

Final project research paper

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Psychology 1000

The topic I chose to do my project on suicide rates in military members, veterans, and their families. I think this is a very important topic to cover because it doesn't get as much attention as it needs to. Not only does it not get as much attention but it also affects the community around them in major ways. Suicide is also the number one leading cause of death in military members after 9/11.

There is several major causes that lead to suicide that are:

- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Personality traits of aggression, mood swings, and bad relationships
- Conduct problems
- Anxiety disorders

But all of these can be made more serious as active duty members who are away from home in another state or country adds an additional layer of potential stressors on top of

the regular ups-and-downs of life, and that puts them at a much higher risk of committing suicide. And this also affects the families of military members as they are also put through a much higher level of all the major causes to push someone to commit suicide.

Since 2011 the Department of Defense has begun to track how many active and current members and family members have committed suicide and it's grown over the past 12 years at a constant rate. The DoD has found that 30,177 active and former military members have committed suicide after 9/11 compared to the 7,057 deaths due to combat (all within the same 20 years). All of these numbers are very similar to the amount of suicides committed in the U.S. population in most years between 2011-2022. The largest increase in these years was in 2020 when Covid 19 hit the main cause was due to the loss of personal contact with friends and family and that pushed many people not only in the military to commit suicide but it also raised the national average as well.

These numbers are quite surprising and like I said it's not talked about as much as it should be. But there is a silver lining in this case as many organizations are trying to make centers that can help veterans and active duty soldiers with their mental health one of these is the USO (United Service Organization) it's main responsibility is to give soldiers a place to go and hangout with friends and other soldiers to avoid the battle of being lonely especially if they are away from family overseas. This organization also gives the soldiers ways to communicate with family and that also helps the family feel a little relief knowing they can talk to their loved one.

