



# Help at the Hip

*Increasing Resiliency in High Risk Suicidal Veterans through Interactive Text Messaging*

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# The Need for Continuity of Care

## Veterans at high risk for suicide

- Require Record Flag
- Safety Plan
- Suicide prevention included in Treatment Plan
- Require 4 Mental Health follow-up appointments/contacts during the first 30 days
- Require response to no-show appointments
- Followed at least for 90 days

# Challenge in Continuity of Care

## Difficulties following veterans identified as high risk for suicide

- Missed appointments
- Evasive on the phone
- Unanswered phone calls/ wrong number/ mailbox full/ no longer in-service
- No return calls
- Stop taking medications
- Relapse on substances

# Challenge in Continuity of Care

## Difficulties following veterans identified as high risk for suicide

- Not home when welfare check is conducted
- Move to new location without notification
- Re-hospitalization
- Repeat suicide attempt/ possible completion
- Veteran doesn't want to be bothered or to be on the high risk list
- Fail to meet standards of care

# Under-utilized Technology

- Text-messaging has risen exponentially in popularity in the United States since 2001.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK)
  - Sponsored a 2007 report *Lifeline Service and Outreach Strategies Suggested by Suicide Attempt Survivors*.
  - This report specifically recommended that crisis centers explore the use of text-messaging.

# Under-utilized Technology

- Text-messaging can be done through email
  - To: [8475551212@vtext.com](mailto:8475551212@vtext.com)
  - Subject: Be like a sunflower and keep your head turned towards the light!
- Text-messaging services negotiate contracts with cell-phone carriers to get through spam firewalls.

# Process

- Focus Group
- Recruitment
- Informed Consent
- Enrollment in the Texting Program
- 90 Day Follow-up
- Exit interview



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Log Out

Home Usage Report My Account Administration

## My Account

Account Information Phone Numbers Email Addresses User Questions User Surveys Personal Reminders

Actions	Phone Number	Type	Carrier	Active	Confirmed
	- - - *	Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bell Mobility (Including Aliant, NorthernTel, Telebec)</li> <li>Fido (Division of Rogers Wireless)</li> <li>MTS Mobility</li> <li>Rogers Wireless (Including Videotron)</li> <li>SaskTel Mobility</li> <li>Telus Mobility (Including Koodo)</li> <li>Virgin Mobile Canada</li> <li>Alltel</li> <li>Boost Mobile</li> <li>Cellular South</li> <li>Dobson Cellular Systems</li> <li>Nextel</li> <li>Sprint</li> <li>T-Mobile</li> <li>Verizon Wireless</li> <li>AT&amp;T</li> <li>Cincinatti Bell</li> <li><b>Cricket Communications</b></li> <li>nTelos</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No records to display.					

RESET PASSWORD SUBMIT

# Texting Service

## Ability to pre-program/ schedule

- Appointment reminders
- Medication reminders
- Motivational/ inspirational messages
- Mental status check-in question
  - Straight-forward question: “How do you rate your mood right now?”
  - Rating scale: “Where 1=great, 2=good, 3=okay, 4=poor, 5=lousy.”



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Account Information	Phone Numbers	Email Addresses	User Questions	User Surveys	Personal Reminders			
Action	Question	Un-Answered	Interaction	Active	Recurring	Last Run	Next Run	Created
	Question :		Interaction :	Active :			Max Value (Optional) :	
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			3	
	Select Interval :							
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Start Date :		End By :					
	Start Time :	1	: 00	AM				

● RESET PASSWORD ● SUBMIT



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Log Out

[Home](#) [Usage Report](#) [My Account](#) [Administration](#)

## My Account

Account Information

Phone Numbers

Email Addresses

User Questions

User Surveys

Personal Reminders



Action	Reminder Message	Interaction	Active	Recurring?	Last Run	Next Run	Created
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Message:



characters remaining.

Interaction:

Active:

Select Interval:

Start Date:

End By:

Start Time:  :

No records to display.

[RESET PASSWORD](#) [SUBMIT](#)

# Texting Service

- SPC/ provider alert
  - Alerted via text message or email that a participant answered check-in question above a set threshold or within specified time frame.
- Support network
  - Participants could add consenting individuals as their support network (e.g. family members, relatives, friends, and other providers)
- Dashboard monitoring
  - Highlighted in red any user who had unanswered check-in questions or text messages that failed to be received.
  - Provided details of individual's usage, date and time-stamped responses to check-in questions and preprogrammed messages could be monitored.

# Texting Service

- Dashboard monitoring (cont.)
  - Program administrators, including the SPC, could update appointment reminders and modify motivational messages as needed for the entire group.
- Individual text messages
  - An individual text message could be sent to any one participant.
- Group text messages
  - One text message could be sent out to a group of participants.
- Real time feedback
  - At a glance any participants mental status, (according to their check-in question), could be viewed everyday at any time.



## User Management

**SUBMIT**

Filter by user

Actions	User Name	Email Address	Un-Answered Msgs	Approved?	Group Affiliation	Last Logged In
	1492	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	5/02/2011 09:55 AM
	Admin2	Gregory.Rimoldi@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	9/16/2011 09:17 AM
	Armyman	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	5/05/2011 11:43 AM
	DemoPeterL	Peter.Lewis@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	6/11/2012 08:23 PM
	Freight Train	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	4/26/2011 01:46 PM
	Freight Train 2	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	5/05/2011 10:50 AM
	GI Joe	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	6/06/2011 08:27 PM
	Grumpy	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	4/26/2011 11:11 AM
	Grumpy2	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	4/26/2011 11:33 AM
	Iraq Dazey	noemail@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	5/05/2011 03:23 PM
	Kristina	Kristina.Lecce@va.gov	0	Yes	VA - Cpt. James A. Lovell FHCC	4/26/2011 11:25 AM

# Participants' Reactions

## Motivational/ Inspirational Messages

- “It felt like someone was there encouraging me.”
- “They came at needed times.”
- “On days I didn’t get (i.e. wasn’t scheduled to receive) a motivational message I went back and scrolled down to past messages for support.”
- One veteran said that he relied on the messages for support at specific times in the day and that this helped him improve his coping abilities.
- Several participants said that receiving the motivational messages helped them in general to feel supported and reduced feelings of loneliness and alienation.

# Participants' Reactions

## Suggested Changes

- Some participants suggested that they would have liked the motivational messages to have been changed more frequently (which had been done with other veterans who requested this during the program) and to include Bible quotes (which some had in fact received).
- Another thought was that the times at which the motivational messages were sent should have been varied more frequently, which would also have been possible.

# Participants' Reactions

## Medication / Appointment Reminders

- Two of the participants expressed appreciation for the medication reminders and one was especially grateful for appointment reminders.
- Not all participants opted to receive appointment or medication reminders.
- Those that did use this service found it very useful while a few that did not use this service conveyed regret for not taking advantage of this addition.

# Participants' Reactions

## Check-in Questions

Each participant stated that receiving the check-in question caused them to reflect on how they were really doing in that particular moment.

- “I had to stop and really think about how I felt which I have never done before.”
- “Once I realized where I was on the scale I used coping strategies to help myself either improve my mood or to maintain it.”

# Participants' Reactions

## Check-in Questions

Other comments indicated that some of the participants found themselves more willing to respond honestly because they felt supported.

- “It forced me to be honest with myself and with you (i.e. the SPC).”

# Participants' Reactions

**Warning Message for Check-in Question: “You have responded below the desired threshold, your SPC will contact you soon.”**

- One veteran stated that he thought that the warnings were annoying and that he did not always want to answer his check-in question within the three-hour time frame.
- Another individual stated that the warnings made him feel that someone really cared about him and so he felt supported.
- Yet another veteran indicated that the warnings made him feel as if he had a safety net.

# Participants' Reactions

**Warning Message for Check-in Question: “You have responded below the desired threshold, your SPC will contact you soon.”**

- One participant stated that he felt reassured when notified that he would be contacted soon. During an occasion when this particular veteran was experiencing distress, the text-messaging system communicated this quickly and effectively to the SPC. After being notified, the SPC called this veteran and provided him an opportunity to talk and work through a difficult time.

# Clinical Assessment and Conclusion

## Clinical Utility

- Effective Triage
- Increased contact
- Efficient communication
- Improved clinical outreach

# Clinical Assessment and Conclusion

## Improved Client Satisfaction

- Non-intrusive
- Increased comfort of participants
- Demonstrable support

# Clinical Assessment and Conclusion

## Administrative Power

- Efficient tracking
- Reduced workload
- Accurate documentation

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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