GUIDING THE WAY OF THE CCN TO SUPPORT SAILORS

This newsletter provides members of the Cultural Champion Network (CCN) with 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 Drug Detection and Deterrence, and Suicide Prevention.

This month’s Sailor Spotlight features CAPT Javier Medina, Team Chief for a Deployable Training Team at the Joint Staff J7 Hampton Roads. Read more about CAPT Medina’s experience building an effective, inclusive team environment on page 2.

Check out page 5’s On Your Radar section for information about updated SAPR training and E-OSC implementation.

In addition, feel free to share The CCN Navigator content with others who may benefit. To subscribe, click here or email culturalchampions@navy.mil. Interested in reading past issues of The CCN Navigator? Click here to download!

UNDERSTANDING OPIOIDS AND STAYING SAFE

At 50 times the potency of heroin, just two milligrams of fentanyl – an amount that could fit on the tip of a pencil – is considered a potentially lethal dose. In 2021, of the more than 107,000 deaths caused by drug overdose or poisoning, sixty-six percent were attributable to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Now, “rainbow fentanyl” is being sold on the streets. These colorful pills in different sizes and shapes may appeal to children. Rainbow fentanyl was first reported to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in February 2022 and in at least 21 states.

With its One Pill Can Kill initiative, the DEA has continued to warn the public of fake pills disguised and sold as legitimate prescription medications that are fentanyl. Launched in September 2021, the initiative also includes efforts to remove fentanyl from the streets. Between May and September 2022, the DEA and law enforcement partners seized more than ten million fentanyl pills and approximately 980 pounds of fentanyl powder. The DEA has also developed a fact sheet for parents and caregivers detailing what they need to know about fake pills and tips for talking to their children about fentanyl and other drugs.

Synthetic opioids aren’t the only danger. Even prescription opioids like Oxycodone or Oxycontin can be a risk to young people or anyone not authorized to take them. An easy way to get rid of old and expired prescription drugs and keep them out of the wrong hands is to take advantage of National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, scheduled for Saturday, October 29, from 1000 – 1400. More information about take-back sites operating on Take Back Day and even year-round is available from the DEA Diversion Control Division.

Not able to make it to Take Back Day or get to a year-round drop box? At-home disposal is another option for potentially dangerous prescription drugs. Place pills in a sealable bag with an undesired substance like used coffee grounds or cat litter, and throw them in the trash. And always be sure to cover up personal information with a dark marker on medicine bottle labels before throwing them away.

Learn more about what Sailors and other Service members need to know about prescription drug misuse and illicit substance use by visiting the Too Much To Lose campaign.
In his role empowering the Joint Force – consisting of Sailors, Soldiers, Marines, Airman, and Guardians – CAPT Javier “Javy” Medina must work across boundaries, borders, and theatres. This requires his Deployable Training Team to be flexible and adaptable, without making any compromises on mission readiness. Moreover, they must be adept at cross-cultural communication in order to effectively train partner nations.

This work is a tall order in the best of circumstances. Medina credits his team’s successes to an open, inclusive atmosphere.

“We promote diversity of thought, inclusion, and connectedness with every team and staff member that we come in contact during our temporary duty assignments as well as back in the home guard,” said Medina.

It is this very same connectedness that lies at the core of the Navy’s Culture of Excellence and Get Real, Get Better call to action. This culture provides the framework and tools Sailors need to make better decisions and improve their behavior and performance. “To me, COE means that I can trust my teammates, co-workers, and partner nation members to work together,” said Medina. “More importantly, [COE means] that I can trust that my service organization to empower me to be a tough and well-rounded servicemember.”

In order for Sailors to perform at their best, they must feel empowered to self-assess and self-correct when they identify a problem or a better way forward. CAPT Medina feels that Signature Behavior #4, “Intervene When Necessary” is particularly helpful in his work leading a Deployable Training Team. During his most recent Temporary Duty Assignment to Panama, Medina was able to intervene in a situation where he says he was able to build trust between U.S. and Partner Nation servicemembers. “The outcome of the interaction empowered PN senior officers to trust my team and to elicit our support with unadulterated feedback on both personal and team performance,” he said.

CAPT Medina has one final piece of advice for Sailors: “Seize every opportunity to showcase your culture and your cultural understanding of others. I was able to do this while participating in a multi-nation exercise where more than 17 partner nations came together to defend a high value regional asset. Despite cultural and language challenges, we were able to work together with our partners in leading roles throughout every directorate within the Multinational Task Force,” he said. “Our U.S. servicemembers learned a lot from our day-to-day interactions and our mission became a success because of our openness to culture, inclusiveness, and the empowerment of others.”

To connect with CAPT Medina, or nominate a Sailor (active, reserve, or civilian) for the Navigator spotlight please email culturalchampions@navy.mil.
LETHAL MEANS SAFETY: PREVENTING SUICIDE

COURTESY OF PROJECT 1 SMALL ACT

Preventing suicide is an all-hands community effort. So this year, consider adding “taking steps to prevent suicide” to your list of 1 Small ACTs. Whether you take time to support a friend following a challenging time or distribute gun locks to your team, we all can play a role in completing small ACTs to help others.

Most Sailor suicides and attempts are impulsive decisions made during a short-term crisis period. Storing lethal means properly—securing personally owned firearms in a safe, storing ammunition separately, and disposing of unwanted, unused, or expired medications—can interrupt the impulse and give someone in crisis just enough time to reconsider a suicide attempt. Practicing lethal means safety is one way to support yourself and others in reducing suicide risk.

Take these steps to practice lethal means safety and help prevent suicide:

1. **Store your firearms safely.** Whether it’s within your own home or in a home you may be visiting, make sure firearms are safely stored, separated from ammunition, and secured in a locked location or with a safety device.

2. **Secure any current prescription medications and dispose of unwanted, unused, or expired medications.** Visit your local Military Treatment Facility (MTF) which has convenient, safe, and anonymous drop boxes as part of the Military Health System’s year-round prescription drug take-back program.

3. **Discuss the importance of lethal means safety with others.** Lethal means safety can make a real difference in protecting yourself, your family, and those around you. Have a conversation with those in your community about the danger of easy access to lethal means and ways to mitigate it.

Gun locks are available to all Sailors and their families at CONUS Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSCs) or Navy Operational Support Centers (NOSCs). Sailors and their family members should contact their command Suicide Prevention Coordinator, local FFSC or NOSC for further information.

For more information, visit the Project 1 Small ACT blog [here](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

NUTRITION’S CONNECTION TO SUICIDE RISK

BY LCDR MELISSA AMESCUA, MS, LD, RD, OPNAV N171 DIETITIAN

Poor nutrition and lack of key nutrients impact your mental health. In several research studies, suicide risk was found to be increased in those that are malnourished. For example, in 2011, the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry published research entitled “Suicide Deaths of Active-Duty US Military and Omega-3 Fatty Status: A Case-Control Comparison,” comparing medical records of 800 service members. This research showed low levels of omega-3’s fatty acid DHA was a strong predictor of suicide in military personnel. Those with low levels of omega-3’s were 62% more likely to die by suicide than those with higher levels.

In other studies, low Vitamin D was also associated with an increased suicide risk. One study showed that 58% of individuals that attempted suicide were low in Vitamin D. There has also been research showing those suffering from Eating Disorders, specifically anorexia nervosa, suffer from an increased risk of depression and suicide due to being so malnourished.

If your diet lacks key nutrients, healthy food choices can improve your mood, happiness, and overall health. Focus on a diet with omega-3’s and getting enough vitamin D. But overall, make sure your diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, lean proteins, and healthy fats – all of which contribute to your mental health.
ADVERSE SUPPLEMENT INTERACTIONS

BY LCDR MELISSA AMESCUA, MS, LD, RD, OPNAV N171 DIETITIAN

Dietary supplement use is popular in both civilian and military populations. It is a multi-billion dollar industry that has continued to grow. People take supplements for many reasons, including to improve their health, increase their energy, or improve their performance. However, supplements do not need to be registered or approved by the FDA prior to production or sales. According to recent research, 70% of US military service members regularly use dietary supplements. That same research found that 18-20% had some adverse event or negative interaction. The report also identified that service members are more likely to use unsafe dietary supplements than civilians. Of the 200,000 US service members that participated in this study, the researchers concluded that a large proportion had experienced an adverse event, especially individuals that combined different supplements. An adverse event from a supplement alone, combined with another supplement or a medication, can have long-term detrimental effects. It is imperative to your health to understand how to pick a supplement and how it interacts with other foods, medications and supplements. For more information on how to pick a supplement, go to https://www.opss.org to find the adverse reporting link under "Reporting Side Effects." In October, Operation Supplement Safety through CHAMPS, Uniformed Services University, will be campaigning “Lets Talk About Dietary Supplements” from 1-31 October. Log onto their website for more information!


INCLUSIVE PRACTICES HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

BY DR. JESSICA A. MILAM, OPNAV N174

Diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace are critical to suicide prevention. “Suicide touches all races, ethnicities, abilities, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, nationalities, religions, and veteran status. All individuals are unique and have intersecting identities. When we don’t acknowledge the identities impacted by suicide, we enable the stigma that keeps too many silent and possibly disregard the specific needs of individuals.” The Center for Disease Control lists isolation as a leading contributor to increasing the risk of a suicide attempt. As leaders and team members, we can promote inclusive practices within teams, commands, and Fleetwide. Not all inclusion efforts require a heavy lift; some are immediately actionable by every member of our Navy and should be practiced to increase Sailor inclusion and decrease feelings of isolation.

Immediately Actionable Inclusive Practices

1. Pay respect, complement, and gratitude to others
2. Make intentional efforts to get to know those within your command
3. Touch base with those who might seem unusually down

1Diversity and Suicide Prevention | U-M Counseling and Psychological Services (umich.edu)
2Risk and Protective Factors | Suicide | CDC

Questions about DEI in the Navy, or resources you can integrate into your Command? Email ALTN_USN_INCLUSION_AND_DIVERSITY@navy.mil.
ON YOUR RADAR

UPDATED SAPR GENERAL MILITARY TRAINING
OPNAV is excited to announce the release of an updated Sexual Assault Prevention and Response General Military Training (SAPR GMT). Training materials are available for download via MyNavyPortal and include new videos and scenarios, critical changes reflecting updated policy, and common themes we’ve become familiar with in cultivating our Culture of Excellence.

NAVY DRUG AND ALCOHOL DETERRENCE WEBINARS
The Drug and Alcohol Deterrence office continues to host weekly webinars for drug and alcohol program personnel. Visit Navy Drug Detection and Deterrence for the full schedule of upcoming webinars and information on how to join, or email MILL_NDSP@navy.mil.

MATERNITY UNIFORM PILOT PROGRAM (MPP)
The MPP (NAVADMIN 284/21) launched on January 2, 2022 and will conclude September 30, 2026. The program is open to officers and enlisted, Active and Reserve Sailors assigned to CONUS and OCONUS commands. Participation in the program is voluntary and requires command endorsement. Selection for participation will be on a first-come, first-served basis, provided all eligibility requirements are met. More information on the program and eligibility requirements are available online.

JOIN THE WEEKLY “E-OSC SUPPORT AND BEST PRACTICE HUDDLE” HOSTED BY OPNAV N17 AND NCCOSC STAFF!
Implementing Expanded Operational Stress Control (E-OSC) at your command is essential and requires a motivated and Proactive Team Leader. Beginning implementation is challenging, and Team Leaders will benefit from the support of other Team Leaders at nearby commands and subject matter experts at OPNAV N17 and NCCOSC. All Team Leaders are welcome to join the virtual weekly support meeting to ask questions and solve problems in a collaborative environment.

Commands that feel that E-OSC implementation is going well are encouraged to join in order to share their lessons learned with the broader Navy community.

The meeting occurs every Monday at 13:00EST/10:00PST. If you would like the meeting details, please email: eosc.fct@navy.mil