

On July 30, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) hosted a nationwide webinar entitled "*Suicide Prevention Strategies and Resources to Improve Services for Service Members, Veterans, and their Families.*" The webinar featured presenters from the Department of Veterans Affairs, branches of the military service, and national and state mental health and suicide resource organizations.

Our nation's veterans or active service members can be a vulnerable population to post-traumatic stress disorder challenges and are at a higher risk to suicide as compared to other population groups--as the presenters pointed out with some alarming statistics. Fortunately, key stakeholders at the national and state levels have recognized the challenge and have put together a multi-faceted approach to promote awareness, communication, and resources.

A highlight of the webinar was the good use of modern technology and communication resources. In the year 2013, many Americans communicate in different ways--text message, cell phones, internet chat and social websites to name a few. Veterans and active service members are no different, so with the goal of enhancing resources and improving services, advocates put that same technology to positive use.

Veterans, Service Members, or their family members with concerns may contact the Veterans' Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (and press 1) to speak to trained responders on a confidential toll-free hotline. However, if another form of communicating is more comfortable to a consumer, the "Veterans' Crisis Line" offers **Text Message** communicating--by sending a text to "**838255**". At www.veteranscrisisline.net they also offer online **chat** communication and at that same website they offer supportive resources for the deaf and hard of hearing. In any of those communication techniques, the Veterans' Crisis Line connects those in crisis with qualified, caring responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Communication is at the heart of any positive mental health or suicide response interaction. SAMSHA and national suicide prevention stakeholders should be applauded for adding a variety of modern communication tools to the wellness toolbox!