The Courage to Defy Tradition: A New Way to Help Veterans Thrive

Colonel (Ret.) Wanda Wright
Director
Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services
• Arizona Management System
• Veteran Suicide Statistics
• Be Connected program
• Collective Impact
• Evaluation
The Arizona Management System

• An intentional management system based in Lean concepts
• Data-driven problem solving at every level of the organization
• Leaders committed to developing their teams
• Teams dedicated to continuous improvement
Our Culture

Set Targets, Expectations and Standards

Measure Results against Targets

Identify Gaps between targets and results

Take action to close gaps
RISK OF SUICIDE
For Arizona Veterans

General Population 3x 4x

-Arizona Violent Death Reporting System
For every 1 suicide...

- 9 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for self harm injuries
- 27 people make a suicide attempt
- 227 people report thoughts of suicide

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices.
Arizona Veterans

393 known suicides in 18 months…

3,537 veterans treated in hospital emergency rooms for self harm injuries

10,611 veterans made a suicide attempt

89,211 veterans had thoughts of suicide
U.S. Veterans

- **1,379,933** veterans had thoughts of suicide
- **164,133** veterans made a suicide attempt
- **54,711** veterans treated in hospital emergency rooms for self-harm injuries
- **6,079** known suicides in 2016
Upstream Prevention

Goal = earlier intervention to positively impact social determinants of health

GREEN ZONE: Ready
No crisis and stress is manageable

YELLOW ZONE: Stress Reaction
Increased signs of distress

ORANGE ZONE: Stress Injury
Urgent situation requiring support

RED ZONE: Stress Illness
Immediate danger or threat to life
Upstream Prevention

- Known suicides
- Veterans treated in hospital emergency rooms
- Suicide attempts
- Thoughts of suicide

Opportunity to impact social determinants of health:
Arizona’s Approach

WHO: All Service Members, Veterans, Family Members, Providers & Helpers

WHAT: Upstream – earlier and more effective intervention to prevent crisis

WHERE: Statewide

HOW: Outreach, engagement, resource connection, coordination of care (VA, community and more), equipping and capacity-building
Program Components

CALL
- Help and support available 24/7
- Fielded 5 calls in the first two weeks of operation in April 2017.
- After 18 months: 5,000th call
- After 6 more months: 10,000th call

MATCH
- Personalized Resource Matching & Navigation
- 8,000+ encounters
- 8 navigators statewide
- Developing and piloting a closed loop referral system to better track connections and impact on social determinants of health

LEARN
- Training and skills to equip yourself to help
- Online & in-person training
- Navigator | Peer Support
- ASIST | Military Culture
- MHFA | Symposium
- Be Connected e-course
- 4,000+ Navigators Trained

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What We Built

In partnership with the Office of Senator McCain
Key Areas of Alignment

- Alignment of mission and vision
- Alignment of leadership and stakeholders
- Alignment of resources toward implementation
- Alignment of effort toward a common goal
Collective impact brings people together, in a structured way, to achieve social change.

**Collective impact…**

- Starts with a common agenda
- Establishes shared measurement
- Fosters mutually reinforcing activities
- Encourages continuous communication
- Has a strong backbone team (Arizona Coalition for Military Families)
Building a Team of Teams

BC Team of Communities

BC Partner Community =
Leaders +
Stakeholders +
Organizations +
Systems +
Community Members

All Engaged, Equipped &
Connected

BC Support Team:
Support Line
Navigators
Backbone Team
Trainers
Leadership
Evaluation Evolution

Utilization: Will people use Be Connected?
Service Delivery: How do we deliver quality, consistent services statewide?
Measuring Impact: What is the impact of the program?
Evaluation Evolution

**CALL**
- Number of calls
- Number of Resolved Calls
- Types of Interventions
- Gaps in Resources

**MATCH**
- Case Closure
- Timeliness
- Customer Satisfaction
- # of resources added

**LEARN**
- Outreach per month
- # of people trained by county
- # of targeted training

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Takeaways

- Take time and use some resources to build infrastructure (backbone team)
- Staff with the right people (passion + experience + skills)
- Use available opportunities to advance your effort
- Draw upon effective practices from other issue areas
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