

Training Tuesday Recap

Be The One: How Departments Are Making a Difference

Date: June 25, 2025

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Purpose of the Session

This session focused on how departments across The American Legion are putting the Be The One suicide prevention mission into action. Leaders shared tangible practices, local outreach efforts, and peer support models that are helping reduce stigma and foster connection at the grassroots level.

Opening Remarks

The session opened with a reminder that Be The One is more than a campaign--it's a personal and collective commitment. Attendees were encouraged to lead with authenticity, listen without judgment, and normalize conversations about mental health.

Department Spotlights

Indiana:

- Integrated Be The One into Post-level events including race weekends and fish fries
- Used community events to promote awareness and resource sharing

Montana:

- Focused on rural outreach by training trusted community figures (e.g., barbers, clergy)
- Emphasized relationship-building over formal presentations

Arkansas:

- Embedded Be The One messaging into post programs and conversations
- Prioritized grassroots education and member-to-member engagement

Shared Tools and Templates

- Event flyer templates
- Post meeting talking points
- "Be The One at Your Post" planning checklist

Peer Support in Action

- "Battle buddy" systems
- Designated wellness contacts at the Post level
- Proactive check-ins and follow-ups as a life-saving intervention

Technology Spotlight: Columbia Protocol App

Participants also reviewed the Columbia Protocol mobile app, a free tool that walks users through the same suicide risk screening questions used in Be The One training. During question 3, the app prompts users to share their location in order to recommend nearby mental health resources. This feature underscores the importance of being prepared for next steps--knowing how and where to connect someone with professional help.

Closing Reflection: Tony's Final Training

Tony concluded his final session with heartfelt encouragement:

"I'm retiring, but the work isn't. I want to leave you with this: every time you show up, every time you ask the question, every time you choose connection over silence--you're being the one. And that matters more than you know."

Key Takeaway

Departments don't need a big budget or special training to make a difference. Small, consistent acts of connection--combined with the tools and messaging of Be The One--can save lives.