

VOL. 1 ISSUE 3 · OCTOBER 2021

SUICIDE IS THE TENTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN 2019

Official Newsletter Melissa Mullanphy: "Not in Vain; A Promise Kept - coming 2021"

September is National Suicide Prevention Month

- All month, mental health advocates, prevention organizations, survivors, allies, and community members unite to promote suicide prevention awareness in September.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Leading Causes of Death Reports, in 2019](#)
 - Suicide was the **tenth** leading cause of death overall in the United States, claiming the lives of over 47,500 people.
 - Suicide was the **second** leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34, and the **fourth** leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 44.
 - There were nearly two and a half times as many suicides (47,511) in the United States as there were homicides (19,141).

Source: The National Institute of Mental Health Information Resource Center



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Trends and Covid-19

In 2020 suicide frequency stayed stable and, in some cases, decreased amongst specific populations, contrary to what many mental health professionals and agencies warned. Some warned that the coronavirus had created the “perfect storm” for a rise in suicides. In contrast, suicides dropped by 5 percent, to 44,834 deaths in 2020 from 47,511 in 2019. It is the second year in a row that the number has fallen after cresting in 2018.

There are many reasons hypothesis of why this perfect storm did not happen. Some professionals who sounded the alarm think that lockdowns may have helped parents keep a better eye on their children. Therefore, better understanding signs of mental health issues and children were not in potential stressful peer situations that may lead them to risk factors sometimes can lead to suicide. Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death of individuals between the age of 10 and 34 in 2019. That is a startling statistic.

But while the number of suicides may have declined overall in 2020, preliminary studies of local communities in states like Illinois, Maryland, and Connecticut found a rise in suicides among Black Americans and other people of color compared with previous years. Federal health officials have yet to release a detailed breakdown of the race and ethnicity of last year’s suicide victims. Some experts have cautioned against making generalizations based on trends in a few localities.

Dr. Paul Nestadt, a psychiatrist from John Hopkins, has requested funding to study some of these upticks by conducting psychological autopsies, interviewing family members of those who died by suicide. An early hypothesis is that the increase in suicide rates in 2020 may be related to the pandemic, less access to healthcare, poverty, job loss, and possibly a smaller support structure in the family. In addition, there is also speculation that the social justice movement may have also be a contributing factor. Further study and data analysis are needed.

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/suicides-rise-in-black-population-during-covid-19-pandemic>



Veteran Crisis

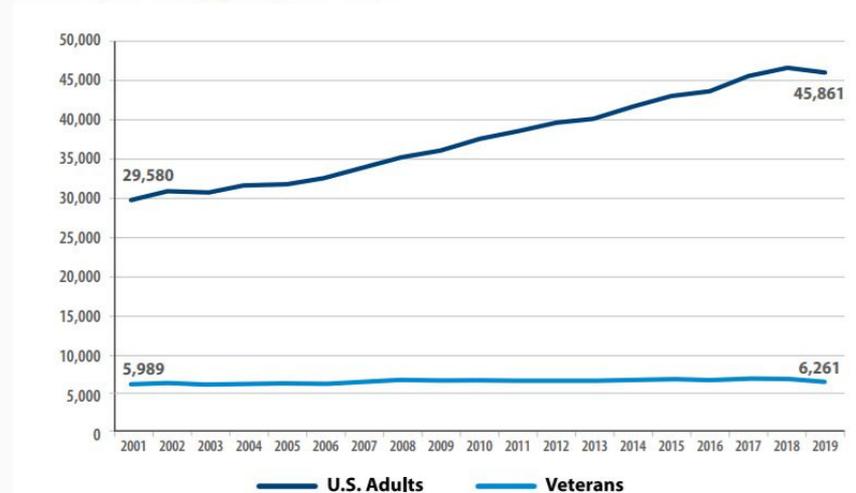
Suicide among U.S. Adults and Among Veterans, 2001–2019

The number and rate of suicide deaths rose from 2001 to 2018 across the U.S. population. Yet, the U.S. population and the Veteran population **experienced a decrease in the suicide count and rate from 2018 to 2019**. Furthermore, in retrospect and updated data, the Veteran suicide count decreased in 2018—one year ahead of the U.S. population suicide decrease, as Figures 1 and 3 illustrate.

This section provides an overview of Veteran data within the context of U.S. national data organized by Suicide Deaths by Count/Number, Suicide Average Per Day, and Suicide Rates. Suicide Deaths by Count/Number The number (count) of suicides among U.S. adults increased from 29,580 in 2001 to 45,861 in 2019

Figure 1. Veterans accounted for 5,989 suicides in 2001, which represented 20.2% of suicides among U.S. adults in 2001; and 6,261 suicides in 2019, which, by comparison, represented 13.7% of suicides among U.S. adults in 2019.

Figure 1: Suicide Deaths, by Year, 2001–2019





Veteran Crisis

Suicide Average Per Day

The average number of suicides per day among U.S. adults rose 55.0%, from 81.0 in 2001 to 125.6 in 2019. Across the same 18-year period, the average number of Veteran suicides per day rose 4.5%, from 16.4 in 2001 to 17.2 in 2019.

In 2019, among the average 17.2 Veteran suicides per day, an estimated 6.8 suicides per day were among those with VHA encounters in 2018 or 2019, whereas 10.4 per day were among The takeaway from this data provided by the VA indicates that when veterans use the mental health resources created for them; there seems to be a reduction overall of suicide 6.9 vs 10.4 per day. Those with no VHA encounter in 2018 or 2019. Suicide Rates From 2001 to 2019, the U.S. adult population increased 26.2%, from 186.6 million in 2001 to 235.4 million in 2019. From 2001 to 2019, the Veteran population decreased 23.1%, from 25.7 million in 2001 to 19.8 million in 2019.

In this context, from 2001 to 2019, the unadjusted suicide rate among non-Veteran U.S. adults rose 33.0%, from 12.6 per 100,000 in 2001 to 16.8 per 100,000 in 2019. In comparison, the rate among Veterans rose 35.9% from 2001 to 2019, from 23.3 per 100,000 in 2001 to 31.6 per 100,000 in 2019. In 2019, the unadjusted suicide rates were highest among Veterans ages 18-34 (44.4 per 100,000).

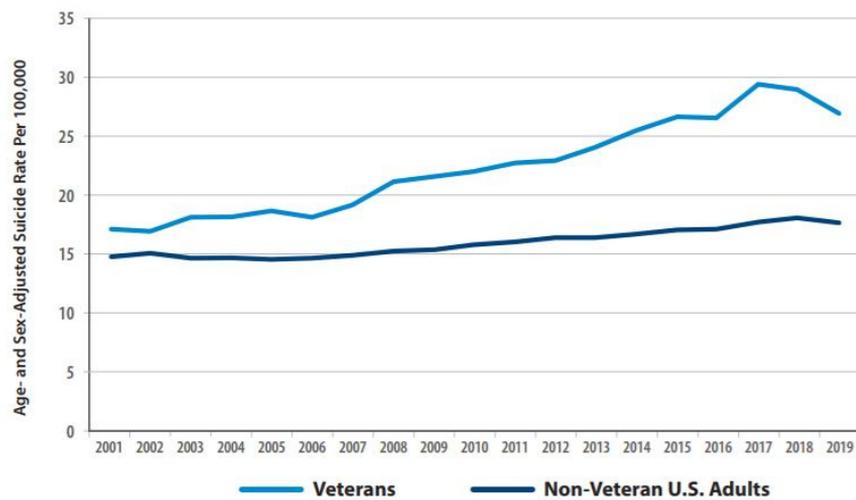
Source: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2021/2021-National-Veteran-Suicide-Prevention-Annual-Report-FINAL-9-8-21.pdf>



Veteran Crisis

Figure 3 indicates that the difference in adjusted rates between Veterans and non-Veterans was highest in 2017, when Veteran adjusted rates were 66.3% greater than those for non-Veteran adults; this differential decreased to 52.3% in 2019.

Figure 3: Age- and Sex-Adjusted Suicide Rates, Veterans and Non-Veteran U.S. Adults, 2001–2019



Source: <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2021/2021-National-Veteran-Suicide-Prevention-Annual-Report-FINAL-9-8-21.pdf>



Tomorrow

Our [Veterans Crisis Line] number is being marketed everywhere right now, which I'm thankful for," said psychologist and Crisis Line Director Lisa Kearney "The more we can do to normalize discussions about a crisis, about suicide and its OK to reach out for help. I'm thankful for it." Texts to the hotline jumped 98% between Aug. 14 and Aug. 29, while chat messages and calls rose by 40% and 7% when compared with the same time frame last year, according to the VA.

Since the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Kabul, veterans, their advocates, and mental health professionals have expressed concern for the health of former troops, who may be experiencing renewed grief over the loss of comrades-in-arms or questioning their service or purpose as the war concluded.

America is very divided today. These are hard times. I'm afraid the history books written in the future will be an example of how "America lost its way" and include lessons to learn from.

I hope we find our way back and we need to be there for our veterans. We also need to be proactive in mental health in 2021 We must do better in all aspects of healthcare, and mental health. We need to remove the stigma of seeking mental health, particularly with males is NOT a sign of weakness but the opposite You recognize a problem and you are going to tackle it and that is not easy. That is strength and grit. Please see the resources on the next page.

You are not alone, and you matter.

MelissaMullamphy ©

Sign up for newsletters at <http://www.melissamullamphy.com>



Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

 **1-800-273-8255**



VA.gov | Veterans Affairs

Apply for and manage the VA benefits and services you've earned as a Veteran, Servicemember, or family member—like health care, disability, education, and...

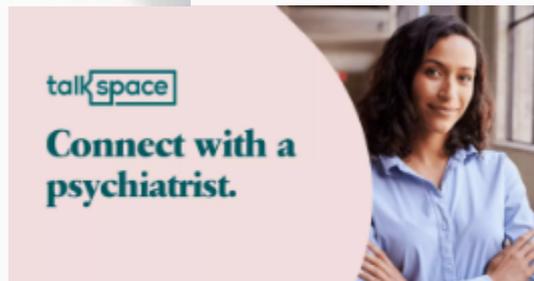
Get help from Veterans Crisis Line

 Call 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)

 Text to 838255

 Chat confidentially now

In crisis or having thoughts of suicide, visit [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) for more resources



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