



LIFELINK

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WHAT'S NEXT? NAVIGATING TRANSITIONS, PT 4

Helping Military Children Thrive

Though we recognize their strength, resilience and contribution every day, each April our Armed Forces and the entire nation honors military kids with the [Month of the Military Child](#).

It's often said that military children serve right alongside their parents. They endure many of the same transitions: navigating separation during deployment (or geo-bachelor tours), adapting to life when that parent leaves and returns home, frequent moves, making new friends, adjusting to new surroundings, and more. Though they tend to keep a smile on our faces and often help positively shape others' perspectives, sometimes it's difficult to determine how children are processing the latest changes in their lives—even the familiar ones (like moving!). The presence of [protective factors](#) can help lessen the negative effects of stress on children and families alike, building *family* resilience. Help your kids and family apply the [5 Principles of Resilience](#) (Predictability, Controllability, Relationships, Trust and Meaning) to thrive through transition periods with these quick tips:

- **Connect with the community (*Relationships*).** Helping your kids get involved in social and extra curricular activities will lessen the stress of making new friends and getting acclimated with a new place, while providing a positive environment for expression. Social activities and peer connections can also be confidence-builders; military kids are often admired by their peers for their adaptability, sacrifice, and the “cool places” they’ve lived. A sense of belongingness is important!
- **Explore their feelings (*Predictability, Controllability, Trust*).** There are a lot of unknowns with deployments and PCS moves alike. Sit down with your children and explore their apprehensions. Making a plan for communication when a parent will be in a different location, teaching them about their new community and having open discussions can help kids regain a sense of control and promote trust. Get them excited about their upcoming changes while letting them know what to expect. They’re more likely to adjust better to their new phase of life, and you’ll have more peace of mind.
- **Set an example (*Meaning*).** Kids look up to their parents in challenging times, but that doesn’t mean you have to be superhuman! It’s important to show children that life’s changes bring new opportunities and that setbacks are only temporary. Help them see the positives, while trying to remain level-headed. Lean on the support of friends and family, faith or [laughter as medicine for stress relief](#). This will help your children learn positive ways to navigate stress and find greater meaning in life’s twists and turns.

Most importantly, remind your kids that you admire their strength. Thank them and tell them you love them. Whether facing a change or navigating daily life, nurturing and affection are important protective factors at all times. Salute your [Military Child](#)!



April is the Month of the Military Child. Click the image to view the many events honoring military kids in your community.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Meet the Trainers
[NavyNavStress](#)

What's Next? Navigating Transitions, Pt. 3
[NavyNavStress](#)

Tools for Healthy Eating Barracks Style
[NavyNavStress](#)

Helping Your Teen Manage Stress
[Military OneSource](#)

Build a Better Team
[HPRC Online](#)

LIFELINK NEWSLETTER

LIFELINK SPOTLIGHT

“28 Sailors, 2 Aircraft Carriers, 1 Moment in Time”

Inspired by [recent events](#) on the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), this month’s spotlight goes to the thousands of Sailors and families who are separated for months, or years, on end while their loved ones put warfighting first and operate forward.

On March 22, Truman Sailors with family members serving on board USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77) were briefly reunited as the two aircraft carriers conducted a vertical replenishment in the Gulf of Aden. Truman began its latest deployment in July 2013 and was preparing to conduct turnover with the USS George H.W. Bush in providing maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. When they deployed, Truman Sailors with spouses and siblings stationed aboard Bush expected to be apart from their loved ones for nearly two years. However, thanks to months of planning and coordination between the aircraft carriers’ senior leaders, the 28 Sailors were able to reunite for two hours aboard Truman and enjoyed lunch together in the ship’s first class petty officer mess.

Not only were the Sailors overjoyed to see their loved ones unexpectedly, but they were particularly grateful for the supportive leadership who made the event possible. “This opportunity tells something about the leadership here, allowing us to come see our families one more time,” said Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Handling) 1st Class David Brownlee, assigned to Bush. “It feels like Christmas right now,” said another petty officer.

Relationships and connections are important to our psychological wellness and ability to navigate stress. Time away from loved ones isn’t easy, but even short moments shared can help “recharge” our spirits, adding meaning to what can be a difficult period. Together, our leadership, families and peers provide hope and community, helping us thrive, not just survive.

The LifeLink Spotlight recognizes a proactive Sailor, command, or member of the Navy community that has gone above and beyond to help others thrive, not just survive. Whether sharing an inspiring personal testimony, organizing efforts to promote wellness and resilience, or taking ACTIONS that save a life, spotlight awardees offer hope and build a sense of community—protective factors against suicide and other destructive behaviors. Send your nominations to suicideprevention@navy.mil.

RESILIENCE CORNER

Live Our Values: Step Up to Stop Sexual Assault

Regardless of the accused’s or survivor’s gender, research indicates that sexual assault is associated with an increased risk of suicide related behavior. Sexual assault has been linked to both physical and psychological effects on survivors, including depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress.



2014 SAAM Public Service Announcement

Reducing the threat of sexual violence from within our ranks continues to be an all hands evolution, all of the time. While ensuring the safety of our Sailors is a year-round priority, Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) is a call-to-action to help us reenergize our focus on the scope and impact of sexual assault, while dedicating ourselves to be active bystanders.

For more information on SAAM events at your command or local installation, visit www.sapr.navy.mil. If you need help regarding a sexual assault, visit www.safehelpline.org or call 1-877-995-5247. If you or a shipmate are having thoughts of suicide, contact the [Veteran’s Crisis Line](#) at 1-800-273-TALK (Option 1).

“I Choose” - SAMHSA’s 2014 National Prevention Week Project

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is gearing up for 2014 [National Prevention Week](#), observed May 18-24. The goal of this week is to increase public awareness of psychological health issues and substance abuse issues through community-centered approaches. Throughout the week, daily prevention themes highlight issues such as tobacco use, drug and alcohol use and abuse, and suicide.

Leading up to National Prevention Week, you can help encourage healthy choices to build resilience and effectively navigate life’s challenges by participating in SAMHSA’s “I Choose” project. Simply take a photograph of yourself holding an “I Choose” sign, personalized with actions you can *choose* to prevent substance abuse and promote mental health. Involve your shipmates and share how you’ll thrive in your community and make healthy choices together. Send your entry to newmedia@samhsa.hhs.gov. You can also take the “Prevention Pledge” on [SAMHSA’s Facebook Page](#). For more information about the “I Choose” project click [here](#).

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APRIL EVENTS

Sexual Assault Awareness Month
April

SPC Basic Training Webinar
Apr. 16
May 7
[Register Here!](#)

COMING UP...

Navy Fitness Month
May

National Mental Health Month
May

ALCOHOL’S IMPACT ON YOUR ABILITY TO NAVIGATE STRESS

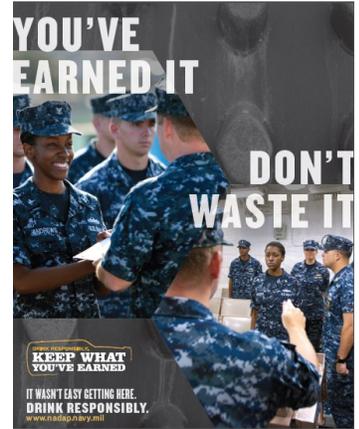
Having an extra beer or glass of wine to unwind from a stressful day or drinking excessively with friends at the end of a challenging week may seem like ways to “release,” but using alcohol to combat stress is a dangerous combination. Not only does alcohol impact your physical health, but it can take a toll on your psychological and emotional wellness if consumed irresponsibly or in excess. Abusing alcohol in response to stress may spiral into social withdrawal, anger or rage, and decreased inhibitions—which may increase suicide risk.

Stress induces the body’s “fight or flight” response, providing rapid energy in order to handle threats. A variety of circumstances can evoke this response, from unforeseen challenges or alarming situations, to actual safety threats. When we’re unable to respond to these challenges adaptively, we may make unhealthy choices to ease the tension. Though it may seem to help you loosen up, using alcohol to navigate stress can lead to long term impacts on your physical and psychological health including addictive or destructive behavior.

If relaxing after a challenging situation seems difficult, rather than reaching for a drink or heading to the bar, try positive ways to counter stress. If you enjoy the company of others, go for a run with a few shipmates or get in a good workout. Physical activity can help your body re-regulate hormones to help you think clearly and unwind. Passive activities like music, reading, and meditation, can also produce a sense of calm so that you can refocus on positive solutions and regain a sense of control.

Using alcohol as a response to stress won’t help you decrease your stress level long-term. In fact, it can jeopardize everything you’ve worked hard for, particularly if your use turns into abuse, or you make just one irresponsible decision like getting behind the wheel after drinking. April marks the first anniversary of Navy’s flagship responsible drinking campaign, Keep What You’ve Earned. This month, you can help Navy Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention get a “pulse check” on how you believe attitudes and behaviors toward drinking in the Navy have changed since the campaign’s launch by taking part in an anonymous survey to help shape upcoming Keep What You’ve Earned efforts. To participate in the survey, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KWYE>.

For tips on responsible drinking, click [here](#). If you think you may be struggling with alcohol, contact your local Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program.



Contact Navy Suicide Prevention

[Email Us](#) | [Website](#)

Follow Operational Stress

Control Online...



Life is worth living!



Click here for your lifeline.

1-800-273-TALK
(8255 Option 1)

Prevent Suicide

MORE NEWS YOU CAN USE

Keep What You’ve Earned Video Profile: Sr. Chief Brian Wenzel [YouTube](#)

Sleep: Nature’s Best Medicine [Military Pathways](#)

Tips for Staying in Touch During Deployment [HPRC Online](#)

Working Together to Help Veterans [NavyLive](#)

Renting Versus Buying When You PCS [Military OneSource](#)

Deciding Where to Live when you Leave the Military [Military OneSource](#)

How Veterans Can Address Substance Misuse [Real Warriors](#)

DoD Menus Improving, Armed Forces Recipe Cards to Enhance Go for Green [Navy.mil](#)

The following program resources have been updated:
Seven Everyday Ways to Promote Suicide Prevention Awareness (available for download [here](#))