# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toolkit Purpose</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach, Engagement and Events Ideas</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) Program</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Content</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Plan of the Day/Week Notes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social Media Messages and Graphics</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stress Navigation Plan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Connections: 'Care' in Action</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Starters</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread the Truth: Suicide Prevention Facts and Key Messages</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices for Safe Suicide Prevention Messaging</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Suicide Prevention Office Outreach Recognition</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Posters, Graphics and Resources</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 30 Days of Small ACTs Calendar</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The goal of annual suicide prevention observances is not to prevent suicide on a day, week or month. Rather, efforts aim to educate audiences and motivate behavior change through the application of tools and skills that can enable prevention at the individual, community and fleet levels. Research indicates that isolated actions are less likely to produce meaningful outcomes than more articulated, sustainable approaches that fuse public health measures with necessary social support. Suicide Prevention Month reinforces the Navy’s “all hands, all of the time” approach using September as a month-long launch for tailored engagement at the deckplate throughout the upcoming fiscal year. This approach advances our efforts beyond a typical awareness campaign blitz to sustainable initiatives that motivate positive action and behavior on an ongoing basis.

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY-21) efforts will align with the Navy’s Culture of Excellence (COE) approach by highlighting the importance of connectedness in supporting every Sailor, every day and integrating Defense Suicide Prevention Office’s (DSPO) call-to-action, “Connect to Protect.” Connectedness is a key protective factor against suicide. Although risk factors associated with suicide-related behaviors (SRBs) do not cause or predict suicide, several relate to social connection:

- Lack of social support and sense of isolation;
- Loss of relationship or significant personal loss; and
- Feeling like a burden to others, helplessness.

At the heart of FY-21 efforts is the acknowledgement of the importance of connection in suicide prevention, resilience and overall mental and emotional wellness. Positive social relationships and supportive community connections can help buffer the effects of these risk factors in people’s lives. As we continue to navigate the physical and psychological health wellness effects of a global pandemic, the Navy recognizes the need to promote adaptive, virtual communication strategies that help foster a sense of connection and support among Sailors. Messages used throughout FY-21 serve as a call-to-action to change the way the Navy and its communities connect, discuss, perceive and react to psychological health concerns and help-seeking behaviors. As such, all resources promoted during 2020 Suicide Prevention Month and beyond are intended to encourage digital engagement and support the entire fleet, as well as their families and Navy civilians – whether forward-deployed, CONUS or OCONUS.

### Mental Health During COVID-19

Crisis Text Line, a free, 24/7 support for those in crisis, tracks metrics about the mental health of those reaching out to its service during the COVID-19 pandemic. A snapshot of their data includes:

- **Conversations per month that mention the word "virus" have increased 49 times**
- **80% of people who mentioned "virus" reported increased anxiety (compared to 34% of texters overall who mentioned feeling anxious).**
- **18-34-year-olds make up over half (52%) of those texting about the virus**

The top words and topics that make texters feel calm are those that reference relationships and social connection. The key takeaway: it is essential to communicate with individuals, emphasize they are not alone, and remind them seeking help is a sign of strength.
BACKGROUND
In 2012, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, through DSPO and Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services, expanded the weekly recognition of National Suicide Prevention Week to the entire month of September. Navy launched its first Suicide Prevention Month (SP Month) in September 2012. Since then, the Navy has made every September its launchpad for that fiscal year’s suicide prevention efforts. To be clear, Suicide Prevention Month is not designed to prevent suicide on a single day, week or month. Rather, efforts aim to educate audiences and motivate behavior change through the application of tools that can enable prevention at the individual, community and fleet levels throughout the fiscal year.

Navy Suicide Prevention Program’s award-winning Every Sailor, Every Day (ESED) campaign leads the charge for Navy’s Suicide Prevention Month efforts and continued engagement throughout the year. ESED aims to reshape the conversation about stress and suicide in the Navy community by promoting proactive engagement and open dialogue and empowering behavior change by engaging Sailors, Civilians and Family Members with practical ways to navigate stress, build resilience, recognize risk and warning signs and keep each other safe.

TOOLKIT PURPOSE
This toolkit is designed for suicide prevention coordinators (SPCs), suicide prevention program managers (SPPMs), health promotion coordinators, leaders, providers and anyone who wants to support Navy’s suicide prevention efforts. It contains graphics, talking points, event ideas and other materials to refresh local engagement beginning in September 2020 and continuing throughout FY-21, in alignment with the campaign’s focus areas. By using the resources and products in this toolkit and on the program’s website, you will help your shipmates and community members:

- Promote safe discussion of psychological health and suicide;
- Recognize early warning signs of psychological health concerns in themselves and others, and understand how to seek help and intervene;
- Identify resources for treatment and support, and feel comfortable seeking those resources without fear of judgment or impact to their career or security clearance eligibility;
- Become familiar with lethal means safety precautions during periods of increased risk or stress;
- Become familiar with Navy’s resources, policies and training supporting stress navigation and suicide prevention;
- Practice simple ways to strengthen their physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing; and
- Make a difference in the lives of every Sailor, every day.

WHERE TO ACCESS EVERY SAILOR, EVERY DAY CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

- Website: www.suicide.navy.mil > Every Sailor, Every Day
- Blog: navstress.wordpress.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/navstress
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/navstress
- Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/navstress
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/navstress
OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT & EVENT IDEAS

Efforts to engage and educate your shipmates about stress navigation and suicide prevention can help promote a culture supportive of psychological health, emotional wellness, protective factors, connectedness and seeking help. The ideas below can be implemented locally during September or any time of year to educate and engage your community on suicide prevention and the importance of being there for every Sailor, every day. **SPCs are responsible for working with their command resilience teams (CRT) to ensure that command engagement is ongoing** and fully integrated into other wellness efforts, using September as an opportunity to reenergize the conversation and set the tone for the upcoming year. Send us any photos or other media and a description of suicide prevention efforts to be featured and shouted out on social media by: tagging us in your Facebook or Twitter content; using the hashtag ‘#1SmallACT’ on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter; or emailing us at suicideprevention@navy.mil.

- **Spread the Word** and share the 30 Days of Small ACTs Calendar by printing and posting the 2020 30 Days of Small ACTs Calendar (pg. 24) in high traffic areas. Social distancing? Email the calendar to your shipmates or share each Small ACT with your social networks. Encourage friends, peers and family members to share the Small ACTs with theirs. Social media images for each Small ACT are available on our Flickr as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages. Each Small ACT has both Twitter- and Facebook-/Instagram-optimized graphics. The printable calendar and corresponding social media graphics include ways to stay connected to others, practice means safety, participate in self-care, invest in wellbeing, reach out to shipmates and more. For some friendly competition, form small teams and challenge your shipmates to complete as many of the Small ACTs as they can. Encourage team members to individually track completed Small ACTs in a digital note or journal to help them reflect on their impact. You can also work with your base or ship social media account operators to share each day's Small ACT from our Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote participation among family and other Navy community members.

- **Share Stories of Connection, Hope and Recovery** to demonstrate that help works, life counts and connectedness plays a critical role in protecting against suicide. Visit [www.realwarriors.net](http://www.realwarriors.net) and [www.maketheconnection.net](http://www.maketheconnection.net) for testimonials from active duty service members, veterans and family members who have recovered from psychological health crises and are living full, productive and meaningful lives. Use the best practices provided in this toolkit to foster a positive narrative. Possible stories to share include:
  - Stay Safe and Connected: [https://maketheconnection.net/whats-new/stay-safe-and-connected](https://maketheconnection.net/whats-new/stay-safe-and-connected)
• **Small Steps Lead to Big Strides:** https://maketheconnection.net/whats-new/small-steps-lead-to-big-strides
• Taking the First Step to Improve Relationships: https://youtu.be/jOGx3-ZWjHM
• Video profile: Technical Sgt. Joshua Williamson: https://www.realwarriors.net/personal-stories/joshua-williamson
• Being Vulnerable Allowed Me to Get Help: https://maketheconnection.net/stories/831
• It Can’t Hurt to Talk to Somebody: https://maketheconnection.net/stories/798
• Counseling Provided Tools to Cope with Challenges: https://maketheconnection.net/stories/686
• Overcoming the Barriers of Seeking Treatment: https://www.realwarriors.net/personal-stories/casey-ross-psa2

• **Invest in Peer-to-Peer Conversations** by hosting small group discussions, or take it virtual with an Instagram or Facebook Live, about topics like mentorship, starting open conversations about mental health, recognizing personal stressors, fostering healthy coping skills, rebounding after setbacks and reaching out to support networks. In conversations, highlight the importance of treating each other with respect and listening to what everyone has to say. For some, it might be the first time discussing psychological health and it might be a little awkward for them initially. As an icebreaker, direct participants to the new mental health conversation starter “Recipe Cards” which outline supportive ways to start conversations with others about mental health. The Recipe Cards are available for download on our Flickr account, and are also included on pgs. 17-18 of the toolkit.

• **Host a “Week of Connection” Event** once per month or quarter. Challenge Sailors to actively connect and check in with at least three people every day, including themselves. Throughout the week, encourage Sailors to develop SMART holistic wellness goals or to make a daily self-care ritual, commitment or pledge. During the Week of Connection, consider hosting a “brown bag” or informal meeting around a shared work interest, skill or topic to help foster command connectedness.

• **Highlight Available Resources** like the ‘Sailor on the Street’ video PSAs, the updated Stress Navigation plan, campaign posters and infographics. Many of these products, like the Stress Navigation Plan (located on pgs. 14-15) or the PSAs, can be used as conversation starters and discussion guides. Stress Navigation Plan digital graphics optimized for Facebook and Twitter can be found on our Flickr page.
The PSAs are located on the ESED YouTube channel and website. Give participants ESED materials, such as the Stress Continuum Thermometer Magnet (NAVPERS 600034) and the Life Counts Magnet (NAVPERS 60008A) or Business Card (NAVPERS 60009A). Procedures and the form to order these and other campaign items available free of charge from the Naval Logistics Library are available here.

- **Send Messages of Hope** by sharing or tagging shipmates in Caring Connections graphics on social media. When you notice when a fellow shipmate or loved one isn’t acting like themselves, it may be hard to know what you can do to respond. Sometimes, 1 Small ACT is all it takes to boost someone’s mood. Whether you send a quick text or a message on social media, offering simple words of support and concern can have a positive impact on a person’s psychological health. More information about Caring Connections is on pg. 16.

- **Conduct a Weekend Send-Off.** Work with base security and recruit a group of Sailors to hold ESED posters or signs with messages of hope, outreach and/or crisis resources, risk factors and warning signs, means safety tips, stress navigation tips, motivational messaging, contact information for local or national crisis resources such as the Military Crisis Line, SAMHSA’s Helpline, Give An Hour, etc. and at exit gates on an afternoon during peak outgoing traffic times (1430-1600). Reach out to your local drug and alcohol program advisor (DAPA) to potentially coordinate with responsible drinking send-offs to promote a range of healthy behaviors (alcohol misuse is a risk factor for suicide).

- **Connect to Protect** by organizing group activities like a group workout (socially distanced as necessary!), planning and making a meal together (even if it’s virtually!), creating a collaborative music playlist, putting together a group book, photography or other hobby-based club to illustrate ways to navigate stress, strengthen mental health and reinforce peer connection and support networks. Ideas include:
  
  - A high-intensity interval training (HIIT) style workout using one of the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Systems (NOFFS) in this NavyNavStress blog post.
  - A 5K fun run with campaign resources displayed at the starting line/finish line and water stations along the route, including messages of hope, educational materials and contact information for support services. Display the ESED campaign’s lethal means safety posters (links on pgs. 24-25)
  - A yoga class with a “Small ACT Selfie” station where participants can write and share how they practice self-care in their daily lives. Signs are available for download and print here. After personalizing their sign, encourage participants to snap a selfie or group photo and share on social media, tagging ESED social channels (@Navstress for Twitter, and @U.S. Navy Operational Stress Control for Facebook), or using the hashtag #1SmallACT for Instagram. Participants can also send their selfies to suicideprevention@navy.mil with their names and event information for inclusion in the ESED campaign’s 1 Small ACT Photo Gallery. Following the event, collect the
signs and post them throughout high-traffic areas as reminders of the simple ways we can support others and our own psychological health.

- A digital book or podcast club that “meets” at regular intervals throughout the year. Pick a theme for your club and some initial authors, audio series or genres in which the group has shared interest. Start each meeting with a quick mental health check-in, share or highlight an outreach resource and have a prepared list of discussion questions about the book or podcast before every meeting. Consider creating a social media space for the club where you can invite new members to join, stay connected between meetings, post meeting schedules and share new or additional reading or listening suggestions.

- **Spread the Truth and Share the Facts** by working with your command’s social media POC and/or installation public affairs office to share educational content and any suicide prevention command events on the command’s official pages with the #1SmallACT hashtag. You can offer the sample social media included in this toolkit (pgs. 12-13). Corresponding digital graphics that can be included with the social media messages are located on our Flickr account. Share the content with your social media networks as well and encourage shipmates, friends and family members to do the same.

- **Connect with the Local Community** by hosting a command-sponsored community service event. Helping others is a great way to build relationships and instill meaning, both Principles of Resilience, as well as find a renewed sense of purpose and contribution. Moreover, community relations (COMREL) is a way to Be There for others in the community, can help Sailors thrive during periods of transition and strengthen belonging – both to the community and within the command.
SAI LOR ASSISTANCE AND INTERCEPT FOR LIFE (SAIL) PROGRAM

The SAIL program is an outreach effort that provides rapid assistance, ongoing clinical case management, care coordination and reintegration assistance for Sailors identified during the 90 days after a suicide-related behavior (SRB), the period of highest risk. SAIL is designed to supplement, not replace, mental health treatment. SAIL Case Managers are Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) counselors who initiate and provide a series of caring contacts with Sailors at 3, 7, 14, 30, 60 and 90 days following an SRB. SAIL Case Managers also maintain a collaborative relationship with health care providers and command leadership.

SAIL boosts the resources available to Sailors and provides additional support to commands to help reintegrate Sailors after an SRB. Many Sailors prefer a caring contact from outside the command and appreciate the support from a voice outside the “skin of the ship.” A local SAIL Case Manager will contact the Sailor and educate them on the program and SAIL services. Once that contact is made, the Sailor can decide whether to participate in the program.

SAIL is not treatment. Rather, SAIL is a support network to assist the Sailor in navigating support services throughout their recovery process. Suicide prevention requires ongoing efforts to promote health and a sense of community.

During Suicide Prevention Month, SPCs should invite the local SAIL Case Manager to the command to connect with the CO. If there is an opportunity such as an All Hands Call or GMT (as permitted by pandemic safety constraints), invite the SAIL Case Manager to talk about the SAIL Program and answer any questions the CO may have.

Why SAIL?

- Evidence shows that SRBs significantly increases the risk of suicide, and evidence-based interventions are needed within the immediate months following SRBs (90 days) to ensure a Sailor’s safety.
- Programs that encourage support, provide ongoing caring contacts and help people navigate medical systems following an SRB reduce deaths by suicide.
- The most effective programs provide a range of different elements of support and collaboration with multiple stakeholders.
- According to the Navy Suicide Prevention Annual Multi-Disciplinary Case Review, about 40 percent of Sailors who died by suicide had a previous SRB.
Plan of the Day/Week Notes

The below plan of the week notes can be used during Suicide Prevention Month and throughout the year. For additional notes aligning suicide prevention and psychological health with other health topics addressed by the ESED campaign, subscribe to Lifelink Newsletter.

- Connection helps us grow both personally and professionally. Fostering an open and inclusive environment improves our well-being—whether we’re empowering our shipmates to succeed, deepening our bonds with our friends through humor or expressing empathy with our family members when they’re going through a rough patch. Showing someone you care and respect them can go a long way in helping others feel included and supported. Learn more: https://navstress.wordpress.com/2020/06/05/celebrating-inclusion-makes-us-stronger/

- The COVID-19 pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about and your community stronger. Learn more at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html

- Leaders have a significant role in suicide prevention. Though Sailors may compartmentalize their personal stressors to stay focused on the mission, if those stressors aren’t being adequately addressed or continue to pile up, they’re likely to spill over into work performance. Taking the time to get to know your people can better enable you to notice when something seems off. For example, a Sailor who used to be engaged and happy at work is becoming more withdrawn, is unable to focus or is easily agitated. These can be signals that a Sailor is in crisis and are opportunities for supportive conversation and ACTion. Consider reaching out to one of their peers who knows them well, as well as their family members who are more likely to have a more complete picture of what may be troubling the Sailor so that you can connect the dots and offer appropriate support. Read more about the supervisor’s role in suicide prevention here: https://navstress.wordpress.com/2019/02/27/suicide-prevention-and-supervisors-the-front-line-when-things-get-tough/

- Addressing psychological and behavioral health needs is essential to maintaining personal and mission readiness, and your ability to be there for others. However, concerns about career implications may lead to apprehension about seeking help. The truth is there are DoD-level policy protections in place to help prevent negative career impacts for those who seek proactive help. In fact, less than 1% of security clearance denials or revocations involve psychological health concerns or behavioral health support. Seeking help is a sign of strength. Further, it’s an indicator of the good judgment and reliability needed to maintain a security clearance.

- Take a moment to understand how to reduce access to lethal means. Reducing access to lethal means of suicide and self-harm is key if a person is at risk for suicide. Storing medications and firearms safely and always disposing of medications properly are small steps you can take to help save lives.
Alcohol misuse has consistently been associated with suicidal behavior, according to the National Institutes of Health. Consuming alcohol can lower inhibitions, increase impulsiveness and impair judgment. Alcohol misuse can also lead to social withdrawal, and all these attributes can lead to greater suicide risk. Seeking help early is a sign of strength. The Navy's non-disciplinary self-referral process allows Sailors to seek help and remain an active duty Sailor. The intent of a self-referral is to provide Sailors with a means of intervening in the progression of alcohol misuse early enough to get help before a problem becomes more advanced and difficult to resolve without disciplinary action. Learn more and get answers to some frequently asked questions at https://navstress.wordpress.com/2019/04/17/self-referral-seeking-help-early-is-a-sign-of-strength/

Suicide Prevention Month is an opportunity to reenergize the conversation and set a positive tone about being there for yourself and others for the upcoming fiscal year. At the heart of Suicide Prevention Month is the acknowledgment of the importance of connection in suicide prevention, resilience and overall psychological and emotional wellness. Positive social relationships and supportive community connections can help buffer the effects of risk factors in people’s lives. Use this month to find everyday ways to connect with others—and ways to carry that forward into the coming months. Bringing a shipmate a cup of coffee, sharing a meal together, asking how someone is doing or lending a listening ear may seem small, but they can have a big impact when someone is feeling disconnected. 1 Small ACT can make a difference and save a life. For more ways to be there for every Sailor, every day, visit www.facebook.com/navstress or www.twitter.com/navstress

If you've ever provided support to a loved one when they are facing a crisis, challenge, traumatic or stressful event, you may know how difficult it can be to maintain your own emotional and psychological health. While practicing self-care is important through life’s ups and downs, it is especially critical to remember when supporting others during trying times. Whether you're helping a friend that has a mental health challenge or a family member dealing with substance misuse, maintaining your self-care plan is critical to ensuring your own well-being.

Did You Know? Suicide risk is highest in the 90 days following a suicide attempt or other suicide-related behavior (SRB). Access to care is critical, but in some locations can be difficult due to manning and other factors. The Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) program prevents care from falling through the cracks. SAIL is that continuous caring contact during the first 90 days after an SRB to ensure the Sailor has ongoing resources and support. SAIL is not therapy and does not replace therapy or the care the Sailor may receive from medical and chaplains. It is risk assessment, safety planning and all the additional resources that FFSC offers to support our Sailors.
**Social Media Messages and Graphics**

Use the following social media messages on personal or command/organization-operated social media accounts. For additional messaging throughout FY-21, like us on Facebook and Twitter to share directly from our pages. Additional graphics are available on Flickr.

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<th>Platform</th>
<th>Message</th>
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<td>Did You Know: Feeling connected to others can help reduce the isolation of suicidal thoughts, which often stem from a desire to stop intense pain rather than a desire to die.</td>
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<td>#SuicidePrevention is: Working hand-in-hand to help those at risk. Know the warning signs. Practice asking the hard questions, like &quot;are you thinking of killing yourself?&quot; Reach out. Offer support. Follow up. Together we can #BeThere for #EverySailorEveryDay</td>
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<td>Self-care is an essential part of our wellness that deserves the same attention as any other important aspect of our lives. One way to make sure our self-care doesn't fall by the wayside? Build a self-care plan: <a href="http://bit.ly/SelfCarePlans">http://bit.ly/SelfCarePlans #selfcareisntselfish</a></td>
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<td>Regularly sharing caring words and messages helps individuals feel more connected. Whether it's a shipmate, coworker, friend, family member of someone else important to you, expressing to others that you care about them goes a long way. Caring is at the heart of connectedness. #connecttoprotect</td>
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<td>Less than 1% of security clearances are revoked or denied for mental health reasons. Be proud of yourself for seeking help and be candid during a clearance process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You know your shipmates best. If you notice even a small change in their behavior, trust your gut. Reach out, ask how they are doing and actively listen to their response. Offer hope and support and connect them with people &amp; resources that can help, like the Military Crisis Line. Call 24/7: 1-800-273-8255, press 1, text 838255 or chat <a href="https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line">https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/military-crisis-line</a></td>
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Knowing that a friend, shipmate or loved one is struggling with their mental health can be scary and confusing. You may feel powerless, but you can make a difference by listening, being prepared, and knowing when to ACT. #ISPATHWARM

**ACT (Ask. Care. Treat.)** when you notice a change – no matter how small it may seem. #trustyourgut #1SmallACT

The real factors that heavily influence clearance status are whether an individual is trustworthy, dependable, reliable and shows good judgment. Seeking help when you face a problem—including a mental health problem—actually demonstrates trustworthiness, dependability, reliability and good judgment—the very factors being vetted for a security clearance. #KnowTheFacts #ShareTheFacts #1SmallACT

Although some are planned in advance, the majority of suicides and attempts are impulsive reactions to stress. Limiting access to lethal methods can be life-saving. #1SmallACT

Did You Know? Suicide risk is highest in the 90 days following a suicide attempt or other suicide-related behavior.

Annually, an average of 35% of Sailors who died by suicide had previous mental health care but for various reasons declined to continue those services or didn’t return to care when problems resurfaced. SAIL prevents care from falling through the cracks and is that critical caring contact during the first 90 days after an SRB to ensure the Sailor has ongoing resources and support.
STRESS NAVIGATION PLAN

Effective stress navigation doesn’t start once stress becomes a distraction, it starts by planning ahead and exploring available resources proactively. This Stress Navigation Plan is a personal list of positive strategies and support resources that you can turn to during times of increased stress and adversity. It can also be used as a “conversation starter” when a shipmate is encountering difficulty and may benefit from resources to enable healthy decision-making.

USE THIS PLAN DURING TIMES OF:
- Transition and changes
- Work or career stress
- Relationship issues
- Financial stress
- Feelings of despair/loneliness
- Grief or loss

CONSIDER THESE STRATEGIES OR ACTIONS WHEN YOU’RE FEELING STRESSED:
- Exercise
- Get outside
- Call a friend
- Watch a favorite movie
- Read a book
- Listen to music

SIGNS TO HELP RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU’RE STRESSED:

- PHYSICAL SIGNS change in energy level, muscle tension, etc.
- EMOTIONAL SIGNS negative thoughts, feeling overwhelmed, easily agitated, etc.
- SOCIAL OR BEHAVIORAL SIGNS spending less time with friends/family, increased use of alcohol or tobacco, etc.

ASK YOURSELF:
WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR TODAY?
WHAT IS ONE THING YOU LOOK FORWARD TO ACCOMPLISHING IN THE FUTURE?

Navstress.wordpress.com  Suicide.navy.mil
SEVERE OR PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO STRESS MAY LEAD TO STRESS INJURY. WHILE MOST STRESS INJURIES HEAL OVER TIME, IF LEFT UNTREATED THEY MAY PROGRESS INTO MORE SERIOUS PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH IMPACTS.

IS PATH WARM? KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

I - Ideation: Thoughts of suicide (expressed, threatened, written)
S - Substance abuse: Increased or excessive alcohol or drug use
P - Purposelessness: Seeing no reason for living or meaning in life
A - Anxiety: Anxiousness, agitation, nightmares or inability to sleep
T - Tapped: Feeling as though there is no way out of current situation
H - Hopelessness: Feeling hopeless about oneself, others or the future
W - Withdrawal: Isolating from friends, family, usual activities, society
A - Anger: Feelings of rage or uncontrollable anger, seeking revenge
R - recklessness: Acting without regard for consequences
M - Mood change: dramatic changes in mood, unstable mood

CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7 SUPPORT FOR STRESS:

MILITARY ONESOURCE:  
call 1-800-342-9647  
visit www.militaryonesource.mil

REAL WARRIORS LIVE CHAT:  
call 866-966-1020  
visit www.realwarriors.net/livechat

GIVE AN HOUR:  
visit https://giveanhour.org/get-help/

CRISIS TEXT LINE:  
text 741741

TO PROMOTE RECOVERY

IT’S OKAY TO SPEAK UP WHEN YOU’RE DOWN

SEEK GUIDANCE from a medical professional, support resource, counselor, or a Navy chaplain.

COMMUNICATE with a trusted shipmate or leader to harness support and promote safety.

PRACTICE the strategies you identified above.

IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS AND NEED IMMEDIATE HELP:

CALL Military Crisis Line for 24/7 confidential support at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and Press 1
TEXT 838255
VISIT www.militarycrisisline.net for chat support.
CARING CONNECTIONS: ‘CARE’ IN ACTION

Protective factors against suicide include sense of community and belonging, strong connections with family and friends, sense of purpose and personal fulfillment and contribution or responsibility to others. Whether you send a quick text or a message on social media to a friend on deployment or send a handwritten letter to a family member that lives in a different state, offering simple words of support and concern can have a positive impact on a loved one’s psychological health.

While you may notice when a fellow shipmate or loved one isn’t acting like themselves, it may be hard to know what you can do to respond. Sometimes, all it may take to bolster someone’s outlook is a simple gesture. For those potentially at-risk for suicide or suicide-related behavior, several studies have shown that regularly sharing caring words and messages can help individuals feel more connected.

Connectedness and trust are key protective factors against suicide. Although risk factors associated with suicide related behaviors (SRBs) do not cause or predict suicide, several relate to social connection: 1) Lack of social support and sense of isolation; 2) Loss of relationship or significant personal loss; and 3) Feeling like a burden to others, helplessness. At the heart of the Caring Connections graphics is the acknowledgement of the importance of connection in suicide prevention, resilience and overall wellness. Positive social relationships and supportive community connections can help buffer the effects of these risk factors in people’s lives.

Postcard-style templates for use on social and digital media channels are available for download on our Flickr page. Thumbnails are linked below. Some templates have been formatted as Facebook posts, while others are vertical for easy screenshot and mobile device shareability. Encourage your shipmates to fill in the postcards on their mobile devices and share them with a friend or loved one as a way to check in.
Save and share these new ‘recipe card’ graphics (linked) for how to start conversations around mental health.

### RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL MENTAL HEALTH CONVO

- **LEVEL:** Medium to Hard
- **TIME:** 20-30 minutes
- **SERVES:** Everyone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ME(NT)AL PREP</th>
<th>DIRECTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go into the conversation prepared with a list of available resources they could use in case it becomes clear they need additional support. You are being a great person by starting this conversation – but you’re not a mental health professional. If the person you care about has told you they’re thinking of self-harm or suicide, it’s a warning sign that they should speak with a mental health professional.</td>
<td>“Maybe it’s me, but I was wondering if you were ok?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hey, I’ve noticed you’ve seemed kind of down lately. What’s going on? Is everything ok?”</td>
<td>“Hey, we haven’t talked in a while and I wanted to reach out. How are you doing?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’ve noticed recently that you haven’t seemed like yourself lately. How are you?”</td>
<td>“I was just thinking about the time when [share a fun memory] and wanted to check in.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I know you’re going through some stuff. I just wanted to reach out and let you know that if you ever want to talk, I’m here for you.”</td>
<td>“This might seem awkward, but I’d like to know how you’re really doing and if you’re really alright.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hey, you seemed frustrated today. I’m here for you. Want to chat?”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I feel like something’s up, and I want to support you. Do you want to talk about what’s going on?”</td>
<td>“Are you okay? I’m worried about you. You don’t seem like yourself lately.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I just want you to know that I know life can be overwhelming sometimes. So, if you need to talk, I’m here.”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hey, is there anything you want to get off your chest?”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Listen, you’re my friend, and I just want to know honestly how you’re feeling.”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I care about you, and I just want to be there to support you.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Whatever you are going through, I’ve got your back.”</td>
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</table>
**RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL MENTAL HEALTH CONVO**

**INGREDIENTS**
- Let people know you’re willing to talk about mental health by being open about your own.
- Speak to them privately. Always start with an expression of care, followed by an observation.
- Let them know you care, and that you understand it’s both okay and normal to have both easier and harder mental health days.

**DIRECTIONS**
- “Maybe it’s me, but I was wondering if you were okay?”
- “Hey, I’ve noticed you’ve seemed kind of down lately. What’s going on? Is everything okay?”
- “Hey, we haven’t talked in a while and I wanted to reach out. How are you doing?”
- “I’ve noticed recently that you haven’t seemed like yourself lately. How are you?”
- “I was just thinking about the time when [share a fun memory] and wanted to check in.”
- “This might seem awkward, but I’d like to know how you’re really doing and if you’re really alright.”
SPREAD THE TRUTH: SUICIDE PREVENTION FACTS AND KEY MESSAGES

Share the following facts and key messages to reshape the conversation about suicide, encourage seeking help and promote a culture supportive of psychological health. Additional resources to help you convey this information, such as posters and digital graphics, can be found in this toolkit and on www.suicide.navy.mil.

- **Protective factors** are resources and aspects of our lives that promote healthy stress navigation and good coping skills. They can be personal, external or environmental. Protective factors against suicide include a strong sense of community and belonging, strong connections with family and friends, comprehensive wellness and good health practices, a sense of purpose and fulfillment, access to health care, and good problem solving and coping skills.

- **Self-care is an essential component of good health and can be thought of as a set of survival skills.** Self-care includes basic activities of daily living (such as eating a balanced diet, grooming, getting adequate sleep, exercising and attending to medical concerns). It also includes activities that can enhance psychological and emotional well-being, such as journaling, meditation, social connection, counseling or therapy.

- **Risk factors for suicide** are complex but consist of a chain of events leading an individual to feel anguish and hopelessness, with the capacity to be lethal (due in part to impacted judgment and access to means). Risk factors include a disruption in primary relationship, loss of status, feelings of rejection or abandonment, increased substance use or abuse, pending legal/disciplinary actions, transition periods and access to lethal means.

- **Annual case reviews consistently reveal that suicide risk is higher when Sailors are experiencing multiple stressors, including transitions, relationship issues and career or personal setbacks.** Active communication is important, especially when a Sailor is alone and away from his or her support networks.

- **When it comes to warning signs, remember IS PATH WARM:** Ideation, Substance abuse, Purposelessness, Anxiety, Trapped, Hopelessness, Withdrawal, Anger, Recklessness, and Mood changes.
These signs may indicate that a person is at immediate risk of suicide. You don’t have to see every sign to intervene.

- Practicing means safety by ensuring that highly lethal methods of suicide are out of reach during times of increased stress has been proven effective at preventing suicide. Highly lethal methods of suicide include but are not limited to firearms and some prescription medications. For added safety during times of increased stress, store personally owned firearms with a gun lock in a secured safe separate from ammunition. Dispose of unwanted, unused or expired medications by emptying them into a sealable plastic bag with used coffee grounds or another undesirable substance and throwing the bag and empty bottles in the trash. Use a dark marker to cross out your personal information from the label. The Military Health System has also established a year-round prescription drug take back program using safe, convenient and anonymous drop boxes placed at Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs). Check with your local MTF to see if they are participating in this program.

- Per OPNAVINST 1720.4B, Sailors can work with their commanding officers and health professionals to arrange safe storage of their personal firearm during a high-risk period. This applies to all Sailors (both active and reserve) and is in accordance with Section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2013.

- Seeking help to promote personal wellness and recovery may favorably impact a person's security clearance eligibility. Less than one percent of security clearance denials and revocations involve psychological health concerns. It's okay to speak up when you're down.

- Most people who consider suicide do not want to die; they want their pain to stop. Very few people who consider suicide are determined to end their life. Traumatic life events or jolting changes may surpass a person's ability to cope and cause feelings of hopelessness and burdensomeness. While treatment should be handled by a professional, you can take the first life-saving steps by reaching out, offering hope and seeking help.

- Suicide risk is highest in the 90 days following an attempt or other suicide-related behavior. Access to care is critical. The Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) program offers a series of caring contacts, risk assessment and reintegration assistance following a suicide-related behavior to promote recovery. Participation is voluntary and does not replace mental health services but is designed to bring together support and tools to reduce risk and promote resilience.

- 1 Small ACT can make a difference and save a life. Be there for Every Sailor, Every Day. All members of the Navy community should lead by example and take proactive steps towards strengthening physical, psychological and emotional wellness daily, recognizing when it's necessary to seek help.
If you notice anything out of the norm from your shipmate, one conversation—1 Small ACT—can open the door for support by breaking the silence and facilitating early intervention. If you think a shipmate is having trouble navigating stress, ACT (Ask, Care, Treat):

- **Ask** – Ask directly, “are you thinking of killing yourself?” or “does it ever get so tough that you think about ending your life?”
- **Care** – Listen without judgment. Show that you care “I’m right here with you,” “nothing you’re going through changes how I feel about you, and how great I think you are” or “I care about you no matter what, and we’re going to get through this together”
- **Treat** – Get help immediately and don’t leave the Sailor alone. Escort them to the nearest chaplain, trusted leader or medical professional for treatment.
BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE SUICIDE PREVENTION MESSAGING

The way suicide is discussed in any setting (training, everyday conversation, public messaging, media coverage, etc.) can either motivate positive behavior or contribute to risk. All discussion of suicide should follow guidelines for safe messaging, per the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.

- **Use objective language.** Describing a suicide attempt as “successful,” “unsuccessful” or “incomplete” frames suicide death as a desirable state. Attempts are either fatal or non-fatal. Additionally, the term “committed suicide” frames it as a crime, which can increase barriers to seeking help by reinforcing negative attitudes. Use “die by suicide” or “death by suicide” instead.

- **Always foster a positive suicide prevention narrative.** Inclusion of data and statistics should not undermine the intent to convey a positive and action-oriented message that promotes understanding of suicide risk and protective factors, encourages active dialogue about suicide and psychological health and promotes help-seeking behavior. The vast majority of those who encounter stress, adversity and/or psychological health challenges do not die by suicide.

- **Use numbers with discretion.** A single life lost to suicide is one too many. Extensive discussion of numbers shifts the focus away from preventive actions that can save lives. Avoid presenting suicide as an “epidemic” or common occurrence among a particular community. This can normalize suicide to those at-risk, discouraging positive action and seeking help. Always include appropriate resources within every discussion of suicide, such as the Military Crisis Line.

- **Avoid glamorizing deaths by suicide.** Although “peace” may be a desirable state for those who are encountering adversity, stating that a person found peace by taking his or her life glorifies the act. Dying by suicide may sound more attractive to those who are struggling to cope with psychological pain when it seems like an escape. Always separate the person’s positive life accomplishments from his/her final act.

- **Avoid presenting suicide as an inevitable event or oversimplifying the cause.** Most suicidal people exhibit warning signs, which may be caused by mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. However, no one should feel as though suicide is the inevitable solution. Discuss risk factors commonly associated with suicide to increase awareness and promote seeking treatment. It’s best to shift the focus away from speculated causes of a single case. Revealing unconfirmed details may lead to generalizations that could normalize the event and hinder postvention efforts.

- **Always provide information for assistance.** To promote help-seeking behavior, accompany discussions about suicide and psychological health with available resources including chaplain support, Military OneSource, or the Military Crisis Line.

DEFENSE SUICIDE PREVENTION OFFICE OUTREACH RECOGNITION

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) will conduct its DoD Suicide Prevention Month Outreach Recognition to recognize one exemplary installation from each of the services and one from either the Reserves or National Guard. This recognition honors the installations with the most dedicated and influential efforts commemorating Suicide Prevention Month in support of DSPO's Connect to Protect campaign. Recipients will be recognized for their efforts to be there for service members, their families and DoD civilians by educating, engaging and building community support for suicide prevention.

All Navy events must adhere to the safe messaging guidelines included on pg. 22 to ensure that they do not unintentionally place vulnerable individuals at increased risk and convey a positive narrative. Additionally, Navy events should promote one or more of the following ESED campaign concepts:

- The importance of lethal means safety and how to practice that safety during periods of increased stress;
- How to recognize suicide risk factors, protective factors and warning signs;
- Practicing proactive self-care techniques;
- Encouraging early intervention and seeking help;
- Promoting open, positive and ongoing dialogue about stress, coping skills, psychological health and suicide;
- How to ask the hard questions and start conversations with shipmates, friends and loved ones; and
- Demonstrate practical applications of the “1 Small ACT,” “Connect to Protect” and/or “BeThere” messages.

All nominations must be submitted via email to Navy Suicide Prevention Branch at suicideprevention@navy.mil, specific submission requirements and deadlines will be posted to ESED Facebook and Twitter pages and will be included in a NavyNavStress blog when it becomes available.

Congratulations to NIOC Georgia, DSPO’s 2019 Suicide Prevention Month Recognition Navy recipient for their exceptional suicide prevention efforts during Suicide Prevention Month! They held seven major events during 2019 Suicide Prevention Month, including a Support Our Shipmates (SOS) Buddy Walk and Suicide Prevention Pledge signing.
The following resources address key campaign topics for 2020 Suicide Prevention Month and can be shared and displayed throughout FY-21. They are available for download from the ESED campaign webpage on www.suicide.navy.mil (suicide.navy.mil > Every Sailor, Every Day > Get Involved) using the links below. Full-size versions of posters can be bulk-ordered from the Naval Logistics Library (NLL) free of charge. Display them in high-traffic areas including work centers, passageways, bathroom stalls, barracks and mess halls. Links to digital versions of each graphic are also provided for use on social media. For additional posters and graphics, visit https://go.usa.gov/xUwmC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graphic Thumbnail</th>
<th>Description &amp; Link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warning Signs Poster</td>
<td>Describes immediate warning signs of suicide using American Association of Suicidology’s IS PATH WARM mnemonic device and details how to intervene. Social Media Graphic Poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethal Means Safety Poster, Version 1</td>
<td>Part of an ongoing series addressing ways to practice lethal means safety during times of increased stress. Social Media Graphic 1 Social Media Graphic 2 Poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethal Means Safety Poster, Version 2</td>
<td>Part of an ongoing series of social media images addressing lethal means safety during times of increased stress. For use on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+ accounts operated by commands, organizations and/or individuals. Social Media Graphic Poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Clearance Poster, Version 1</td>
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<td>Promotes the positive impacts that seeking help for psychological health concerns can have on one's security clearance eligibility and includes guidance on treatment that does not have to be reported when answering the security clearance questionnaire.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Poster</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Social Media Graphic 1</strong></td>
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<th>Security Clearance Poster, Version 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Poster</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Social Media Graphic 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Social Media Graphic 3</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lethal Means Safety Fact Sheet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single page fact sheet addressing ways to practice lethal means safety, including firearm storage, use of gun locks and prescription drug disposal. Includes information on accessing free gun locks in the fleet.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fact Sheet</strong></td>
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<td>Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>This Suicide Prevention Month, commit to accomplishing 1 Small ACT each day for 30 days to build healthy habits, be there for others and help prevent suicide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Create space for your mental health. Self-care is an essential part of wellness. Take a moment to build out a weekly self-care plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 ACT. Noticed changes in a friend’s behavior? Reach out. Need a conversation starter? Try: “You haven’t been yourself. What’s up?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Get active. Exercise boosts mental health. Try this: 50 air squats, 25 burpees, 40 sit-ups, 25 burpees, 30 push-ups, 25 burpees. Challenge a friend to complete it too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Prep for the day. Mentally prep for your workdays, with this tip: Go through your to-do list in your head while standing in line for or brewing your next cup of coffee.</td>
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Navy Suicide Prevention Month is not just a 30-day blitz of suicide prevention efforts; it is the starting point for year-long conversations on how to be there for Every Sailor, Every Day.
Where to Get Help:
- Your local Navy chaplain, Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) or medical
- Military Crisis Line: call 1-800-273-TALK, press 1; text 838255; visit www.militarycrisisline.net
- Military OneSource: www.militaryonesource.mil
- Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL)

Additional Sources of Information:
- Defense Suicide Prevention Office: www.dspo.mil
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: www.sprc.org
- American Foundation of Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.com
- Human Performance Resource Center: www.hprc-online.org
- Real Warriors Campaign: www.realwarriors.net

ESED campaign resources and materials will be released throughout September and fiscal year 2021 on www.suicide.navy.mil. Follow us on Twitter @NavStress and Flickr @OPNAVNI71, like us on Facebook @U.S Navy Operational Stress Control and subscribe to our NavyNavStress blog for more.