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Rocky Mountain MIRECC for Veteran Suicide Prevention - Home - MIRECC / CoE (va.gov)*



DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE



WHY IS TBI ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER SUICIDE RISK?

Factors thought to be related to increased suicide risk among those living with TBI include changes in:

- One's ability to participate in work and homelife. Difficulty returning to work and a change in one's role at home can create financial and social impacts that decrease quality of life and lead to an increased sense of hopelessness.
- Difficulties associated with brain functioning, including:
 1. Processing emotions
 2. Impulse control
 3. Getting stuck in the same thought pattern and being unable to switch thoughts
- Shifts in relationships.
- Changes in sleep, levels of energy, and mood.
- Other factors that are known to contribute to suicide risk in the general population can also impact those with a history of TBI. These can include:
 1. Substance use
 2. Stressful life events
 3. History of prior suicide attempts
 4. Low level of social support
- Seeking treatment, including psychotherapy and counseling can be very helpful in addressing these concerns.

REFERENCES

¹ Menon DK, Schwab K, Wright DW, Maas AI; Demographics and Clinical Assessment Working Group of the International and Interagency Initiative toward Common Data Elements for Research on Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health. Position statement: definition of traumatic brain injury. *Arch Phys Med Rehabil.* 2010 Nov;91(11):1637-40. doi: 10.1016/j.apmr.2010.05.017. PMID: 21044706.

² Fralick M, Sy E, Hassan A, Burke MJ, Mostofsky E, Karsies T. Association of Concussion With the Risk of Suicide: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Neurol.* 2019 Feb 1;76(2):144-151. doi: 10.1001/jamaneurol.2018.3487. PMID: 30419085; PMCID: PMC6439954.

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CONNECT TO PROTECT

- **Get immediate help:** If you or your loved one are having thoughts of suicide, it is important to get help right away. To reach the Military/Veterans Crisis Line, Dial 988 and then press 1. Military/Veterans Crisis Line provides free, confidential support for Service members and veterans in crisis.
- **Seek services:** Individuals with thoughts of suicide should consult a mental health provider about options for therapy and medication management.
- **Lethal means safety (LMS):** Lethal means are objects (e.g., medications, firearms, sharp instruments) that can be used to inflict self-directed violence ([LMS Suite of Tools](#)).
 - [LMS](#) is an intentional, voluntary practice to reduce one's suicide risk by limiting access to those lethal means.
 - Some methods include gun locks and storing lethal means outside of the home, such as with a trusted friend/loved one (e.g., medications, firearms).
- **Keep learning:** Learning more about your brain injury and getting treatment for your symptoms from professionals who understand TBI is very helpful for reducing symptoms that may contribute to suicidal thoughts. Although not an exhaustive list, resources to consider include:
 - [TBI Toolkit](#)
 - [National Intrepid Center of Excellence](#)
 - [Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence](#)
 - [Brain Injury Association of America*](#)
 - [TBI Model Systems*](#)
 - [Brainline*](#)
 - [Psychological Health Center of Excellence](#)

Remember, support is out there,
treatment works, and help is within reach.
Connect to protect yourself and
those you care about.