

Veterans & Family Support

One of the focuses of this program is Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness. Such a big focus has been put on mental health in the last decade or so to make it not be something to be ashamed of. All too often people keep their thoughts and feelings bottled up inside and no one can really tell that they aren't doing great. There are so many ways to get help and many times it can start with just a "How are you doing?" If you notice changes in someone mood or behavior, don't just brush it off, be there for the person, lend an ear, or offer to assist them in getting help.



September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Did you know that the blue teardrop is the official symbol of suicide prevention and awareness? There is a template available on MALTA and the National Website to print out on sticker paper. Just wearing the teardrop sticker can start a conversation about what it stands for/why you are displaying it. There is also an official pin available for purchase through the VFW Store (product code 01724.)



Last year the number for the Veterans Crisis Line changed to make it even easier to get help. It is now 988 and then press 1. Or you/they can text 838255.

I urge everyone to save this information on your phones in the case you ever need it. Military Suicide rates have been on the decrease the last few years, but there is still a long

way to go.

For donations towards suicide prevention, send money to VFW National Headquarters, 406 W 34th Street 9th Floor, KC, MO 64111. Write on the check that it is for health awareness and suicide prevention.

There are also many alternative therapy options available such as equine therapy and support groups. In Kansas there are 2 different equine therapy organizations that I know of. *War Horses for Veterans* in Stillwell is where they ride horses, take care of them, learn farm chores, and focus on self-awareness. *Horses and Heroes* in Leavenworth puts a lot of focus on pairing horses with PTSD with veterans with PTSD. They focus on mindfulness and getting know each other emotionally. *Caregivers on the Homefront* in Kansas City focuses on the caregivers taking care of veterans. They have education, support, and restorative weekends. Caregivers are often overlooked but go through a lot.

Sept. 11, 2023 – Patriot Day – An annual observance to remember and honor those who were injured or killed during the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Sept. 15, 2023 – POW/MIA Recognition Day

Sept. 18, 2023 – Air Force Birthday

Sept. 24, 2023 – Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day – A day to honor the families of fallen Servicemembers.

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Ft. Riley Soldier Recovery Unit Is looking for donations.

Bring any items to your District meetings and we will have a way for them to be collected and delivered.
If you would like to deliver them yourself, that is also a possibility.



Kitchen Utensils



Shampoos and soaps-NOT travel size



Cookie Sheets



Coffee pots & Toasters



Pots & Pans



General Cleaning Supplies



Crockpots



Silverware



Electric griddles

They are looking for new or gently used items, if in doubt, just ask yourself “would I like to get this from someone?”

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