



“22 EVERYDAY”



NATIONAL VETERANS SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS PROGRAM

Suicide is a big problem and a silent killer that does not get addressed and talked about as it should be. It is estimated that in the U.S.A., 22 Veterans commit suicide per day. We, on the National Veterans Suicide and Prevention & Awareness Committee, want to help have influence and change those numbers to zero per day. The following are excerpts from the Department of Veterans Affairs 2014 Suicide Data Sheet. In the State of New York alone, 225 veterans committed suicide. The following is a breakdown by age groups: among the 18-34-year-old there were 33 suicides; among the 35-54-year-old there were 70 suicides; among the 55-74-year-old there were 86 suicides; and the 75+ age group there were 36 suicides. Clearly this problem can arise at any stage of life, leaving entire families in disarray and questioning whether there were signs and why no one saw them.

There are signs and symptoms that could raise a red flag that someone may be in crisis. Some of the signs to look for are: appearing sad/depressed most of the time; sleeplessness, anxiousness, agitation, neglecting personal welfare, deteriorating physical appearance, withdrawing from family and friends, frequent mood changes, losing interest in all activities, talking as though life is not worth living, engaging in reckless behaviors, seeking excessive access to pills, a sudden, out-of-character interest in firearms, and talking as if there is no solution to their problems.

There are many reasons as to why a Veteran might choose suicide to cope with their problems that are not always obvious to the people who surround them. Suicide does not just affect the Veteran, but their family and friends tremendously too. Reach out yourself, if you cannot get the person in crisis to see someone in private or at the Veterans Hospital. You, as a friend, or a family member, can make the call. There are Suicide Prevention Hotlines such as 988 Press 1, which was initiated in the State of New York with the passage of the Joshua Omvig Suicide Prevention Act of 2007.



Together, we can have influence in one's life, and by doing that we will affect everyone around them. If you, or someone you know is in an emotional crisis, please know this and tell them that there are people out there to talk to who care and help is available. Encourage them to call the Suicide Prevention Hotline or make the call yourself to find out how you can get help for yourself or to help someone else at **988 Press 1**.

AMVETS National

The National 22 Everyday Program committee was established at the 2017 National Convention by Kevin Matteson. The core committee of eight members was appointed by the National Commander. Members throughout the United States are the diligent individuals creating awareness and preventing suicide. Kevin Matteson is the current National Chairperson of the Program.

The Program has an EIN number with a checking account to assist in purchasing materials. Committee members have set up tables at community events with donation jars and their own fund-raising events have raised a nice sum of money; however, various Posts, Riders, and Sons of AMVETS have given some great donations as well.

Packages of suicide materials have been mailed to committee members and various Posts on request. Materials have been purchased when not available through VA Centers as well. We have purchased two roll-up "22 Everyday" Banners, and a table cover that is in circulation on request from committee members. The committee has designed a dress type shirt with the "22 Everyday" insignia for committee members, and polo shirts to sell as a fund-raiser. A "22 Everyday" pin is also available. (Contact Kevin)

"22 Everyday" Program meetings are held at the National Convention annually. Quarterly zoom meetings have also been planned. All are welcome. E-mails are continuously in circulation that fills our communication gap. It is amazing what a group of people/committee can accomplish when no-one person wants to take all the credit – Great teamwork.

Thanks to all the partnerships to this date, which has helped this Program flourish. Many thanks to the committee and all State committees developed throughout the United States.

This is a great program that National AMVETS has established for our Veterans.

God Bless America,

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