



## **SPARRC**

Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee

# Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee (SPARRC)

The SPARRC provides a forum for the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to partner and coordinate suicide prevention and risk reduction efforts. This committee is chaired by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE). Members include suicide prevention program managers from each of the services and representatives from the National Guard Bureau, Reserve Affairs, VA, Office of Armed Forces Medical Examiner, National Center for Telehealth and Technology, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and others. SPARRC is also a valuable venue for collaboration and resource sharing. Information is disseminated by committee members to their respective stakeholders, including servicemembers, families, health care providers and the field of psychological health research. Some of SPARRC's initiatives include:

### **Annual DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference**

This annual conference provides a platform to disseminate practical tools and innovative practices and research related to suicide prevention for servicemembers, veterans and family members in distress. The conference also serves as a forum to collect feedback on community needs. The DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference is now an internationally-recognized annual suicide prevention conference.

### **Department of Defense Suicide Event Report (DoDSER)**

In January 2008, DoD began to standardize data collection on deaths by suicide across the services. The DoDSER collects more than 250 data points per suicide. The information collected is used to better understand the potential contributing factors to suicide and provide valuable insight for the services, health care providers and research. The reports are available at [www.SuicideOutreach.org](http://www.SuicideOutreach.org).

### **Partnerships**

SPARRC works with medical, operational and community leaders and organizations to help maintain the psychological wellness of the force. SPARRC partners with the following: Yellow Ribbon Program, Tragedy Assistance Programs for Survivors, Suicide Prevention Resource Center and Federal Partners Working Group.

### **RAND Study on Suicide Prevention Programs**

The RAND Center for Military Health Policy Research reviewed and cataloged suicide prevention programs across the services to offer recommendations for enhancements of current programs. The resulting RAND report, "The War Within: Preventing Suicides in the Military," is available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG953.html>.

### **SPARRC Family Sub-committee**

SPARRC Family subcommittee addresses DoD gaps in suicide prevention initiatives for families. The subcommittee has provided numerous recommendations to the SPARRC, such as the "ACE" card, which has been developed for family members to use when approaching their servicemember: Ask the servicemember if they are considering suicide, tell the servicemember that you Care, and Escort the servicemember to treatment.

### **SPARRC Website**

A publicly-accessible website launched in October 2010, and serves as a "clearinghouse" for suicide prevention information, contacts, innovative approaches and tools. Visit the site at [www.SuicideOutreach.org](http://www.SuicideOutreach.org)