



2021 DOD/VA

# Suicide Prevention CONFERENCE

*Make Every Connection Count*



Stay in the Fight: Using Military/ Veteran Culture to Prevent Suicide  
*(When one of us is harmed – we are all harmed)*

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# BACKGROUND

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- Discussion in a Milwaukee VA Suicide Prevention Committee cited that many people are people affected by a suicide death (very striking numbers!).
- Veterans on the committee identified this number with the approximate size of a military unit.
- Questions were raised:

# Veterans have connected to the public message of 22 deaths of Veterans by suicide daily.

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This number is no longer correct (VA reports 17 suicides per day) and this message does not promote help seeking behavior.

Do Veterans respond differently to suicide prevention public messaging than civilians?

If military training and culture emphasize group needs over individual needs, would Veterans be more inclined to seek health care based on the needs of others?

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Would a message focused on memories of the Veterans unit and comrades be more likely to promote health seeking behavior?





SHARING LUNCH  
ON THE HOOD  
OF AN ARMY  
HMVEE



# DONA DREW, MSW

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- Here is my picture of my comrades from the military (Memories during HMVEE School)
- Statement from Veteran -
  - When one of is harmed – we are all harmed.





We asked Veterans of the Milwaukee VA  
Veteran's Advocacy Council to select their  
favorite military group photograph for a  
video public message on Suicide Prevention.

# DR. BERT BERGER

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- **Disclaimer:** one of the Veteran's shared his attempt method and you should be aware that this information may be triggering to some viewers.
- This is our preliminary video and there is link to provide us feedback on the message. We want to be up front about the message. We didn't give much guidance to the Veterans in the video and allowed them to share what was important in their story of recovery.
- Want you to all be aware, one Veteran chose to speak openly about the method he used in his suicide attempt and acknowledge that this may be triggering for some viewers. Please feel free to minimize screen or separate yourself from the presentation to take care of yourself.



A rectangular sign with a black frame is mounted on a light gray wall. The sign has a white background with a central light gray rectangle. Inside this rectangle, the text "OUR VIDEO MESSAGE" is written in a bold, dark gray, sans-serif font, split into two lines. Two thin red horizontal lines are positioned above and below the central gray rectangle. The bottom of the image shows a wooden floor with vertical planks.

# OUR VIDEO MESSAGE

**PLEASE PROVIDE US FEEDBACK ON THE MESSAGE  
TO HELP US IMPROVE OUR MESSAGE.**

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**[CLICK HERE FOR OUR FEEDBACK SURVEY.](#)**

**WE WANT TO HAVE THE MOST IMPACT POSSIBLE TO  
PREVENT SUICIDE!**

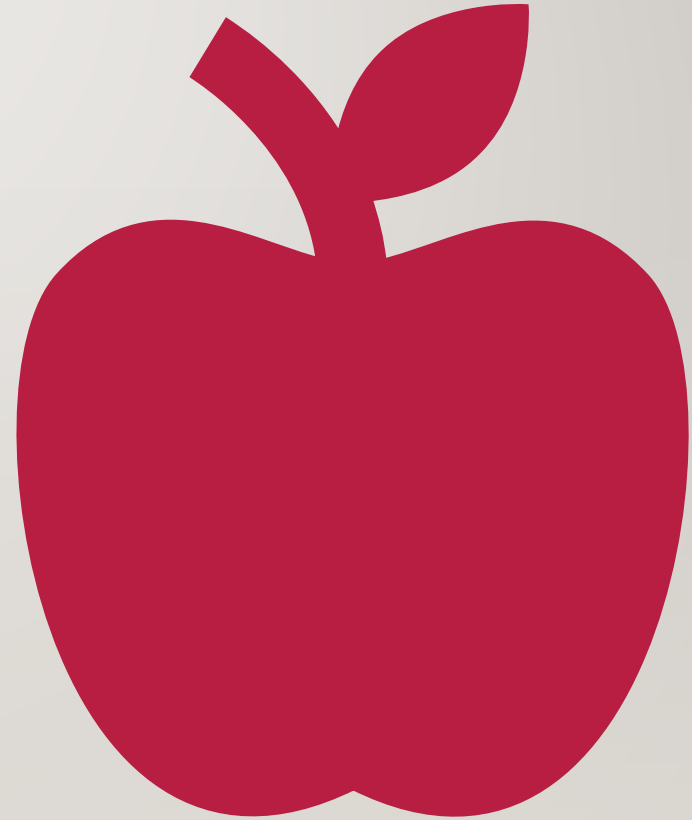




# ADVANCING A HEALTHIER WISCONSIN GRANT

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WE PLAN TO STUDY  
VETERAN MESSAGES  
TO PREVENT SUICIDE



# **How Many People Are Exposed to Suicide? Not Six**

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JULIE CEREL, PHD , MARGARET M. BROWN, DRPH, MYFANWY MAPLE, PHD, MICHAEL SINGLETON, PHD, JUDY VAN DE VENNE, PHD, MELINDA MOORE, PHD, AND CHRIS FLAHERTY, PHD

[https://losscs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Cerel\\_et\\_al-2018-Suicide\\_and\\_Life-Threatening\\_Behavior.pdf](https://losscs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Cerel_et_al-2018-Suicide_and_Life-Threatening_Behavior.pdf)



# THANK YOU VETERANS AND STAFF AT THE MILWAUKEE VA

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## Veterans

- Charlie Walton
- Glen Perry
- Chris Swift
- Pam Lindeke
- Ricky Cruse
- Prosper Pfannerstill
- Clayton Bohannon
- Howard Hadley

## VA and Vet Center Staff

- Jennifer Robinson
- Tyler Rodenkirch
- David Walter
- Dr. Bert Berger
- Dona Drew
- Ozzie Brodhead
- Dr. Jamie Noffsinger
- Michael McBride