

# DISORIENTING DILEMMA COVID-19



A dilemma which does not typically fit into a person's traditional or existing meaning structure – these experiences can serve as a catalyst for a transformative learning experience

# 2020 ISSUES IMPACTING VETERANS



# DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Veterans are often not allowed the opportunity to express themselves during service

Thousands suffer in silence for various reasons

- Mission comes first above all
- Cultural stigma – “help equals weakness”
- Veterans are provided minimal transitional resources
- Veterans experience a sense of loss after service



# DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Over 700,000 veterans are struggling with mental illness (NCBH, 2020)

- Less than 50% receive treatment
- Struggle with Depression, TBI, PTSD
- This often leads to a high-rate of suicide



## TRANSITION INFORMATION

**48%**



**OF VETERANS INDICATE THEIR TRANSITION WAS MORE DIFFICULT THAN EXPECTED**

The transition from military life into the civilian workforce can be difficult for service members and their families

**76%**

of veterans agree when asked if their transition was stressful

**52%**

agree their transition was confusing

# DEFINE THE PROBLEM

*Table 2. Age- and Sex-Adjusted Veteran Suicide Rate per 100,000 Population Members, 2005–2017*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Suicide Deaths</b>	<b>Average per Day</b>	<b>Veteran Population</b>	<b>Age-and-Sex-Adjusted Suicide Rate</b>
2005	5,787	15.9	24,240,000	18.5
2006	5,688	15.6	23,731,000	17.6
2007	5,893	16.1	23,291,000	18.8
2008	6,216	17.0	22,996,000	20.6
2009	6,172	16.9	22,603,000	20.8
2010	6,158	16.9	22,411,000	21.4
2011	6,116	16.8	22,061,000	22.3
2012	6,065	16.6	21,765,000	22.4
2013	6,132	16.8	21,415,000	23.6
2014	6,272	17.2	21,029,000	25.0
2015	6,227	17.1	20,560,000	26.3
2016	6,010	16.4	20,170,000	25.7
2017	6,139	16.8	19,803,000	27.7

# GOAL SETTING AND MOTIVATION



Setting realistic/challenging goals – can enhance meaning and increase internal motivation

# GROWTH MINDSET



Self-actualization and Self-awareness can lead to personal growth = Maximum potential

## Cultural Sensitivity During COVID-19

Three Tenets of Cross Cultural Communication to cultivate relationships that counteract fears, encourage safe behaviors, and create trust during the pandemic

# 1

### EMPATHY

Empathy is an action. Show patients you care about what they are going through: Attune to their experience, listen closely, use positive body language, and use strength-based language.

### CURIOSITY

Be authentic and demonstrate genuine interest in the challenges posed by the pandemic. Ask direct questions about how it is impacting their lives and their loved ones.

# 2

### RESPECT

Misinformation abounds during times of heightened fear. Focus on what we can do to prevent the spread of disease. Provide up to date information and reliable resources in a caring way.

# 3



Adapted from Quality Interactions



## Self-Care Techniques At Your Desk



**Box Breathing:** Practice Box Breathing to regulate breathing and practice mindfulness

**Grounding:** Practice using the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique to orient self to present moment, using the 5 senses

**Take a 3-Minute Break:** Watch a short funny video to relax and take a momentary break from your day

**Move Your Body:** Stretch or Walk for 3 - 5 minutes, using a timer and practice deep breathing techniques

**Take Pictures:** Keep photos of loved ones on your desk to encourage and remind you of support

**Practice Progressive Muscle:** A Relaxation Technique to release tension and stress from the body

**Prayer or Meditation:** Repeat inspiring mantra or prayer, while practicing deep breathing techniques

**Essential Oils:** Use essential oils like lavender, wild orange, or bergamot to relieve stress

**Encouraging Words:** Keep a list of inspiring words or pictures to periodically refer to during the day

**Water a Plant:** Keep a plant on your desk to water and take care of, taking a moment to redirect thoughts



# TIPS TO PREVENT TRAUMA SYMPTOMS FROM WORSENING DURING COVID-19



## ACCEPT

- Accept that COVID-19 can be stressful and anxiety provoking.
- Control what you can like hygiene, exercise, and making contingency plans.
- Be flexible and adjust to change-change is a constant during this time.

## ACT

- Create structure in your day-to-day life. A routine can bring consistency in shifting circumstances.
- Do activities that reduce stress like walking, reading, meditating, or anything else that reduces stress.
- Take time to do the things you enjoy, start a new hobby, or learn a new skill to take your mind off of the current situation.

## CONNECT

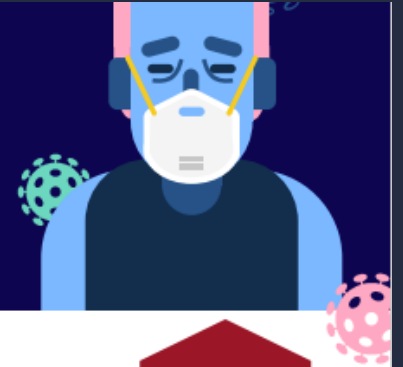
- Use technology to connect with friends, family, and loved ones. Take time away from media to play with your children or pets, watch a movie, or take a quiet moment to reflect on yourself.
- Stay connected with behavioral and mental health professionals by using telehealth if your symptoms become overwhelming.

## REACH OUT

- Identify warning signs of trauma symptoms, such as snapping at loved ones or self-isolation.
- Contact your local behavioral health services if you feel the need to speak to someone about increased anxiety and stress.

INFORMATION RETRIEVED FROM: JAIN, S. (2020) TRAUMA AMID THE CORONAVIRUS: 8 WAYS TO PREVENT SYMPTOMS FROM WORSENING. MINDBODYGREEN.

## Resilience Building Tips Coronavirus (COVID-19) Trauma Informed Care principles help the workforce adapt to challenges ahead



### Safety

#### Everyone is in a state of alert

- Many are living in their lower survival brain. Staff are worried and have many competing priorities. Prioritize physical, emotional, and psychological safety in every interaction.
- Model Vulnerability
  - Respond Empathetically
  - Pause between stimulus and response
  - Practice grounding techniques
  - Take 5 deep breaths

### Trust

#### Confidence in people and systems is diminished

- Trust is built through practice and intentional relationship building.
- Share as much information as quickly as possible
  - Staff may doubt decisions or intentions
  - Be accepting of staff who are slow to trust
  - Understand that staff can handle difficult news
  - Allow time for processing information and differences of opinions

### Collaboration

#### Working together even when apart

- Collaboration during social distancing is critical. Relationships can suffer if physically removed from each other.
- Partner with staff and ask for ideas
  - Maximize information sharing platforms
  - Look for common experiences with staff
  - Highlight shared humanity

### Empowerment

#### Everyone needs to feel supported

- Acknowledge and utilize different ways to engage in work.
- Seek staff input in planning
  - Assume everyone is doing their best
  - Openly appreciate staff for dedication

### Choice

#### Offer choice when appropriate

- Allow staff to have choices and provide opportunity in shared decision making.
- Respect and honor individual dignity
  - Consider how information is shared with all staff

### Peer Support

#### More than ever, rely on each other

- Intentionally plan opportunities for staff discussion and self-care.
- Consider a buddy system
  - Practice Mental Health First Aid
  - Ensure staff can access EAPs