



Fort Bliss Suicide Myth Busters



MYTH Talking About Suicide Makes it Worse

✔ **FACT CHECK:** Talking to a friend, family member, or colleague about suicide does not make it worse. Speaking openly about suicide helps spread awareness, increase knowledge, and reduce the stigma associated with suicide or behavioral health care. Neglecting mental health needs, shaming others, and conveying a message that suicide should not be discussed does not make it go away, but it may worsen feelings of isolation, loneliness, or helplessness.

MYTH Only People with Mental Illness Die by Suicide

✔ **FACT CHECK:** The assumption that every person who dies by suicide has a mental illness is false. In 2018, 54% of people who died by suicide did not have a known mental health condition. Many things are associated with suicidal thoughts and behavior, including mood disorders (depression, bipolar disorder), alcohol use disorders, and military sexual trauma (MST). Generally, overwhelming stress such as unemployment, financial hardship, relationship problems, or other circumstances that prompt feelings of helplessness are strongly associated with suicidal thinking and behavior.

MYTH Suicide Cannot be Prevented

✔ **FACT CHECK:** Suicide prevention is a collaborative effort, something that everybody can contribute to. Mental health professionals are not the only people who can help; speaking with friends, family, and colleagues about their life, worries, and troubles can go a long way. One of the most harmful aspects of suicidality is the feeling that nobody cares and the world will be better without you in it. Asking questions, showing that you care, and assisting someone to find help could improve their mood or save their life. These are tasks that each of us can adopt and enact.

MYTH Suicide is Only a Problem for Certain Types of People

✔ **FACT CHECK:** Feelings of helplessness, sadness, and despair do not discriminate. While certain groups of people are at higher risk than others, stress, in general, is known to contribute to suicidal thoughts and behavior. People of all backgrounds (culture, age, sexuality, gender, disability, etc.) are affected by suicide, and people with varying types of jobs, financial means, and personalities may struggle with suicidality. Just because someone makes a lot of money, has a seemingly enjoyable job, or appears happy, does not mean they are immune from issues that contribute to suicide.

MYTH I Will Never be able to Tell if Someone is Contemplating Suicide

✔ **FACT CHECK:** People who are in distress almost always make it known. Whether this means telling family or friends, reaching out for professional help, or trying to hide their struggle, warning signs for suicide are often observable to others. Changes in mood (sudden or prolonged sadness), withdrawal or isolation, self-harm (cutting/burning/hitting), and preparation (suicide notes, writing a will) are warning signs for suicide. The best way to determine if someone is contemplating suicide is to ask.



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Facts Every Soldier Should Know



- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in two age groups (10-24 years and 25-44)
- In 2019, an estimated 12 million people had serious thoughts about suicide, 3.5 million made a plan for suicide, and 1.4 million attempted suicide
- Women are more likely to attempt suicide, and men are more likely to die by suicide
- More than 47,500 people died from suicide in 2019 in the United States (1 death every 11 minutes)
- The United States accounts for 35% of global deaths by suicide involving firearms, but only makes up 4% of the world's population
- 498 Service Members across all components died by suicide in 2019
- 12 Soldiers across Fort Bliss have died by suicide in 2021

TIPS Asking Questions

Sharing information, asking to help, and expressing concern might be the lifeline someone has been waiting on. Specific questions could prompt someone to seek help when they otherwise might not:

It seems like something is bothering you, can I do anything to help?

Is everything alright?

Do you want to talk to someone?

Are you thinking of hurting yourself?

MESSAGE

Your life is a life worth living!

RESOURCES

Reaching Out & Getting Help

Veterans Crisis Line - (800) 273-8255 and press 1, text 838255, or chat online at veteranscrisisline.net

- Calling from overseas:
- Europe: Call 00800 1273 8255 or DSN 118
- Korea: Call 0808 555 118 or DSN 118
- Afghanistan: Call 00 1 800 273 8255 or DSN 111
- National Suicide Preven on Lifeline - (800) 273-TALK (8255)
- 24/7 Chaplain Line - (915) 637-4265
- El Paso Crisis Line - (915) 779-1800



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