
Rural Veteran Suicide Prevention Symposium

***ISSUES AND INITIATIVES FOR RURAL VETERAN ACCESS TO
MENTAL WELLNESS, CARE, AND SUPPORT***

Monday, September 29, 2025

Harnett Hall, Minot State University

500 University Ave W

Minot, ND 58707

Together With Veterans (TWV) is a community-based suicide prevention program for rural Veterans. TWV involves partnering with rural Veterans and their communities to implement community-based suicide prevention programs and strategies.

EVENT PARKING

Please park on the east side parking lot of the Dome (#8). Go down the steps, Hartnett Hall (#12) will be located across the street from the Dome entrance.



BE SEEN. BE HEARD. BELONG.



Minot State University
500 University Ave W
Minot, ND 58707

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MinotStateU.edu

Minot State University is
a tobacco free campus.



AGENDA

8:00 - 8:50	Registration / Vendor visit
8:50 - 8:55	Opening remarks • Max Pontenila, TWV-Minot, Veteran, USAF
08:55 - 9:10	Opening remarks • Tom Joyce, Interim City Manager, Veteran, USAF
9:10 - 10:00	Introduction to Military Culture • Nikki Frohlich, Veteran, Army National Guard • Aaron Moss, Veteran, USAF
10:00 - 10:50	Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) & Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) • Sarah Blazek, ND Survivor Outreach Services • Davina French, Veteran, Army National Guard
10:50 - 11:00	Break / Vendor visit
11:00 - 11:50	VA S.A.V.E. • Tammy Monsebroten LCSW, Fargo VA Medical Center
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:50	Lethal Means Safety Training • Tammy Monsebroten LCSW, Fargo VA Medical Center
2:00 - 2:50	First Link and the 988 Crisis Line • Jennifer Illich, First Link
2:50 - 3:00	Break / Vendor Visit
3:00 - 3:50	De-escalation Techniques • Aaron Moss, Law Enforcement Instructor
4:00 - 4:50	Practicing self-care for providers • Adam Guilmino, PhD, Minot Vet Center
4:50 - 5:00	Closing remarks / Survey
	2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report • Data available via weblink and QR code

OPENING REMARKS

TOM JOYCE is currently the Interim City Manager for the City of Minot. Joyce began his duties in Minot as Assistant City Manager on Jan 15, 2024, where he serves on the city's executive leadership team and has primary responsibility for overseeing city Engineering, Public Works Utilities (Water and Wastewater, Water Treatment, Solid Waste and Recycling) and Public Works Operations (Transit, Fleet Management, Street and Sewer Maintenance, Property Maintenance and the City Cemetery). In addition, he served as Interim Human Resources Director, Feb-May 2025.

From Dec 2021 to Jan 2024, Joyce served as the Deputy to the Garrison Commander at the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, Co. In that position, Joyce was responsible for directing administrative, technical, and professional services supporting a population of more than 73,000 at a large, multi-mission military installation. Prior to that, he served in multiple leadership roles both stateside and overseas as a Department of the Army Civilian and during a 28-year U.S. Air Force career.

INTRODUCTION TO MILITARY CULTURE

Session Objectives:

- Provide a comprehensive understanding of the unique aspect's military life; to include hierarchy, values, norms, and experiences that shapes a service members' perspective.
- Gain insight into the challenges faced by military personnel and their families, upon transition from active service to civilian life.

NICOLE "NIKKI" FROHLICH served in the ND Army National Guard for 25 years, she retired January 2024. She has worked as a Human Resource Specialist and as a Domestic Operations Specialist. She was deployed in 2009-2010 to Kosovo for the KFOR12 peacekeeping mission. During her time in the NDNG, she has served in Egypt, Germany, Kosovo, and Ghana. She has worked for the NDNG State Family Programs for over 14 years. She currently serves as a ND Military Outreach Specialist; assisting service members, veterans, and their families find the benefits that they need.

AARON MOSS is a veteran of the US Air Force and Air Force Reserve, serving from 1994 – 2003, where he served as a Security Specialist. He retrained and eventually become a Military Working Dog Handler in Security Forces in 1998. He currently serves as the Veterans Outreach Program Specialist for the Vet Center in Minot, North Dakota. He is responsible for outreach programing in a fifteen-county area covering Northwest and Northcentral North Dakota which consists of making qualified veterans aware of their eligibly for Readjustment Counseling Services, as well as working with other federal, tribal, and state organizations, business, and nonprofit stakeholders who provide various veteran services.

SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES AND TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS

Session Objectives:

- Comprehend the services available for families of fallen service members in North Dakota and nationally.
- Know where and how to connect clients to SOS and TAPS
- Learn about education for bereavement professionals, who work with grieving military, veteran, and civilian families.

ND Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) connects families of the fallen military servicemembers with people and services that can help throughout the grieving process. This program provides services to families regardless of their loved one's branch of service which includes Active Duty, National Guard or Reserves, or how they died: killed in action, accident, illness or suicide.

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is the national nonprofit organization providing compassionate care and comprehensive resources to all those grieving a death in the military or veteran community. It provides comfort and hope 24/7 through a national peer support network and connection to grief resources, all at no cost to surviving families and loved ones.

SARA BLAZEK is the Army Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) Coordinator for ND has worked for the ND National Guard SOS program for 13 years assisting and supporting Families of Fallen military service members providing community resources to help throughout the grieving process and ensure the Survivor receives their necessary services.

DAVINA FRENCH is the Military Liaison for TAPS. Davina was a commander and came to TAPS in 2005 after her military unit sustained KIA's in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I. She volunteered for 14 years at TAPS events as her unit continued to experience the Casualties of War through suicides and deaths due to illness. She eventually retired from the North Dakota National Guard in 2019 and has since been employed at TAPS working with Military and Veterans Organizations across the nation. Her last position in the military was as a Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Commander and as the Military Legislative Liaison for the State of North Dakota. Davina is dedicated to the TAPS mission as she spreads the message of TAPS in military and Veteran environments; supporting those who Care for America's Hero's.

VA S.A.V.E

Session Objectives:

- Identify Veterans who may be at risk for suicide
- Validate Veterans' individual needs and perspectives
- Connect Veterans to appropriate resources

VA SAVE is a Gatekeeper training for anyone who wants to learn how to help Veterans who may be in crisis. No degree or expertise is needed. Learn what to say, how to be supportive, and which options are available to help those in need.

TAMMY MONSEBROTEN, LCSW is a graduate of Minot State University and University of North Dakota. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with 15 years of experience engaging with Veterans, their families, and their communities to reduce suicide risk. Tammy is well-versed in suicide prevention best practices, including safety planning, lethal means safety, and community-based interventions. She currently serves as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the Fargo VA Medical Center.

LETHAL MEANS SAFETY

Session Objectives:

- Identify available community-based resources to mitigate the public health risk of suicide.
- Demonstrate lethal means safety evidenced based practices
- Practice collaborative language around lethal means safety

TAMMY MONSEBROTEN, LCSW is a graduate of Minot State University and University of North Dakota. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with 15 years of experience engaging with Veterans, their families, and their communities to reduce suicide risk. Tammy is well-versed in suicide prevention best practices, including safety planning, lethal means safety, and community-based interventions. She currently serves as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the Fargo VA Medical Center.

FIRSTLINK AND THE 988 CRISIS LINE

Session Objectives:

- Know what happens when you call, text or chat 988 and how it is similar and different than the Veteran Crisis Line.
- Know about what types of services are available through 211.
- Know how to help clients connect to services by contacting FirstLink or by using the self-service directory.

FirstLink, the center responsible for answering the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and 211 Information & Referral Helpline connects those in need with services in a compassionate, nonjudgmental manner 24 hours a day. This presentation will provide information on what happens when you call 988 and 211, information about their Care and Support Program, and trainings offered.

Jennifer Illich is the Executive Director at FirstLink. She has 20 years of experience working in a variety of roles with individuals of all ages in community-based settings. She completed her MBA from the University of Mary in 2021. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two daughters having family movie nights, playing board games, and camping

DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

Session Objectives:

- Discuss de-escalation on a conceptual basis and defined terms.
- Learn and gain knowledge on Active Listening skills inherent to successful de-escalation.
- Learn and gain knowledge on Diffusion techniques to aid in de-escalation.

AARON MOSS has been a licensed Peace Officer in North Dakota for 22 years and is retired from the Minot Police Department where he served in the Patrol and Administrative Divisions. He is currently a part time Deputy Sheriff with the Bottineau County Sheriff's Office. Aaron has also been a NDPOST Board certified Law Enforcement instructor for 16 years, and has received specialized instructor certification training including: Field Training Officer (Kaminsky, Sullenberger & Associates), Defensive Driving Instructor (National Safety Council), Domestic Violence Instructor Training Program (Department of Homeland Security - Federal Law Enforcement Training Center), Crisis Intervention Team Instructor (Minnesota Crisis Intervention Team Association), and De-escalation Instructor Course (Blue Shield Tactical Systems). He also taught "Crime Prevention and Fear Reduction" at the North Dakota Law Enforcement Training Academy for seven and half years. Aaron has also authored NDPOST training programs in the areas of Search and Seizure, and Ethics for Law Enforcement.

SELF-CARE, RESILIENCE, AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Session Objectives:

- Learn what self-care, resilience, and stress-management terminology is really getting at.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of not caring for oneself.
- Understand ways in which we sabotage ourselves.
- Identify ways in which we can improve our quality of life.

Adam Guilmino, Ph.D. is a Licensed Psychologist at the Minot Vet Center. He has 25 years of experience helping military and non-military alike to navigate life's challenges. He draws on his personal experiences, faith, and clinical practices to come along side folks who are struggling and to help offer a different perspective on tackling life's problems.

2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report

Session Objectives: All reports can be accessed via the following weblinks or on the QR code below.

- Veteran Suicide Data and Reporting
 - https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/data.asp
- 2024 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report (2021-2022 reporting period)
 - Part 1: In-Depth Reviews
www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2024/2024-Annual-Report-Part-1-of-2_508.pdf
 - Part 2: Report Findings
https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2024/2024-Annual-Report-Part-2-of-2_508.pdf
- State-Level Veteran Suicide Data (2022 reporting period)
 - You can access any state's Veteran Suicide Data Sheet
 - Click on North Dakota
www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2022/2022_State_Data_Sheets_North_Dakota_508.pdf





CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEUs)

Make sure that you sign in, whether in-person or virtually. A certificate of completion will be sent to all participants. Please submit a copy of this program guide and certificate of completion to your respective licensing board for CEU approval.

GRATITUDE

We would like to thank the following community partners in making this event possible:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Department of Veterans Affairs, Fargo VAMC Suicide Prevention Office
- Minot AFB, Suicide Prevention Office
- Minot Police Department
- Minot State University
- Minot Vet Center
- ND Cares
- ND Military Outreach
- North Central Human Service Center
- Ward County Sherriff's Office