

5 WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT
VETERANS
MENTAL HEALTH

I. UNDERSTAND PTSD

Trauma can have long-lasting negative effects such as trouble sleeping, anger, nightmares, and substance abuse. Although PTSD is not unique to the military, it is important to note that the rate of PTSD is up to 15x higher among veterans than among civilians.

WAYS TO HELP

Reach out to organizations that specialize in treating veterans who suffer from PTSD. You can refer a veteran you know or inform yourself so you can better support the veteran in your life.

If you notice that someone in your life has symptoms, refer them to a professional for care. Don't wait, don't be afraid to ask. PTSD is a risk factor for suicide.

2. UNDERSTAND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Known as a “signature wound” of the post 9/11 wars, due to blasts from explosive devices. The high rate of TBI results from current combat operations directly impacts the health and safety of individual service members.

WAYS TO HELP

Volunteer to work with veterans who have experienced TBI. You can offer help through an organization or provide assistance with activities of daily living by volunteering at Veteran’s homes, the VA and more. There are many organizations that support a veteran who struggles with with TBI.

3. UNDERSTAND DEPRESSION

Depression is one of the most common mental health conditions. Symptoms include persistently sad or irritable mood, changes in sleep, appetite, energy, problems with memory and concentration, lack of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

WAYS TO HELP

Recommend helping resources and help with a mental health professional. There are many resources and information online and locally to help those in your life who may be struggling.

4. UNDERSTAND SUICIDE

On average, 17 veterans a day die by suicide. In 2017, nearly one in every seven suicides nationally was a veteran—13.5% annually—compared with Census data that shows veterans make up about 8% of the U.S. adult population.

WAYS TO HELP

Reach out to veterans through Veteran organizations such as the American Legion and others in your local community to provide or refer social support for a veteran you may know. Some of the strongest protective factors against suicide is social support.

Donate your time and money (if you can) to help support veterans. Volunteering to help could make a difference in a veteran's life.

5. ADVOCATE FOR MORE FUNDING AND RESEARCH

The funding allocated for veteran mental health care needs to be increased so that every veteran has easy access to this type of care when they need it. Our veterans should never be used as political pawns in spending battles and excessive wait times at local VA facilities need to be addressed and reduced through additional spending as well.

We can no longer look the other way or continue to under fund the mental health care system that our veterans use. The least we can do is contact our representatives to ensure adequately funded mental health treatment services available in every local community.

LOCAL VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS IN GALLATIN VALLEY

Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation
406-585-9793 | info@wqwf.org

American Legion Post #14
406-586-8400 | bozemanamericanlegion.org

Veterans Support Center at Montana State
406-994-3661 | vets@montana.edu

Bozeman Veterans Affairs Clinic
406-582-5300 | montana.va.gov