



## Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services

2 Oak Street • Norwalk, Ohio 44857 • 419-681-6268

### Behavioral Health Support for Veterans

On Veterans Day, we set aside time to honor the contributions of those who have served our country. Throughout our nation's history, millions of Americans have answered the call to uniformed service, and they often continue to lead in their communities once they are out of uniform. Every year, approximately 200,000 men and women transition out of active-duty service and return to civilian life. This transition requires Veterans and their families to adjust their lives across various domains which include employment, finances, housing, social supports, health, and more. Transitions in life can be incredibly stressful for all of us. They produce changes in relationships and support networks, and they challenge our identities and self-perceptions. Transitions for Veterans can be especially difficult to navigate due to shifting from the unique collective culture of military service to having to develop a more individualized approach in how they live, work, and interact with others. In addition to the challenges in transitioning to civilian life, veterans can still experience vivid memories years after their time of service is completed which can compound stress and add strain on an individual's mental health. High levels of stress can negatively impact mental health, and after returning home, many veterans face obstacles in finding the mental health resources they need.

Studies indicate that 44 percent to 72 percent of veterans experience high levels of stress during the transition from military to civilian life. Data also suggests that approximately half of those who recently departed from military duties may not immediately connect with available resources, benefits, and services. Without support, more complex behavioral health concerns might emerge over time. In 2020, approximately 5.2 million Veterans experienced a behavioral health condition. Unfortunately, out of that number, more than half did not receive treatment within the past year. Additionally, more than 90 percent of those experiencing substance use challenges did not receive treatment. This data reminds us that our friends, family, and community members may be suffering in silence and that barriers to care, such as stigma, still exist.

Throughout their service, veterans have often navigated deployments, trauma-related stressors, multiple geographic moves, and other factors that can make it difficult to prioritize mental wellbeing. As they travel this unique journey from service to civilian life, it is important that they know they are not alone. Behavioral health is essential to overall health, and we all have a role in ensuring that service members, Veterans and their families have knowledge of and access to needed support. Encouraging veterans to open up to a family member, get involved in a support group or speak with a mental health professional can reduce isolation and can help those at risk or suffering from mental health or substance use challenges find the help they need.

#### Find Support

Learn the Signs of a Crisis: Every Veteran is different, and many may not show any signs of intent to harm themselves. But some actions and behaviors can be signs that they need help. The following link will provide information on how to recognize the signs of suicide, as well as a free self-check assessment for those who may be struggling: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/signs-of-crisis/>

Find 24/7, Confidential Crisis Support for Veterans and Their Loved Ones: The end of a personal relationship. The loss of a job. Everybody faces difficult times in life, and people cope with stressful situations in different ways. When emotional issues reach a crisis point, the Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect with caring, qualified responders: **Dial 988 then Press 1, chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text (838255).**



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**Connect with Local Support:** 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. Plus, each VA medical center has a Suicide Prevention Coordinator to connect you with the counseling and services needed. Find your local suicide prevention coordinator here <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/find-resources/local-resources/>.

### Take Action

- Learn how to talk with a Veteran in crisis: If a Veteran you care about is going through a difficult time or having thoughts of suicide, you're probably worried and confused. You want to help but may be scared you could make things worse—the only wrong thing to do is to do nothing. Now is the time to act. You can begin by learning the signs of crisis and how to start a conversation with the Veteran. **See document below.**
- Spread the word about Veteran suicide prevention: You can support Veterans even more by sharing or using downloadable resources and information, including sample social media posts, newsletter content, graphics, flyers, and fact sheets found at <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/find-resources/spread-the-word/>.
- Locate the services you need: Whether you need emergency medical care, employment assistance, or housing or financial-related services, or you're looking for information for women Veterans, LGBTQ+ Veterans, or Veteran caregivers, we have resources tailored to you. For more information visit <https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/index.asp>.
- Find stories of hope: Make the Connection features stories of hope and recovery from Veterans like you. Watch Veterans and their family members share real stories of strength and recovery and find useful information and local mental health resources at <https://www.maketheconnection.net/>.
- Explore additional resources: You can turn to VA for almost anything, including evidence-based treatments for substance abuse, insomnia, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety and couple's therapy; parenting resources; safety resources; and understanding suicide loss. For more information visit <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/index.asp>.

### Resources for Help

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately. If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, you can call:

- Huron County Crisis Hopeline: 567-867-HOPE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988

If you are uncomfortable talking on the phone, you can also text **4HOPE** to 741-741 to be connected to a free, trained crisis counselor on the Crisis Text Line.

**For a list of local treatment providers and support services visit:** [www.hcbmhas.org](http://www.hcbmhas.org).

[https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/)  
[https://www.vehiclesforveterans.org/free-mental-health-resources-for-veterans/?](https://www.vehiclesforveterans.org/free-mental-health-resources-for-veterans/)  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/blog/supporting-behavioral-health-needs-our-nations-veterans>