



RECOVERY. RESILIENCE.

Wounded, Ill, and Injured



Preventing Social Isolation on All Fronts: Provider's Handbook

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NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER
PREVENTION AND PROTECTION START HERE

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Introduction: Preventing social isolation and promoting social engagement

A serious wound, illness, or injury can create major changes in an individual's life, which can have a ripple effect on the social system in which that individual operates. Factors such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, treatments, and recovery time combined with physical limitations, pain, and psychological and emotional changes all have a direct impact on an individual's relationships and social engagement. These changes in a service member's social environment and support network can positively or negatively affect their treatment, recovery, and quality of life.

The goal is to provide information, education, and resources for early intervention to help prevent social isolation in wounded, ill, or injured Sailors and Marines to help them mitigate the negative impact of this potential trend. This handbook is one of three Social Isolation Prevention Handbooks, each is written for targeted audience from a service member's care team:

1. Wounded, ill, or injured service members,
2. Caregivers, and
3. Providers.

Preventing social isolation and building or maintaining a strong support network is a team effort and each of these groups has an important role to play to support the overall health and wellness of the service member. The resources in these handbooks; the Social Engagement Conversation Guide, the Plan of Action Worksheet, the Strategies for Social Engagement (in the Caregiver and Service Member Handbooks), and the Resource Guide; are designed to start a dialogue about social isolation, as this can be an overlooked and neglected area of treatment. These resources can be introduced and used by any member of the care team, but will be most effective if they are used by the service member, caregiver, and provider together, addressing the value of social engagement from all involved. This handbook can help Sailors and Marines engage as active members of their health care team through guided conversation, decision-making, and developing a plan.

Inside the Providers Handbook

- **Social Engagement Conversation Guide.** This is a list of questions asking service members about their level of social engagement before and after their wound, illness or injury.
- **Plan of Action Worksheet.** This is a one page worksheet designed to help service members organize their goals and track progress.
- **Resource Guide.** The Resource Guide includes links and descriptions of support services available to service members and their families.

All three handbooks are available for download on the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center website:

Providers: http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/wounded-ill-and-injured/Rel-and-Int/WII_RelAndInt_SocialIsolation_Providers.pdf

Caregivers: http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/wounded-ill-and-injured/Rel-and-Int/WII_RelAndInt_SocialIsolation_Caregivers.pdf

Service members: http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/wounded-ill-and-injured/Rel-and-Int/WII_RelAndInt_SocialIsolation_ServiceMembers.pdf

Social Engagement Conversation Guide

Purpose

The Social Engagement Conversation Guide is designed start a discussion on how the onset of a wound, illness, or injury may affect socialization. It asks the service member how often they engaged in a number of social activities; more than before, the same amount, or less than before their wound, illness, or injury. Reviewing the answers or discussing the questions can help the service member, caregiver, and provider identify goals to improve and maintain socialization and prevent social isolation. **The Social Engagement Conversation Guide is available in [Appendix A](#).**

Instructions

Service members can complete this on their own time, with a caregiver, or you can complete it with them. Or they can complete it on their own and then review it with you or bring it to their next appointment with the healthcare team. The Conversation Guide is most effective when the service member and their provider and/or caregiver can discuss the questions and answers.

Follow-up Discussion

This Conversation Guide can be completed by a service member on their own, but is designed to be a jumping off point for a discussion with a caregiver and/or provider about social isolation and setting goals to get involved in social activities. This is not an assessment or evaluation of a service member's social engagement but a way to talk about the service member's life before and after their wound, illness, or injury. If they have reduced social interaction for most or all of the activities listed, that might indicate there are some overarching changes that they might consider to prevent social isolation. However, if there are only a few areas where a service member indicates he or she has limited engagement, this might be an opportunity to talk about why that has changed or to set specific goals related to that activity.

Talking through the Guide, you can look at the service member's answers and discuss changes and the reasons that these shifts may be occurring. Caregivers can also take the time to review resources for the service member and make suggestions on how to help the service member participate in enjoyable activities and increase social interaction. During the discussion you can refer to:

- The [Plan of Action Worksheet](#) to help service members organize their goals and develop strategies for implementation.
- The [SMART approach to goal setting](#) which encourages service members to set goals that are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART).

- The [Resource Guide](#) which can be used to identify specific and appropriate resources that the service member can access.

It is important to encourage the service member to incorporate new activities into their life as it can enhance the recovery process and their overall health and wellness. The service member may not have the same capabilities as before but reassure him or her that there are often options to adapt an activity to their ability and/or find other activities to enjoy.

For additional information, provide the service member with the “Maintaining Social Interaction” brochure. http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/wounded-ill-and-injured/Rel-and-Int/WII_RelAndInt_MaintainingSocial.pdf

Plan of Action Worksheet

Purpose

The purpose of the Plan of Action Worksheet is to create an organized, documented plan with the service member including action items and implementation strategies. This will help organize the service member and give them a place to start to take steps to address potential social isolation issues. **The Plan of Action Worksheet is located in [Appendix B](#).**

Instructions

1. After the service member completes the Conversation Guide, introduce the Plan of Action Worksheet.
2. Use the Worksheet to identify specific goals related to any gaps in social engagement.
3. Review the SMART technique with the service member to ensure effective goal setting.
4. Encourage the service member to bring the sheet back to the next visit if possible to assist with follow-up. Use the Progress column to help the service member track challenges and success during follow-up appoints.

Follow-up Discussion

After working with the service member to set SMART goals, discuss the obstacles and challenges to reaching those goals. Obstacles may be related to transportation, adaptive equipment, or emotional issues such as anxiety or loneliness. The more specific the service member is when describing their concerns, the better you will be able to help them create specific next steps and direct them to the appropriate resources.

Supplement your resources with the Resource Guide to develop strategies and next steps. The Guide includes services that will help Sailors and Marines connect with peers, find social activities, and garner support from people going through similar challenges.

Setting SMART Goals

The SMART approach to goal setting suggests that each goal be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Resource Guide

Sites and Organizations that Provide Multiple Services

- **The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Wounded, Ill, and Injured (WII)** <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/wounded-ill-and-injured/Pages/wii.aspx> works to enhance the readiness, resilience and recovery of WII Sailors and Marines by offering tailored informational tools and materials for healthy living.
 - **Traumatic Brain Injury Resources** <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/Wii-tbi.aspx>
 - **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Resources** <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/Wii-ptsd.aspx>
 - **Relationships and Intimacy Resources** <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/Wii-relationships-intimacy.aspx>
 - **Caregiver Support Resources** <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/Wii-caregiver-support.aspx>
- **The National Resource Directory** www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/nrd connects service members, Veterans, their families, and their caregivers with local resources for the support you need.
- **Military OneSource** www.militaryonesource.mil is a confidential Department of Defense-funded program providing comprehensive information on every aspect of military life at no cost to Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve Component members, and their families. The services include information on family or individual therapy, deployment, reunion, relationship, grief, spouse employment and education, parenting, childhood development, and financial management. Military OneSource also offers 24/7 confidential non-medical counseling services online, via telephone, or face to face. Visit the website or call **800-342-9647**.
- **After Deployment** <http://afterdeployment.dcoe.mil> provides self-care solutions targeting post-traumatic stress, depression, and other common challenges faced after a deployment and with daily living.
- **Wounded Warrior Project** www.WoundedWarriorProject.org is a website that can provide resources and information for you whether you wounded, injured, or ill. They have different sections to meet individual needs; including mind, body, economic empowerment, and engagement (ensuring service members stay connected).

Crisis and Peer Support Lines

- **Military Crisis Line** www.militarycrisisline.net provides confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year for service members in crisis. You can access the Military Crisis Line is accessible by phone, online chat, or text message and is staffed by caring, qualified responders from VA—many of whom have served in the military themselves.
- **Marine Corps DSTRESS Line** www.dstressline.com was developed by the Corps to provide professional, anonymous counseling for Marines, attached Sailors, and families. You can call 1-877-476-7734 to speak to a peer.
- **Real Warriors Message Board** www.realwarriors.net/forum/ is a part of the Real Warriors Campaign to encourage help-seeking behavior among service members, veterans, and military families coping with invisible wounds. The message boards include spaces for Active Duty, Veterans, and military families.
- **Vets4Warriors** www.vets4warriors.com provides Active Duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members and their families worldwide with 24/7 peer-to-peer support by phone (855-838-8255), email, or live online chat.

Counseling Services

- **Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs)** <http://www.tricare.mil/mtf> each have services for therapy and counseling.
- **Fleet and Family Support Centers** www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/family_readiness/fleet_and_family_support_program.html provides customer-focused, consistent, and efficient FFSP programs and counseling services to support sustained mission and Navy readiness.
- **National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE)** www.fallenheroesfund.org is designed to provide clinical and therapeutic services for military personnel and veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and/or complex psychological health issues.
- **Community Counseling Centers** are on-base resources that provide Marines with counseling, group counseling, assessments, case management, and referrals. Marines can find their on-base centers by asking a health professional chaplain, peer, or on the base website.
- **Military Family Life Consultants** https://www.mhngs.com/app/programsandservices/mflc_program.content connect licensed clinical providers with Service Members and their families to assist with issues they may face throughout the cycle of deployment.

Non-Medical Case Management and Care Support

- **Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor** <http://safeharbor.navylive.dodlive.mil/> is the Navy's organization for coordinating the non-medical care of seriously wounded, ill, and injured Sailors, and providing resources and support to their families.
- **Marine Wounded Warrior Regiment** www.woundedwarriorregiment.org provides and enables assistance to wounded, ill, and injured Marines and Sailors and their family members in order to assist them as they return to duty or transition to civilian life.
- **Chaplains** are there to provide spiritual guidance and counseling to Sailors and their families. Contact your local chaplain in the field or at home for confidential support.

Activity Resources

- **Navy Wounded Warrior Adaptive Athletic Reconditioning** safeharbor.navylive.dodlive.mil/transition/adaptive-athletics/ Adaptive athletic reconditioning – athletic activities that are modified to meet the abilities of injured or ill individuals – are essential to the recuperation of wounded warriors. All enrollees in Navy Wounded Warrior – Safe Harbor are encouraged to make athletics a key component of their recovery and rehabilitation plans.
- **Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA)** <http://www.disabledsportsusa.org/> provides adaptive sports opportunities for people with disabilities to develop independence, confidence and fitness through sports. DSUSA also has multiple state and regional sites.
- **Wounded Warriors, Physical Health and Wellness** www.woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/physical-health-wellness/ Physical Health & Wellness (PH&W) programs are designed to reduce stress, combat depression, and promote an overall healthy and active lifestyle by encouraging participation in fun, educational activities. Physical Health & Wellness has something to offer warriors in every stage of recovery.

TBI/PTSD Resources

- **The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE)** www.dcoe.mil maintains a 24/7 outreach center staffed by health resource consultants who provide psychological health and TBI information, resources and referrals for service members, Veterans and their families as well. They also have resources on the website.
- **National Center for PTSD** <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/> provides information for service members, veterans, and their families about combat stress/PTSD.

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center <http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/audience/service-members-veterans> serves active duty military, their beneficiaries, and Veterans with traumatic brain injuries through state-of-the-art clinical care, innovative clinical research initiatives and educational programs, and support for force health protection services.

Appendix A: Social Engagement Conversation Guide

Are you isolating yourself? The Conversation Guide below can help you think about how your wound, illness, or injury might have affected your social engagement. The questions ask if you engage in social activities more often, the same amount, or less often than before your wound, illness, or injury. Review the questions below on your own, with your caregiver, or with your health care provider. This is only the beginning of a conversation about social isolation.

Please circle the answer that fits you best.

1. I go see movies with others.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

2. I go on dates with my significant other or if single, someone new.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

3. I go to concerts or other live shows.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

4. I talk on the phone or use social media to connect with family, friends, and relatives.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

5. I go see local sporting events.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

6. I make an effort to meet new people.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

7. I attend faith-based services or social functions.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

8. I volunteer in my community.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

9. I play board games or video games with family or friends.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

10. I have guests over to my house for a dinner or party.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

11. I participate in casual sports games or group physical activity.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

12. I am intimate with my significant other.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

13. I go out to eat with my family and friends.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

14. I spend time outdoors.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

15. I reach out to close friends to hang out and catch up.

More than before About the same amount Less than before

Please write in any other activities you like such as going to the gym, museums, historical sites, playing music, travel, or participating in holiday traditions.

16. I _____

More than before About the same amount Less than before

17. I _____

More than before About the same amount Less than before

18. I _____

More than before About the same amount Less than before

19. I _____

More than before About the same amount Less than before

Appendix B: Plan of Action Worksheet for Service Members

Plan of Action Worksheet (to be used with Social Engagement Conversation Guide)			
Start Date: _____			
SMART Goals	Obstacles	Strategies/Next Steps	Progress Notes (include dates)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			