



LIFELINK

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Get in on the ACT! Ways to Engage for 2015 Suicide Prevention Month

September is Suicide Prevention Month and we have the resources you need to get *actively* involved in supporting your shipmates this month and throughout the year. In August, we announced that we're integrating the message "1 Small ACT" into the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign, focusing on the little things we can do as shipmates, leaders and family members to make a big difference in the lives of others. While suicide prevention is an ongoing effort, this month's observance is the perfect time to catalyze engagement and encourage your shipmates to support one another through life's challenges.

You can get involved starting *now* by participating in the 1 Small ACT Photo Gallery on our Operational Stress Control Facebook page (www.facebook.com/navstress). By contributing to the photo gallery, you can demonstrate your commitment to supporting every Sailor, every day by highlighting simple ways to make a difference, inspire hope and save a life. Submissions will be accepted through August 31, 2016.

Contributing to the 1 Small ACT Photo Gallery is quick, but the impact can last a lifetime. To participate:

- Submit a photograph of yourself or your shipmates holding the **1 Small ACT sign**, personalized with a small act that can make a difference or save a life.
- Send your photo to suicideprevention@navy.mil for review and posting in the photo gallery. In the email, include your command or organization and the small act written on sign (may be used as caption).
- Like us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/navstress) to view and share your image as inspiration to your shipmates, friends and family!

You can also submit your 1 Small ACT photo through the **Real Warriors mobile application**. The Real Warriors app is an online photo-sharing service that offers peer support for warriors, veterans and military families. Users can upload photos to the Wall, salute others and access 24/7 resources. If you don't have the sign, just hold up your index finger in the photo, pick an inspirational message (e.g. "Real Strength") and

write your 1 Small ACT as a caption. You can download the app on the **Apple App Store** or "salute" photos on your mobile browser at realstrength.realwarriors.net.

Don't stop there! There are plenty of ways to get involved. For example, you could commit to educating 5 shipmates on five **risk factors** or **warning signs** for suicide and ask them to educate 5 more people. To get your unit or entire command involved, organize a 1 Small ACT challenge by encouraging your shipmates to perform meaningful acts throughout the month of September and post each on a designated wall in a high-visibility area, using the **1 Small ACT sign**. To highlight the relationship between physical and psychological fitness, as well as community, organize a 5K walk/run aboard your ship. Instead of having runners wear bibs with numbers, have 1 Small ACT signs available and encourage them to fill one out and pin it to their shirt. Don't forget to encourage them to snap a photo and email suicideprevention@navy.mil for inclusion in the photo gallery!

The **1 Small ACT Toolkit** includes additional materials to support local and individual efforts. Bookmark Navy Suicide Prevention's **webpage**, like us on **Facebook** and follow us on **Twitter** for more resources to support every Sailor, every day. What will your small ACT be?



Lifelink Spotlight

Some stories are so extraordinary that they should be retold as often as possible. As we kick-off Suicide Prevention Month, check out an actual example of how 1 Small ACT saved a life.

In 2012, a USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) Sailor was driving to work one morning across the Coronado Bay Bridge when he noticed a car in front of him pull over. It stopped near the bridge's apex, with no hazard lights on, as if to be inconspicuous.

"I saw he was an older guy...I didn't want him to get hit," the Sailor said as he recounted his story. "Most people going over the bridge at that time won't be paying attention; they're just trying to wake up."

While the Sailor assumed he'd be assisting with a flat tire or offering a ride to highway patrol, the man suddenly moved onto the bridge's ledge. The Sailor remained calm and directed traffic around them for safety, asking a few passing cars to call for assistance. He began talking to the man, telling him about what he did in the military and the places he'd visited.

"I didn't ask him what he did or about his family...he might have been up there for that certain reason. I didn't want him to think about it."

The man leaned forward a couple of times as if to jump, but the Sailor continued to urge him not to do it, stating that they could get through this moment *together*.

The man said nothing to the Sailor, but stood back and looked at him, slowly inching away from the ledge.

First responders arrived and asked the Sailor if he wanted to leave since they were equipped to handle the crisis, however, the Sailor refused. "I felt like I was responsible, well, *now* I was responsible for this guy's life. So I stayed the whole time."

In care of first responders after ultimately backing down from the ledge, the man asked to speak with the Sailor. He said nothing, but simply looked up and thanked him.

The Sailor didn't believe he did anything extraordinary, crediting his training in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and ACT (Ask Care Treat) for equipping him with the knowledge to stay calm, engage and seek help. His small act—pulling over to help a distressed driver—ended up saving a life. It was the man's sixtieth birthday.



Resilience Corner

Need to Refocus and Relax? Take a Deep Breath!

Our bodies are equipped with several internal processes to help us stay ready and face challenges, such as the fight-or-flight stress response. This is a good thing when we're faced



with immediate threats to our safety and wellbeing, but not such a good thing when regularly provoked by day-to-day stressors like advancement prep, financial woes, or even traffic. When the body perceives these issues as threats, it begins reacting by releasing adrenaline and cortisol, hormones that increase heart rate, blood pressure and energy supply for fight-mode. Constant release of these hormones due to persistent stress throws the fight-or-flight mechanism out of sync and can increase risk for a myriad of health problems, including heart disease, anxiety, depression, restlessness, weight gain and more.

Taking a few deep breaths isn't just a cliché suggestion for calming down during a heated moment. It's a proven stress-reducer that activates the body's relaxation response.. Here are a few deep breathing tips to get you started:

- **Find a quiet space.** Try to find an area with little noise or distractions (to the extent possible). Earplugs or earphones can help!
- **Get comfortable.** If at your desk, sit up straight, feet firmly but comfortably planted on the floor. You may also sit on the floor with your back straight (torso directly over your hips), legs crossed, or lay down.
- **Focus on your breath.** After taking a normal breath, try a deep breath by slowly inhaling from your nose to fill your lungs, and exhaling slowly through your mouth while engaging your lower abdomen. Repeat, focusing on a positive word, phrase or image that you find calming.

For more tips, check out the [Breathe 2 Relax](#) app or Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center's [Relax Relax toolkit](#).

Suicide Prevention GMT Download Trouble?

Commands with limited bandwidth may experience difficulty downloading the zip file containing the updated Suicide Prevention General Military Training (GMT) from Navy Knowledge Online (NKO). While NKO works to resolve this issue, those experiencing technical difficulties may request that the file be sent through an alternate transmission process, using Safe Access File Exchange (SAFE). To submit a request, email the GMT Program Manager at gmt.distribution@navy.mil or call 757-492-0763 (DSN 492-0763).

Navy Chaplains, Partners in Care to Help Build Spiritual Resilience

News and Resources

Rear Adm. Burkhardt Public Service Announcement [All Hands](#)

Commander, Navy Region Southeast Signs Suicide Prevention Month Proclamation [Navy.mil](#)

Former Detroit Lions Quarterback Eric Hipple Provides Suicide Awareness Seminar [Navy.mil](#)

Practicing Optimism [HPRC](#)

Graham Family has Lost Two Battles, but their War is Far from Over [Kentucky Kernel](#)

How to Eat for Better Sleep [Health.mil](#)

Stress Can Zap Relationships [HPRC](#)

Gearing Up for Good Times [Jacksonville.com](#)

Navy's ShipShape Program: It's Your Job to Stay Fit and Our Job to Help [Navy Medicine Live](#)

Preventive Health Equals Warfighter Readiness [Navy Medicine Live](#)

Resources for Psychological Health Care Professionals [Real Warriors](#)

All Hands on Deck for Suicide Prevention [Wavy.com](#)

Upcoming Events

SPC Training Webinars
September 9, 1000 CT
September 22, 1400 CT
[Register Here](#)

National Suicide Prevention Week
September 6-12

2015 Defense Centers of Excellence Summit
September 9-11

World Suicide Prevention Day
September 10

One conversation can save a life. As part of Navy's effort to encourage Sailors and Marines to access psychological health and emotional well-being resources, the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center recently met with the Navy Chief of Chaplains' Office to discuss the role of chaplains in providing support to Sailors, Marines, and their family members in difficult times.

Chaplains can help build spiritual resilience and reinforce a sense of connectedness and hope. "Resilient people are connected people," said Navy chaplain Capt. David Bynum. Spiritual resilience recognizes that life has fundamental meaning and value based on a belief in the transcendent, of something greater than oneself. Chaplains understand this may have a different meaning for people depending on the individual's faith background so chaplains help people wherever they are in their spiritual journey to contextualize their lives and reframe their struggles so they can move forward. Their aim is to help people regain a sense of hope and meaning in life.

Within the Navy Chaplain Corps, 81 chaplains and 41 Religious Program Specialists currently serve as suicide prevention coordinators. Over the past year, one of the key initiatives for the Chaplain Corps has been to enhance skills in suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. The Chaplain Corps' FY15 Professional Development Training Course trained chaplains and RPs in the use of evidence-based tools, such as the Veterans Affairs (VA) Safety Plan and the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS), to conduct risk assessments. As partners in care, this training ensures that chaplains have the tools to provide the best pastoral care possible to Sailors, Marines and families. This includes knowing when to refer them to psychological health professionals for additional help.

Talking about psychological and emotional health can be difficult and at times overwhelming. Navy chaplains can be a great resource for Sailors, Marines, and their family members struggling with these conversations, which often involve underlying spiritual issues. Chaplains are embedded in commands and serve alongside Sailors and Marines at sea, ashore, in training commands, and in medical centers and hospitals. This close connection and shared identity help build trust with Sailors and Marines and make chaplains a unique resource. They are, in fact, the only ones in the command who offer 100% confidentiality to their people, regardless of the individual's religious beliefs.

Chaplains cannot be compelled by the command, medical professionals, or others when it comes to disclosing what a service member or family member shares in confidence. The confidential relationship also extends to oral, written and electronic communication (e.g. letters, emails, and text messages). That being said, the chaplain will not leave an individual alone if the individual or others are at risk. The chaplain is committed to the ultimate goal of the commander and all partners in care: To get the individual the support he/she needs.

This also includes family members. Family members are often the ones attuned to changes in their loved one but may fear repercussion on their family member's career if they speak up. It's important to note that chaplains can serve as advocates in the command to get you or your loved one the help needed before a crisis occurs. This one small act can make the difference.

Chaplains can also provide family members and service members with guidance and support in how to approach one another during relationship challenges. "Both family members and service members play a key role in creating resilience, and it's important that they both consider their counterparts' point of view, especially when the service member is deployed," said Bynum. Call Navy 311 to request chaplain support in your area: 1-855-NAVY-311 or text to: Navy311@navy.mil. To find out more information about the Navy Chaplain Corps and 100% confidentiality, visit www.navy.mil/local/crb.

