



Beebe American Legion Post 91 is sponsoring a series of events to address the increase of suicide in our community. Suicide is a major national public health issue in the United States. This country has one of the highest suicide rates among wealthy nations. Arkansas has a higher-than-average suicide rate of over 18 per 100,000 compared to the national average of 14 per 100,000. In 2022, the unadjusted U.S. suicide rate for Veterans was 38.3 per 100,000. Put in perspective, this is the seventh leading cause of veteran deaths.

The mission of The American Legion's "Be The One" initiative is to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. At every level, we are actively working on lessening the stigma associated with mental health treatment and empowering everyone to take appropriate action when a veteran or service member may be at risk – one life at a time.

The Post 91 Beebe American Legion Family is on the front-line of the effort to prevent veteran suicide. We are a part of the community and veterans will always be our number one priority, we also know there have been several incidents of suicide in other populations of our community. In the past year, we have lost youth in our school system, elderly living on welfare, and the marginalized and homeless.

The Post 91 family, in partnership with the Beebe High School HOSA – Future Health Professionals Club and Air Force Junior ROTC, has been using the **September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month** to provide resources to students, parents, and staff to raise awareness about suicide prevention and address mental health challenges.

Post 91 will continue this effort on October 20th by sponsoring trainers from Columbia University to come to Beebe to provide **FREE** advance training using the Columbia Protocol-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). This protocol supports suicide risk screening through a series of simple, plain-language questions that anyone can ask. The answers help users identify whether someone is at risk of suicide, determine the severity and immediacy of that risk, and gauge the level of support that the person needs.

There will be two similar versions of this training offered. The American Legion "**Be The One**" training utilizes our military philosophy to call on our "battle buddies" when they need to hear a friendly voice. Our "**Be There**" initiative is designed to enable our First Responders, educators, and all civilians to be able to ask the right questions to identify and help provide assistance to someone who is at risk of suicide.

Training will be held on October 20th at the Beebe Schools Auditorium. A 1pm session will be adapted towards the educational community for teachers, paraprofessionals, and students. The 6pm session will be more focus on the veterans and military but is open to anyone who wants to learn how to respond to someone at risk of suicide. A specialized session will be held on the 21st at 8:30am in the Beebe Community Center for First Responders.

November 1st, the Post 91 family is sponsoring a Be The One Walk on the Arkansas State University campus to bring awareness about the program and provide resources to those who may need them. Veteran resource providers will be on hand to help answer questions about VA claims and Healthcare.

For more information, please call American Legion Post 91 at (501) 765-4663