

Episode 19- Want to Thank a Veteran?

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SPEAKERS

Kyleanne Hunter, Ted Bonar, JJ Janflone



JJ Janflone 00:08

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Kyleanne Hunter 01:08

Very near and dear to my heart. And thank you so much for having me on yet again.



JJ Janflone 01:12

Any, anytime. This issue that is near and dear to Ky's heart is the issue of veterans as we go into Veterans Day, which is today, but also veterans and suicide, and veterans and gun violence.



Kyleanne Hunter 01:26

Yeah, why this is an issue and just some of the, kind of, pure facts behind this. And because, while it's personally a huge issue for me, it's also just a large issue nationally. We know that, when compared to the civilian population, veterans are more than twice as likely to take their own life than civilians. And for female veterans in particular, that number could be up to four times as likely to take your own life.



JJ Janflone 01:54

Oh man, I didn't realize it was that high.



Kyleanne Hunter 01:56

Yeah. And if we look at suicide by firearm in particular, you know, a female veteran is six to seven times more likely to take her life by a firearm, than a civilian female is. So this issue, really this relationship between guns and suicide, and the unique relationship and really the complexity that veterans have with guns. You have this idea that sometimes it makes us more comfortable or we're really familiar around them, so it's often maybe less of a sign to our friends and loved ones when we're engaging with guns, than it might be to say -- you. This is, this is an issue that, while it impacts everyone, it really uniquely impacts veterans and it's something that is completely cross generational. You know, I think we look at gun violence and we often try to, we don't try to, like the data tell u, that there are specific demographics that different types of gun violence impacts. Veteran suicide is really one of those issues that crosses generations too. We have Korean War veterans, Vietnam veterans, pos- 9/11 veterans, all just as likely to unfortunately take their own life by firearm and the one piece that's consistent is access to guns and isolation. It's really important, I think, to remember our older veterans right now, that this is, gun violence in particular, because we have so much amazing youth energy around the Get Out The Vote efforts, really the raising awareness to gun violence. You know, we forget that we have a older population, especially when suicide is concerned, that are very at risk, and we're not going to solve gun violence if we don't reach that part of the population.



JJ Janflone 03:42

And so to answer and talk about this super complicated, but super important issue, Ky and I will be breaking it down with clinical psychologist Ted Bonar, Ted is a specialist dealing with military and veteran concerns around PTSD, depression, suicide and gun safety. He's also just a pretty awesome person that I'm glad I got to meet. Then later in our "Unbelievable, but" segment, we are talking about friends of the NRA raffling off guns

in schools. Ky just made a facial expression like Macaulay Culkin. Then finally, we're wrapping up with our gun violence prevention hero. And I know you want to know who that is. But you have to keep listening to find out. And I can't think of a better way to honor veterans than to try to keep them alive via, sort of, just the base awareness of that this is a problem.



Kyleanne Hunter 04:28

Yes, absolutely. I think the best way that you can thank a veteran for their service is to make sure they live another day.



JJ Janflone 04:36

Hi, everybody. I'm joined with Ky and then we have a new friend here in studio today.



Ted Bonar 04:41

Hi, my name is Ted Bonar. I'm a clinical psychologist based out of Columbus, Ohio.



JJ Janflone 04:46

It's always good when you make new friends that have, you know, professional credentials that you can use. That's always a really helpful thing.



Ted Bonar 04:52

That's right. You can borrow mine anytime you want.



Kyleanne Hunter 04:54

So, jumping on in in your time, as a clinical psychologist, I know you spent quite a bit of time helping the veteran community. And I think often, you know, people see Veterans Day as a sign of appreciation. But it also be a time that feels very isolating. Just I think to kick things off, before we get into discussing more about the EFF side of things, what are some of your tips for people who want to be, good supporters of our military, and you know, can often be enthusiastic, but maybe haven't had as much experience. You know, ways to respectfully engage our veteran community around Veterans Day without unintentionally triggering or bringing up negative emotions for people?



05:40

Yeah, I think it's a it's a great question, and it can be tricky. And you know, I want to be careful, I don't want to speak on behalf of veterans, because I'm not one -- I'm a civilian, right. I got into the work because I love working with military and veterans, it matters a great deal to me and I decided a long time ago that that was going to be my direction. But what that meant was, I had a lot to learn, right. And I had a lot to learn about what tends to be important and the fact that that can be different for any individual, right. So I guess the reason I'm saying that, Ky in response to your specific question of how to how to help, when it might be triggering for a tough time of year, or, you know, why Veterans Day might be confusing or complex for some people. You know, in my experience, there can be, for a veteran, for a military individual, military service member that, you know, I don't want special treatment, I don't want recognition, I don't need a badge, or, you know, just because like I chose this life, and it's what I did, and I don't need the recognition for it. And at the same time, the flip side is, it's a unique population that has a very special experience that not many people have, that no civilian has, right, and so there's a split, right. So there can be, you know, I don't need to be recognized, you know, as a story. And why, and then at another level of a person, it's why doesn't, "why doesn't everybody understand me?" Can people understand and recognize who I am as people, right? So I think that that's one reason that Veterans Day can, or and Memorial Day, and you know, other, you know, military and veterans events is that that's a conflict that plays off each other. So I think it's okay for civilians to know, you can ask questions, you can express appreciation, you know, I am always very careful not to thank a veteran for their service, simply to thank a veteran. Meaning I don't want I don't want that to be just a reflex that ends up being meaningless. I don't want that to be "Hi, how are you? Oh, and thank you for your service." Because, in my experience, I think veterans might say, you know, like, "Why are you giving me that platitude?" I will say it but I want to say it in the context of a relationship that I have with somebody, right, that I know a little bit about what they've been through and where they've been, and why their story is different than mine, and that I appreciate it. And at that point, at the right time, I can offer a much more meaningful thanks and gratitude for somebody's service. But I try not to do it as a knee jerk reaction, because I found that some people like yeah, that can turn somebody off to me, if I do it at the wrong time. Does that make sense?

K

Kyleanne Hunter 08:22

It -- absolutely. And I think that's actually something that is incredibly important and powerful. When we think about how we interact, you know, as a society around our, our veteran community that "Thank you for your service" has become essentially like, Oh, hi, and I can cut off a conversation, rather than using it for a bridge to understand somebody

to ask them more about why they joined or what they did, that it does make it much more meaningful when you get people who want to engage and relate on a, on a human level.



Ted Bonar 08:57

I mean, to simplify it, I probably don't thank somebody for their service first, when somebody is introduced to me. I want to know who they are, I want to learn about them as a person, right. And at the end of that conversation, or interaction, or within the context of the relationship I have time, I can find a place to say "I really appreciate what you've done, you know. And if it's the words "thank you for your service" or just "I appreciate you" or some version of that, I've found that that's more meaningful to me. So as Veterans Day comes up, I think we might have more opportunities for those kind of conversations. You know, you put on that uniform and we civilians can decide to not treat somebody like another human.



JJ Janflone 09:39

Yeah



Ted Bonar 09:40

It's like, oh, well, we're just gonna treat you as a uniform. Well, we can actually interact with people in uniform as human beings, right?



JJ Janflone 09:48

They see the uniform as an indication that someone has that this is a person of a particular type of character. They there you put characteristics on with the clothing, but I can see how that would be both, you know, is putting a spotlight on someone while being incredibly isolating at the same time.



10:05

Ky, I'd be interested in your perspective, having worn the uniform, how do people treat you differently?



Kyleanne Hunter 10:10

Yeah, it's a very interesting, you know I think that the isolating spotlight is something that is incredibly real for so many of us. And it's often a, almost like triple bind, of an isolating spotlight where there's this simultaneous like you stand out, yet your profession is also one to blend in and one really of service. You know one of the things in the military, that's so much part of the ethos is that it actually is a complete team and we can't do anything without anybody else. And individualism is not something we're used to, like we're not used to being, sort of, individually praised. Our, like, we all have to be incredibly good at what we do to meet mission. And while the the military is getting more and more diverse, it's also becoming a smaller and smaller percentage of the United States population and so it's a bit of a spotlight. And I think that that isolation, a sense of like, oh well, "thank you for your service, you're out there" makes us also feel very unapproachable. It can very much highlight, I think, a lot of the insecurities because while myself and just about everybody I know who's worn the uniform is incredibly proud of our service and our team and who we are, we've also had a lot of things we have done, that we actually, I mean regret isn't even the right word, but that have caused us a lot of pain. And it's a it's a pain that, when we're put on isolating pedestals, it's often dehumanizing that pain and that trauma that we feel. And some of the confliction of, you know, we're very proud of what we've done, but we also had to do things that were really, really hard, morally, physically, spiritually, whatever, whatever that side is. And when you sort of reduce a person to a uniform, it denies them the ability to grieve and wrestle with a lot of that, you know, that individual trauma.



12:20

As a psychologist, that's something that could come up in therapy a lot, like in a couple of different ways, right. And of course, we're just, you know, we're consolidating one version of this. But you know, if somebody has been through something, either something has been done to them, that's been horrific, or they have gone through something horrific, and maybe done something horrific to another, right, even an enemy, right, in combat, etc. And then Veterans Day comes along, and you can be put on a stage and be thanked and celebrated. But inside, deep inside, that individual, it's like "wait a minute, I'm being celebrated for what?" right. That's, and that's when we start to get into the ideas of moral injury, which is, you know, it can be connected to PTSD. It can also be on its own, but that's a, that's a really profound, like, how do you hold both experiences at the same time, right? And I won't judge either of these experiences, I won't judge any of them like, these are the things that happen, right. It doesn't happen for every service member. It hasn't happened to every veteran. But for those who wrestle with those, kind of, both what has happened in my past, who am I now, who was I then, who am I now? And what's happening, there's a celebration and a band



Kyleanne Hunter 13:29

To bring this around full circle early, something that's incredibly meaningful in my own life that brought me into the whole GVP movement is you, you combine the PTSD, the moral injury, the celebrations, the loud noises, also, with the fact that many veterans again, not, not all, but myself included, have a very interesting mixed relationship with guns. Yeah. And that for, I know after some of my deployment, when I came home, I just wanted to have guns around me because it felt very comfortable. I had guns with me everywhere I went, I was then dropped in the middle of a city that I was actually like PCSed, a week after I got back deployment, to start a very high-profile garrison job. And I was like, well, everything feels foreign and weird and bizarre. And so, you know what's really comfortable is like, having a pistol on my hip all the time. That's just a thing that's like a, oh, look, here's a thing that's normal. And that can, I think, start to bring up, you know, but then when you get isolated and you have guns around, and people who don't understand these sort of double binds of isolation and celebration and celebration causing more isolation -- plus guns.



Ted Bonar 14:46

Right.



JJ Janflone 14:46

Yeah.



Kyleanne Hunter 14:47

You can get into some more trouble. So I'm, I'm curious, like, what are, what are some ways again, some tips to really ask those hard questions? Because I know for me, somebody's actually asking the hard questions is what was meaningful, but I think we're often afraid to.



15:03

Yeah, I mean, there's a couple of different things here, you know, like, what kind of questions do we need to ask, is a different, is how I'm thinking about this. And, you know, sometimes carrying a pistol on your hip is a, is a matter of transition, right? It's a matter of transitioning out of the military and into civilian life. And that's something that's, that's common, right, that you you are armed, you know, as a service member. And as a civilian, you generally won't be, right? And so making that transition into civilian life on that level,

that's a challenge, right? When it, and that's a real challenge and it's also a very different, most times, I think, it can be combined, but it can be most times different from, is this PTSD, and I'm having guns with me, not because it's what I do, but because it's comfortable, because the world is dangerous, and I need them to protect me at all times. Now, of course, there's an element of truth to that, like we do live in a dangerous world, and I can guarantee that something won't happen. But the need to carry your gun with you everywhere you go, or have multiple around you at home while you're isolated at all times. That's a very different level of "the world is dangerous and I need these around me," right? And and if it's connected to PTSD, well, then those are the questions, right, how do we determine if somebody's had PTSD? And then how do we treat it? An important piece here is that there's a way to recalibrate all of that, right, that this is not a hopeless situation, that PTSD is eminently treatable. It's one of the most treatable conditions that we have. And I think that there's some mythology, I know, there's some mythology about that, that if you have PTSD, you will always have PTSD and that has to be your identity. And there's a lot of reasons for that, and I don't devalue those thoughts, and why those, why that myth exists. And while I value that, like, here's the fact is that -- PTSD is treatable. And so how do we reach out to a veteran who is, the condition of PTSD, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is combining with I need my guns around and I'm in a kind of a dangerous place personally, and how do we reach out to that person. Those are the questions that I think about.

K

Kyleanne Hunter 17:26

Yeah, and I think it's, you know, one of the considerations as we're going into Veterans Day is, you know, because servicemembers are becoming a smaller and smaller percentage of our, of our population transitioning out can often be incredibly isolating, and not being around, you know, is one of the other I think sides that can be a vulnerable time, as you go from being surrounded by like-minded people and like-actioned people all the time, to now you're out wherever it is that you're living, working. And more and more, you're, you're isolated from that community that you've had for, for a long time. And so I think even just raising these issues of, you know, how do you start meaningful human connections? How do you say you were, we're not, we're more than a, you know, a uniform, were more than a thing to be thanked one day. But actually, you taking some time, it sounds like a bit of a PSA, "take some time to get to know your friendly neighborhood veteran." But, but that is a, it's very easy to reduce a minority population to a thing.

T

Ted Bonar 18:36

Right. Yeah.



Kyleanne Hunter 18:36

And so I think that time is important. But I think on, on PTSD, I think some questions for you too, that you know PTSD is, is treatable. Yeah and I think we've made a lot of strides, and actually what treating it looks like, but for, you know, people who are out there and have, you know, have those that they care about in their lives, who are struggling, what are some ways to help engage people to encourage them to to get treatment, and especially, one of the things when we talk about being around guns a lot, especially in the suicide realm of, the easy access to guns turns what's often a temporary crisis into a permanent tragedy.



Ted Bonar 19:16

Yep.



Kyleanne Hunter 19:16

And so I think if there's something we can really encourage the audience to do is, is to work to prevent those permanent tragedies and work to engage people, and the fact that most people aren't actual clinical psychologists out there, how are some ways to sort of navigate those tough conversations, to encourage people to get the help that they want that aren't the same? I mean, as a veteran, I will like just go smack my fellow veterans upside the head and be like, "Go get help you bonehead."



JJ Janflone 19:44

Yeah. But and for my, you know, so I would never, I mean, maybe you Ky because I love you dearly, but if it were just like a co-worker, how do I go to my dad, right, in some cases, or my brother, or my spouse and say, hey, like I'm getting, "I'm getting worried. And I know that a lot of your identity has been forced to be at this idea that you're a protector, and you're tough. But I'm worried," right? How do you have those conversations?



20:13

Well, I like how you just said that.



JJ Janflone 20:15

Really?



20:15

Yeah. "You're a protector and you're tough and I'm worried about you. And I'm concerned," like, "I'm worried about what's been going on. I want to check in with you," right. That's a really powerful opening statement, right. Now that can take some practice. And I think, and there's questions that, that move on from there. We started talking about PTSD, and then how you brought up guns and ammo, and suicide. You know, one of the things is we can't, if the message that I was talking about before about PTSD is treatable, that matters. And we need to be able to say that. If somebody is in a crisis, I don't know that that's first. It might be in the conversation but if somebody's in crisis, you know, "I'm really worried about you, Dad," right "and, and I wonder if we can talk about it," like, just being open and honest about it. Now, if we're talking about it, and then it starts to get, like, you can ramp up a level from there, right. And if this starts to be a mental health crisis, you know, saying, at some point, and this takes some practice, but at some point in the conversation, we can ask, as civilians, as not as a mental health professional, not as a psychologist, as a daughter, as a friend, as a co worker, "Have you been thinking about killing yourself?" Like, we can ask that question, that matters. It doesn't increase the chance of somebody killing themselves or dying by suicide, it decreases it. That can then lead into "Do you have a gun?" right.



21:39

Now, this gets into, this needs to combine with the earlier conversation we had. If we're talking about military, if we're talking about somebody whose identity happens to include "I have service weapon," right, and I have guns to keep me feel comfortable, right, and feel less anxious. How do we have the conversation and say, well, you know, "I wonder if we can talk about whether, you know, having a gun right now is is a good idea, that gun by your nightstand," right that, "I wonder if we can talk about, you know, if there's a friend that can hold on to that for you?" It's a harder conversation, and we need to practice it. But they're all in the game. We're talking about somebody's life, right. And then if we get into more specifically, the veterans work in gun ownership, and we talk about lethal means safety, and if we talk about safe gun storage, those are hard conversations. But I think they're imperative. I think they're vital, I think we all have to practice them. So we need to do it with humility. And we need to do it with understanding how important that, you know, somebody that's in a crisis, somebody with a background where firearms are part of their life, and part of their protection. You know, there's some simple things, but I think it can be powerful. You know, back in the day, drunk driving wasn't uncommon, right? And there was a public health initiative and movement about right, "who's the designated driver?" "Can I hold your keys?" that doesn't mean I'm never gonna let you drive again. It means if you've had too much to drink, it's not a good idea to get behind

the car and drive. So we civilians, we in this country, we in this culture really need to practice that conversation, as applied to gun ownership, that I don't want to take your guns away forever, right. If somebody has PTSD, I want to be able to treat PTSD, right. And because maybe they don't need to have so many guns around when they can be safely stored, right? We have to get the keys to the car in order to have that conversation, right. It's, it has to be one of the first conversations. If there's no problem, and the guns are stored safely -- fabulous -- right. Now, we can talk about other things. But I think it needs to, kind of, move up the chain in what we talk about when we're worried about somebody.

K

Kyleanne Hunter 23:56

And I think just to add a little bit of that, you know, as a, as a veteran, though, again, I'm not speaking for all in this in this capacity. But as as one I think this is an important, important conversation to have, and especially one to think about really what it means as we're going into to Veterans Day. One of the things I know that it's often isolating for veterans is this feeling like yes, we have sacrificed a lot, we have done a lot and you say thank you one day, but what are you actually doing to show that you care? This is a place for a conversation to say, you know, "I recognize the the pain and the trauma that you had to go through to sacrifice to serve us. Let me do something to help you." And this is really a way that there is, you know, a temporary, much like "You've had too much to drink, let me take the keys so you'll live to fight another day." This is a similar thing. Like let me let me take the lethal means so you can actually get the help. So I think to the, you know, PTSD is treatable, but you got to be alive to have it treated.

T

Ted Bonar 25:00

That's right, 100 percent.

K

Kyleanne Hunter 25:02

And here's a way that you can help keep us alive.



JJ Janflone 25:04

And so I think that then, that probably answers the question I'm about to ask, which is we've also talked to a lot of first responders who go through similar, yet distinctly different issues. And one of the things that's come up with that has been the well, if I give up my gun, or I go into treatment, if I'm still active, if this is my career, am I harming my job? Am I harming this thing that you know, provides for myself provides for my family? And I'm

guessing by your facial expressions, the answer is, that is a very strong misconception. But if you want to, since we're not a visual medium, for the folks at home, you know, how do we end that sort of misconception?



25:41

Well don't know that I can end it, right? I can, you know, I'm gonna own my perspective on this, that I'm going to answer this from the perspective of a mental health professional, and a concerned, citizen friend, family member to human being is that, you're not going to keep your clearance if you die by suicide. Right and, and so if somebody is in a crisis, where they might be ending their life, I will prioritize that. Now, how I have that conversation, I am, I don't have any intention, nor do I devalue the importance of clearance, or a job or a career or, you know, it matters to me to be this person and I have to hold on to it. So I'm not suggesting that it's simple. I have decided that that's, that I will place that in priority, right? Like, I don't want to discount any of those things. I value each of those. And like, I'll try to focus on it as an "and" not a "but" right. It's "and: I'm really worried about you right now, right. Because right now, like, I am not an expert in your career, I do know that you're in trouble right now. And I'm worried about you. And so I want to say how, how can we kind of reduce this from crisis level to something we can, you know, get through safely. And that means we have to do something about guns that aren't stored safely.



Kyleanne Hunter 27:12

And I think the other side is that from a, I can speak from the military side, and I'm very confident, similar in law enforcement, and firefighters, is that if you do seek mental health care, you will not lose your job. But as Ted mentioned, if you die, you will lose your job. So the act of seeking care is not career disqualifying. Now, you might be temporarily reassigned while you get treatment, but it's no different than if you break your leg, you're going to be temporary reassigned while you're in physical therapy. You know, so to that, I think one of the things that's incredibly important is that those of us who have sought care, who have seen the importance of seeking seeking care, speak out about it and talk about how the fact that it's, it doesn't mean that you're weak, it doesn't mean you can't be a protector, it doesn't mean that you're you failed at your job, or you're not good at something because you need to go get care for an injury. And that's essentially that, that is what you are doing. And whether it is combat, not combat, whether it's just fighting with your spouse, whether it's stress from a young child at home, or moving every two years, whatever it is, these are very real things that can be treated, you know. We wouldn't look down on someone, again, if they broke their leg and had to endure several years of physical therapy, to get back to the physical strength that they were before they broke

their leg.



Ted Bonar 28:44

And I want to add another thought, you know, when we're talking about a crisis, and in any of these hypotheticals that we're talking about, like 'what if' this, it's tempting in the hypotheticals, it's tempting in real life, to think I've got to solve all of these problems right now. I have to say everything perfectly, so that somebody understands that maybe they won't lose their career. And it's,



JJ Janflone 29:08

And I have to solve it, as a civilian, for my dad, for my friend, for my spouse.



29:14

Yeah, and you know, the person in crisis might be thinking 'I have to solve all of this right now.'



JJ Janflone 29:19

Yeah.



Ted Bonar 29:19

And the person that might be trying to help says well, now I have, and I would really, I would offer an alternative thought, is that we can slow this down. We, and I think we need to. Like, well, I don't know how to solve all of that. I don't, right. I can't speak to that. What I can say is "I'm concerned. I love you. And I'm worried about what's happening right now. Like, these are real things. And it may affect your career. I don't know. I don't know," right "but I know I'm worried right now. And you're, you're telling me you're thinking about suicide and you're telling me that, that you put your pistol in your mouth last night." Because these are the things that people will say --



29:57

Mm hmm.



Ted Bonar 29:57

and if somebody says that, well, "I get it that your career's important, I get your clearance is important. I really care about that. So can we take that a step at-a-time? Can we work through that? And right now, let's see if we can get some help. Because this this sounds pretty scary" right. So I wanted to add that, like, we can't solve all of the problems in the middle of a crisis. But you know what? Somebody's got a broken leg, we got to go in.



Kyleanne Hunter 30:25

And triage.



Ted Bonar 30:27

Yeah, triage.



JJ Janflone 30:28

How do you feel about then something like an Extreme Risk Protection Order?



Ted Bonar 30:33

Well, I, you know, I live in the state of Ohio, and we don't have them. So I think it's all about the process and it's all about the implementation, right. I think the word extreme is in there for a reason, that as a mental health professional, not only do I not want to abuse, an extreme risk protection order, I probably can't -- and that's a good thing. I want to protect people's rights. It's not about that. It's about what's happening in a crisis right now, right. It's, you know, there are a couple of things that are really, as a mental health provider, I look at as last resort interventions. And last resort interventions for me are hospitalizations and any kind of legal proceeding, right? They should be last because in my profession, my skill set should be 'how do we get through this and de-escalate a crisis before taking away one's rights.' Inpatient hospitalization is taking away somebody's rights, it takes, it takes away somebody's autonomy, right? Primarily, we take away their free will -- they can't leave. Right. I will have that as a last resort. There is stigma misperception myth, whatever you want to call it, that it's easy to hospitalize somebody and that I'm looking to do that. I'm actually, like, that is the last thing I want to do. I need to be prepared to do it to save somebody's life, if somebody is an imminent threat to harm themselves, but I'm not looking to do it. And I would look at Extreme Risk Protection Orders, at the same level. In fact, they're probably connected, right. And it would depend on the ins-and-outs of the state law. And I know there's variance in Ohio. There's, right, it's

in the legislation right now. So we know that Extreme Risk Protection Orders can save lives. We know that. So I think we need them. And I think that we need to look at it clearly and it needs to come with education and the proper messaging, that that doesn't mean we're coming for the guns, because that's not what it's about. We're trying to save lives.



JJ Janflone 32:39

Yeah, I think that the the messaging is big. Because when, when I hear you say something like someone disclosing that, like, last night there was a gun in their mouth. And the triage, the triage for me, like as a civilian, as not a mental health worker is, you know, this is my best friend telling me this is all right, we got to whatever we were doing today is done. We're going to go sit at a Dairy Queen, and we're going to have a conversation for however long we need. But whatever happens at the end of this conversation -- I'm not sending you home by yourself with guns in the house. So whether it's you give me the keys and we go move it, or I call your dad, something is happening. And I could see myself, if I lived in a state that had an extreme risk protection order, that might even be a step of, if the conversation is not happening. Yeah, you know, if we were standing on a bridge, I wouldn't leave you on the bridge either. And so if I have to call someone to have the bridge removed, then that's what I'm going to do in that moment.



Kyleanne Hunter 33:31

I think you bring up a really important point, JJ, just the fact that, you know, not leaving people alone is where the end of this this comes from. But I think that there are, you know there are two different perspectives. One, the thing that every single one of us can do is to make sure that people aren't isolated in that opportunity. And then there's the mental health professional side that have the tools, you know. In your case, like the engineer to be able to..



JJ Janflone 33:59


Yeah. Yeah.





Kyleanne Hunter 33:59


fix the way the bridges work. You know that, but as I think what that comes up absolutely essential, is that we we know what lethal means our friends might have access to and in those moments of crisis, we, we do the hard work to make sure that they don't have immediate access to them. So they can actually get the help to, sort of, deconstruct. But I

think, you know, Ted's point is also important that, from a messaging perspective, these aren't the first order of business, right? Like this is this isn't if I go into just a routine mental health check, and I say, Oh, yeah, I have guns, you're not going to immediately say, "okay, we're going to take them away from you because you're getting mental health care."


 Ted Bonar 34:40
That's right.


 JJ Janflone 34:41
Yeah.

 Kyleanne Hunter 34:41
You know, that that it would escalate. However, if I come in and say, "Oh, yeah, I had my pistol in my mouth this morning."

 Ted Bonar 34:47
Yeah.

 Kyleanne Hunter 34:48
Yeah, that might be that we need to escalate to that point.

 Ted Bonar 34:50
I just find it hard to say that we're just not gonna do anything, right. We have to have a tool there.

 JJ Janflone 34:55
But what I'm hearing though is that it's really important to establish those relationships ahead of, so that people have someone to talk to.



Ted Bonar 35:01

Oh yeah.



JJ Janflone 35:02

What then would you recommend, what can a civilian do? Or what can even someone who's active in the military or retired military? What can they do to make sure that they're safe and that the people that they love and care about are safe?



Ted Bonar 35:17

Well, I think you've already set it right. What's your relationship, right? How do you nurture the relationship and care for the relationship?



JJ Janflone 35:24

Ky I love you



Ted Bonar 35:25

There you go, right, like that matters, right? And, and check-ins for no reason at all. Meaning, well, check ins because they matter, right, as opposed to check ins because it's Veterans Day. Like check-ins on Veterans Day is fine, like, but you know, check ins because it's an event, that's fine, that's great, right? For some people, it will matter for some people, they, it won't matter and they'll be like, oh, whatever. But you know, check in on February, you know, 18th when it's snowing and gross out and say, "Hey, just want to say, hey, because I wanted to say, hey," like that's a real deal, right. And when we're in conversations with people, and you know, we don't have to be afraid to ask questions. And we civilians, I think, can really be overcome by fear and anxiety. Am I doing this right? Am I asking the right question? Am I allowed to ask this question?



JJ Janflone 36:17

Am I being inappropriate? Am I being gross?



Ted Bonar 36:19

Am I being inappropriate? Is this secret? I mean, you know, some tact matters, right. But in

the context of a relationship, we get to have relationships. I think that that's more important than anything. Ky, I love you too.



Kyleanne Hunter 36:34

I think just to echo make, make real relationships. And I'm very fortunate that both of the people I'm in this room with right now have, have done just that.



Ted Bonar 36:44

Thank you, JJ. And thank you, Ky, I really appreciate both of you and everything you do.



JJ Janflone 36:49

Sliding into our "Unbelievable but" segment, I have something that I know Ky will find not necessarily unbelievable in the sense of like, she can't believe it's happening, but unbelievable in the sense of like, the way your mom is when you roll in at two o'clock in the morning. Like really? This is the choice that you chose to make? So, the NRA Foundation hosts what it calls "Friends of the NRA" events, which is a fundraising arm of the NRA, and they oftentimes raffle off firearms, in addition to other items to raise money for programs such as hunter education and competitive shooting teams. I'm actually cool with that sort of thing, that's great, as long as they're ensuring that the firearms they raffle off, go to individuals who can legally possess them. But these raffles are huge. They're so big that in the state of Washington, the NRA Foundation is seeking to increase price values to over \$500,000, surpassing the state's \$300,000 annual limit for prizes. But that's not even the unbelievable part. Some of the raffles are being held in schools. And that's now, Ky, you can't see it, but she's looking at me like she's gonna flip a table. One of these events recently garnered attention when guns and high-capacity magazines were being raffled off in a Kentucky high school gym. The actual weapons weren't actually physically present, this year, although they have been in past years because a nearby Kentucky school had a shooting that left two students dead and more than a dozen injured. Many parents still weren't happy with the raffle itself taking place at the school. And one parent even said, quote, "They're selling guns on school property where we have active shooter drills." Now these fundraising events put on by Friends of the NRA netted more than \$33 million last year. Ky, thoughts?



Kyleanne Hunter 38:36

Other than just -- wow.



JJ Janflone 38:38

I just hit you with a lot of bad didn't I?



Kyleanne Hunter 38:39

Yeah. I mean look, it's it's things like 4H clubs, hunting clubs, archery teams, rifle teams, all have really positive impacts on kids lives.



JJ Janflone 38:50

Yeah, yeah.



Kyleanne Hunter 38:51

And so not not to take that way. You know, I was I was part of a shooting team as a kid.



JJ Janflone 38:58

You shot the skeet, right?



Kyleanne Hunter 39:01

I shot skeet and trap and sporting clays.



JJ Janflone 39:03

'Cause you have ribbons and metals and stuff, you were like a master



Kyleanne Hunter 39:07

Exactly. I was most likely to become the next Annie Oakley. It was a, and so those things have, have real value. However, everybody in this country knows right now that top of mind for almost every parent is the, unfortunate reality that they there's a fear around school shootings taking place. One hand you're saying we want responsibility while your practicing something that is very irresponsible. And so this is a, it's just very, very unfortunate, but sadly not unexpected misstep that we're seeing happen again,



JJ Janflone 39:45

Hence why it's unbelievable, but... And now it's the moment you've all been waiting for. We're announcing our GVP hero of the week. And yet again, our hero is indeed heroes. From Virginia Tech to Virginia Beach gun violence has changed the lives and communities of Virginians forever. But Virginia is now home to one of the strongest gun violence prevention movements in the country. In particular, we really wanted to call out Andy Goddard, who's the Richmond chapter leader of Brady, and a survivor. He's been involved in the movement since his son, Colin Goddard, was shot at Virginia Tech. We also want to celebrate Martina Leinz, the Brady Northern Virginia chapter leader who has had a super integral role to making sure that Brady has had boots on the ground throughout Richmond. We wanted to celebrate Julie Keller, who is also a NoVa chapter leader. She's been so active in the movement since the Sandy Hook shooting. And every single month Julie protests outside of the NRA's headquarters. We want to salute Lari Haas, who is the senior director of advocacy at the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. Lori has been an activist ever since her daughter was shot at Virginia Tech, and she's a key figure and making sure legislators know about legislation that will save lives and prevent gun violence. Now the list of those who made electing a gun violence prevention majority in Virginia, it just goes on and on. We couldn't possibly list all of them. We are so thankful to each and every one of them. Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the podcast, get in touch with us at Bradyunited.org or go on social @Bradybuzz. Be brave. And remember, take action, not sides.