ABOUT THE CCN NAVIGATOR

GUIDING THE WAY OF THE CCN TO SUPPORT SAILORS

This newsletter provides members of the Cultural Champion Network (CCN) with important and timely information, updates, and resources to carry out their roles in supporting Sailors to help the Navy drive towards a Culture of Excellence (COE). This edition of The CCN Navigator primarily focuses on Suicide Prevention and the commemoration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Pride Month.

Feel free to share the CCN Navigator content with others who may benefit. If you have questions or would like to submit feedback, please contact CulturalChampions@navy.mil. To subscribe, click here.

SUMMER SAFETY: SUICIDE PREVENTION DURING THE 101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER

BY: SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE, OPNAV N17 21ST CENTURY SAILOR OFFICE

The 101 Critical Days of Summer are always a time to focus on safety—responsible drinking, boating safety, swimming safety, and more—but suicide prevention efforts aren’t always included as a focus. The causes of suicide are complex, and while seasonality and weather are not significant risk factors, researchers have observed some associations between warm weather and suicide rates. Additionally, the stresses of military moves and accompanying separation from known support networks can be very difficult during this time of year. For these reasons and more, suicide prevention efforts are an important part of summer safety.

Use caution if drinking and watch out for your shipmates if they choose to drink. Alcohol misuse has been consistently associated with suicidal behavior, according to the National Institutes of Health. Consuming alcohol can lower inhibitions, increase impulsiveness, and impair judgement. Alcohol misuse can also lead to social withdrawal, and all of these attributes can lead to greater suicide risk.

Understand how to reduce access to lethal means. Reducing access to lethal means of self-harm is key if a person is at risk of suicide, according to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Many suicide attempts happen during a short-term crisis, so reducing access to deadly medications or to firearms is important. Always store medications and firearms safely or remove them from the area completely if you are concerned about those nearby.

Stay connected during times of change. Relationships play an invaluable role in our lives and are one of the Principles of Resilience. During the summer, when people are coming and going as a part of Navy life, it’s easy to feel disconnected. Check in on your friends who have left and reach out to new people in your community. Help create a feeling of belongingness in those around you and for yourself.

Suicide prevention is an all-hands, year-round responsibility. If you think a shipmate is having trouble navigating stress, ACT (Ask, Care, Treat):

• Ask directly: Are you thinking of killing yourself?
• Show that you care by listening without judgment and offering hope. Be there.
• Help your friend connect with a support system immediately.

Contact the Military Crisis Line (call 800-273-TALK and Press 1 or text 838255), escort them to the nearest chaplain, provider, or leader, or call 911 if danger is imminent. Stay in contact with your friend throughout their treatment to promote a healthy recovery.
JUNE OBSERVANCES

LGBTQ+ Pride Month Statement

Celebrated every June, LGBTQ+ Pride Month or Pride Month, commemorates the community, history, and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Americans. As we celebrate our fleet’s diversity and recognize our LGBTQ+ service members and civilians for their dedicated service, we should also acknowledge our nation’s complex historical legacy. Acknowledgment is a critical part of our progress towards a more equitable, inclusive, and respectable military service. Resources related to Pride Month are available on the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute website.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (SAPR) OFFICE

On April 27, 2021, the Department of Defense (DoD) SAPR Office held a virtual awards ceremony. Congratulations to all of the winners, but a special “shout-out” to Melissa Nauss, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) for Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Navy recipient of the 2021 Liz Blanc Exceptional SARC of the Year award and members of our N17 Cultural Champions Network team (CAPT Michael Hall, Dr. Monique Clinton-Sherrrod, CDR Tracy Less, and Master Chief Jerald Baker), for receiving the 2021 Promoting Excellence in Prevention Award.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) WEBINARS

DEI webinars are monthly opportunities to explore various topics around inclusion and diversity. For more information, please email N17 DEI at ALTN_USN_INCLUSION_AND_DIVERSITY@navy.mil.

Upcoming webinars include:

June 22 (1200-1300 EST): Pride Panel: A Historical Perspective & The Way Ahead

The OPNAV N17 DEI team presents a historical look at the impact of LGBTQ+ service members and their contributions to the DoD. The OPNAV N17 DEI team will guide attendees through a historical timeline, highlight key events, and conclude with a panel of Sailors who will share their experiences and journey in the Navy.

Interested in attending? Please reach out to PSC(SW) Sara Knutson at sara.knutson@navy.mil.

JULY IS NATIONAL MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, which is a time to recognize that mental illness does not discriminate based on race, color, gender, or identity. Also, sustaining mental health requires a proactive approach regardless of a person’s identity. One important way to boost your mental health is to connect with others, and prevent isolation. While some civilian studies have shown that a person’s identity can make it more challenging to obtain access to high quality mental health care, a person’s identity should not prevent them from connecting with others around them, talking through problems, and seeking support from their shipmates. Nor should identity prevent a person from seeking professional help when needed. In the Navy, support from our shipmates, our leaders, and our supporting professionals is expected for every Sailor, every day. This July, let’s raise awareness that sustaining diversity, sustaining inclusion, and sustaining mental health go hand-in-hand. Let’s create an environment that normalizes conversations about mental health among our Sailors.
CELEBRATING INCLUSION MAKES US STRONGER

BY: SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE, OPNAV N17 21ST CENTURY SAILOR OFFICE

Connection helps us grow both personally and professionally. Fostering an open and inclusive environment improves our well-being – whether we are empowering our shipmates to succeed, deepening our bonds with our friends with humor, or expressing empathy with our family members when they’re going through a rough patch. Showing someone you care and respect them – even with a small act of kindness – can go a long way in helping others feel included and supported.

Since we often find ourselves navigating uncertainty, establishing a support network that helps us navigate life’s twists and turns is a great way to ground ourselves. Individuals inside and outside of our central circles may have helpful insights from their experiences or new perspectives on situations that we have not yet considered. On an individual level, valuing diverse perspectives and leveraging unique mindsets fuels our own personal growth and strengthens our communities.

Inclusion promotes innovation, establishes equity across various networks, and lowers instances of negative behaviors. From an organizational perspective, the Navy continues to invest in DEI.

The Navy defines DEI as:

**Diversity:** all of the different characteristics and attributes of our Navy Team, which are consistent with Navy core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the Nation we serve.

**Equity:** consistent, systematic, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity), national origin, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

**Inclusion:** valuing and integrating each individual’s perspectives, ideas, and contributions into the way an organization functions and makes decisions.

While these definitions highlight opportunities for the Navy community to build a fair, inclusive environment, they are just as relevant when considering your day-to-day actions when engaging with others. Gaining an understanding of the different perspectives, experiences, and ideas of the people around us helps give us the flexibility to be more open to change and to make sure all identities are supported and seen. These actions help ensure that everyone in the Navy feels that they belong and are treated equitably.

Connection is essential during times of extreme stress. Protective factors against suicide include: a strong sense of community and belonging, psychological and physical safety, strong ties with family and friends, a fulfillment of personal purpose, and a contribution or responsibility to others.

Investing in your relationships with others and these protective factors prior to a stressful event occurring will help you feel more confident in exercising resilience.

Make an effort to regularly express how much your loved ones mean to you as well as your respect and admiration for colleagues.
SPOTLIGHT: LS3 JASON PETITFRERE

Logistics Specialist Third Class (LS3) Jason Petitfrere is a Supply/Logistics Clerk at Airborne Command & Control Squadron (VAW-123) in Norfolk, VA.

How does your role support COE?
Excellence is not just a status one achieves in a singular moment, but rather a consistent or elevated maintenance of standards and performance. Taking that further to having a “culture” of excellence means not just pushing the envelope in one area but making a habit of reaching for greatness in all possible facets of life. As a logistics specialist, promoting a culture of excellence does not just mean getting the numbers right and being timely (although very important in their own right), but making it a habit to provide stellar customer service, maintaining a clean workspace, or even when your work is done, to check on your shipmates.

What does COE mean to you personally?
My foundation of excellence was set at an early age by my parents. My mother often quoted Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in saying, “heights by great men reached and kept were not obtained by sudden flight but, while their companions slept, they were toiling upward in the night.” This quote has stayed with me because it taught me the meaning of excellence. My father, however, taught me why striving for excellence is important. He would say, “your first name is yours and you can do whatever you want with it. Keep it clean or drag it through the mud I don’t care. But your last name? That is not yours to keep and do with as you will. You will have to pass that on one day. Set yourself up to be proud of what you’ll be turning over.” I take that same resolve with me into the workplace and know that everything I do is tied to my legacy and purpose. Though I make mistakes, this oath to go beyond expectations is just one of the many commitments I make in pursuit of a true Culture of Excellence.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
Thinking of the most rewarding part of my job brings me back to my time onboard “Old Ironsides” the USS CONSTITUTION. I think of the interactions with the public during our live tours and our many outreach events with schools and scout clubs across the nation. I saw every one of those events as an opportunity and platform to change lives for the better. Retelling history during these events served as a reminder that greatness is not limited by your talents as an individual, and we must be resolute in our determination of who and what we are fighting for. My greatest reward lied in seeing the fire that would light up in the eyes of those seeking a purpose and meaning to their lives. Seeing them leave our ship with a bigger stride and wide smiles, a wave of passion and gratitude for the life changing opportunity I had to make a difference in the lives of people washed over me.

What might people in the Navy not know about what you do to support others?
Something I’ve heard all too often is “oh, I could never do that” or “well, of course you could do it.” Given the chance I would always strive to change that mindset. I was able to capitalize on the opportunities presented to me not because I just happened to have talents suited for the job, but because of the mostly unseen dedication to excellence acted on long before such a chance ever came along. This is critical to the message I want to convey because it debunks the stigma of “that’s not for me.” What I did might be unique in its execution, but how I did it was based on universal principles accessible to everyone. It takes more than just doing your job or working your rate, it takes doing your job well and inquiring about the wellbeing of those around you. It takes working beyond the expected hours, not just to be seen by superiors, but rather in recognition of the value and mental fortitude to be gained from doing so. What many who’ve heard or witnessed my story don't know at first, is simply that they can do it too.

What is one resource for Sailors that you'd like to highlight?
Be intentional about gathering a roster of credible mentors, they are an indispensable resource. Having a respected voice of reason is not just crucial for promoting excellence, but also for saving lives. There were times that it was the echoing words of my parents that set me straight when tempted to slack off, and other times were the concerned inquiries of a mentor that rescued me from the pits of depression. Find mentors that you cannot afford to disappoint, people who know the extent of your capabilities, and won’t accept anything less than your best in order to test the limits of your growing potential. Whether they are an officer or a member of the enlisted ranks, a contracted civilian or an esteemed Chief Warrant Officer, the Navy has no shortage of people to emulate. Find them, serve them, and learn from them.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with fellow Cultural Champion Network members?
Take care of one another, whether it’s on a personal matter, family matter, or on a professional level. Guide everyone to success and learn from each other. Our day-to-day jobs require a lot of energy and focus, which could lead to complacency. Work as a team, and you will succeed as a team.

If you would like to connect with LS3 Petitfrere or learn more about resources, please email culturalchampions@navy.mil.

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