

Supporting Our Military and Veteran Caregivers

Melissa Comeau, Director, Military and Veteran Caregiver Network, American Red Cross

Shawn Moore, L.M.S.W., Executive Director, Founder, Caregivers on the Homefront

Kathleen LeRoy, Caregiver

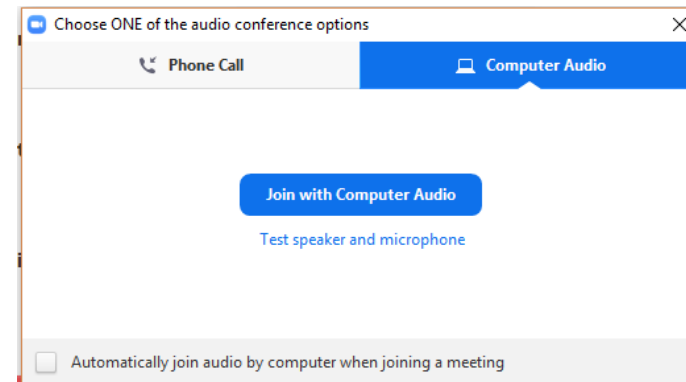
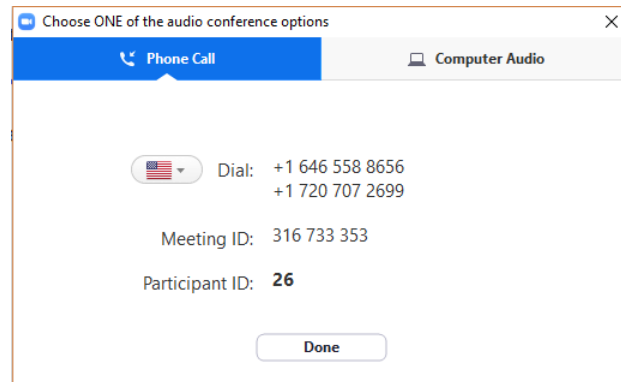
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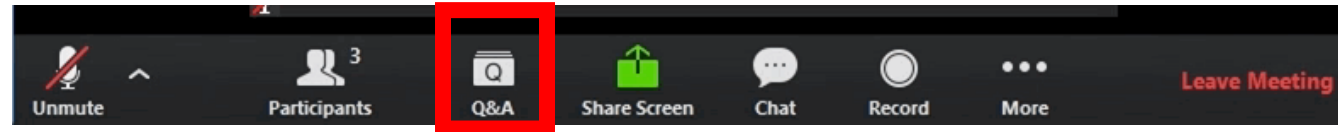
SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Call Logistics

- Call in on your telephone, or use your computer audio option
- If you are on the phone, remember to enter your Audio PIN



How to Ask a Question



Click on the Q&A function located at the bottom of your screen.
This will open a pop up where you can type your question.

SAMHSA Welcome



Stacey Owens, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.-C.

Military and Veterans Affairs Liaison

Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Disclaimer

The views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

SAMHSA Background



Since 2008, SAMHSA has partnered with states and territories to strengthen behavioral health systems serving **Service Members, Veterans, and their families** (SMVF), providing technical assistance (TA) through its SMVF TA Center.

SAMHSA leads efforts to ensure substance use and mental health issues among all Americans, including SMVF, are well understood.

SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center



SAMHSA ★ **SMVF TA CENTER**
Service Members, Veterans, and their
Families Technical Assistance Center

- Strengthening ongoing collaboration among military and civilian stakeholders
- Providing a centralized mechanism for cities, states, and territories to learn, connect, and share
- Increasing awareness of and access to resources and programs that strengthen behavioral healthcare systems for Service Members, Veterans, and their families (SMVF)
- Supporting coordinated responses to the behavioral health needs of SMVF
- Encouraging cities, states, and territories to implement promising, best, and evidence-based practices

Technical Assistance Methods

The SMVF TA Center provides training and technical assistance through activities such as:

- Policy Academies
- Implementation Academies
- Crisis Intercept Mapping
- Webinars
- Learning Communities
- Technical Assistance Call Series
- Onsite and virtual expert consultation
- Resource dissemination

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Describe the military and Veteran family experience and share insights on their behavioral health needs
- ✓ Illustrate how military and Veteran family life may be impacted by trauma and secondary/vicarious trauma
- ✓ Demonstrate concrete strategies for supporting caregivers and preventing burnout
- ✓ Connect with caregivers through hearing their story
- ✓ Provide examples of peer-based support and services to connect the caregivers of service members, Veterans, and their families (SMVF) with access points to behavioral health resources

Our Presenters Today



Melissa Comeau
Director
Military and Veteran
Caregiver Network
American Red Cross



Shawn Moore, LMSW
Executive Director
Founder
Caregivers on the
Homefront



Kathleen LeRoy
Caregiver

Military and Veteran Caregiver Network

Melissa Comeau
Director

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Red Cross**

Military and Veteran
Caregiver Network

The MVCN is a lifeline for me because the encouragement offered both individually and as a team creates an environment that really is a community.

Jeannine, New York



About Us

The Military and Veteran Caregiver Network delivers highest-quality, structured peer support to those providing care to military service members and veterans. Our network is *by caregivers, for caregivers.*

Meet the
Team

MVCN
History

Our
Caregivers

The
Network

Meet the Team



Melissa Comeau, Director



Rachel Moyers, Outreach,
Engagement, & Training
Associate



Melissa Johnson,
Programs & Services Associate

The Military and Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN) was designed to provide military caregivers with peer support services, to increase caregiver connections, engagement, knowledge, skills, and hope.

In 2014, the White House Joining Forces Initiative and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation endorsed the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) as the ideal nonprofit to facilitate the creation of the MVCN. MVCN's peer support programs and services are modeled on evidence-based, best practices, which TAPS has offered to more than 60,000 family members and friends grieving the death of a military-affiliated loved one.

In 2017, the MVCN transitioned to the American Red Cross. As part of the Service to the Armed Forces, the MVCN provides peer support through our safe and secure Online Community, the Peer Mentor Program, and online and in-person support groups. We also provide access to critical resources through our extensive Hero Care Resource Directory and access to caregiver-specific events on our Caregiver Calendar.

Who does the MVCN serve?

The MVCN serves caregivers of all eras, stages of life, and relations, across all locations.

Caregivers play a vital role in supporting the recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration of wounded, ill, injured, and aging military servicemembers and veterans. The people who fill this role include:

- Spouses/partners
- Parents
- Siblings
- Children
- Family members
- Friends
- Battle buddies



The Network



The Network is centered around our Online Community which provides 24/7 support through our secure, customized caregiver platform. The Online Community is the the entry point to all programs and services and delivers information and resources weekly to caregiver members.

Additionally, the Network provides virtual training and learning opportunities for caregivers to gain knowledge and skills. A beautiful measure of growth often comes from caregivers volunteering to support other caregivers.



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Jeannine, New York



Engagement

Caregivers engage with one another for support through our three evidence-based programs.



Online
Community

Peer
Mentor
Program

Support
Groups

Online Community

- Limited to vetted caregivers via safe, secure technology
- Operates 24/7/365 to fit caregivers' busy schedules
- Features peer-moderated groups, discussions, topics & chats
- Permits creation and sharing of a secure online profile
- Moderated by trained caregiver peers to ensure appropriate, accurate content
- Creates and ensures an atmosphere of mutual respect and confidentiality
- Provides crisis interventions and referrals for caregiver members in distress



I appreciate the platform because it allows caregivers the opportunity to not only hear each other and share one's journey, it helps us to know we are not alone.

Abigail, New York



Peer Mentor Program

- Matches trained mentors with caregiver mentees for one-on-one communication in ways and at times that are mutually agreed upon
- Offers caregivers the opportunity to select, or to be paired with, a trained peer mentor
- Offers mentees positive models of caregiving, companionship and support by mentors with similar lived experiences
- Trains caregiver mentors in communication skills, accessing resources, and making referrals



AMAZING training opportunity. Far surpassed my expectations in dissemination of the information as well as application of relevant skills. Presenters were excellent teachers!




Support Groups



- Facilitated by 2+ trained peer facilitators
- Include 10-15 caregivers
- Meet at times convenient for caregivers (including weekends & evenings)
- Observe confidentiality and offer mutual respect
- Can be hosted by and for constituents of partner organizations
- Welcome regular participants, as well as drop-ins
- Available in-person, online, and by telephone





*Calls online have been very helpful. I
have gained knowledge on this journey.
This is an awesome program.*

Angelina, Connecticut



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Jeannine, New York



Knowledge



I have found it beneficial to have the education from other organizations such as Healing Household 6. Attending the group training was so useful to me and those I serve on a daily basis.

Marjorie, Maine

Hero Care
Resource
Directory

Caregiver
Calendar

Hero Care Resource Directory

Piloting the Aunt Bertha social care network with public-facing resources created to enhance the support for service members, veterans, caregivers and their families.



<https://herocare.auntbertha.com>

Caregiver Calendar

The Caregiver Calendar provides easy access to events for caregivers - whether hosted by MVCN or our partner organizations.



<https://redcross.org/caregivers>



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Skills



Our peer support training programs equip caregivers with the skills necessary to use their lived experiences to support their caregiver peers.

Training is provided live via Zoom video for an in-person experience. We provide training for three roles: peer mentors, online peer moderators, and peer support group facilitators.



I truly appreciate your time, commitment, and patience during training. I was very pleasantly surprised to find that I not only enjoyed myself but was also thoroughly engaged in learning that I truly feel will benefit me when it comes time to take on the role of mentor. I will definitely be passing along my double thumbs up!

Shaina, TX





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Jeannine, New York



Hope



Knowing there are others going through the same thing is a great help and makes me hopeful.

Mary, Illinois



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Jeannine, New York



**ANY
QUESTIONS**



Contact Us

Contact Us

Website: <https://www.redcross.org/caregivers>

Email: programs.mvcn@redcross.org

Twitter: [@MilVetCaregiver](https://twitter.com/MilVetCaregiver)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MilVetCaregiver>

Instagram: [milvetcaregivernetwork](https://www.instagram.com/milvetcaregivernetwork)





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Jeannine, New York



The Impact of Trauma on the Family

Shawn Moore, LMSW

Executive Director/Founder

Caregivers on the Homefront

Shawn.Moore@Caregivers-homefront.org



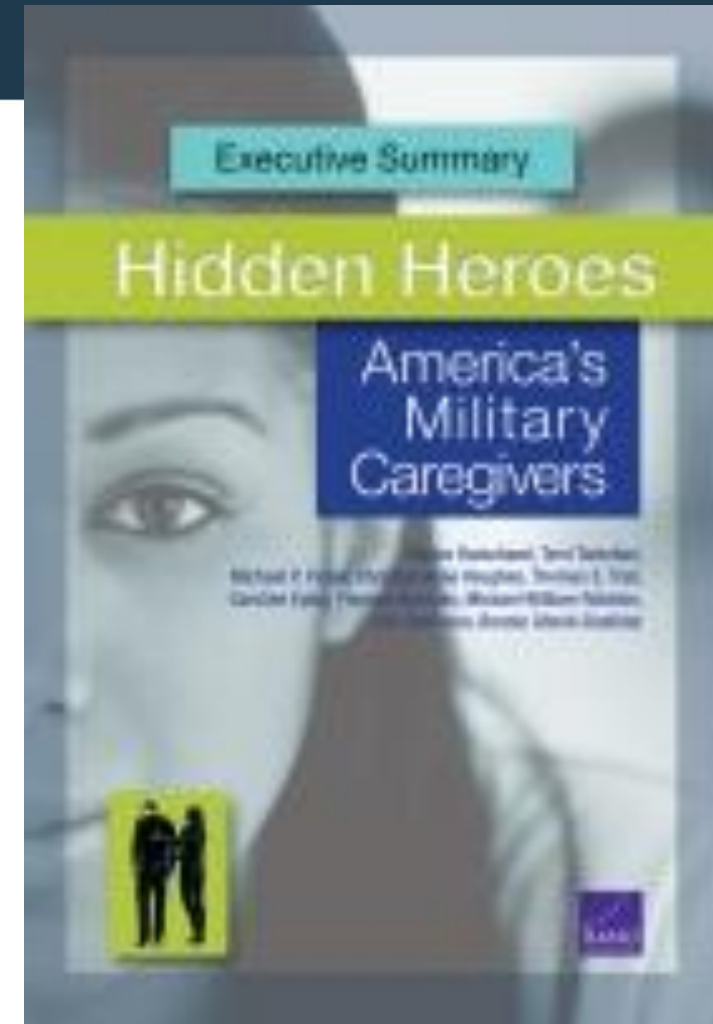
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Objectives

- Illustrate how military and veteran family life may be impacted by trauma and secondary/vicarious trauma
- Demonstrate concrete strategies for supporting caregivers and preventing burnout
- Identify resources to support the family caregivers of veterans and service members

The Numbers Don't Lie

- 5.5 million Americans care for injured or ill service members and veterans.
- Caregivers provide \$14 Billion of uncompensated care a year.
- They experience worse health outcomes, greater strains in family relationships, and more workplace problems than non caregivers.
- Time spent giving care and helping the care recipient cope with behavioral health problems contribute to depression in caregivers.
- In a sample of 458 caregivers, 39% experienced interruptions in their education and 23.6% reported suicidal ideation since becoming a caregiver.
- Dr. Delgado, et al's study indicates that an interruption of life events, loss of self, and caring for a veteran with mental health conditions/suicidality are significant predictors of suicidality in military caregivers.



Ramchand, Rajeev, Terri Tanielian, Michael P. Fisher, Christine Anne Vaughan, Thomas E. Trail, Caroline Batka, Phoenix Voorhies, Michael W. Robbins, Eric Robinson, and Bonnie Ghosh-Dastidar, *Hidden Heroes: America's Military Caregivers*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-499-TEDF, 2014. As of July 12, 2021: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR499.html

Delgado RE, Peacock K, Wang C-P, Pugh MJ (2021) Phenotypes of caregiver distress in military and veteran caregivers: Suicidal ideation associations. *PLoS ONE* 16(6): e0253207. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253207>

Strategies for Supporting Caregivers

- Must have a one-stop place to list resources specific to caregivers.
- Must provide opportunities for caregivers to meet each other.
- Must have access to culturally competent mental health care.
- Include caregivers/family members in job fairs and higher education opportunities.
- Contact the Elizabeth Dole Fellow(s) in your state to be a part of the mayor and governor's challenge.



Strategies for Supporting Caregivers

- Train providers in Inclusive Care
 - Caregivers must be a member of the care team
- Policymakers
 - Protect and Expand state and local support programs
 - Expand Respite to Veteran and Military Caregivers
- Employers
 - Offer Paid Family Leave
 - Flexible Work Schedules



Support Resources for Family and Caregivers

- Caregivers on the Homefront
 - <https://caregivers-homefront.org/>
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation
 - <https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org/>
- Red Cross Military and Veteran Caregiver Network
 - <https://www.redcross.org/>

- VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
 - <https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers/>
- PsychArmor
 - <https://psycharmor.org/>



Thank You

SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Shawn Moore, LMSW

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816-462-2022

www.samhsa.gov

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

Caregiver Perspective

Katie LeRoy
Caregiver

Webinar
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HOW MANY HATS WILL YOU WEAR TODAY?

- Caregiver
- Coach
- Partner
- Parent
- Motivator
- Employee/Boss



WHAT DOES SELF CARE LOOK LIKE?

- Spa or beauty care treatments
- Reading something for pleasure
- Organizing a closet or area of your life
- Taking a walk or exercising
- Meet a friend out for a in person chat or shopping date
- Schedule a call with a friend
- Learn a new skill
- Plan a new recipe night

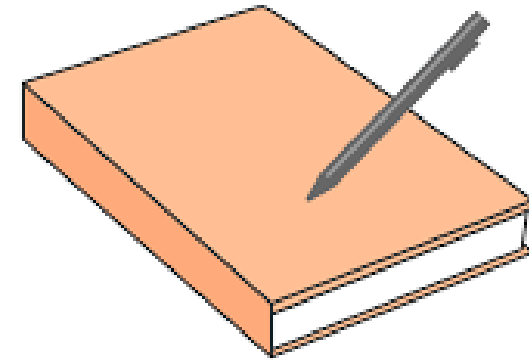


Visible and Invisible Wounds

- Can you help declining behaviors
- Does activity and exercise help
- Will connecting with social groups give support
- Asking for help
- Volunteering in your community

Grab & Go Binder

- **Personal Information**
- **Medical Information and Insurance**
- **Military Information**
- **Insurance and Income**
- **Real State, Personal Property and Debt**



Resources

National Military Family Association: <https://www.militaryfamily.org>

Veterans Families United: <https://veteransfamiliesunited.org>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov>

Disabled Veterans of America: <https://www.dav.org>

Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program: <https://cap.mil>

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Katie LeRoy
703-853-8080

www.samhsa.gov

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Questions?

Contact SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center



SAMHSA ★ **SMVF TA CENTER**

Service Members, Veterans, and their
Families Technical Assistance Center

345 Delaware Avenue

Delmar, NY 12054

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Email: smvftacenter@prainc.com

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