Operation Deep Dive Overview

Operation Deep Dive is a first of its kind community-based military veteran suicide prevention study taking place in 14 communities across the country. This four-year study is a partnership between America’s Warrior Partnership and researchers from the University of Alabama that is funded by a grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation.

The goal of Operation Deep Dive is to identify the risk factors that lead to suicide and deaths from self-harm in veteran communities. This will help to guide the development of programs that will improve the quality of life and reduce self-harm and suicide among veterans.

Operation Deep Dive is the first research study of its kind to look at:

- The impact of community environments on veterans.
- The impact of less-than-honorable discharges on veteran suicides, as well as the differences in suicide rates between those who did and did not receive support services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- For the first time ever, this study will include veterans with Honorable Discharge, Entry Level Separation (ELS), General Discharge - Under Honorable Conditions, Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge, Bad Conduct Discharge (BCD), Officer Discharge, or Dishonorable Discharge.
- This study will include cases of self-harm in addition to suicide, which will provide a more comprehensive view of self-destructive behaviors that can potentially prove fatal.

Have you lost a veteran to suicide or self-harm? You can help.

You can help support Operation Deep Dive by participating in an interview that aims to investigate the lives of the veteran lost to suicide or death from self-harm for the last six months to a year before their death. The goal is to look at how the community supported or challenged the veteran and where we can do better to support those who have served within our community.

If you would like learn more about how you can promote veteran life and wellbeing in your community, contact: Alice Yatsenyuk ~ 864-423-7116 ~ Upstatescopdd@americaswarriorpartnership.org

AmericasWarriorPartnership.org
'OPERATION DEEP DIVE'
RESEARCH STUDY OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

America's Warrior Partnership, University of Alabama researchers and the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation have partnered on a four-year research study that will examine the factors and potential causes involved in suicides and early mortality due to self-harm among military veterans. The study began in 2018 and will conclude at the end of 2021. Funded by a $2.9 million grant from Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, as well as additional investment from America's Warrior Partnership and other in-kind supporters, "Operation Deep Dive" will use unique methodologies that have never before been applied to the research of veteran suicides.

OBJECTIVES & SCOPE

This study will identify the individual, organizational, and community risk factors that lead to suicide within veteran communities and help guide the development of programs to prevent and reduce self-harm among veterans. The study will include veterans with Honorable Discharge, Entry Level Separation [ELS], General Discharge - Under Honorable Conditions, Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge, Bad Conduct Discharge [BCD], Officer Discharge, or Dishonorable Discharge).

A total of 14 communities are participating in this study across the country. In 2018, we launched the study with Community Affiliates, including California (Orange County), Florida (Panhandle), Georgia (Atlanta), Minnesota (Minneapolis and St. Paul), South Carolina (Greenville and Charleston). In 2019, we added an additional eight communities that were selected through a Request for Proposal process. These communities include Alabama (Mobile), Arizona (Phoenix), Indiana (Indianapolis), the tristate area of Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio (Cincinnati), Nevada (Las Vegas), New York (Syracuse), North Carolina (Charlotte), and Texas (Houston).
This study will be divided into two phases over four years using a mixed-methods, Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach.

**Phase I (Year 1)**
1. Partner with Medical Examiners (MEs) in each community to conduct a two to five-year retrospective of veteran suicides or suspected suicides, determine their military service history via the Department of Defense Database, and identify which veterans were receiving VA services.
2. Recruit and implement Community Action Teams in each community, consisting of MEs, Veteran Serving Organization (VSO) leaders, community leaders, and veterans/family members to help shape, review, and help direct the research from design to dissemination.
3. Geo-map all identified veteran suicides or suspected suicides in each community to determine different geo-cultural contexts and locations that affect likelihood of suicide/suspected suicide.
4. Develop sociocultural death investigation tool that identifies individual, organizational, and community factors leading to veteran suicide or self-harm leading to suicide.
5. Recruit seven (7) non-Affiliate Communities with similar demographics to the seven (7) Affiliate Communities

**Phase II (Years 2-4)**
1. Implement sociocultural death investigations of new suicides in communities with friends and family members of deceased in Affiliate and non-Affiliate Communities.
2. In seven new non-Affiliate Communities, implement retrospective analysis of former service member suicides or suspected suicides as completed for Affiliate Communities in Phase I.
3. In-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews with veterans at higher risk for suicide to explore the role of community in engaging those who have served to prevent negative outcomes contributing to suicide and self-harm.
4. Conduct a quantitative multi-database statistical analysis linking the WarriorServe® information system linked with the joint Department of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Suicide Data Repository (SDR) and VA health records data. We will also link to U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service data sources to facilitate a comprehensive capture of potential community and social factors related to suicides identified in Phase I.

Funding provided by Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation.

AmericasWarriorPartnership.org/deep-dive