



2021 DOD/VA

Suicide Prevention CONFERENCE

Make Every Connection Count

Essential Partnership: How to Foster VA & Community Collaboration for Upstream Veteran Suicide Prevention

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Agenda

- About our partnership
- Why cross-sector partnership is essential for suicide prevention
- The landscape
- The collective impact model
- Troubleshooting partnership challenges
- Opportunities
- Q & A / Discussion

About Us



**State
Agency**



- Phoenix • Tucson • Prescott
- Phoenix Regional Office

**Federal
Agency**



**Community
Nonprofit**

Arizona's Track Record in Public/Private Partnership



Active and growing partnership for over a decade



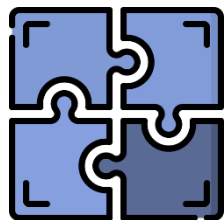
Weathered changes in all major leadership roles



Arizona National Guard suicide rate from highest to zero for three years




Created statewide upstream prevention program for 500,000+ in 2017



All major federal, state and community organizations are actively engaged



Partnership has a focus on continuous learning and improvement

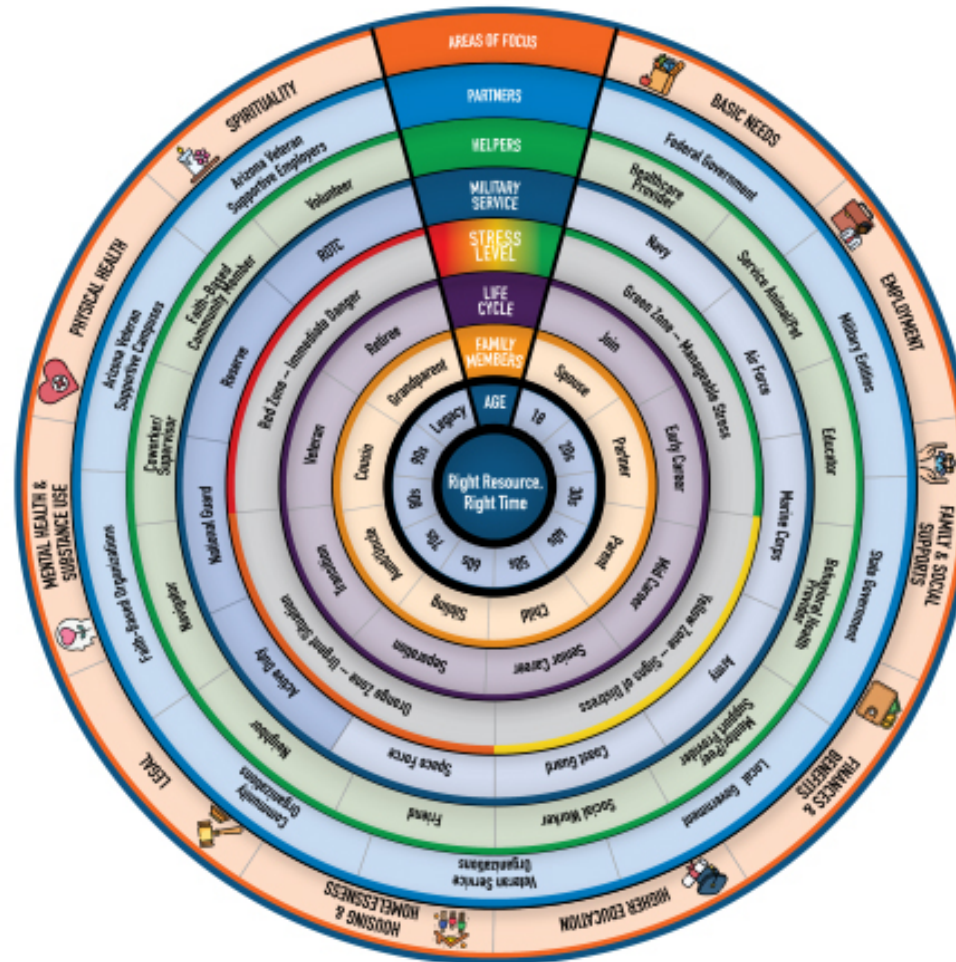


**What challenges have you
observed or experienced in
your state or community
relating to military/veteran
suicide prevention efforts?**

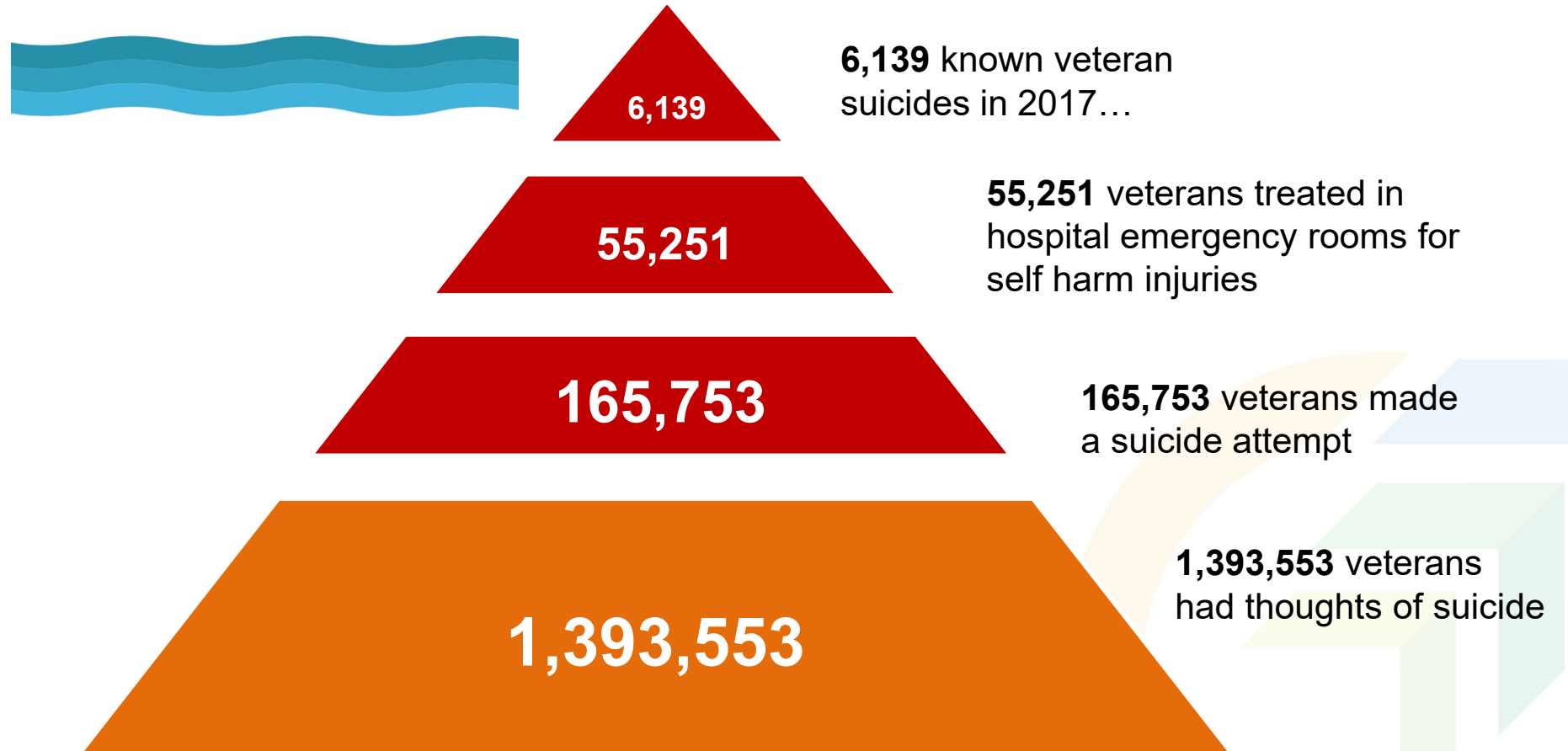
**Type a response
in the chat box**



Be Connected Ecosystem of Support Video



Why Upstream Prevention is Key



For illustration purposes, based on a model from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Preventing Suicide: A Technical Package of Policy, Programs, and Practices.

Opportunity to help



Known suicides

**Veterans treated in hospital
emergency rooms**

Suicide attempts

Thoughts of suicide

Opportunity to impact social determinants of health:

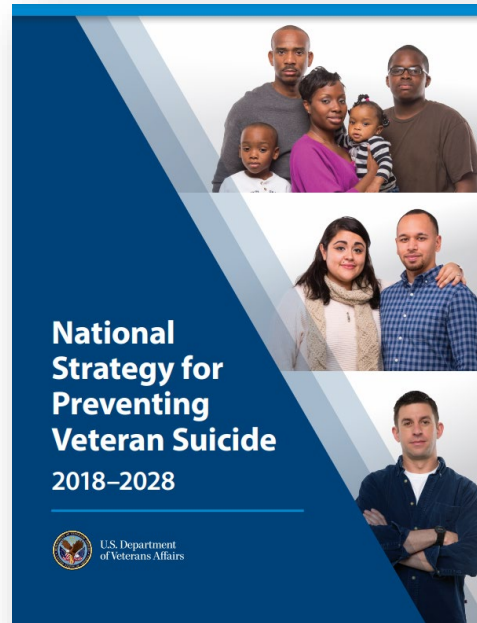


Veteran Suicide Landscape

- 70% of veterans dying by suicide are not connected to the VA.
- Systems are built and funded siloed so there aren't usually preset ways for them to work together. Requires establishing those partnerships.
- Despite significant resources invested in suicide prevention and a shared goal of prevention, rates and disparities remain consistently high for veterans.
- Who can do the work to reverse this disparities?

The Essential Partnership

National Landscape



"A coordinated effort at the federal, state, and local levels is key to preventing Veteran suicide."

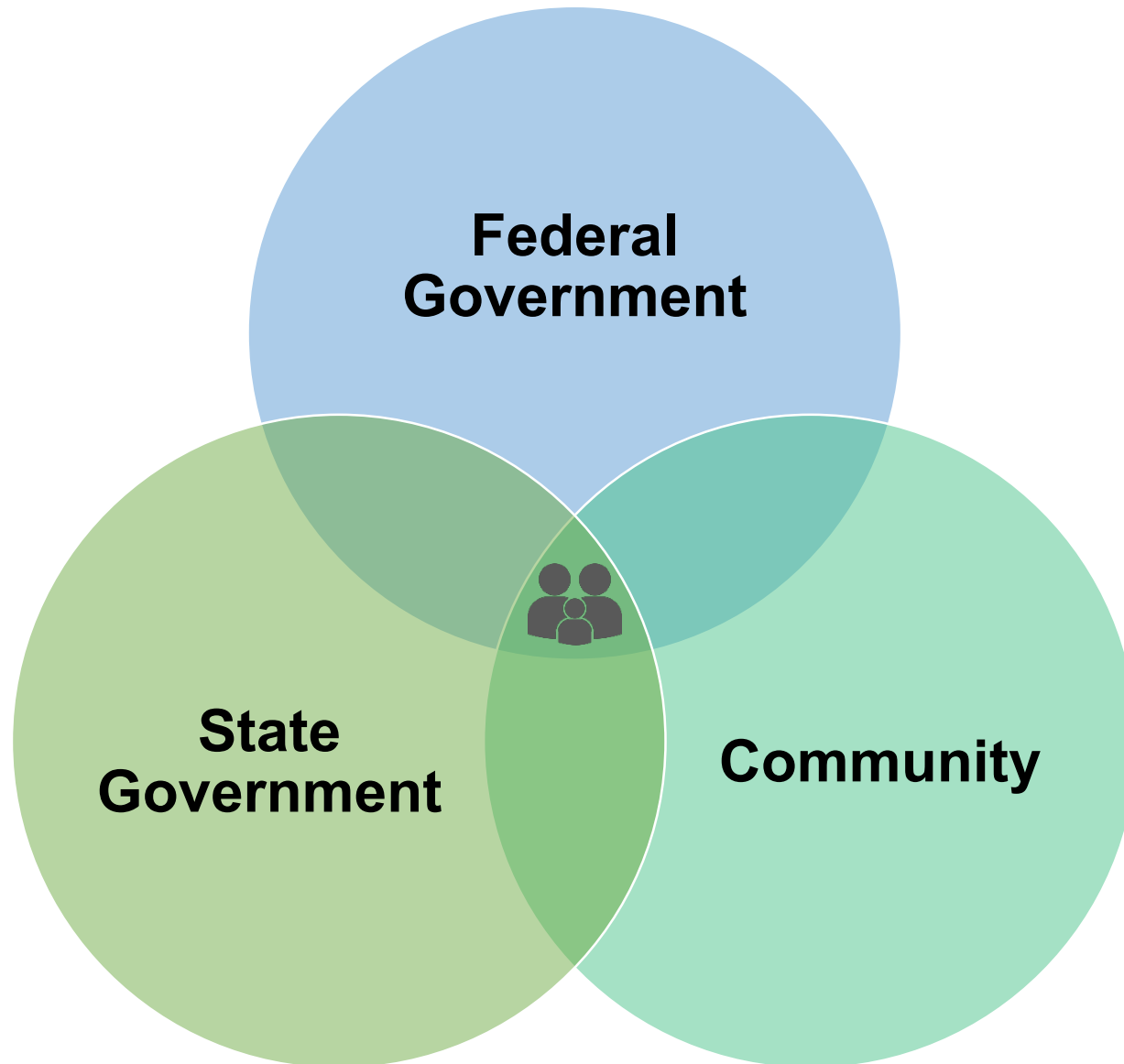



**PREVENTS
Executive Order**



**Legislation: Clay Hunt
Suicide Prevention for
American Veterans
Act & SSG Fox
Suicide Prevention
Grant Program**

Essential Partnership





**What successes have you
seen with partnership
between federal, state and/or
community partners?**

**Type a response
in the chat box**





The Collective Impact Model



Collective Impact Model

Collective impact brings people and organizations 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



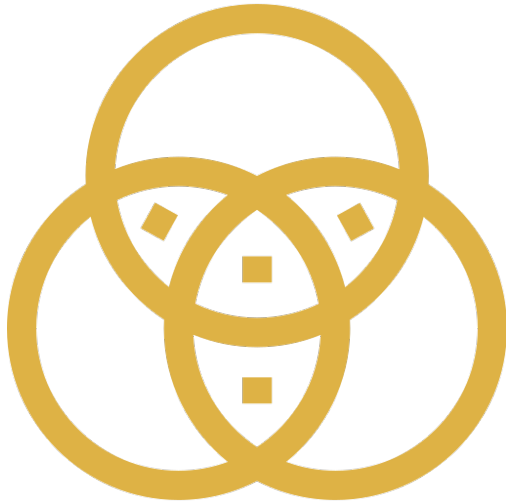
Has a strong backbone team
(Arizona Coalition for Military Families)



Troubleshooting Partnership Challenges Through Collective Impact



Collective Impact: Common Agenda



- Align the vision between partners and also vertically within each organization (leadership – management – frontline).
- Create a shared agenda to address the shared issue.
- Find people/organizations who can be translators and bridges (e.g., those who have worked in or with multiple systems).
- Keep those you seek to serve at the center of your work always. Don't allow gravitational pull to knock your effort off course.

Collective Impact: Shared Measurement



- Go beyond a focus on reducing deaths by suicide as the only metric. This is a long-term metric.
- Focus on tracking two areas:
 - Building your collaboration (partners, engagement, training, etc.).
 - The impact on people your collective helps (increasing resilience, decreasing negative outcomes, including suicide, eventually).
- Combine data sources.
- Build continuous feedback loops.

Collective Impact: Mutually Reinforcing Activities



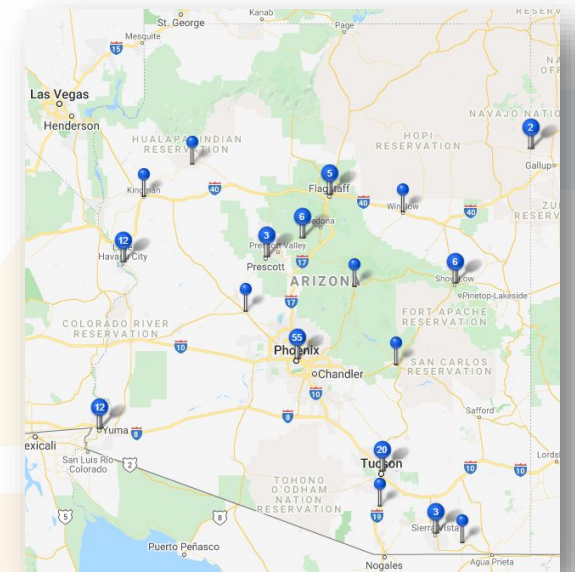
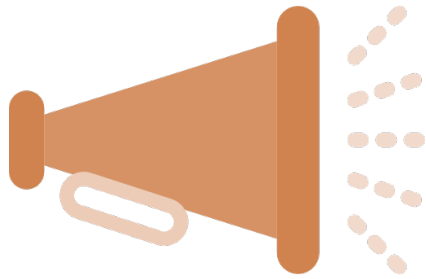
- This is the day-to-day work.
- A common pitfall to look out for is when your effort becomes more focused on meeting than doing (when, where, who is speaking, agenda, etc.).
- People are too busy, so they will vote with their feet (or mouse click). If the partnership does not add value to their organization and work, they likely won't continue participation.
- Get buy-in from the frontline teams by showing the impact of their collaborative work (examples: VA & Benefits Counselors <—> Be Connected team)

Collective Impact: Communication

- Hone your message.
- Connect the dots (communications workgroup).

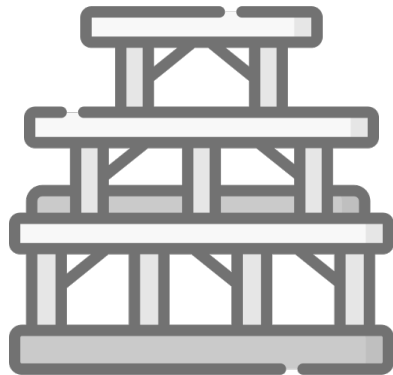
- Examples:

- Convenings & presentations
- Social media
- VA facilities (elevators)
- Billboards
- Magazine
- Public service campaign



Statewide public service campaign on tv & radio

Collective Impact: Backbone Team



- A strong backbone team keeps the collective effort advancing, allowing every partner to continue focus on their core mission while also being part of the collective.
- A backbone team can be key to sustainability and bridging across sectors and siloes.
- Investment in building and sustaining a backbone team can yield results far into the future.

**Which of these
is the most
challenging in
your
experience?**

**Type a response
in the chat box**

Collective impact...



Starts with a common agenda



Establishes shared measurement



Fosters mutually reinforcing activities



Encourages continuous communication



Has a strong backbone team

Funding



- Have a clear picture of what you want to do and then find resources that overlap and align with those goals.
- Start small, demonstrate success.
- Think creatively about how your partnership can solve problems and then pursue resources.
- Combine different sources of funding to accomplish collective goals (federal & state, public and private).

Opportunities to Build Partnership



Don't reinvent the wheel



Research what already exists, not always necessary to start something new



Start small, build trust



To get started or build, look to your essential partners

Questions?

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