC SAFETY GUIDELINES:

Avoid saying...

Say instead...

"Committed suicide"	→	"Died by suicide"
"Completed or successful attempt"	→	"Suicide death"
"Failed attempt"	→	"Suicide attempt"
"22 veterans a day"	→	"Nearly 20 service members and veterans a day"



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- **Don't overshare details** of other suicides like means, location, or vivid imagery.
- **Don't sensationalize**, glamorize, romanticize, or normalize suicide.
- **Don't speculate** on or oversimplify the cause of a suicide death.
- **Don't miscategorize** a suicide attempt or act as selfish, stupid, crazy, inevitable, etc.

How you talk about suicide is more important than **what** you say.

- **Speaking openly** and confidently breaks taboos and reduces stigma.
- **Be mindful** of your body language, eye contact, and emotional cues.
- **Stay calm**, be compassionate, listen, and act.
- **Don't whisper** or speak in hushed tones.
- **Don't speak in euphemisms** or beat around the bush.
- It's okay to say the word "**suicide**" out loud.

Stay **hopeful**. Provide **resources**.

- Military service members or veterans may call Stop Soldier Suicide **24/7** at **844-503-0553**.
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is **800-273-8255**.

FUNDRAISING CALL TO ACTION EXAMPLES

- When our nation called, they answered. Now, it's our turn.
- Join the fight to reduce the military suicide rate.
- Let's do more for our nation's heroes.
- Let's show veterans and service members we're here for the fight.
- Every \$30 provides one hour of life-saving care to a veteran or service member at risk for suicide.
- If you're unable to donate, please share this fundraiser on social media.



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SOCIAL MEDIA POST EXAMPLES

- Join me as I raise funds for Stop Soldier Suicide. Every \$30 provides one hour of mental health and wellness care to a veteran or service member at risk. Let's show our nation's heroes we're here for the fight. Donate today.
- Stop Soldier Suicide is powered by small donations from everyday Americans like you. Let's do more for our nation's heroes. Donate today and help give veterans and service members the mental health and wellness care they deserve.
- Stop Soldier Suicide doesn't just reduce and stabilize their clients' suicide risk. They provide holistic, continuous support to increase their wellbeing and help them thrive. Join me as I raise funds for SSS and help expand access to mental health and wellness care for veterans and service members.
- My fundraiser for Stop Soldier Suicide is about more than money. Help me raise awareness, reduce stigma, and let the military community know we have their back. Stop Soldier Suicide provides free, confidential mental health and wellness care to veterans and service members.

The above examples are intentionally generic. Feel free to include the name or title of your DIY fundraiser or charity livestream event, your fundraising goal amount, and/or the total impact you hope to achieve. Remember, \$30 provides one hour of care.

More specific examples include:

- Join my charity livestream event on Twitch as we raise \$3,000 to help Stop Soldier Suicide provide 100 hours of care for veterans and service members.
- For my summer fitness challenge, I'm doing 1x push-up for every \$1 raised for Stop Soldier Suicide. Help me reach my goal of \$2,000, and SSS will provide over 65 hours of life-saving mental health and wellness care to veterans and service members.