



Suicide Prevention Month



Suicide prevention is one of the DoD's top priorities. Observation of Suicide Prevention Month provides an opportunity to demonstrate our collective resolve to combat this problem and promote steps to increase knowledge and foster understanding of suicide prevention and enhance help-seeking and resilience efforts.



The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) is part of the Department of Defense's Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. DSPO oversees the development of policies, procedures and messaging to prevent suicide across the U.S. military.

Department of Defense (DoD) Talking Points:

Suicide Prevention: A Very Serious Concern at DoD

- ▶ The DoD takes suicide prevention very seriously and considers any measure that saves a life as one worth taking.
- ▶ All Service branches at DoD are commemorating Suicide Prevention Month by participating in special suicide prevention activities in September.
- ▶ The DoD has implemented many programs and services to help Service members and their families cope with everyday stresses and those unique to military life.
- ▶ Suicide prevention is primarily the responsibility of leaders. Front-line leaders at all levels must embrace this issue and take measures to create a command climate that encourages Service members to seek the help they need.

The Causes of Suicide Are Diverse

- ▶ There appears to be no direct link between deployment and an associated risk of suicide.
- ▶ Suicide is a complex issue with very individualistic factors. Just as in the general population, in the military, suicide is usually associated with major relationship problems, financial distress and legal issues.
- ▶ Suicide prevention is part of a comprehensive effort to address various high-risk behaviors.

Building Resilience is Critical

- ▶ The DoD is fully committed to bolstering the resilience, cohesiveness and a sense of purpose and belonging for all Service members. These are all protective factors that can reduce the prospects of a suicide.
- ▶ The Services are working to enhance protective factors and build resilience by using the Total Force Fitness framework of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Total Force Fitness emphasizes the importance of both mental and physical fitness.

DoD Promotes Help-Seeking

- ▶ Seeking mental health care is a sign of strength.
- ▶ Suicide is a medical emergency and care should be sought immediately.
- ▶ Service members in crisis should seek help immediately by contacting the Military Crisis Line. Dial **800-273-8255 (press 1 for military)** for 24/7 crisis support. The crisis line, found at <http://militarycrisisline.net>, also provides a chat and text service.
- ▶ If you suspect someone may be feeling suicidal, talk to them – it could help save their life.