



# Collaborative Chess Versus a Complex Opponent: Suicide Prevention in the Military Population using a Public Health Approach



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Suicide is a serious public health problem. Rates of suicide have been on the rise for more than a decade and the costs stretch well into the billions of dollars each year. While suicide is a rare outcome statistically, its human impact has a ripple effect that is far-reaching. Addressing SMVF Suicide using a community-based public health approach is one way to impact the number of SMVF suicides in El Paso County (Stone et al., 2017).

Stone, D. M., Holland, K. M., Bartholow, B. N., Crosby, A. E., Davis, S. P., & Wilkins, N. (2017). Preventing suicide: A technical package of policies, programs, and practice.

## Intervention Strategies for Suicide Prevention in Military Populations



## Suicide Prevention Efforts in Colorado

**Colorado National Collaborative**



**Suicide Prevention Collaborative of El Paso County**



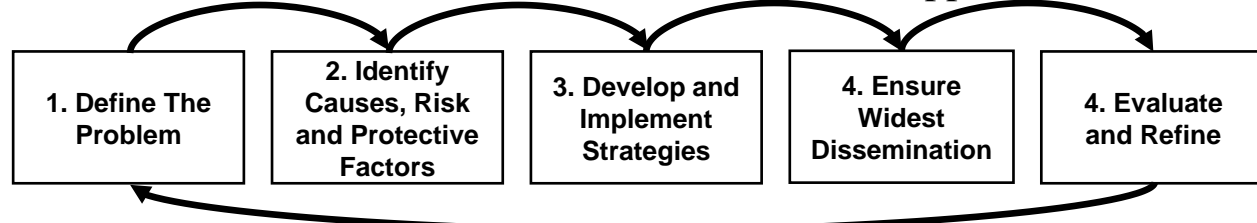
**El Paso County SMVF Suicide Prevention Coalition**

A Federal – State – Local partnership that is bringing national resources to Colorado in order to address the high rate of suicide. The goal of the CNC is to reduce suicide in six Colorado counties by 20% by 2024

A collaborative of community organizations supporting a wide range of at-risk populations and strategic impact domains. The goal of the Task Force is to reduce suicide in El Paso County by 20% by 2024

A coalition of veteran-serving organizations that will be provided technical support and resources in order to address suicide in the SMVF population. The goal of the Coalition is to reduce suicide in the SMVF population in El Paso County by 2024

## Suicide Prevention: The Public Health Approach

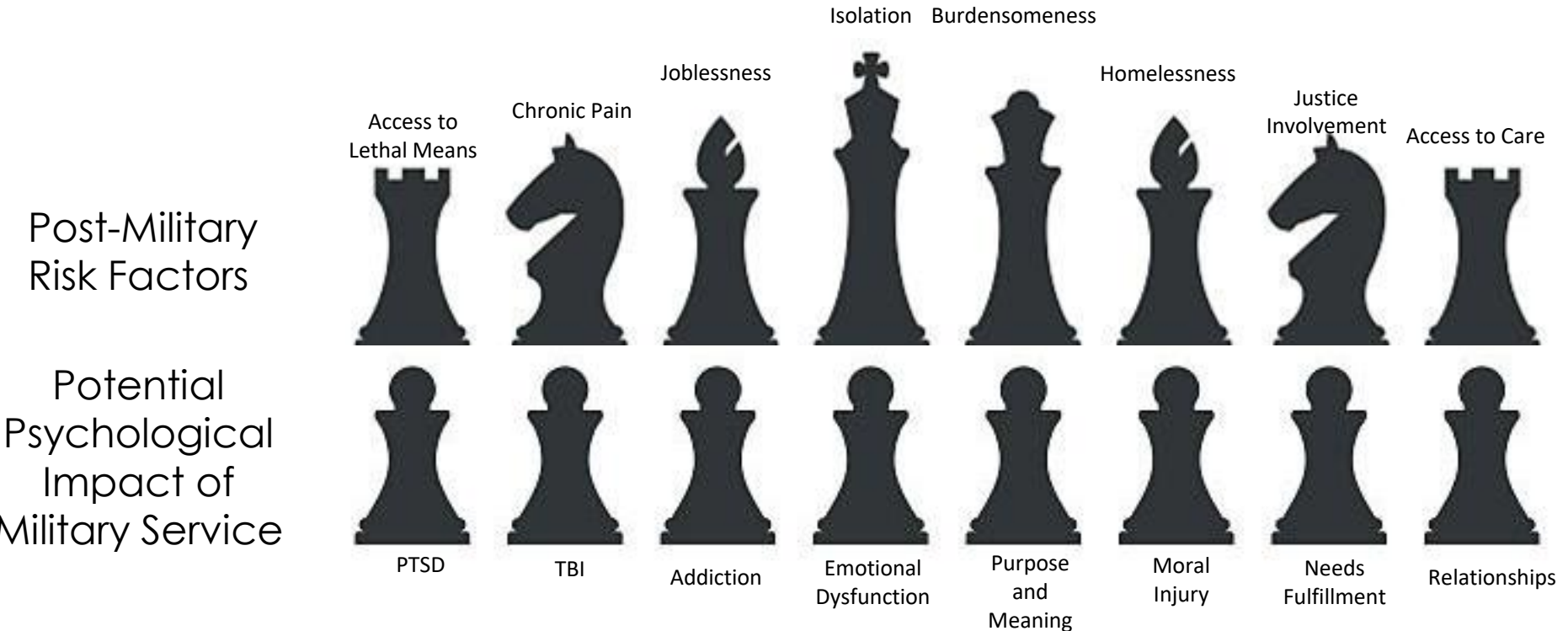


# DEFINING THE PROBLEM

## Complexity of Factors for Suicide In the Military Affiliated Population

Between 2004 and 2020, over 3,000 service members and veterans have died by suicide in Colorado. Over half of those deaths occurred in veterans over the age of 55. The Department of Veterans Affairs has indicated that VA Integrated Service Network (VISN) 19, which consists of Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Oklahoma, has had the highest increase in veteran deaths by suicide out of all VISNs in the last five years. The Eastern Colorado Healthcare System, the VA healthcare system that covers most of central and southern Colorado, has had the highest numbers of veteran deaths by suicide out of any other HCS in VISN 19

Suicide is a complex result of a number of underlying unresolved conditions. Some conditions are risk factors for veterans in post-military life: isolation, economic instability, justice involvement, and more. Other conditions are possible outcomes of traumatic exposure and other situations frequently experienced in the military: PTSD, TBI, Moral Injury, a lack of purpose and meaning, and more.



### Contact Information