

Fact Sheet: The Impact of Mental Illness on Veterans and their Families

“Every suicide represents a tragic loss to our Army and the nation. We are confident that efforts aimed at increasing individuals’ resiliency, while reducing incidence of at-risk and high-risk behavior across the force, are having a positive impact. We absolutely recognize there is much work to be done and remain committed to ensuring our people are cared for and have ready access to the best possible programs and services.”

Gen. Peter Chiarelli, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and 2011 recipient of the Hero of Medicine Award from the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine

- Between 2002 and 2010, 27.9 percent of returning service members from Iraq and Afghanistan were diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression or another type of mental illness.
- Only one-half of troops experiencing symptoms of mental illness seek treatment for fear of seeming weak to their peers.
- For the second year in a row, the U.S. military has lost more troops to suicide than it has to combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Eighteen veterans die by suicide each day.
- Each month, 950 veterans attempt suicide.
- There are more than 100,000 homeless veterans living on the street on any given night.
- Almost one-half of all homeless veterans live with a mental illness or substance-abuse problem.
- Unemployment of returning veterans is more than double the national rate, at about 20 percent.
- An adolescent whose parent is sent on military deployments is more likely to have suicidal thoughts and feel depressed than the child of civilians.
- Almost 10 million family members of military personnel, including spouses and children, have a direct connection to someone who has gone to war.

These facts are frightening. NAMI wants you to know that you are not alone, there is hope and recovery is possible. Find help through a NAMI support group, education program or resources today.

If you or one of your loved ones are facing a mental illness, NAMI’s support and education programs can help. Visit www.nami.org/programs for more information on treatment and support.

For more information on mental health issues facing active-duty service members, veterans and their families, please visit www.nami.org/veterans.

For the latest research and resources available on PTSD, check out NAMI’s new brochure and web resource on PTSD at www.nami.org/ptsd.

