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## **Cohen Veterans Network Releases Findings of Suicide Risk Stratification Study: Measurement-Based Care and Collaboration Critical to Suicide Prevention Ecosystem**

*Developed With Support From USAA, New CVN Suicide Risk Stratification Training Package for Clinicians Available to the Mental Health Field at No Cost*

Stamford, Conn., Oct. 26, 2023 – Today, Cohen Veterans Network (CVN), a not-for-profit philanthropic organization that serves post-9/11 veterans, service members and military families through a nationwide system of mental health clinics, released findings from its [study](#) on clinical decision-making in suicide risk assessment. The network simultaneously launched a [CVN Suicide Risk Stratification Training Package for Clinicians](#), available to the field at no cost, to help mental health providers enhance their clinical skills around understanding and managing suicide risk. The implementation of the study and the development of the training package were supported by a grant from USAA.

Researchers reported a number of compelling findings from the study, including that measurement-based care complements clinical judgement in suicide risk assessment and intervention when implemented with fidelity; suicide risk assessment and management are continuous and collaborative; and clinician transparency is a critical element in building therapeutic alliance with active duty and veteran clients.

Suicide prevention is a top priority for CVN considering military and veteran suicides remain at high levels. In 2020, the veteran suicide rate was over 1.5 times the rate of non-veteran US adults, according to data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' 2022 National Veteran Suicide Prevention [Annual Report](#).

“We are thrilled to help advance the field by promoting a greater understanding of clinician decision-making in suicide risk assessment,” said Cohen Veterans Network Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Tracy Neal-Walden. “Our research highlights the value of utilizing standardized measures and the benefits of a multidisciplinary collaborative care team. By promoting the implementation of these practices in clinical care we have an opportunity to significantly improve client care and safety.”

To evaluate the process of suicide risk stratification, CVN researchers developed a series of vignettes, or clinical scenarios, to be utilized by clinicians across CVN’s network of 24 clinics in conjunction with validated assessment tools developed by the VA. The vignettes served to illustrate clinician decision-making and accuracy in identifying suicide risk. Researchers then collected and analyzed data from over 50 clinicians through their ratings of the vignettes and participation in structured interviews.

The research team additionally utilized the vignettes to develop new training tools to help clinicians enhance their professional skills related to suicide risk assessment. The [CVN Suicide Risk Stratification Training Package for Clinicians](#), which is available to the field at no cost, includes a report of Lessons Learned, Risk Stratification Training Vignettes and a Training Guide.



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“We are proud to support the critical work that Cohen Veterans Network is doing to better understand and prevent veteran suicide,” said Justin Schmitt, AVP of Corporate Responsibility at USAA, which also recently founded a veteran suicide prevention coalition called [Face the Fight](#). “This new training package provides a vital tool to help clinicians refine their skills in assessing suicide risk. With this, there is an opportunity to better meet the needs of the veteran community and save lives.”

The research project was led by the [Cohen Veterans Network Institute for Quality \(CVN-IQ\)](#). The institute, which launched in 2022, uses research, innovation, and collaboration with other military and veteran service agencies, mental health industry leaders and academic partners to improve treatment outcomes for veterans, service members and their families while enhancing their quality of life.

“We are incredibly pleased to contribute to the limited literature on suicide risk stratification,” said CVN-IQ Director Dr. David Linkh. “Through an improved understanding of how clinicians stratify suicide risk, we can inform and enhance clinical assessment and intervention strategies, advancing our efforts to reduce veteran suicide.”

CVN provides high-quality, accessible mental health services to post-9/11 veterans, active-duty service members and military family members through its 24 Cohen Clinics across the country. Treatment is available for a wide variety of mental health challenges including depression, anxiety, adjustment issues, anger, PTSD, grief and loss, family issues, transition challenges and relationship problems. CVN has treated over 60,000 clients and provided over 500,000 clinical sessions since its inception in 2016.

#### **ABOUT COHEN VETERANS NETWORK**

Cohen Veterans Network (CVN) is a 501(c)(3) national not-for-profit philanthropic organization for post-9/11 veterans, active duty service members and their families. CVN focuses on improving mental health outcomes, operating a network of outpatient mental health clinics in high-need communities, in which trained clinicians deliver holistic evidence-based care to treat mental health conditions. It was established in 2016 by philanthropist Steven A. Cohen with a commitment of \$275 million to build the network. Learn more about CVN at [cohenveteransnetwork.org](http://cohenveteransnetwork.org).

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