



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Strengthening America

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Be the One sample speech

The American Legion
Media & Communications Division

For more than a century, The American Legion has advocated for the well-being of America's veterans and their families. Yet there is no single deed or accomplishment that is more important to our organization than the prevention of veteran suicide.

Since the 9/11 attacks, the number of veterans who have taken their own lives far surpasses the number of American deaths incurred during the entire Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War and the Global War on Terrorism combined.

A veteran is 50 percent more likely to take his or her life than a person who has never served in the military.

This must stop.

Statistics fluctuate but the most important number to The American Legion is ONE, as in Be the One to stop a veteran from taking his or her own life. If we all save one, collectively we will save thousands.

It has been called a campaign, a slogan, a phrase and an initiative. None of these words appropriately reflect what Be the One is to The American Legion.

IT IS A MISSION.

We can accomplish this mission by destigmatizing the issue of mental health. Veterans value courage and it takes courage to ask for help. But through our Buddy Check outreach programs, The American Legion does not

sit back and wait to be asked. We take a pro-active approach and ask veterans if they are okay.

Equally important is listening. The goal is to affirmatively and compassionately engage with the veteran. Pay attention to the responses, body language and other signs. If the veteran is struggling or in crisis, encourage the veteran to call or even text the 988-crisis line. For better outcomes, watch the veteran make the call rather than trusting that he or she will do it at a later time. Follow up with the veteran and ensure that he or she connects with the needed resources. Communicate with family members and friends of the veteran, so they can be vigilant and supportive.

Everyone can Be the One and help reduce the number of veterans lost to suicide.

For the latest on Be the One, visit the national Be the One website, at www.BeTheOne.org . That's www.BeTheOne.org.

Since 1919, Legionnaires have answered their nation's call. We now call on ALL AMERICANS to assist us in undertaking this new mission. The mission to Be the One to save one.