

Kim Ruocco

Kim Ruocco is presently the Chief External Relations Officer for Suicide Prevention and Postvention for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). Ms. Ruocco is an international public speaker who has a unique combination of personal and professional experience, education and training that provides a comprehensive understanding of suicide prevention and postvention. Ms. Ruocco has been the keynote speaker at many national events, most notably the Department of Defense (DOD)/Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Suicide Prevention Conference, VA Suicide Prevention Month, The LOSS team conference, AAS/AFSP Healing Conference, IAVA Clay Hunt announcement and multiple USMC, Army, ANG and Navy safety stand downs. She has appeared in multiple media outlets including CNN, Fox News, Al Jazeera, NPR and NBC radio. She has been the topic of many magazine articles including Men's Health, Christian Science Monitor, Stars and Stripes and Marine Times. Ms. Ruocco is regularly quoted in national newspapers articles on the topics of Suicide, Military Culture, Mental Illness, PTSD and VA and DOD policy matters.

Ms. Ruocco has been instrumental in raising awareness using the voices of military suicide survivors. She developed suicide survivor panels that testified in multiple venues including the DOD/VA suicide prevention task force, National Action Alliance and DOD/VA conferences. She assisted in the development of the Department of Defense Suicide prevention Office (DSPO) Postvention Toolkit, and was a reviewer for the current national strategy for postvention. Ms. Ruocco assisted in the development of the USMC's "Never Leave a Marine Behind" program and is a participant in the training video. She was the Family Liaison Contact for the USMC/AAS psychological autopsy research project that provided key prevention information for the USMC. She and her sons are also lead participants in the Sesame Street "When Families Grieve" video which is distributed internationally to families who have a recent death. Ms. Ruocco regularly briefs the DSPO and Navy on the family perspective of risk factors and gaps in service. She has also testified before the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs and is considered a subject matter expert for suicide pre and postvention.

Ms. Ruocco has developed comprehensive, peer-based programs that offer comfort and care to all those who are grieving the loss of a service member to suicide. She created a team of peer-professionals who provide care and comfort to nearly 5000 survivors of military suicide. The most impactful of these services is the TAPS Annual Survivors of Suicide Loss Seminar, which offers hope and healing to thousands of survivors, and provides a camp and military mentoring for the children of the fallen. Her programming has been ground breaking in the field of postvention and has been incorporated into many civilian postvention programs.

Ms. Ruocco is currently the co-lead on the National Action Alliance Military and Family Task force and a member of the National Expert Advisory Panel for Research.

Ms. Ruocco holds a BA in Human Services and Psychology from the University of Massachusetts and a Masters degree in Clinical Social Work from Boston University. She is also the surviving widow of Marine Corp Major John Ruocco, who died by suicide in 2005.