

CAVCON 2026

Post-Traumatic Growth: Beyond Physical and Hidden Disabilities

Sioux Falls Convention Center

DAY 1 | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

8:00 AM to 5:15 PM

Time	Session Details
8:00–8:45 AM	Registration and Networking
8:45–9:00 AM	Welcome and Opening Remarks Location: Exhibit Hall 2
9:00–10:15 AM	When the Caregiver Is the Whole System: Tools, Resources, and Rural Realities for Families Caring for Veterans Through Recovery Presenter: Michael Bankowski Location: Exhibit Hall 2
10:15–10:30 AM	Break

BREAKOUT SESSIONS | 10:30–11:45 AM

Track	Session Details
Mental Health	Accelerated Resolution Therapy Presenter: Jade Ronk Location: Exhibit Hall 2
Rural Challenges	Hearing Loss Among Veterans: Challenges, Resources, and Rural Solutions Presenter: Katie Peterson Location: Meeting Room 2
Military Families	Soldier-to-Civilian Transition: Past, Present, and Future Development Presenter: Nancy Thum-Thomas Location: Meeting Room 3

DAY 1 | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Afternoon Schedule

Time	Session Details
11:45 AM–1:00 PM	Lunch on Your Own Attendees are responsible for purchasing their own food and beverages.
1:00–2:15 PM	Growing Forward: The SOAR Mindset as a Map for Post-Traumatic Growth, Session 1 Presenter: Jonathan Pride Location: Exhibit Hall 2
2:15–2:30 PM	Break

BREAKOUT SESSIONS | 2:30–3:45 PM

Track	Session Details
Mental Health	Uniting for Suicide Postvention: Healing After Suicide Loss Presenter: Jody Smith Location: Exhibit Hall 2
Rural Challenges	Trusted in the Community: How Community Health Workers Are Closing Rural Veteran Care Gaps in South Dakota Presenter: Ben May Location: Meeting Room 2
Military Families	The Grief Journey as a Resilient Path for Wellbeing Presenter: Mike Keller Location: Meeting Room 3

Time	Session Details
3:45–4:00 PM	Break
4:00–5:15 PM	From Combat to Community: Building Resilience Through Employment, Purpose, and Connection Presenter: Dr. Andrea Grannum-Mosley Facilitator: Kyla Peterson Location: Exhibit Hall 2

DAY 2 | TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Time	Session Details
8:00–8:15 AM	Welcome Back Location: Exhibit Hall 2
8:15–9:30 AM	Beyond “Thank You for Your Service”: When Coming Home Gets Complicated Presenter: Jonathan Theel Location: Exhibit Hall 2
9:30–9:45 AM	Break

BREAKOUT SESSIONS | 9:45–11:00 AM

Track	Session Details
Mental Health	Navigating South Dakota’s Public Behavioral Health System: An Overview of Statewide Services Presenters: Andrea Heronimus and Jordan Mounga Location: Exhibit Hall 2
Rural Challenges	Journey of Veterans Map Presenter: Jade Ronk Location: Meeting Room 2
Military Families	“I Know a Guy”: Harnessing the Power of Unique Stakeholders in Rural Communities Presenter: Machel Kocer Location: Meeting Room 3

Time	Session Details
11:00–11:15 AM	Break
11:15 AM–12:30 PM	Growing Forward: The SOAR Mindset as a Map for Post-Traumatic Growth, Session 2 Presenter: Jonathan Pride Location: Exhibit Hall 2
12:30–12:45 PM	Closing Remarks Location: Exhibit Hall 2
By 1:00 PM	Conference Concludes

CAVCON 2026 PRESENTER GUIDE

Post-Traumatic Growth: Beyond Physical and Hidden Disabilities

Presenters are listed in conference order.

DAY 1 | MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

9:00 AM | PLENARY

Michael Bankowski, BS

Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Prosperous Robotics Group

Session: When the Caregiver Is the Whole System: Tools, Resources, and Rural Realities for Families Caring for Veterans Through Recovery

Michael Bankowski is a service-disabled veteran, longtime caregiver, and rehabilitation-technology entrepreneur. His work focuses on practical tools and technology that support neurological recovery for veterans and families, especially in rural communities.

10:30 AM | BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jade Ronk, MSW, CSW

Healthcare Navigator and Case Manager, Supportive Services for Veteran Families

Session: Accelerated Resolution Therapy; Journey of Veterans Map

Jade Ronk is a U.S. Air Force veteran and licensed social worker with more than 20 years of experience supporting veterans and families. Her work focuses on trauma recovery, resource navigation, and improving access to care.

Katie Peterson, BS

Sign Language Interpreter

Session: Hearing Loss Among Veterans: Challenges, Resources, and Rural Solutions

Katie Peterson holds a Bachelor of Science degree and works as a sign language interpreter. She brings that professional background to a discussion of hearing loss, available resources, and rural solutions for veterans.

Nancy Thum-Thomas, RN, PhD

Consultant, Life Coach, and Researcher

Session: Soldier-to-Civilian Transition: Past, Present, and Future Development

Nancy Thum-Thomas is a registered nurse, consultant, life coach, and researcher. Her career includes clinical practice, administration, consulting, VA service, and research involving military sexual trauma and veterans experiencing post-traumatic stress.

1:00 PM | PLENARY

Jonathan Pride, MA, CSSBB

Founder and Chief Flight Officer, Caterpillar Leadership Institute™

Session: Growing Forward: The SOAR Mindset™ as a Map for Post-Traumatic Growth

Jonathan Pride is a former U.S. Army Military Intelligence Officer, author, leadership architect, and creator of The SOAR Mindset™. His work helps individuals and organizations grow through storytelling, ownership, abundance, and resilience.

2:30 PM | BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Jody Smith, MSW, CSW-PIP

Suicide Prevention Outreach Coordinator, Black Hills Health Care System

Session: Uniting for Suicide Postvention: Healing After Suicide Loss

Jody Smith is a licensed social worker with more than 34 years of experience in suicide prevention, crisis intervention, counseling, and community education. Her work supports veterans, families, and communities through prevention, postvention, and recovery.

Ben May, BA

Executive Director, Community Health Worker Collaborative of South Dakota

Session: Trusted in the Community: How Community Health Workers Are Closing Rural Veteran Care Gaps in South Dakota

Ben May is a project manager and public health professional who provides technical assistance on community health worker programs, Medicaid reimbursement, program development, and sustainability. He also leads the Community Health Worker Collaborative of South Dakota.

Mike Keller, MA

Suicide Prevention and Outreach Program Director, Helpline Center

Session: The Grief Journey as a Resilient Path for Wellbeing

Mike Keller has worked in suicide prevention and grief support for nearly 30 years. His work includes mental health training, support programs, grief journeys after suicide loss, and a particular emphasis on veterans and moral injury.

4:00 PM | PLENARY

Dr. Andrea Grannum-Mosley, Ed.D., M.Ed., SHRM-CP

Founder and CEO, MosAL Consulting LLC

Session: From Combat to Community: Building Resilience Through Employment, Purpose, and Connection

Dr. Andrea Grannum-Mosley is an Army veteran, workforce strategist, human resources executive, and higher education leader. Her work focuses on veteran transition, resilience, career pathways, employer engagement, and building veteran-ready workplaces.

Kyla Peterson, MSW, CSW-PIP, QMHP

Owner, Sunspire Integrative Therapy and Consulting; Clinical Instructor, University of South Dakota

Session: From Combat to Community: Building Resilience Through Employment, Purpose, and Connection

Kyla Peterson is a clinical social worker, educator, and mental health professional. Her work spans trauma-informed care, behavioral health, grief support, interdisciplinary practice, and veteran-serving work through Community Action for Veterans.

DAY 2 | TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

8:15 AM | PLENARY

Jonathan “JT” Theel

Executive Director, South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance; Retired U.S. Coast Guard Captain

Session: Beyond “Thank You for Your Service”: When Coming Home Gets Complicated

Jonathan “JT” Theel retired as a U.S. Coast Guard Captain after more than 30 years of service. His career included leadership in search and rescue, crisis response, law enforcement, national security, and team development, and he now serves South Dakota’s veteran community.

9:45 AM | BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Andrea Heronimus, BS

Mental Health Services Program Manager, South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health

Session: Navigating South Dakota’s Public Behavioral Health System: An Overview of Statewide Services

Andrea Heronimus has more than 20 years of experience in community mental health, including case management, program development, coordination, and state-level administrative oversight. She has served as Mental Health Services Program Manager since December 2019.

Jordan Mouna, BS

Program Manager, Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services, South Dakota Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health

Session: Navigating South Dakota’s Public Behavioral Health System: An Overview of Statewide Services

Jordan Mouna has more than 15 years of experience in grant management, prevention, and community coalition work in South Dakota. In her current role, she manages suicide-prevention programming and implementation of the three pillars of crisis care.

Machelle Kocer, MSW, CSW-PIP

Community Engagement Partnership Coordinator, Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

Session: “I Know a Guy”: Harnessing the Power of Unique Stakeholders in Rural Communities

Machelle Kocer is a social worker and retired Chief Master Sergeant who served nearly 28 years in the South Dakota Air National Guard. She has spent 19 years serving at the Sioux Falls VA Medical Center and now builds community partnerships to advance suicide-prevention efforts.