

SUICIDE PREVENTION

TALKING POINTS FOR DECKPLATE LEADERS

RESPONDING TO SUICIDE RELATED BEHAVIORS IN YOUR COMMAND

SUICIDE IS A COMPLEX, DIFFICULT TOPIC, AND IT IS RARELY THE RESULT OF A SINGLE EVENT OR STRESSOR. Two people can respond to nearly identical life events in vastly different manners. On average, approximately 60 Navy commands will experience a death by suicide every year. When a suicide occurs, People, Leaders, and Teams are at an increased risk for additional suicides.

A Sailor's experience within their command can impact the possibility they may attempt or die by suicide.

- Commands that create a sense of purpose, with high connectedness and cohesion, create conditions that could lower risk of suicide.
- Commands with unmanaged high levels of stress, hostile work environments, and harassment – even in microclimates – could increase the risk of suicide.
- Use the [Mental Health Playbook](#) and the [Mental Health Roadmap](#) as tools to prevent, mitigate, or address mental health issues within your command and the [Suicide Related Behavior Response and Postvention Guide](#) to reference helpful information on suicide crisis response.



TALKING POINTS FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

QUICK VIEW

PEOPLE

- Many Sailors won't seek help because they fear it may affect their **security clearance**.
- Sometimes, adjustments to a Sailor's **job responsibilities** may be in their best interest to enable proper treatment and recovery.

LEADERS

- Demonstrate proper physical and psychological health. Encourage these behaviors in others. Taking care of our **Mind, Body, and Spirit** is critical to maintaining proper physical and psychological health.
- Pay attention when Sailors are facing **stressful times**.
- Ask about **access to lethal means**.

TEAMS

- **Outreach** from leaders, shipmates and family can make a difference.
- **Support reintegration** after a Sailor receives psychological health treatment or intervention, appropriate reintegration is vital to the Sailor's long-term successful recovery.

VETERANS CRISIS LINE FOR ALL MILITARY **24/7, Confidential Crisis Support**

CALLING FROM CONUS

Call 988 then Press 1

[Chat with a Crisis Line responder](#) by text 838255 or through VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat

CALLING FROM OCONUS

Europe:

Call +1 844-702-5495 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)

Southwest Asia:

Call +1 855-422-7719 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)

Pacific:

Call +1 844-702-5493 (off base) or DSN 988 (on base)



SUICIDE PREVENTION

TALKING POINTS FOR DECKPLATE LEADERS

PEOPLE

- ✓ **Many Sailors won't seek help because they fear it may affect their security clearance.** Remind Sailors that less than one percent of security clearance denials and revocations involve psychological health concerns. Proactively seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery may favorably impact security clearance eligibility.
- ✓ **Sometimes, adjustments to a Sailor's job responsibilities may be in their best interest to enable proper treatment and recovery.** The Sailor's health is the priority. These changes are not in retaliation for seeking help. Share positive stories of recovery and career mobility to encourage treatment.

LEADERS

- ✓ **Demonstrate proper physical and psychological health. Encourage these behaviors in others. Taking care of our Mind, Body, and Spirit is critical to maintaining proper physical and psychological health.** Basic self-care such as eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and getting adequate sleep are all vital to staying fit from the inside out. Seeking help for health concerns is also part of basic self-care. Encourage Sailors to make taking care of themselves a top priority and lead by example.
- ✓ **Pay attention when Sailors are facing stressful times.** There is no single cause of suicide. Pay attention to mentions of relationship problems, career setbacks, academic failures or health concerns as these are risk factors for suicide. Sailors facing transitions or legal challenges (e.g., non-judicial punishment (NJP)) are also at increased risk. Look out for other risk factors such as increased alcohol use, social isolation or withdrawal from usual activities. Remember, you don't have to see every sign to ACT (Ask, Care, Treat). Remind Sailors that they are never alone and that their lives count.
- ✓ **Familiarize yourself with the [Mental Health Playbook \(MHPB\)](#).** The MHPB is designed to assist Navy leaders in preventing, mitigating, or addressing mental health issues within their commands. It is a resource for ALL Navy leaders to develop communities of support for their Sailors. The playbook focuses on preventative maintenance for our People, and how to connect Sailors with the right mental health care. **Use the [Mental Health Roadmap](#) within the playbook to help determine how to access the right care, for the right person, at the right time.**
- ✓ **Consider using Human Factors Boards and Councils ([HFB/HFC](#)) to focus on the personal and professional health of Sailors.** HFB/HFC are event-driven (such as leaving or returning from deployment) and involve leadership pausing to discuss the personal and professional wellbeing of an individual, through an HFB or HFC respectively. Use HFB/HFC as a confidential tool to help your Team navigate challenges that have disrupted their lives.
- ✓ **Ask about access to lethal means.** Firearms are the most commonly used means of suicide in the Navy. When a Sailor is showing signs of crisis, ask about access to firearms and encourage means safety through voluntary storage of privately owned firearms. Familiarize yourself with [NAVADMIN 263/14](#) for additional guidance and be familiar with your local procedures for storage.

TEAMS

- ✓ **Outreach from leaders, shipmates and family can make a difference.** Research indicates that Sailors may be not be willing to proactively discuss their concerns with military providers because they believe that others will find out, fearing judgement, gossip or career impacts. Staying engaged, knowing your Sailors and knowing the warning signs can enable early intervention. Familiarize yourself with the guidance for communication between line leaders and mental health providers available on www.suicide.navy.mil to address concerns about privacy rights. And always encourage the use of confidential resources, such as [Military OneSource](#), the [Military Crisis Line](#) or Navy Chaplains.
- ✓ **Support reintegration after a Sailor receives psychological health treatment or intervention. Appropriate reintegration is vital to the Sailor's long-term successful recovery.** Determining fitness for duty is a team effort that involves more than the chain of command and medical provider(s), which is why active engagement and communication are essential. Other Sailors may consider a shipmate's reintegration experience when they are making the decision to seek help for psychological health issues. Seeing a shipmate successfully return as a respected, contributing member of the Team after receiving treatment reinforces that seeking help is a sign of strength, and may increase the chances that others will seek help when needed.



SUICIDE RELATED BEHAVIOR RESPONSE AND POSTVENTION GUIDE

Developed to provide a streamlined reference to suicide crisis response, suicide related behavior response, reintegration, and suicide postvention.

