



# Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Month

## Message for Commanding Officers

Serving in the Navy or Marine Corps can be demanding. As a leader, you are in a unique position to promote an environment free from the negative attitudes that can be associated with seeking support with overcoming life's challenges. Encourage your Sailors and Marines, from the most junior to the most senior service members, to use the resources available to them. Reaching out and accepting help is a sign of strength and ultimately enhances mission readiness.

Support Sailors and Marines during Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Month by promoting positive coping strategies to manage challenges, and by encouraging them to seek help from peers and helping professionals. Every day, each of us has the opportunity to encourage and support our fellow shipmates and Marines in navigating life's challenges. Encourage them to seek help early before challenges seem like they are no longer manageable.

Access the psychological health and emotional well-being tools and resources by clicking on the blue, underlined, hyperlinked text throughout the document. By incorporating these tips into daily positive mental health behaviors, Sailors, Marines, their families, and civilian personnel can access the resources they need to support each other and themselves.

## What Can Leadership Do?

**As a Commanding Officer, you play an important role in promoting mental health among your Sailors and/or Marines:**

- Take advantage of the [Navy Leader's Guide for Managing Sailors in Distress](#), which can also be accessed through a mobile app (download instructions listed on the top left-hand corner of the page), and the [Marine Corps Leaders Resource Guide](#) – two resources tailored to support leaders.
- The more informed you are, the better you will be at establishing a safe work environment and build trust within your command. Start by taking a look at [Suicide At A Glance](#) to understand definitions, facts, and resources for suicide prevention and intervention.
- Be able to spot warning signs with [IS PATH WARM](#), a mnemonic device designed to help others identify individuals who may be at acute risk for suicide.
- Explore the [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Toolbox](#) to familiarize yourself with the many resources the NMCPHC HPW Department has to offer.



- Reference the [ACT Now!](#) guide to learn how to engage personnel who may be having suicidal thoughts or behaviors.
- Provide the [Psychological and Emotional Well-Being Guide](#) to all personnel to make help-seeking behavior the norm.

**You can work with command Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) and Health Promotion Coordinators to:**

- Make sure Sailors and Marines know they are never alone. Urge your command to support one another by promoting the Navy's Suicide Prevention campaign "[Every Sailor, Every Day](#)" and "[1 Small ACT](#)" key messages.
- Inform your command about access to confidential support including:
  - [Military Crisis Line](#): Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), Press 1; text 838255; or connect with a [peer consultant](#) from Military OneSource at 800-342-9647
  - [Military OneSource](#): Call 1-800-342-9647
  - [Marine Corps DStress Line](#): Call 1-877-476-7734 to anonymously speak with veteran Marines, former Fleet Marine Force Corpsmen, Marine Corps family members, and licensed clinicians with specific training in Marine Corps culture.
- Recommend mental health strategies that will help [Build Psychological Toughness](#) in your command.
- Challenge personnel to tackle [10 specific strategies](#) to building psychological resilience.
- Encourage Sailors and Marines to create a [personal stress navigation plan](#). You never know when you'll have to overcome your next challenge, so during periods of low-stress take the opportunity to plan ahead.
- Promote the regular updates from the [Navy Operational Stress Control Blog](#).

## References

<sup>1</sup>Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment 2014. Navy Marine Corps Public Health Center EpiData Center Department. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/HRA-2014-report-final.pdf>. Prepared May 2015. Accessed July 2015.