



VETERANS VOICE

Winnebago County Department of Veterans Services Newsletter

September 2021

VA Family and Caregiver Resources

Veterans who served in Afghanistan may be experiencing a range of emotions related to the U.S. withdrawal from the country, and their families and caregivers face challenges supporting them and may be experiencing their own range of emotions. VA has developed a list of family and caregiver resources, including call center information and community support available to assist during this critical time.

Veteran caregivers face unique challenges with little or no medical and mental health training to support themselves and the Veteran in their care. These challenges can take an emotional, financial and physical toll on Veteran caregivers and their families.

Family members of Veterans are currently facing two challenges - supporting the Veteran they love, and coping with their own thoughts and feelings. VA has resources and information for both of these challenges, like Coaching into Care, which provides support and resources to families who don't know where to start in supporting the Veteran they love, all the way to VA's Caregiver Support Program that connects caregivers to one another to support each other as peers.

VA Caregiver Support Resources:

- <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>
- Locate your local [Caregiver Support Staff](#)
- Caregiver Support Line: 1-855-260-3274

Building Better Caregivers - <https://va.buildingbettercaregivers.org/>

- Online workshop with 6 weekly self-paced lessons, facilitator guidance, group support and access to an alumni community for program graduates.

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Are you a Caregiver looking for information or support?
We're here to help.

VA Caregiver Support Line
1-855-260-3274

www.caregiver.va.gov

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.”

- Vince Lombardi

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Coaching into Care: Call 1-888-823-7458

[Coaching Into Care helps loved ones help Veterans/Vantage Point](#)
[Coaching Into Care - MIRECC / CoE \(va.gov\)](#)

- Coaching Into Care is a free service for people who are concerned about the Veterans in their lives. Licensed psychologists and social workers offer advice for starting the conversation with a Veteran about their mental health and motivating them to seek treatment if it's needed.

Vet Centers: Call 1-877-WAR-VETS

[Vet Centers \(Readjustment Counseling\) Home \(va.gov\)](#)

- Vet Centers are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services, including professional readjustment counseling to eligible Veterans, active duty service members, including National Guard and Reserve components, and their families.

Survivors Assistance:

- <https://www.va.gov/survivors/>

[VA Welcome Kit and Quick Start Guide for Caregivers](#)

MyVA411: Dial 1-855-948-2311 (1-800-MyVA411). Callers have the option of pressing 0 to be immediately connected with a customer service agent to answer questions

- Agents assist with facility locator: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to talk to someone. Send a text message to 838255 to connect with a VA responder.

Start a confidential online chat session at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#)

- For additional mental health resources visit:
https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/resources.asp

#VetResources: VA newsletter reaching more than 11 million Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors. Resources, tools and tips for VA and community resources. Subscribe at <https://www.va.gov/vetresources/>.



Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Suicidal thoughts, much like mental health conditions, can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or background. In fact, suicide is often the result of an untreated health condition. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious issues. September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness on this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. In addition to shifting public perception, this month is used to spread hope and vital information to people affected by suicide.

Facts from National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):

- 78% of all people who die by suicide are male.
- Although more women than men attempt suicide, men are nearly 4x more likely to die by suicide.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34 and the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.
- The overall suicide rate in the U.S. has increased by 35% since 1999.
- 46% of people who die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition.
- While nearly half of individuals have a diagnosed mental health condition, research shows that 90% experienced symptoms.

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately. If you are in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255).

Coping with Current Events in Afghanistan

Veterans who served in Afghanistan may be experiencing a range of challenging emotions related to the U.S. withdrawal from the country. Veterans who served during other conflicts may also be feeling strong emotions as they may be reminded of their own deployment experiences.

Common Reactions to Current Events

Veterans may experience the following reactions related to the current events in Afghanistan:

- Feeling frustrated, sad, helpless, distressed (including moral distress), angry or betrayed
- Worrying about Afghans who worked with the U.S. military, like interpreters
- Experiencing an increase in mental health symptoms like symptoms of PTSD or depression
- Sleeping poorly, drinking more or using more drugs
- Trying to avoid all reminders or media or shy away from social situations
- Having more military and homecoming memories
- Questioning the meaning of their service or whether it was worth the sacrifices they made

Veterans also may feel like they need to expect and/or prepare for the worst and may:

- Become overly protective, vigilant and guarded
- Become preoccupied by danger
- Feel a need to avoid being shocked by, or unprepared for, what may happen in the future

Feeling distress is a normal reaction to negative events, especially ones that feel personal. It can be helpful to let yourself experience those feelings rather than try to avoid them. Often these feelings will naturally run their course. If they continue without easing up or if you feel overwhelmed by them, the suggestions below can be helpful.

Strategies for Managing Ongoing Distress

At this moment, it may seem like all is lost, or like your service or your sacrifices were for nothing. Consider the ways your service made a difference, the impact it had on others' lives or on your own life. Remember that now is just one moment in time and that things will continue to change.

It can be helpful to focus on the present and to engage in the activities that are most meaningful and valuable to you. Is there something you can do today that is important to you? This can be as an individual, a family member, a parent or a community member. Is there something meaningful regarding your work or your spirituality where you can focus additional energy? These activities will not change the past or the things you can't control, but they can help you feel meaningful and reduce distress, despite the things you cannot change.

It can also help to consider your thinking. Ask yourself if your thoughts are helpful to you right now. Are there ways you can change your thinking to be more accurate and less distressing? For example, are you using extreme thinking where you see the situation as all bad or all good? If so, try and think in less extreme terms. Rather than thinking "my service in Afghanistan was useless" consider instead "I helped keep Afghanistan safe."

Finally, consider more general coping strategies:

- Engage in positive, healthy activities that are rewarding, meaningful, or enjoyable, even if you don't feel like it.
- Stay connected by spending time with people who give you a sense of security, calm, or happiness.
- Practice good self-care by engaging in activities such as listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing routines, spending time in nature or with animals, journaling or reading inspirational text.
- Stick to your routines and follow a schedule for when you sleep, eat, work and do other day-to-day activities.
- Limit media exposure especially if it's increasing your distress.
- Use a [VA mobile app](#) to help manage reactions and practice self-care.
- Try [PTSD Coach Online](#), with 17 tools explained by video coaches to help you manage stress.

Upcoming Event

PATRIOT DAY MOTORCYCLE RIDE
SEPTEMBER 11, 2021



4 TH HOOAH WI & COMBAT VETS
MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION® 45-3
PRESENT

Patriot Day Motorcycle Ride



What?

Proceeds help fund partnership programs to license honorably discharged veterans and active duty service members at Appleton Harley Davidson.

Raffles, 50/50, and resource tables will be up at the Anduzzi's Sports Club Howard.

Where?

11:30am Depart Appleton Harley Davidson
5322 W. Clairemont Dr Appleton WI 54913

3-7pm Anduzzi's Sports Club Howard
2555 Lineville Rd, Green Bay WI 54313

Route Stops

1. The Bridge Bar & Restaurant - 101 W Main St, Fremont WI 54940
2. Chain O Lakes - W2590 County Rd Q0 Waupaca WI 54981
3. Waters Supperclub - 815 W Wolf River Ave, New London, WI 54961
4. Frank's Place 107 N Main St Seymour WI 54165
5. Anduzzi - 2555 Lineville Rd, Green Bay WI 54313 (appetizers provided)

When?

SEPTEMBER 11, 2021

Registration: 9-11:30

\$25.00 per rider
\$10 additional rider

\$20.00 car to join route

Last bike in at 5pm
Raffles drawn at 6pm

CONTACT US

Winnebago County
Veterans Service Office

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112 Otter St.
Oshkosh, WI 54901
(920) 232-3400

Neenah Location
211 N. Commercial
Neenah, WI 54956
(920) 729-4820

Stay informed about benefits; join our e-mail list.
Send a request to:

CVSO@co.winnebago.wi.us

Visit us on the web at:

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veterans](http://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/veterans)



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For a list of more events,
check out our [calendar!](#)