

Suicide Risk

Certain observable cues (affective and behavioral) should prompt the clinician to remain alert to the possible presence of suicidal ideation:

- shame
- profound social withdrawal
- humiliation
- neglecting personal welfare
- irrational thinking
- deteriorating physical appearance
- feeling trapped
- paranoia
- feeling like there's no way out
- agitation
- feeling that life is not worth living
- anxiety
- feeling like there is no purpose in life
- insomnia
- feelings of failure or decreased performance
- irritability
- sense of hopelessness or desperation
- despair

General Areas of Concern for All Veterans

Post-Traumatic Stress

- Have you ever experienced a traumatic or stressful event which caused you to believe your life or the lives of those around you were in danger?
- Experiencing trauma-related thoughts or feelings?
- Having nightmares, vivid memories or flashbacks of the event?
- Feeling anxious, jittery?
- Experiencing a sense of panic that something bad is about to happen?
- Having difficulty sleeping or concentrating?

Military Sexual Trauma

- During military service did you receive uninvited or unwanted sexual attention, such as touching, pressure for sexual favors or sexual remarks?
- Did anyone ever use force or threat of force to have sexual contact with you against your will?
- Did you report the incidents to your command and/or military or civilian authorities?

Blast Concussions/Traumatic Brain Injury

- During your service, did you experience . . .
 - heavy artillery fire, vehicular or aircraft accidents,
 - explosions (improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades, land mines, grenades), or
 - fragment or bullet wounds above the shoulders?
- Did you have any of these symptoms immediately afterwards . . .
 - loss of consciousness or being knocked out,
 - being dazed or seeing stars,
 - not remembering the event, or
 - diagnosis of concussion or head injury?

Common Military Health Risks

Radiation Exposure/Nuclear Weapons (WWII: Amchitka, Alaska, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, POW in Japan; Korea; sub-mariners exposed to nasopharyngeal radium treatment; Gulf Wars; Bosnia; Afghanistan): High risk for cancer.

Agent Orange Exposure (Korea & Vietnam): High risk for cancers (including respiratory and prostate cancer), chloracne, type 2 diabetes, ischemic heart disease, soft tissue sarcoma, peripheral neuropathy, spina bifida in veterans' biological children.

Camp Lejeune Water Contamination (January 1, 1957–December 31, 1987): Veterans and families stationed at Camp Lejeune exposed to chemical contaminants in the groundwater and wells are at risk for the following cancers (bladder, blood dyscrasia, breast, esophageal, kidney, leukemia, lung, multiple myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma) and conditions (female infertility, hepatic steatosis, miscarriage, renal toxicity, scleroderma).

Hepatitis C (Vietnam): Transfusions prior to 1992, battlefield exposures to blood and human fluids, group use of needles, razors, toothbrushes, and other personal items.

Exposure to Open Air Burn Pits (Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan): High risk for respiratory illnesses and wide variety of cancers, including leukemia.

Gulf War Syndrome (Gulf Wars): Characterized by fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, headaches, gastrointestinal problems, cognitive impairment and pain, high rates of brain and testicular cancers, and neurodegenerative diseases (ALS, MS).

Depleted Uranium (Gulf Wars, Bosnia, Afghanistan): Inhaled or ingested microfine particles (heavy metal toxicity). Risk for respiratory and kidney diseases.

Infectious Diseases (Iraq & Afghanistan): Malaria, typhoid fever, viral hepatitis, leishmaniasis, TB, rabies resulting from animal bites.



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